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... Tattva Bodha ...

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AI Summary – Class 39

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Summary

Introduction to the 24 Cosmic Principles (caturvimśati-tattva)

Acharya Tadany began the formal teaching by explaining the transition from studying the individual (Vyaṣṭi) to the cosmic level (Samaṣṭi). He introduced the concept of caturvimśati-tattva - the 24 principles that constitute the entire universe.

Key Sanskrit Terms: • Vyaṣṭi = Individual/Micro level • Samaṣṭi = Cosmic/Macro level • Tattva = Principle or element • caturvimśati = Twenty-four

Parallel Structure: Individual and Cosmic Levels

Acharya Tadany emphasized the parallel structure between individual and cosmic manifestation:

Aspect	Individual Level (Vyaṣṭi)	Cosmic Level (Samaṣṭi)
Consciousness Principle	ātmā	Brahman
Material Principle	Anātmā	māyā
Causal/Seed Form	kāraṇa śarīram (Causal Body)	kāraṇa prapañca (Causal Universe)

The Nature of māyā and kāraṇa prapañca

Acharya Tadany explained that the universe existed in a potential form before manifestation, similar to how a tree exists in seed form before growing. This potential form is called kāraṇa prapañca at the cosmic level, parallel to kāraṇa śarīram (causal body) at the individual level.

Definition of māyā/kāraṇa prapañca

The causal universe (māyā) is characterized by three qualities:



- **anirvacanīyam** - Undescribable; cannot be categorically defined as existent (SAT) or non-existent (ASAT), real or unreal
- **anādi** - Beginningless; an endless cycle with no starting point
- **avidyā**- Of the nature of ignorance

The Law of Conservation and Pre-existence

Acharya Tadany referenced the scientific law of conservation of matter and energy, explaining that nothing can be created from nothing. This principle supports the Vedāntic view that the universe must have existed before manifestation in a potential form.

"Not even a grain of matter can be created in this universe. Nothing can be created, even by God. If nothing can be created, what does that mean? It means that this universe, this entire cosmos, existed before it came into manifestation." (Acharya Tadany)

The Seed Analogy

Acharya Tadany used the example of trees and seeds to illustrate the concept:

- A coconut tree comes from a coconut seed
- A neem tree comes from a neem seed
- A mango tree comes from a mango seed

In the seed form, all details of the entire plant exist - size, branches, leaves, fruit - but in a condensed, invisible, indistinct, unmanifest, or dormant form. Similarly, the entire universe existed in potential form before manifestation.

Before the Big Bang: Vedāntic Perspective

Acharya Tadany addressed the scientific question of what existed before the Big Bang. While modern science cannot explain this, Vedānta provides an answer: everything existed in potential form (kāraṇa prapañca), with both matter and consciousness principles present.

In the unmanifest state of kāraṇa prapañca, even time and space did not exist. Time and space only came into being with the manifestation of the universe. (Acharya Tadany)

The Inert Nature of Matter

Acharya Tadany emphasized that the entire gross universe is acetanam (inert). Therefore, māyā - the potential form of matter - must also be inert. Both matter and its potential form exist in an inert state.

However, the consciousness principle (Brahman) also existed before manifestation. Brahman is of the nature of Sat-cit-ānanda:



- **Sat** - Existence; that which exists across all three periods of time (past, present, future), including during the absence of time
- **cit** - Consciousness; the light that illumines everything
- **ānanda** - happiness, contentment, satisfaction

Brahman as the Substratum of māyā

The text states: "Brahmashraya māyā" - māyā (the inert matter in potential form) was dependent upon, supported by, and had Brahman as its substratum. Just as the consciousness principle (ātmā) enlivens and blesses the individual body, the same consciousness principle (Brahman) enlivens and blesses māyā at the cosmic level.

The Three Bodies and Their Nature

Acharya Tadanu reviewed the three bodies (śarīratrayam) from previous lessons:

1. sthūla śarīram (Gross/Physical Body)
2. sūkṣma śarīram (Subtle Body)
3. kāraṇa śarīram (Causal Body)

All three bodies are under the material principle (Anātmā) and are therefore jaḍam (inert) by nature. They are blessed and enlivened by the consciousness principle (ātmā).

Teaching Methodology Notes

Pedagogical Approach

Acharya Tadanu explained his teaching methodology:

- When studying the individual (Vyāṣṭi), he started with the gross body (sthūla śarīram) because it's most familiar, then moved to subtle (sūkṣma) and causal (kāraṇa)
- When studying the cosmic level (Samaṣṭi), he begins with the causal (kāraṇa prapañca) and will work toward the gross
- This approach helps the mind gradually accept unfamiliar concepts by starting from what is known

Study Recommendations

Acharya Tadanu acknowledged the abstract and difficult nature of this topic and recommended:

- Re-reading the material
- Re-watching the class
- Making associations and connections with the three bodies (śarīratrayam)
- Understanding that while initially challenging, the structure becomes elegant, beautiful, and fascinating once grasped

Key Concepts Summary



Concept	Explanation
caturvimśati-tattva	The 24 principles that constitute the entire universe (to be detailed in future classes)
kāraṇa prapañca	The causal/seed form of the universe; the potential state before manifestation
māyā	The material principle at cosmic level; characterized as anirvacanīyam (undescribable), anādi (beginningless), and avidyā(ignorance)
Brahman	The consciousness principle at cosmic level; of the nature of Sat-cit-ānanda
anādi	Beginningless; cyclical existence with no starting or ending point
sr̥ṣṭi and Pralaya	Cosmic cycles of manifestation and dissolution
acetanam	Inert; the nature of all matter including its potential form

Question after class

Student 1's Question: What Came Before the Potential Form?

Student 1 asked what existed prior to big bang?. Acharya Tadany firstly explained that, in the common philosophical problem of "who came first, the creator or the created things?" or "the egg or the chicken?", when seeing from this standpoint, this question leads to infinite regression.

However, the śāstra resolves this by stating that existence is **anādi** (beginningless). This means:

- There is no beginning and no end
- Existence is cyclical, not linear
- Both at the micro level (individual) and macro level (cosmic), existence is beginningless

The universe undergoes cycles of manifestation and unmanifestation:

- At the cosmic level: **sr̥ṣṭi**(creation/manifestation) and **Pralaya** (dissolution/unmanifestation)
- At the micro level: **Jayate** (birth) and **Mriyate** (death)

Both are endless cycles moving from unmanifest to manifest and back to unmanifest form.

Student 2's Concern: Beyond Experience and Reasoning

Student 2 raised an important philosophical concern: many concepts in Advaita Vedānta seem beyond both experience and reasoning. She questioned how one can understand or feel something that cannot be experienced or reasoned about, suggesting it requires blind acceptance of scriptural teachings.



Acharya Tadanu's Response on Experience

Acharya Tadanu strongly refuted the notion that Vedāntic knowledge is beyond experience: "Tell me where there is no experience of yourself. I am sad. I am happy. I am old. I am tall. I am young, I am awake, I am dreaming... All these are experiences. What remains unchanging? I... The unchanging reality, the substratum of all these experiences and descriptions, I."

The problem is not lack of experience, but misidentification:

- We constantly experience the "I" (consciousness)
- However, we mistakenly think this "I" is the body-mind-sense complex
- This misidentification causes all suffering: "I am getting old," "I am not accepted," "I wish I was taller," etc.
- Vedānta removes this ignorance about our true nature

By age 20, we have experienced all human emotions - love, despair, hatred, satisfaction, happiness, sadness, elation, despondency. We keep repeating the same patterns not because experiences are lacking, but because of ignorance about our true nature. (Acharya Tadanu)

Acharya Tadanu's Response on Reasoning

Acharya Tadanu also clarified that Vedāntic knowledge is not beyond reasoning:

- Abstract knowledge requires methodologies, analogies, and logical structure
- Intellectual knowledge takes place intellectually, not emotionally
- The intellect has a framework, and Vedānta fits that framework perfectly
- Vedānta uses logic and reason to remove ignorance

The Role of śraddhā (Trust/Faith)

Acharya Tadanu acknowledged that initially, **śraddhā** (Trust/Faith) is necessary as one of the prerequisites for Vedāntic study. This Trust/Faith is "pending verification" - pending the removal of ignorance through proper understanding.

He referenced the qualifications (Sādhana catuṣṭaya) discussed in earlier classes, emphasizing that this knowledge is easily accessible to those with the proper qualifications, but will remain inaccessible to those without them. This is why studying the Bhagavad Gita is important - it provides the best guidelines for acquiring these preliminary qualifications.

The Vision of Vedānta

Acharya Tadanu concluded by explaining that Vedānta is a vision (not a promise) about one's true nature. It reveals this nature by removing the ignorance that blocks us from living as our true self.



"The vision reveals the reality. The body is getting old, the body is sick, the mind is restless, the mind is sad... But because I think that I am the body-mind-sense complex, I think that I am getting old, I am sad, I am unhappy. Experience is there throughout, but that experience is clouded by my ignorance of who exactly that 'I' is." (Acharya Tadany)