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... Tattva Bodha ...

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AI Summary – Class 40

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Summary

māyā and the Three guṇas

Core Concept

māyā possesses three fundamental features (guṇas), each accounting for specific faculties experienced by all living beings, especially humans:

1. **Sattva guṇa** - Represents jñāna śakti (the learning/known faculty)
2. **Rajas guṇa** - Represents kriyā śakti (the doing/acting faculty)
3. **Tamas guṇa** - Represents Dravya śakti (the resting/withdrawing faculty)

The Three Faculties in Daily Life

Learning Faculty (jñāna śakti):

- Operates through the five sense organs of knowledge (jñānedriyāni)
- Enables acquisition of knowledge throughout the day
- Registers and processes sensory information

Acting Faculty (kriyā śakti):

- Enables response to circumstances and situations
- Example given: When crossing a street and a bicycle approaches, the sense organs register the bicycle (knowing faculty), but you must act to avoid collision (acting faculty)
- Represents all doing, performing, and responding activities

Resting Faculty (Dravya śakti):

- Activated when exhaustion occurs from learning and acting
- Manifests primarily as sleep
- Provides rest, recharge, and rejuvenation for all organs



- After sound sleep, one wakes up refreshed and ready to resume learning and acting

Pre-Manifestation State

Before the universe manifested, Brahman (consciousness principle from cosmic perspective) and māyā (with its three faculties) existed in dormant, potential, or seed form. The three guṇas remained in a state of equilibrium at the māyā level, not in operational mode.

Newton's Law Parallel

Similar to Newton's law of motion stating that every object remains at rest or in uniform motion unless disturbed by an external factor, the three guṇas remain in equilibrium until disturbed. The disturbance in māyā's equilibrium causes the entire universe to come into manifestation.

Law of Karma

The disturbance is caused by the law of karma, specifically at the Samaṣṭi (cosmic/universal) level, not at the Vyaṣṭi (individual) level. This represents collective, universal karmas rather than individual karmas.

Evolution of the Universe

Gradual Process

According to śāstra, evolution is not a revolutionary or sudden change (unlike the "Big Bang" theory). It is a gradual process, comparable to how a seed does not become a full-fledged tree overnight but develops through stages.

Two Main Stages

1. **First Phase:** kāraṇa prapañcaḥ (Causal Universe) → sūkṣma prapañcaḥ (Subtle Universe)
2. **Second Phase:** sūkṣma prapañcaḥ (Subtle Universe) → sthūla prapañcaḥ (Gross/Physical Universe)

The journey progresses: Causal Universe → Subtle Universe → Physical Universe
kāraṇa prapañcaḥ → sūkṣma prapañcaḥ → sthūla prapañcaḥ

The Five Elements (pañca bhūtāni)

Important Distinction



At this stage of manifestation, the discussion concerns **subtle elements (sūkṣma bhūtāni)**, not gross elements. These subtle elements are the basic raw materials from which the entire universe is created. (Acharya Tadanu)

Evolution Sequence and Properties

Element	Sanskrit Name	Unique Property (viśeṣa guṇa)	Connected Sense Organ	Total Properties
Space	ākāśa	śabda (Sound)	śrotra (Ears)	1 property
Air	vāyu	sparśa (Touch)	Tvak (Skin)	2 properties (Touch + Sound)
Fire	Agni/Tejas	rūpa (Form/Color)	caṅṣu (Eyes)	3 properties (Form + Touch + Sound)
Water	Jala/Apah	Rasa (Taste)	Rasana (Tongue)	4 properties (Taste + Form + Touch + Sound)
Earth	ṛthivī	Gandha (Smell)	Ghrana (Nose)	5 properties (Smell + Taste + Form + Touch + Sound)

Inheritance Pattern

Each element inherits the properties of all preceding elements (like parental and grandparental properties) while developing its own unique attribute:

- **ākāśa:** Has only its own property (sound)
- **vāyu:** Has its own property (touch) + inherited property from ākāśa (sound)
- **Agni:** Has its own property (form/color) + inherited from vāyu (touch) + inherited from ākāśa (sound)
- **Jala:** Has its own property (taste) + inherited from Agni (form) + vāyu (touch) + ākāśa (sound)
- **ṛthivī:** Has its own property (smell) + all inherited properties from the four preceding elements

Detailed Element Explanations



1. ākāśa (Space)

The first element to evolve from māyā. Its unique property is sound (śabda), which is perceived by the ears (śrotra Indriya). Space and ears are interconnected.

Omkara - The Primordial Sound: According to śāstra, Omkara (OM) is the basic sound that pervades the entire space. It consists of three matras: A + U + M, which grammatically combine to form OM. This primordial sound exists throughout space, and all other sounds are conversions of this essential sound, similar to how white light contains all colors that become visible when passed through a prism.

When we speak, we are not producing new sounds but converting the already-existing Omkara into alphabetic sounds used for communication.

2. vāyu (Air)

Evolved from ākāśa. Its unique property is touch (sparśa), perceived by the skin (Tvak). Air and skin are interconnected. vāyu inherits the sound property from ākāśa, which is why we can both hear and feel wind - we hear the wind's sound and feel its touch.

3. Agni (Fire)

Evolved from vāyu. Its unique property is form and color (rūpa), perceived by the eyes (cakṣu). Fire and eyes are interconnected. Fire has an incandescent brightness that can be seen. Agni inherits touch from vāyu and sound from ākāśa, giving it three total properties.

4. Jala (Water)

Evolved from Agni (subtle fire, not gross fire). Its unique property is taste (Rasa), perceived by the tongue (Rasana). Water and tongue are interconnected.

The Taste of Water: The śāstra describes water's taste as "tasteless." This tastelessness is actually a potential state containing all other tastes in dormant form, similar to how white light contains all colors and Omkara contains all sounds. From the subtle level, all other tastes exist within water's tastelessness in potential form. (Acharya Tadany)

Water inherits form from Agni, touch from vāyu, and sound from ākāśa.

5. pṛthivī (Earth)

Evolved from Jala (subtle water). Its unique property is smell (Gandha), perceived by the nose (Ghrana). Earth and nose are interconnected.



Example given: In Pune, after the first rain following months of dry, dusty conditions, opening a window allows one to experience the fragrance of the earth - this is the Gandha property of pṛthivī.

Earth inherits all properties from the four preceding elements: taste from water, form from fire, touch from air, and sound from space. Children who grow up in the countryside naturally experience all these properties of earth.

Creation of Subtle Universe and Bodies

From the subtle five elements (sūkṣma bhūtāni), two things are created simultaneously:

1. **sūkṣma prapañcaḥ** - The entire subtle universe
2. **sūkṣma śarīra** - All subtle bodies of all living beings

These represent an intermediary stage in the evolutionary process. The final stage involves the creation of sthūla bhūtāni (gross elements), from which emerge:

- sthūla prapañcaḥ (gross/physical universe)
- sthūla śarīra (gross/physical bodies)

Vedāntic Cosmology Summary

This teaching represents Vedāntic cosmogenesis - how the Vedas explain the manifestation of the entire universe. The process follows a clear hierarchical evolution:

1. māyā (with three guṇas in equilibrium)
2. Disturbance caused by cosmic karma
3. Evolution of five subtle elements in sequence
4. Creation of subtle universe and subtle bodies
5. Further evolution to gross elements
6. Creation of physical universe and physical bodies

Questions after class

Question 1 from Student 1: Understanding sūkṣma

Question: Is sūkṣma something we can experience, or is it not in the realm of our experience?

Answer by Acharya Tadanu: Everything that exists in the universe is subject to experience. However, we as individuals are limited in our perceptual capacity across all sense organs (Indriyas). Our eyes, ears, and other senses have limited ranges.



Expanding Perceptual Capacity

Science expands our limited capacity through instruments:

- **Telescopes:** Expand our seeing capacity to perceive objects light-years away, beyond our natural visual range
- **Microscopes:** Allow us to see what is smaller than our natural capacity - for example, viewing skin under a microscope reveals an entire ecosystem of microorganisms invisible to the naked eye

As we age and prana gradually leaves the body, even our basic perceptual powers decrease - hence the need for spectacles. Without them, everything becomes blurred, like the background in portrait photographs.

Scientific Knowledge and Experience

The entire scientific world's data collection, theory formation, and law establishment is based on this capacity to enlarge our basic sensory abilities. Without the basic Indriyas (sense organs), there is no experience, as there would be no connection between the object of perception and the sense organs, they must match.

Examples of experienceable phenomena we're still understanding:

- Dark matter (theories and projections exist)
- Black holes (theoretical understanding)
- Supernovas (generation process understood)
- Star formation (birth process understood)

Q2: Distinguishing sūkṣma from sthūla

Question: How do you differentiate between something being sūkṣma versus gross? What is the distinguishing line?

Answer by Acharya Tadany - The Key Distinction:

Gross (sthūla): Whatever is gross is perceived by everyone equally. It is universally experienceable. **Subtle (sūkṣma):** Whatever is subtle is perceived only by the specific individual. It is individually experienceable, not universally accessible.

Examples of sūkṣma

Thoughts and Memories: Your thoughts are part of your sūkṣma śarīra (subtle body), not your sthūla śarīra (gross body). You can perceive your own thoughts, but others cannot perceive them. Your memories, knowledge, and internal experiences are known only to you unless you express them.



Aura and Energy Healing: Some people claim to have the capacity to perceive others' subtle bodies or auras. Practitioners who "fix your aura" say they can see where there is disharmony or lack of alignment in the subtle body and work to correct it. Some claim to have created instruments that measure the energy of the sūkṣma śarīra. While the śāstra acknowledges that sūkṣma śarīra exists, it maintains that for most people, the subtle body is perceptible only to the individual.