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... Tattva Bodha ...

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Summary

Fourth Topic of Tattva Bodha - jīva-Īśvara Aikyam

Overview and Context

The class focused on the fourth and most important topic of Tattva Bodha: jīva-Īśvara Aikyam (the oneness of individual and cosmic consciousness).

Review of Previous Topics

1. First Topic: Qualifications for studying Vedānt (Four Ds) - *sādhana-catustayam*
 - Discrimination (Viveka)
 - Dispassion (vairāgyam)
 - Discipline (ṣaṭka-sampattiḥ)
 - Desire for mokṣa (mumukṣutvam)
1. Second Topic: Nature of the Individual (Vyāṣṭi vicāra)
 - Analysis of the microcosm
 - Three bodies: Physical (sthūla), Subtle (sūkṣma), Causal (kāraṇa)
1. Third Topic: Nature of the Universe (Samaṣṭi vicāra)
 - Analysis of the macrocosm
 - Three layers: kāraṇa prapañca, sūkṣma prapañca, sthūla prapañca



The Consciousness Principle - Foundation

Definition of Consciousness

Consciousness is defined assat-citānanda-svarūpa:

- **Sat:** Eternal, not subject to time or death
- **cit:** Of the nature of consciousness itself
- **ānanda:** Of the nature of bliss

Five Features of Consciousness (Critical to Memorize)

Acharya Tadany emphasized these five features are essential for understanding Vedānt:

1. Consciousness is NOT a part of the body. Consciousness is NOT a property of the body.
Consciousness is NOT a product of the body
2. Review others from previous classes.

Two Aspects of Consciousness

Original Consciousness (OC) - Bimba caitanya

- Eternal and changeless
- All-pervading like space
- Not subject to any modification
- Never arrives or departs
- Remains constant regardless of circumstances

Reflected Consciousness (RC) - Pratibimba caitanya

- Manifests in the physical body
- Subject to change and modification
- Temporary and impermanent
- Subject to arrival and departure
- Varies based on the quality of the reflecting medium



Two Names for Original Consciousness

- **ātmā**: From the individual perspective (Vyāṣṭi)
- **Brahman**: From the cosmic perspective (Samaṣṭi)

Both refer to the same original consciousness, just viewed from different standpoints.

The Three Bodies (śarīra Trayam)

All three bodies are:

- Anātmā (not-self)
- Acetana (insentient, without consciousness)
- jaḍam (inert, made of matter)

1. kāraṇa śarīram (Causal Body)

- Also called Avidyā or māyā
- The seed form of existence

1. sūkṣma śarīram (Subtle Body)

- Contains mind, intellect, ego
- Stores all memories, emotions, karma
- Continues after physical death

1. sthūla śarīram (Physical Body)

- The gross, material body
- Subject to birth and death

The Three Universes (prapañca Trayam)

1. kāraṇa prapañca: Universe in potential/seed form before manifestation (before Big Bang)
2. sūkṣma prapañca: The subtle universe
3. sthūla prapañca: The physical, manifest universe

The Sun and Mirror Analogy

Understanding Original Consciousness vs. Reflected Consciousness



Acharya Tadany used an elaborate analogy to explain the relationship between original and reflected consciousness:

The Setup

- One sun (Surya) = Original Consciousness
- 100 mirrors spread around = 100 reflecting mediums (bodies)
- Result: 100 reflected suns = 100 reflected consciousnesses

Key Observations

1. When a mirror is destroyed:
 - The reflected sun in that mirror disappears
 - The original sun remains unchanged
 - Only 99 reflected suns remain
1. When a mirror moves:
 - The reflected sun moves with it
 - The original sun stays in place
1. Quality of reflection depends on the mirror:
 - Muddy mirror = dull reflection
 - Dusty mirror = unclear reflection
 - Clean mirror = clear, bright reflection

Application to Human Experience

Physical Death

- When the physical body dies (mirror shatters), the reflected consciousness disappears
- The original consciousness remains eternal and unchanged
- The subtle body (sūkṣma śarīram) continues carrying all karma and memories

States of Consciousness

- **Waking State:** Reflected consciousness is bright and active
- **Tired/Drowsy:** Reflected consciousness becomes dull (original remains unchanged)
- **Deep Sleep:** Reflecting medium minimally available, reflection minimal



- **Coma/Vegetative State:** Mental death, reflected consciousness almost non-existent

Self-Awareness and the "I Am" Concept

The pervading of original consciousness into the body creates self-awareness, expressed as "I am":

- You are aware you're attending this class
- You are aware you're listening and understanding
- You have no doubt about your existence
- This self-awareness is constant, though what you're aware of constantly changes

What Changes vs. What Remains Constant

Constantly Changing (Objects of Awareness):

- Feelings (happy, sad, introspective)
- Desires (wanting things near or far)
- Surroundings (hot, cold, noisy, quiet)

Always Constant:

- The fact of self-awareness itself
- The "I am" consciousness

Gradations of Reflected Consciousness

Across Species

The quality of reflected consciousness depends on the sophistication of the reflecting medium:

1. Humans: Highest level of awareness
 - Can attend classes of Vedānta and assimilate it
 - Capable of self-reflection and spiritual pursuit
1. Animals: Lower awareness



- More sophisticated than plants
 - Cannot engage in abstract thinking like humans
1. Plants: Even lower awareness
 - Basic life functions
 - Less sophisticated nervous system
 1. Microorganisms/Bacteria: Minimal awareness
 - Most basic life forms
 - Dullest reflected consciousness

Among Humans - Noble vs. Ignoble

Noble People (Bright Reflection)

Those with:

- Benevolent thoughts
- Constructive thoughts
- Loving and compassionate thoughts
- Inspiring thoughts

Ignoble People (Dull Reflection)

Those with:

- Selfish thoughts
- Fearful thoughts
- Aggressive thoughts
- Destructive thoughts

Definition of jīva

jīva is the reflected consciousness - the original consciousness (caitanya) reflected in the three bodies (śarīra Trayam).



Important Clarifications

- jīva is NEITHER the original consciousness NOR the reflecting medium
- jīva IS the reflected consciousness
- jīva is graded based on the quality of the reflecting medium

Three Levels of Reflected Consciousness

- RC1: Reflected Consciousness in sthūla śarīram (physical body)
- RC2: Reflected Consciousness in sūkṣma śarīram (subtle body)
- RC3: Reflected Consciousness in kāraṇa śarīram (causal body)

RC1 + RC2 + RC3 = jīva

Key Takeaways - The Central Equation

The fourth topic of Tattva Bodha aims to solve: **jīva = Īśvara (equation)**

Like a child learning that $4 + 7 = 25 - 16$ (both equal 11), we must understand how the individual consciousness and cosmic consciousness are ultimately one.

Critical Distinctions to Remember

Original Consciousness (OC)	Reflected Consciousness (RC)
Eternal (Nitya)	Temporary (Anitya)
One (Ekam)	Many (Anekam)
Changeless (Acala)	Always changing (Cala)
Never arrives or departs	Subject to arrival and departure
All-pervading	Limited to the body
Not subject to gradation	Subject to gradation based on medium



Practical Spiritual Guidance

- Memorize the five features of consciousness - essential for understanding Vedānt
- Understand the difference between what you can and cannot change
- Develop a healthy, expansive ego rather than trying to destroy it
- Use Dharma and śāstra as guides for action
- Accept the unchangeable without complaint; act on the changeable with wisdom
- Remember your true nature is Abhayam (fearlessness), not fear



Questions after the class

Sandra's Question: What Happens During Reincarnation?

The Process

1. When the physical body dies, the subtle body continues
2. The subtle body carries all information:
 - Knowledge and memories
 - Punyam (merit) and Papam (demerit)
 - Feelings and emotions
 - vāsanās (predispositions)
- 1. Actions create two types of karma:
 - Benevolent actions generate Punyam
 - Malevolent actions generate Papam

The Universal Bank Account

Unlike a regular bank account, positive karma does NOT cancel out negative karma. Everything accumulates in your "universal bank account." (Acharya Tadany)

What Determines Next Birth

Part of the accumulated karma becomes "ready for manifestation" (prārabdha Karma), which determines:

- Type of body (human, animal, plant, microorganism)
- Place of birth
- Parents and family



- Social structure
- Intellectual capacity
- Spiritual inclination
- Economic circumstances

vāsanās (Predispositions)

Inherited tendencies from past lives manifest as natural inclinations:

- Child prodigies (5-year-old piano virtuosos indicate past life as musician)
- Natural career inclinations (wanting to be doctor, engineer, lawyer from young age)
- Spiritual seekers (children who prefer quiet contemplation over play)
- Different interests when given same opportunities (10 children with various tools will choose differently)

Destiny vs. Free Will

While predispositions exist, we cannot definitively pinpoint any specific circumstance as "destiny." The śāstra acknowledges predispositions but emphasizes human capacity for choice and growth.

Sandra's Question: Dealing with Negative Thoughts

The Framework: Choiceless vs. Choiceful Situations



Towards Choiceless Situations (Things You Cannot Change):

- Learn to accept them
- Accept WITHOUT lamenting, complaining, grumbling, murmuring, or crying
- You are not indifferent - you're aware, but not impacted as much
- If impacted, you recover faster

Towards Choiceful Situations (Things You Can Change):

- ACT - do whatever you can to change them
- Use Dharma (righteousness) as the basis for action
- Use śāstra (scriptures) as guidance

What You Can Always Change

- Your thoughts
- Your attitudes
- Your responses
- Your lifestyle
- How you allocate your time
- What activities you engage in

Dealing with Fear Specifically

Always ask: "Why do I have fear about this? What is the source?"

- Fear is NOT your true nature
- ātmā (original consciousness) is Abhayam (fearlessness)
- Krishna teaches in Bhagavad Gita that fearlessness is our true nature
- Sadhanas (spiritual practices) help reprogram and reorient the mind



Practical Advice on News and World Events

- Don't read news obsessively, or treat it as mild entertainment (like watching a movie)
- Stay informed about things that impact daily life (taxes, interest rates, policies)
- Don't get caught up in political fights and divisions
- Accept what you cannot change (government actions, world events)
- Act where you have power (voting, personal choices, sphere of influence)

Sophie's Question: When Does Mind and Ego Form?

The Beginningless Nature

The subtle body (sūkṣma śarīram) is beginningless - it has existed for billions of years in this manifestation, possibly even in previous universes.

The Cycle

1. When Pralayam (end of universe/Armageddon) occurs, everything returns to kāraṇa prapañca (potential form)
2. When new manifestation occurs (sṛṣṭi/Big Bang), the subtle bodies re-emerge
3. The sūkṣma śarīram continues through countless births and deaths
4. It stores everything: memories, thoughts, learning, patterns
5. Part of this manifests in each given life

Does Ego Stay the Same?

No - and hopefully not!



The Evolution of Ego

Human Free Will:

- Humans have prolific, elegant, vast, beautiful free will
- Animals have limited choices
- Only humans can significantly evolve their ego

Stages of Ego Development (from Vivekachudamani):

1. Completely selfish: "I want what I want, regardless of harm to others"
2. Refined selfishness: "I want what I want, but I won't harm others"
3. Family consciousness: Thinking about spouse and children
4. Extended family: Including parents, uncles, relatives
5. Community: Neighborhood associations
6. Regional: State or province level
7. National: Country level
8. Corporate: Company or organization
9. Global: Entire world

The Paradox of Ego

Important Teaching: The ego is NOT bad. A healthy, proud, bigger ego is actually important for spiritual growth.

Why a Big Ego Helps:

- You can only let go of something you possess
- The more proud you are of yourself, the easier it is to eventually let go
- A bigger ego means more people benefit from your thoughts and actions
- The more pleased the ego is with itself, the easier it becomes to transcend it



Warning Against False Teaching:

If someone tells you "the ego is bad" or "you must get rid of your ego" or "the ego is the source of your problems" - Acharya Tadany advises: "Say blessings, namaste, turn around and go home." These are misleading teachings.

The Charles Barkley Story

Acharya Tadany shared an anecdote from the 1992 Barcelona Olympics "Dream Team" (first time NBA professionals could compete):

- A journalist asked Charles Barkley: "Don't you all have big egos?"
- Barkley replied: "Yes, we all have big egos, but we have a reason to have big egos. We can justify that."
- Acharya Tadany found this answer hilarious but also true - they were world-famous, game-changing athletes

Characteristics of Spiritually Advanced People

People who do what they love and have evolved egos tend to be:

- Very cool and relaxed
- Easygoing
- Not uptight or rigid