



Shrimad Bhagavata Sandesh, Talk 12

Swami Tejomayananda

Sandeepany Sadhanalaya, Powai

Yesterday through the method of *anvaya* and *vyatireka* we had determined the intrinsic nature of the Self, which is our pure essential nature - Existence (*Sat*), Consciousness (*Cit*) and is changeless. Be it the body or sense organs, the five vital forces (*prāṇa*), mind, intellect, etc., all are transient and impermanent and hence none of them are the real 'Me' (the Self). Through application of the same method (*anvaya vyatireka*) we will find out the *tattva* (essence, substance) of the world.

We had pondered yesterday upon the question - What is creation?

nāma rūpa prasāraṇā:

The entire creation is *nāma rūpa* (name and form). Firstly there has to be a form, and only then does the need arise to allocate a name to that form. Thus, name is dependent on form, which in turn is a shape. Is this shape a substance (*tattva*) in itself? No. There has to be another substance (*tattva*), which is appearing in that particular shape, and that substance is said to be the *svarūpa* (essence, intrinsic nature). Therefore form (shape - *rūpa*) is one aspect and essence (*svarūpa*) is another aspect. We will now look into a well-known example.

There is gold and there are golden ornaments. The ornaments are many but the gold is one. The ornaments keep changing names and forms. One ornament called a necklace, when melted can be made into another ornament; thus its name and form also change. But among all the changes (in an ornament), the knowledge that 'this is gold' doesn't go away. Isn't it so? When one looks at gold he will say, "this is gold." but after that gold has been transformed into a golden bangle, even if one says, "This is a bangle." the knowledge of 'this is gold' is not lost.

Once it so happened that a woman was searching for something in her house. She had a little daughter who (upon seeing her mother search for something) asked, "Mummy what happened? What are you searching for?" The mother replied, "O daughter, I have lost my ring and therefore I am searching for it," to which the girl said, "O mummy, why are you getting so troubled about this? I have a ring and I will give it to you." Wow! And she went and brought a small ring of hers made out of brass and gave it to her mother.



But upon seeing that small brass ring the mother said, “I have such an adorable daughter who gave me her ring.” and she wished that the little girl’s father (her husband) was also this considerate and sensitive! Anyway, it is interesting that her search for the gold ring continued. Why? Because she wasn’t searching for her ring, she was searching for the gold because it was a ‘golden ring’. Even having said, “I am searching for my ring.” her conviction that it is gold continued to exist.

Bhagavāna Shankaracharya defines this as:

yad viṣayā buddhi na vyabharati tat sat

Like in the anecdote, the ‘this is gold’ knowledge didn’t cease to exist, similarly, that in relation to which ‘this is’ knowledge is never absent, is called Existence (*Sat vastu*).

The conviction that this is a ring or a bangle was lost as soon as the name and form of the ornament changed. When I reflect on the *tattva* (substance, essence) of the name and form, I would negate the name and form by saying *neti neti - na iti* (not That), that is ‘this is not *tattva*.’ This is the method of *vyatireka* wherein I negate what is not *tattva* through *neti neti*. Please note here that the entire ring is not being negated; but the shape, which is not the real substance of the ring, is being negated. Gold is the real essence or substance of the ring, which further establishes that gold is one and is not changing (with the modification in the ornaments). The lustre and the value of the gold will remain as is. Thus, *anvaya* of gold is taking place among the *vyatireka* of the name and form of the golden ornaments.

Now please understand the following:

The knowledge of *tattva* is facilitated through the *vyatireka* method as well as *anvaya* method.

In the *vyatireka* method, through *neti neti*, knowledge of the ultimate Truth (*tattva*) is established.

In the *anvaya* method, through *sarvaṁ khalvidaṁ Brahma* (everything is verily *Brahma tattva* alone), knowledge is established.

Having known that gold is the ultimate reality of the names and forms (gold ornaments), then irrespective of which form I see the gold in, my statement would be “this is gold.” This is the *anvaya* method (*paddhati*).



But if one's conviction is that only the name and form of various ornaments is true, then through *neti neti* the reality of the name and form is negated, so that one becomes cognizant of the gold alone. Then the knowledge of gold being the ultimate reality (substance) of all ornaments, takes place. So the *vyatireka* method is followed by the *anvaya* method.

- Everything is Brahman (*sarvaṁ khalvidaṁ Brahma*) - this is *anvaya*
- "Not That, not That" (*neti neti*) - this is *vyatireka* (negation)

Once knowledge of the Self has taken place, then what we call body, sense organs, mind and intellect - everything is Existence (*Sat tattva*) alone. Even the rivers, mountains, animals, birds, whatever names and forms comprise creation, from the point of view of the ultimate Truth (essence –*tattva*), are all nothing but that Truth-Existence (*Sat tattva*) in essence.

Now when one is at the initial stage of Vedanta study and is unable to comprehend what is being said, then one thinks, "Sometimes they say *neti neti* and then they say everything is 'That' alone. Guruji, are you clear or not?" On their failure to understand they instead start doubting the Guru regarding his clarity of knowledge or wonder what has actually been said in the scriptures.

We experience our body, sense organs, *prāṇa(s)*, mind, intellect and the external world. None of this is being negated altogether in one stage. Firstly it is only being said that these are not the ultimate Truth in themselves, and then the ultimate Truth (*tattva*) of everything is introduced. Once Existence (*Sat tattva*) has been known, then if one looks at anything with that vision, other than Existence nothing else exists and one would say this indeed is everything.

So through the *anvaya vyatireka* method, Existence, Consciousness and Infinitude (*ananta*) were determined as the essential nature (*svarūpa*) of the Self. When we enquire and reflect in relation to the ultimate essence (*tattva*) of the world, we get to know it is Existence and Consciousness. But it is not that Existence and Consciousness are different with reference to the Self and the world respectively. So what is referred to as the Self, found in the cavity of the heart (reflecting in the mind always), is also Brahman (the substratum) and the essence (*tattva*) of the whole world. Then it is further said that the Self and Brahman can't be distinct and are one. Therefore there is a famous statement in Hindi :
ātma so paramātmā.



*Brahmajñāna or tattvajñāna is saccidānandarūpam.
ātmejñāna is saccidānandarūpo'ham.*

Hence the Self and Brahman are one and knowledge of this paves way for liberation. Having known this, one is liberated and after that even if one continues to see various names and form, they hold no value.

So we have seen *anvaya* and *vyatireka* with reference to the Self as well as with reference to the world, and it was proved that enquiry and reflection in relation to the absolute Truth reveals that there is only one Existence- Consciousness. So where is the question of anything else existing? Even now, believing in the existence in other things, we say, "This (or that) cannot be true," etc. We speak in this way. But when the ultimate Truth- Existence has been known, then other than that nothing exists. Even if anything else is perceived it is said, "Other than Brahman nothing else can exist." Then the question is - what are these various names and forms that are seen? This is what we will be seeing in the next verse.

The crux of what we have seen so far today is that the ultimate Truth is *ekameva* (it alone exists), *advitīya* (two of a similar kind not there), *nirviśeṣa* (attribute less) and *saccidānanda* (Existence-Consciousness-Bliss). But we are seeing everything. Yes so whatever is seen is either referred to as the play of Maya or a projection of the mind, as in reality, other than the Self (Brahman) nothing exists. Therefore if one comes across seemingly contradictory statements, either in the scriptures or in the teachings imparted by the Guru, then one has to correctly understand the perspective behind such statements and then there would be no doubts.

Let us take the example of the sky. What we call 'sky' and how it appears to us - is there really such a sky? It is not that one can reach the sky, touch the sky if one keeps going further and further upwards.... But that is how it appears to us, as if it is a blue ceiling. Then it is also said 'cloudless sky' or 'cloud clad sky'. At the time of sunrise and sunset it is laden with different colours.

Further, when one looks towards the horizon, it seems like the earth and the sky are meeting, but all these are nothing but mere delusions with no reality to them even though they are seen. We do not say that it is not seen at all; it is definitely seen, but if someone considers it real and says, "I will go and touch the sky." try! No harm! Also one might wonder whether a painter has painted the sky blue but later he knows it to have no colour at all.



Similarly there is one Self, which can also be called Brahman, as it is one. Everything is appearing in the same Self. This has been mentioned in the next verse. The next verse, as well as the one after that, is from Uddhava Gītā. I had mentioned previously that the teachings imparted to Bhakta Uddhava by Lord Krishna is called Uddhava Gītā. In that comes the 36th verse of the 28th chapter of the 11th canto, which is the next verse of this compilation. In relation to Uddhava Gītā, please note that the portion that comes in the 11th canto is of great importance and from that, what has been mentioned in the 28th chapter is of utmost importance. It is the best as the whole chapter is full of knowledge of Brahman (*tattvajñāna*). What does the chapter say?

We just saw the method of *anvaya and vyatireka*.

Those seekers who have Vedanta *saṁskāra* (have impressions of Vedanta, as have heard it in this birth as well as in previous births) and who have studied Vedanta properly wouldn't face any difficulty in understanding what has been said and established in relation to the *anvaya vyatireka* method. It is possible that some find it difficult, but don't worry. With reference to the previous context of Dharma, something must have surely been understood. At least implement that and keep patience in relation to what is not yet understood.

Let me tell you something interesting. Once a person went to his Dharma Guru and said, "I have studied this scripture relating to Dharma but I am getting very hassled." The Dharma Guru thought that the disciple must be finding something difficult therein and being unable to understand, he is feeling perturbed. The Guru said, "See! If you are finding something difficult to understand then don't get perturbed." The disciple replied, "I am not troubled by what I have not understood but rather by what I have understood! Earlier I didn't know what is considered a sin and what is not. But O God! Now, whatever I have read and understood, with that itself I am feeling scared. What is not understood is absolutely no problem at all!" This also happens! Now let's start with the verse:

Śrībhagavānūvāca

etāvān ātmasammoho yadvikalpastu kevale |
ātman na ṛte svamātmānam avalambo na yasya hi ||(17)
(Śrīmad Bhāgavata 11.28.36)



In this verse the declension of certain words, as per Sanskrit language, is such that the verse isn't easily understood. For instance the word **ātman** is generally used as an address but here it has to be interpreted in the 7th case (*saptami vibhakti*), that is **ātmani**.

So the verse says:

yat vikalpaḥ: We just saw that the Self or Brahman or *Paramātmā tattva* alone exists and that the many-ness that is appearing in the Self as “this is *jīva*”, “this is the world” or as the scriptures say “This is the Lord” - these as well as other infinite names and forms are all **vikalpaḥ** - *vikalpastu*. What is it?

kevale ātmani ātmasammohaḥ:

This the prose order (of these words). How is the Self? The verse says *kevala* - free from all differences and distinctions. In the language of the scriptures, there are three kinds of differences - *sajātīya vijātīya svagata bheda*.

A stone and a tree belong to different species or groups. Similarly trees and animals are also altogether different groups (*vijātīya bheda*). Within the animal kingdom too there are various kinds of animals, different from each other (*sajātīya bheda*). Further, within one body there are different parts such as hands, legs, the head, etc. (*svagata bheda*).

vijātīya bheda - there are two distinct groups.

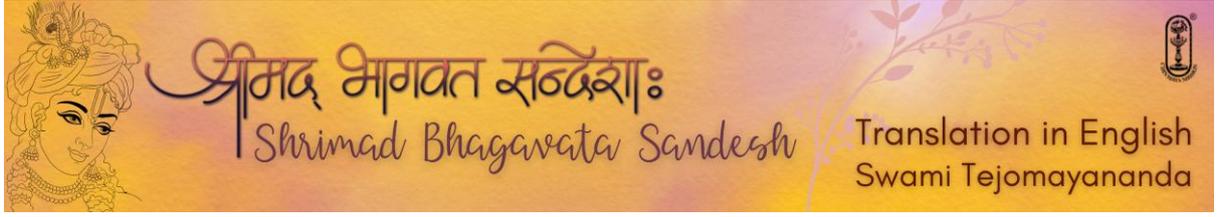
sajātīya bheda - within the same group there are distinct sub-groups.

svagata bheda - within the same composition there are distinct parts.

But with respect to the Self (*kevala*), none of the three differences exist.

yaccāsyā santato bhāvaḥ: The word Self (*ātmā*) itself means changeless, eternal Existence. In the Self there is no modification whatsoever. In this way the Self (*ātmātattva*) is *kevalam* (one) and *nirviśeṣa* (attribute less).

Within the same Self, a panorama of countless things is being seen. As we saw in the example of the sky earlier, even though there is nothing really in the sky yet we keep seeing various things in the sky and with respect to the sky, all these are called *vikalpa*. Due to the shapes of clouds, sometimes celestial realms, a whole city, elephants and horses appear to be in the sky but actually these are only cloud formations and they vanish in a few moments.



Therefore just like the various things that are seen in the sky are false even though seen, similarly, the whole creation, made up of all beings and the world itself, is nothing but *vikalpa*.

ātmasammohaḥ: manasaḥ sammohaḥ everything that is seen is nothing but an imagination, a projection of the mind (*manaḥ kalpita*). Even if we look at it from our individual perspective, when the mind is not there in deep sleep then there is no creation that is perceived. Only when the mind is there, is creation seen and perceived.

Now we should remember one thing:

There is a microcosmic mind (*vyāṣṭi mana*) as well as a macrocosmic (total) mind (*samaṣṭi mana*).

In the waking state, for example, we all see a mountain and other things of the world in the same way, that is the projection or manifestation of the macrocosmic (total) mind.

But one thing is certain - within this macrocosmic creation each individual's joy and sorrow is distinct and very, very private and personal. "Swamiji, I wanted to share something personal with you."

"O! You want to have a personal conversation?" That is because the problem is personal. So whose are the joys and sorrows?

Further we have our own vast individual creation. "Who asked you to create so much? It would have been so much more peaceful if you had sat down quietly doing nothing."

"No, no! I should do something." "Why?" "Because I am sitting idle."

"So what? I am telling you to keep sitting quietly because as soon as you get up you will do this and that but then later you will say you wish to sit quietly and not do anything. You are already sitting now. Don't do this and that!" But who can sit quietly like that?

When one's mind is full of desires, etc. then that person can't sit quietly. We have made our own creation and now we are bound by our own thoughts and desires. Who else has tied us up?



That is why it is said *sankalpa jāle galite* - when this cobweb of various desires and thoughts melts down then our ever-present and unchanging Self shines forth.

Even our dream is a projection of our own mind which, when seen (upon waking), appears to be nothing.

Thus when we see it from the absolute point of view of the Self or Brahman, there is *ekameva advitiya* - there is only one non-dual Brahman. And when nothing else is there then it needn't even be mentioned. Who will mention it?

“But this seems very strange as we can see and experience everything.” “That is your problem!” Even if it is seen, what exactly is it? Within one attribute less Existence (*nirviśeṣa tattva*), various differences are seen due to the play (projection) of the mind. You call it macrocosmic (total) mind or microcosmic (individual) mind - everything exists in the mind alone and everything is projected by the mind alone. (*yadvikalpastu ātmani*)

svam ātmānam rte: because without the Self

avalambaḥ na yaśya hi: there is no substratum for *vikalpa*.

See, the underlying principle here is that when we have such experiences then there has to be a substratum or support for the same. Without that, it will not be possible. A very famous example is that when one sees a snake on the rope then the rope is the substratum. Or when a mirage (water) is seen on the sand then the sand is the substratum on which the Sun's rays are shining.

One person said, “No! I was sitting quietly and there was nothing around me yet I was having such experiences.” But you were there! Was your fertile mind there or not? Your mind was the substratum of whatever you were seeing and experiencing.

But what is the mind and what is its substratum? The pure Consciousness (the Self) is the substratum of the mind. So when one keeps enquiring and reflecting about the substratum, then one realises that pure Existence-Consciousness alone is the substratum of everything and other than that there is nothing else. This is a very important point, which you ought to remember.



Because once it has been understood that all experiences are appearing in me alone and I am that ultimate Truth (the Self), which is the substratum of all of these, then what is left to be afraid of? Nothing remains to be afraid of!

It is like the ocean saying, “I am very afraid of these waves.” But how are the waves possible without you?

Or it is like the sky saying, “I am fed up of this blue colour.” But you alone are its substratum and in reality there is no blue colour!

All *vikalpa* is appearing on me alone.

etāvān ātmasammohaḥ: the entire creation is of the mind

ātmānam vinā bhedasya avalambaḥ āśrayaḥ anyāḥ nāsti: because other than the mind there is no other support of this.

This alone (what has been told now) is the essence of all the Vedas in relation to the context of knowledge (*Vedārtha*). We will be seeing it again in the next verse, which is also from the 11th canto and the 28th chapter.

Om Tat Sat