

vivekac`y~maõĩ

Analysis of Pancakosas-151-159

Verse 151

In the previous verse, it was said: vivekavijnAnamahAsinA. The reference was made to vijnAna produced by viveka. Earlier the disciple asked: "Please instruct me to understand the distinction between the two" What was said generally about the gross, subtle and the causal bodies in brief is now explained at length.

KoshairannamayAdyaih pancabhirAtmA na samvrto bhAti |
Nijashaktisamutpannaih shaivalapaTalairivAmbu vApIstham ||

The Atman does not shine clearly being covered by the material and other sheaths which have arisen by its own power, like the water in a well covered by a sheet of moss.

The shrutis like salila eko draSTA(Brh.) speak of the Atman as being clear, bright and pure like undefiled water. But, it may be asked: if the atman is so pure, clear etc., why does it not shine forth? Taking the illustration of that water itself, the guru explains why it does not shine clearly.

nijashaktisamutpannaih etc: nija: of its own: ' imagined in itself, by the material (annamaya) and other sheaths and ending with the Anandamaya (sheath of joy) to be enumerated, and super-imposed on itself (on the Atman); which functions as obstruction to its (the atman's) clear perception. That is, the Atman does not shine separately as it is covered over by the sheaths super-imposed on it, like a s at concealing Illustrations for the above: moss arises by the quality of a sheet of water itself in a well. It arises on the surface of the water and prevents the water from being seen clearly.

saivala patalaih: by layers of moss.

Even as water in a well cannot be seen on account of its surface being covered with moss arising from itself, so too the Atman cannot be clearly perceived due to the sheaths which get super-imposed on the Atman itself.

Verse 152

The reason for the clear shining of the water in the example is given.

tacchaivAIapanaye samyak salilam pratIyate shuddham |
trSNAsantApaharam sadyassaukhyapradam param pumsah ||

When the moss is removed, the water becomes visible in all its clearness. It removes the pain of thirst and immediately fills men with happiness.

When the moss is removed, the water underneath is seen in all its clearness without any obstruction. The effect of that is-declared. It quenches 'the affliction of heat. It immediately gives relief to the person who drinks it and fills him with joy as he sees it, bathes in it and drinks of it.

Verse 153

The same is explained with reference to what is illustrated.

pancAnAmapi koshanAm apavAde vibhAtyayam shuddhah |
nityAnandaikarasah pratyagrUpah parah svayamjyotih ||

When the five sheaths are set aside, this Atman which is pure, ever blissful, indwelling, supreme and self-effulgent, appears clear (untouched by the anAtman).

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Even so, when five koshas (sheaths) beginning with annamaya and ending with Anandamaya are set aside by the course of reasoning conforming to shruti, then this Atman which is the ultimate truth, is of the nature of eternal bliss, devoid of origination and destruction, untouched by sorrow, compacted whole and entire of bliss only, the innermost citadel of one's being, self-effulgent, which cannot be illumined by anything outside, and which is of the nature of pure intelligence and is ever pure, i.e., without native or external impurities, shines with great splendor.

api in pancAnAm api is to indicate that they should be set aside entirely.

pratyagrUpah: inside everything.

svayamjyotih: (self-effulgent-) incapable of being illumined by anything outside, of the nature of intelligence (jnAna) only.

parah: super-eminent.

shuddhah: untouched by native or acquired impurities.

vibhAti: vishesena bhati: shines excellently: shines being untouched by anything which is of the nature of anAtman.

Verse 154

Therefore,

AtmAnAtmavivekah kartavyo bandhamuktaye viduSA |
tenaivAnandI bhavati svam vijnAya saccidAnandam ||

The man, who has attained knowledge of the scriptures, should learn to discriminate between the Atman and the anAtman for release from bondage. Having understood that which is of the nature of existence, intelligence and bliss, he enjoys the bliss of the Atman.

viduSA: by a man who possesses knowledge derived from the shAstras.

bandhamuktaye: for the removal of adhyasa or superimposition.

vivekah: atmAnAtma-vivekah: distinct knowledge of the (lone) Atman and the many things which are the anAtman, without mixing the two.

kartavyah: must be acquired with effort. By that knowledge obtained by such discrimination.

tenaiva: by such discrimination between the Atman and the anAtman.

svam: svasvarupam: One's true nature; realising one's atman as sat, cit and Ananda and unsublatable in any of the three periods of time, one becomes blissful.

Anandi bhavati: He enjoys incomparable bliss always. Vide the second verse supra: AtmAnAtma-vivecanam svAnubhaavah.

Verse 155

Having thus by an illustration conveyed to the disciple's mind the method of discrimination, the guru teaches him what should be done after such discrimination for being established as Brahman which is the meaning of mukti or liberation.

MunjjAdiSIkAmiva drshyavargAt
pratyancamAtmAnam asangam akriyam |
vivicya tatra pravilApya sarvam
tadAtmanA tiSThati yassa muktah ||

He is liberated who separates, the Atman which is unattached and inactive from every object of sense-perception as the tender core of the iSIkA is carefully separated from its coverings in the munja-grass, and who remains for ever firmly established in that Atman.

munja: a kind of grass.

iSIkA: a delicate thread inside this grass. One must exercise the utmost care to take it out whole and entire from the surrounding grass. Vide the shruti: esa sarveSu bhuteSu gUDhAtmA na prakAshate drshyate tu agrayA buddhyA sUkSmayA sUksSmadarshibhih || (Katha). "The Atman concealed in all

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creatures does not shine out. It is however seen by the sharp intellect of those who can see what is subtle". By the mind purified by observance of the prescribed karmas and by meditation (upAsana), the Atman must be separated from the totality of seen objects which are the anAtman.

drshyavargAt: from the assemblage of whatever is anAtman; which belongs to the category of what is seen.

pratyanam: pratilomyena ancati seeing in the reverse way (not in the usual outgoing way of the senses) i.e., seeing that which shines as pure existence, intelligence and bliss and distinct from what is unreal and material, and which is free from grief and ahamkara.

asangam: being free from every attachment to anything else as it is without a second.

akriyam: as it is undivided and not delimited, it is without any action.

AtmAnam vivicya: separating the Atman; completely eliminating everything from it to the extent of not even thinking of any perceivable object with the firm conviction that there is nothing that is real apart from the Atman.

pravilapya: determining that there is nothing other than the pratyagAtman.

He who is established for ever in the contemplative realisation of this inner atman is said to be liberated from every kind of bondage.

The state of remaining for ever as Brahman is to be attained by discriminating between the Atman and the anAtman. Thus, the man of discrimination should expunge from the mind every trace of contamination by the material world and be firmly established in Brahman.

Verse 156

The shruti says: asmAllokAt pretya etam annamayamAtmAnam upasamkrAmati: "Going away from this body, he (first) transcends the material body". The Atman is behind all the koshas of which (beginning with the annamaya kosha) the Anandamaya kosha is the last. Being the gross sheath, it is the first to be eliminated. The guru now proceeds in these ten verses to analyse the nature of this annamayakosha.

deho'yam annabhavano'nnamayastu koSo
hyannena jivati vinashyati tadvihInah |
tvakcarmamAmsarudhirAsthiputISarAsih
nAyam svayam bhavitum arhati nityashuddhah||

The sheath of the gross body is anna (matter) -born and anna (matter)-sustained. It lives by anna (matter) and dies without it. It is composed of the skin, flesh, blood and the excreta. It does not deserve to be the ever- pure A man.

annabhavanah: that which is originated from anna (matter) Origin of this kosha is from the food eaten by the father and the mother. So, it is annabhavana. This body is a visible object. It is a gross material sheath. tu is to exclude other things. That is, among the five sheaths, the gross body alone is annamaya, not anything else. Vide the shruti: annAd vai prajAh prajAyante, atho annenaiva jIvanti (,Taitt.) "People are born of anna (matter) and they live only by anna". Being of anna is not merely by origin; but even after origination, it lives by anna (food). Without anna, it dies, its prana goes away. Thus, positively, as it lives by anna, and negatively, as it dies without anna, the gross body is dependent on anna.

hi: indicates niscaya, conclusiveness.

The gross body being the anAtman is not merely so because it is dependent on something else; it is also declared by the word tvak (skin) etc., in the verse as impure. It is made of skin, flesh, blood, bones, excrement etc. It does not deserve to be the Atman which is eternally pure etc. Vide the shrutis: ajo nityah (Katha.); suddham apapaviddham (Isa.) etc. "The atman is unborn, eternal, pure and sinless."

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Verse 157

The guru explains clearly the transience of the material body.

pUrvam janerapi mrteratha nAyamasti
 JAtakSaNakSaNaguNo'niyatasvabhAvah |
 Naiko jaDashca ghaTavat paridrshyamAnah
 svAtmA katham bhavati bhAvavikAravettA ||

It does not exist before its origination or after its destruction. Every moment it is subject to birth and death and so is impermanent. It is not of the same nature always. It is material and visible like a pot. How can it be the Atman which knows the changes of existence?

purvam janeh: before birth: before origination.

mrteratha: after death, after destruction.

api: in both cases of birth and death.

It (the gross body) is drSTanaSTasvabhAvah, i.e., it is destroyed ((passes out of existence) even while one is seeing it. The MaNdUkyA kArikA says: AdAvante ca yannAsti vartamAne'pi tattathA: "That which is not in the beginning and at the end, is non-existent also in the present." So it is anirvacanIya: indescribable because it is drSTanaSTasvabhAva.

The same is further explained by jAtakSaNakSaNa etc., kSaNakSaNaguNa: That which is subject to origination and destruction every moment. By contact With vayu (wind), and by the movement of the breath in the body, it lives; but, by the process of drying up due to consumption of this vayu, it begins to decline. Hence the frequent intake of food and water.

aniyatasvabhavah: so it is impermanent; i.e., it is of inconstant nature naikah: In the same janma it is known differently in boyhood, youth etc.

ghaTavatparidrshyamAnah: visible like a pot. Being dependent on illumination by an object outside it, it is dependent on it for its visibility.

katham bhavati bhAvavikAravettA: How can it itself be the knower of its own changes as now it is lean, now it is stout etc. No object in the world can know its own changes. For, a thing cannot know its own qualities. The pot does not see itself. Therefore, it is said: 'The body is not the Atman; for it is visible like the pot' etc. The Atman is eternal, quality-less, of the same nature always (i.e., not subject to change); and it is also the seer.

Verse 158

Another reason for it is given.

pANipAdAdimAn deho nAtmA vyange'pi jIvanAt |
 tattacchakter anAshAcca na niyamyo niyAmakah ||

The body has hands, feet etc. It is not the Atman as one is able to live even without limbs and as their powers are not lost. The ruled cannot be the ruler.

pANipAdAdi: hands, feet etc. The Adi (etc.) is to include the sides and the belly. The combination of the hands, feet, etc. is not the Atman.

vyange'pi jivanAt: because, even if one is without these limbs, one lives. In the world we see men without hands and feet still living, as breathing continues. They perform the functions of receiving, and going from place to place with artificial limbs. There is no dependence on the natural limbs. Therefore, the body with hands etc., is not the Atman. In the Kathopanisad, it is said: na prANena nApAnena martyo jivati kascana | itareNa tu jIvanti yasmin netavupairitau || : "The jiva who is mortal does not subsist merely by the prANa or the apAna; both these depend on the atman which is of the nature of cit." This shows that the atman is the basis of all powers.

The atman is the ruler, not the ruled, of the body, the sense organs etc. The body is the object of control as it is a jada, a material, object. It does not have the quality of a ruler. Hence, as it has limbs,

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and as it is the ruled, it is not the Atman which has no limbs and is the ruler. That is the general meaning.

Verse 159

Having explained that the body is different from the atman, its special quality is further explained for clear understanding.

dehataddharma – tat karma – tadavasthAdisAKSiNah |
sata eva svatassiddham tadvailakSaNyamAtmanah ||

The atman is different from the body, its qualities, its activities, and its states. Being self-subsistent, and as the witness of them, it is different from them all.

tasya dehasya dharmAh: the qualities of that body-, form, touch, smell etc.

tat karmaNi: its actions: getting what is pleasant and avoiding the opposite; going forth etc.

tadavasthAh: its conditions like entering, sitting, lying down etc. adi is intended to include changes like fatness, leanness etc.

sAKSiNah: of the witness: the atman is the mere witness of the body, its qualities, activities and conditions.

In all the different states like boyhood, the atman is unchanging i.e., in any of the three periods of time it is not sublated. So it is distinctly different from the body. Its being different from the body is established by reason of the very fact of its being a witness.

The Atman is different from the body etc., being their witness. What is not different from the body etc., cannot be their witness.