



॥ विवेकचूडामणि ॥
... Vivekacūdāmaṇi ...

AI Summary – Class 114

For Vivekacūdāmaṇi, by Acharya Tadany Cargnin dos Santos
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Summary

Context and Framework

This class is part of a systematic study of Vivekacūdāmaṇi, focusing on answering seven fundamental questions raised by students in verse 49. The current discussion addresses the question: "What is anātmā (non-self)?"

Structural Overview

The anātmā (non-self) is divided into three bodies (śarīra trayam):

- sthūla śarīra (Physical Body)
- sūkṣma śarīra (Subtle Body)
- Karana śarīra (Causal Body)

The causal body has multiple names in the text:

- Avyaktam (Unmanifest)
- avidyā (Ignorance)
- śaktiḥ (Power)
- triguṇātmika (Made of three guṇas)

The Three guṇas and Their Powers

Rajoguṇa - The Active Principle

Rajoguṇa is expressed through **vikṣēpa śaktiḥ** (projecting/disturbing power):

- Power of restlessness and constant movement
- Power of continuous action, imagination, scheming, planning, and executing
- **Critical Point:** Rajoguṇa cannot function independently - it requires the backing of Tamoguṇa

Tamoguṇa - The Veiling Principle

Tamoguṇa is expressed through **āvaraṇa śaktiḥ** (veiling/hiding power):



- Power of concealing and hiding
- Sets the stage for vikṣēpa śaktiḥ to operate
- Prepares the ground for projections and imaginations

The Rope-Snake Analogy

Acharya Tadany explained the relationship between the two powers using the classic Vedāntic example:

A rope may appear as a snake or any other similar object **only when** the rope is covered by āvaraṇa śaktiḥ (ignorance). The veiling power must be present for the projecting power to create the illusion.

Ignorance With and Without Error

Two Types of Ignorance

Ignorance Without Error	Ignorance With Error
<p>Example: Deep sleep state (suṣupti)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Self-ignorance is present• No self-mistakes occur• No harm to self or others• Peaceful and restful• "Ignorance is bliss" applies here	<p>Example: Waking and dream states</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Self-ignorance is present• Self-mistakes occur• Creates suffering and limitations• Foundation of samsara• Leads to misery and pain

Key Principle

Whenever there is an error/mistake, there must be ignorance behind it. However, the reverse is not true, ignorance can exist without error (as in deep sleep). (Acharya Tadany)

How the Two Powers Work Together

The Team Dynamic

1. āvaraṇa śaktiḥ (veiling power) prepares the stage by hiding the true nature
2. vikṣēpa śaktiḥ (projecting power) then operates, creating projections and imaginations
3. This collaboration creates the entire drama of samsara (worldly existence)

Direct vs. Indirect Harm

- **āvaraṇa śaktiḥ**: Indirectly harmful - sets up the conditions for suffering by veiling truth
- **vikṣēpa śaktiḥ**: Directly harmful - actively creates pain and suffering through projections and errors



guṇa Predominance in Individuals

General Principles

Every human being has a predominant guṇa (Sattva, Rajas, or Tamas), but important qualifications apply:

- Even a predominantly Sattvic person will experience Tamoguṇa at times (e.g., after a heavy meal, during afternoon Sanskrit grammar class)
- Even a predominantly Rajasic person will have Tamasic moments
- No guṇa is dominant all the time in any individual

Humorous Example: Even the worst insomnia can be cured by attending a Sanskrit grammar class at 2 PM after a sumptuous lunch, invoking Tamoguṇa's power!

When Tamoguṇa Predominates

Effects on Intelligence

Shankaracharya describes three levels of intelligence that can be affected:

1. **prajñāvān** - Highly intelligent, erudite person
2. **paṇḍitaḥ** - Well-learned, well-cultured person
3. **caturaḥ** - Highly skilled person with discernment power

Even these brilliant individuals, when under Tamoguṇa's predominance:

- Cannot grasp subtle truths
- Cannot understand "Aham Brahma Asmi" (I am Brahman)
- See harm where there is help
- Perceive truth as an attack
- Take suggestions as insults
- Have weakened intellect (buddhi nirbala)

Sanskrit Terms Used

vināśa kālē viparīta buddhi - "When the time of destruction comes, the intellect sees things in reverse"

Three Examples of Veiling

Acharya Tadany provided three analogies to illustrate different degrees of veiling:



1. Fire Covered by Smoke

- Solution: Fan it or blow the smoke away
- The fire's brilliance is easily revealed
- Represents easily removable ignorance

2. Mirror Covered by Dust

- Solution: Wipe or clean the dust
- The reflection becomes clear
- Represents moderately removable ignorance

3. Child in Mother's Womb

- Solution: Wait for time to pass
- Nothing can be done to hasten manifestation
- Represents the most difficult case requiring patience

The Sun Analogy from Shivanandalahari

A beautiful illustration of āvaraṇa śaktiḥ's power:

Even the most powerful clouds cannot completely cover the sun during daytime. There will always be some light, allowing the world to function. However, the devotee laments: "O Bhagavān! You are koṭi-sūrya-prabhāḥ - the essence of millions of suns. Even thick clouds cannot cover our local sun, yet my Tamoguṇa is so dense that it covers You, who are infinitely more brilliant, from my sight."

The Devotee's Surrender

The devotee recognizes:

- The veiling power (āvaraṇa śaktiḥ) is **mahatī prabalā** - extremely powerful
- It is so dense that even Koti sūrya prakāśaḥ Bhagavān (Lord brilliant as millions of suns) is hidden
- This is a "helpless case" - the individual cannot remove this cloud alone
- Therefore: "The ball is in Your court, Bhagavān. You alone can remove this cloud."

States of Consciousness and Error

State	Self-Ignorance	Self-Error/Mistake
Jagrat avasthā (Waking)	✓ Present	✓ Present
Svapna avasthā (Dream)	✓ Present	✓ Present (nightmares = suffering)



suṣupti avasthā (Deep Sleep)	✓ Present	✗ Absent
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The Foundation of Samsara

The creation of worldly suffering follows this sequence:

1. āvaraṇa śaktiḥ veils the true nature (ātmān)
2. This veiling creates the stage for misidentification
3. vikṣēpa śaktiḥ then projects the body-mind complex as the self
4. Based on this false identification, all actions create limitations and suffering
5. This entire process creates **Samsara** - the cycle of worldly existence

Important Insight: The "day-to-day Mahabharata" takes place in our own backyard - more Kurukshetra (battlefield) than Dharmakshetra (field of righteousness). (Acharya Tadany)

Questions after class

Question: Can Rajoguṇa function independently?

Answer: No, Rajoguṇa cannot function independently. There must be ignorance (Tamoguṇa/āvaraṇa śaktiḥ) for it to act. The veiling power sets the stage for the projecting power to operate.

Question: Can errors occur in the dreaming state?

Answer: Definitely yes. Nightmares are an example of suffering in the dream state, indicating that errors and mistakes occur during dreaming.

Additional Reference

Verse Reference

The discussion centers on verse 114 of Vivekacūḍāmaṇi, which describes:

- The nature of triguṇātmika (causal body made of three guṇas)
- How Tamoguṇa's āvaraṇa śaktiḥ operates
- The effect on even highly intelligent individuals (prajñāvān, paṇḍitaḥ, caturaḥ)
- The affirmation "I am the body alone" that arises from this veiling

Practical Implications

Understanding this teaching helps us recognize:

- Why intelligent people can still be deluded about their true nature



- The difference between harmless ignorance (deep sleep) and harmful ignorance (waking/dream states)
 - How the veiling and projecting powers work together to create suffering
 - The need for grace and surrender when the veiling is too dense to remove by personal effort
 - That even temporary predominance of Tamoguṇa can affect our understanding
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Class concluded with the traditional closing prayers and well-wishes for the week ahead.