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Basudebamanana; or, the Meditation of Basudeva.

Translated by Two Members of the Kumbakonam T.S.

(Concluded from p. 28.)

VARUNAKA XI.

OM! Now the fourth characteristic of *Atmā* (viz.) that it has the characteristics of *Sachchidānanda* will be expatiated upon in this, the eleventh Chapter. What is the nature of *Sat* of *Ātmā*? What is its *Chit*? And what its *Ānanda*?

Being of the same nature, unaffected by anything during the three periods of time, is the characteristic of *Sat*. This is found in *Ātmā*. The authorities bearing on this point are, "Sat only was prior to the evolution of this universe," "Out of *Ātmā* arose *Ākāsha*," and such like passages of *Vedānta*. The experience of all men is also evidence. That experience is found thus. All persons whether rich or poor, performers of *Karma*, devotees or aspirants for emancipation, say thus in their experience as will now be here related.¹

The rich man's experience is as follows: "I spent in my former birth some portion at least of my wealth on worthy persons and objects, and

¹ Of course these statements are founded on the belief in the theory of rebirth, a theory which is axiomatic with the *Hindūs*.

that is the reason why I now enjoy much wealth. If I act again in this life similarly I shall enjoy wealth in my future life."

A poor man's experience is: "As I did not spend any portion of my wealth in my former life on deserving objects and persons, I am now suffering from poverty. Therefore, I shall give to the deserving now, so that in my future life I may not so suffer as I do now."

The experience of the performer of (religious) Karmas is: "Because of the due performance of good Karmas (or religious rites), my proclivities are again in this life towards them through their affinities. So by dint of perseverance in the same path I shall be born as a Deva (Celestial Angel) in my next birth."

A devotee's experience is: "Through the affinities generated by me in my former birth, when I was engaged in the worship of God, I am now pursuing the same course; so through the same devotion to God in this life, I shall in my future life enjoy the emancipation of Saloktâ (in the same world with Vishnu, the Lord), in the Vikuntha world and others."

An aspirant after spiritual emancipation in his experience says thus: "In my many former births I was performing actions not actuated by the fruits thereof, and attributing them all to Îshvara, the Lord. Through such a course I have been able in this birth to attain the four means of salvation,¹ a perfect spiritual Guru and Âtmic wisdom through the hearing, etc., of Vedântas. I shall have no more births hereafter. I have done all that should be done."

Thus we find through the experience of men that the "I" (or Ego) exists during all the three periods of time, the body, which is falsely attributed to Âtmâ, being subject to destruction and Non-Âtmâ. Therefore as Âtmâ preserves the same nature unaffected during the three periods of time, it has the characteristic of Sat.

Examining through the evidence of inference (we find) even then that Âtmâ has the nature of Sat. In reply to the question whether men *are* in this world or not, it is said by all men, "I *am* here." Therefore it should be known we are in this world. Then do we who are thus, possess Body or not? As there is Body, we are only with bodies and not bodiless. Whence came the body? On enquiry we find that it certainly arose through Karma. Does that Karma which generates the body belong to us or others? Most assuredly it is only ours, as there is no enjoyment of Svarga (Devachan) for one through the Karma of another. Else through the Karma of another person one will have to reach heaven. (The result will be that) a Shûdra will attain heaven through the performance of sacrifice by a Brâhman. All will have to attain salvation through the Samâdhi (or spiritual trance) of Sukha, a Brahma-rishi (son of Veda-Vyâsa). But such is not the

¹ The four means as stated in the second Chapter of this book, which qualify disciples for journeying on the path.

case. Therefore it should be known that it is only our Karma that gives birth to the body, the Karma which generated this body having been performed in a previous birth through another body; the Karma which generated the body in the previous birth having been performed in a birth anterior to that, and so on. Thus on enquiry, we find it is certain that Karma and Body are without beginning, of the nature of an (unceasing) flood (the source of which is unknown). Therefore it is also certain that Âtmâ, which has Karma and Body, is by virtue of its nature beginningless, like Âkâsha. Thus have we proved through inference that Âtmâ is Sat during the past and present periods.

Now we shall prove through inference the state of Âtmâ (as Sat) in the future also. This birth and the body we have in it now are due to the Karma which we performed through Shrâvana (hearing), etc., in our previous births, in the belief that such Karmas alone were essential. Similarly the Karma we now perform will breed the next birth, and the Karma performed in the next birth will breed still another. Thus by carrying the enquiry further we shall find that the current of Karma as well as that of Body will never have an end in the future. But there is an end to Karma through Tattva-Jñâna.¹ Then there is a cessation of Body. While so, till the attainment of Brahmic wisdom, Âtmâ which is connected with these two (Karma and Body) experiences—the birth and death of the body, as also the pains and happiness of the body—during its existence and is always being deluded in states beginning from Brahma down to fixed objects, but never perishes. Then with the dawning of Tattva-Jñâna, as Karma of the nature of Avidyâ perishes, and as all causes of pains disappear, it (Âtmâ) enjoys the bliss of its own reality and abides in happiness, having attained salvation in a disembodied state. Therefore, it is clear that there is no such thing as negation of Âtmâ even in the future. Therefore through inference we have shown that Âtmâ always is. As Âtmâ exists through the three periods, and as it preserves truly the same nature unaffected by anything, therefore it is certain that it always is. Therefore the conclusion that we have to draw through (the above mentioned processes of) the Scriptures, inference and experience, is this—though the worlds come and go, subject to the deluges (of fire and water), Âtmâ alone remains for ever immutable, and creation, preservation and destruction can only be predicated of the Cosmos, and not of Âtmâ. From the foregoing it has been abundantly demonstrated that Âtmâ is Sat only.

Now we shall explain the second characteristic of Âtmâ (viz.), Chit (consciousness). Chit is that characteristic which shines of itself without needing such objects of light as the sun, etc., and which illuminates

¹ Tattva-Jñâna is the Spiritual Wisdom obtained through the discrimination of Tattvas or primal forces of nature. This takes place only after Âtmic wisdom (Âtmajñâna) is generated and Prârabdha Karma is destroyed.

all inert objects that are only falsely attributed to Âtmâ. It is this characteristic of Chit that is found in Âtmâ, since it shines of itself even in intense darkness without needing the aid of another. Without the aid of another it discerns clearly the three states of Body (*viz.*), growth, maturity, and old age, and its functions which are wrongly attributed to itself (Âtmâ). Therefore it is certain that Âtmâ has the characteristic of Chit.

(Then the question arises)—As we have not omniscience, how can we be said to have the power to illuminate (or know) all objects? The universe is of two kinds, the internal and the external. Both these are illuminated by us only; but they can never illuminate us. The external universe is the source of the manifold names, forms, qualities, properties and actions of such as (the five Elements) Earth, Water, Fire, Vâyu and Âkâsha; (their properties) Sound, Touch, Form, Taste, and Odour; the quintuplicated Elements, Brahma's Egg, the fourteen Worlds, and the four kinds of gross bodies (such as the egg-born, the sweat-born, the seed-born, and the womb-born). This external universe is we know still more sub-divided in manifold ways according to books; but it never knows us. If we should look through introvision and enquire, we shall find that it is only we that illuminate this (external) universe.

The internal universe embraces all the different states from the Food Sheath up to the Salvation of the Ego. The internal universe is thus with the differences of the five Sheaths—of the Food-Sheath, Prâna-Sheath, Manas-Sheath, Vijñâna-Sheath and Ânanda-Sheath; the three bodies—Gross, Subtle and Causal; the six Changes, the six Sheaths, the six States (of growth, etc.), deafness, dulness, activity, desire, and hatred; the three Organs, the Internal Organs; the three Avasthâs (or States)—the waking, the dreaming, and the dreamless sleeping; the five Organs of Sense, the five Organs of Action, the five Prânas with the five sub-Prânas, Manas, Buddhi, Chitta and Ahankâra, and (their functions) doubt, certainty, fittingness and egoism, Vishva, Tajasa and Prajñâ, having different Avasthâs (states), Pratubhâsika, Vyavakarika and Paramârthika; Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas; happiness and pains, wisdom and non-wisdom, love or non-love, indifference; the four means of salvation, the four beginning with friendship, etc.; Yoga and its eight parts, hearing, etc., contemplation and reflection, Samâdhi, evidence and non-evidence, certainty arising from evidence, the three kinds of pain, mental disease, pleasure, devotion, indifference, muteness, ardour, excessive ardour, contemplation with form and without form; the destruction of the lower mind and its affinities, and salvation in embodied and disembodied states. Having differentiated all these in the internal universe which is the source of the changes in name, form and qualities, one should know them but they cannot know us. After enquiring thus well, we know the internal universe.

Therefore, as *Atmā* has also the characteristics of *Chit*, therefore it is of the nature of *Chit*.

It was urged before that *Ātmā* is of the nature of *Chit* and cannot be cognized by another. May not *Manas* (lower mind), which knows all, cognize also *Ātmā*? *Manas* is subject to birth and decay, is of the form of *Sankalpa* (thought), is limited, is composed of the five elements like a pot, is subject to fluctuations by the actions of desire, etc., and has memory and oblivion. Therefore the *Manas* being so constituted should be known as inert and as having no light of its own. And this *Manas* too is cognized by *Chit*. Therefore, how can this *Manas* which is thus inert, cognize the self-shining *Ātmā* of consciousness? It should be known that it never can.

Then how are we to reconcile this with the passage of the *Shrutis* which runs thus: "Through *Manas* alone, it (*Ātmā*) should be cognized"? In gold which is cast into the fire in a crucible to be purified, there arises (in it) a (yellow) splendour. Whence is that lustre? Is it inherent to the gold itself or has it been produced by fire? We see clearly it is due to the natural lustre of gold, the fire being only instrumental in clearing the gold of its dross. No new lustre is imparted to it but it shines in its real state. But were the lustre due to the fire, pots exposed to the fire on a hearth would produce lustre; but such is not the case. Similarly the mind having assumed the nature of *Ātmā* and having commingled itself with the reflection of *Ātmā*, frees (*Ātmā*) from the false and beginningless *Ajñāna* which screens it. If *Ajñāna* is dispelled, then one's *Atmā* shines of itself (in its true state). This is the meaning of the passage of the *Shrutis* above quoted, viz., "Through *Manas* (lower mind) alone, it (*Atmā*) should be cognized." Therefore it is *Atmā* that cognizes the Mind and not the Mind that cognizes *Atmā*.

(The following simile will better illustrate our position.) A room, the darkness of which is dispelled by the light of a lamp cannot be illumined by the lamp itself, or oil, or wick (unless they all join together). Nor is *Agni* (fire) which is latent everywhere (as light), able of itself, without the medium of the above-mentioned (three) materials, to drive away darkness. It is only when fire and the three materials join together there arises the name "the light of the lamp," which light removes darkness. Similarly in this lamp of Body, *Ātmā* of the nature of *Agni* sits, and is one with the *Manas* of the form of wick fed by the oil of *Karma*—which *Karma* has its seat in this lamp of Body. *Ātmā* having thus identified itself with the Mind of all beings dispels the darkness of *Ajñāna* which screens everything, and illuminates all external and internal objects like the lamp which illuminates pots and other objects. Therefore a lamp through its own lustre illuminates not only itself, but also all objects that come within its scope. Likewise *Ātmā* having mounted upon the *Antahkarana* (internal organs or lower mind) not only illuminates itself by virtue of its own conscious-

ness, but also all external and internal objects connected with it. Thus it has been abundantly proved that *Âtmâ* is of the nature of *Chit*.

Now to the characteristic of *Ânanda* (bliss). *Ananda* (bliss) is that happiness which is eternal, *Upâdhiless* (vehicleless) and surpriseless (or degreeless). This is the real nature of *Âtmâ*. But the bliss derived from such objects as flowers, sandal, women and others, as it is temporary and subject to *Upâdhi* (or vehicle) and surprise, cannot be called the bliss of *Âtmâ*. Therefore the bliss as mentioned before pertains to *Âtmâ*. In the bliss of dreamless sleep as there is the characteristic of happiness (to be found), that bliss should be known to be (or pertain to) "I" alone. But then it may be said that there is only freedom from pains and not enjoyment of happiness in that state. On a right enquiry we find that there is bliss in that state, as persons on arising from sleep say, "I slept blissfully till now," thus indicating the fact of the existence of bliss to *Âtmâ* in that state. Therefore it is clear that there is bliss in the experience of men in their dreamless sleeping state. Then if it be asked whether the bliss in the dreamless sleeping state has got the three characteristics of unconditionedness, vehiclelessness and surpriselessness we have to reply in the affirmative.

Now to *Upâdhiless* bliss. Flowers, sandal, women, and other objects, are the *Upâdhis* (or the mediums of enjoyment). Hence the happiness enjoyed through them is called *Aupâdika* (or that enjoyed through a medium). None of these mediums of enjoyment is to be found in the dreamless sleeping state, and yet the bliss is enjoyed by all. Therefore, it should be known that there is in dreamless sleeping state a *Upâdhiless* bliss.

Next as to surpriseless bliss. (According to *Taittiriya Upanishad*) there are eleven degrees of bliss, from that of men to that of *Hiranyagarbha* (*Brahma*). Each of these degrees of bliss is a hundredfold that (which precedes it). Therefore these kinds of bliss (as they vary in their degree of bliss) do surprise us. But that supreme bliss of *Brahm* is surpriseless (or absolute), as it is illimitable, and as there is nothing superior to it. That bliss of *Brahm* is no other than the one enjoyed in the dreamless sleeping state. Therefore it is certain the latter is also surpriseless. All persons in this world thinking that the happiness derived in the dreamless sleeping state is the real one, and not that derived from the objects of senses, enjoy the happiness of that state by lying on soft beds, etc., earned with great effort after giving up even the happiness derived from wife, sons, etc. One who is enjoying thus, on being disturbed in that state even by his delusion-producing and all-fascinating wife, goes even the length of beating her. In that state he does not long for anything. Even a person who is awakened from that state returns to bed again to enjoy the same thinking of it. Therefore it should be known that the bliss in the dreamless sleeping state is surpriseless.

Then as to the bliss being eternal. As different degrees of bliss are being enjoyed in the waking and dreaming states through different objects, these, then, are conditioned through their being separated (by bliss and pains). But the bliss in the dreamless sleeping state is continuous throughout, all-full and never newly created. But if the bliss is eternal then it should also be found in the waking and the dreaming states also. But such is not the case. To this we reply: there is that bliss existing in the waking and dreaming states also. But it is not enjoyed in those states, being veiled by the actions (of the internal organs). How then can the actions of the internal organs which are only the effects, envelope their cause (viz.,) the bliss? Like the clouds which envelop the sun (their cause), or smoke the fire, or serpent the rope, so the actions of the internal organs, though they are the effects, envelop their cause, the bliss of Brahm. Though the ignorant and the young see (from external appearance) only the (smouldering) ash which has fire latent in it, or the frost which veils the sun behind it, yet a true discriminator sees beyond them (viz., ashes and frost) the fire and the sun. Similarly to those having external vision only, the bliss of the dreamless sleeping state, or Brahm, will seem veiled in the waking and dreaming states, but not to those wise men who have developed introvision. Persons of introvision being of the nature of bliss are found to be of the same nature during all the three periods of time. Therefore it is clear that the bliss of Brahm and that of the dreamless sleeping state, which is no other than the former, are eternal.

As thus, these three characteristics of the bliss of Brahm, viz., eternity, vehiclelessness and surpriselessness are also enjoyed by us, we are also of the nature of bliss. As the characteristic of Sachchid-ānanda (Sat, Chit and Ānanda) exists in us also, (as proved) through authority logic and experience, it should be known we have also the Sachchidānanda of Brahm.

How then can we have the self-cognition that we are no other than Sachchidānanda? After having heard for certain from the lips of a Guru the real imports of Vedānta Shāstras through the six methods (as stated at the end of the fifth Chapter), having made it a part of his brain matter and reflected thereupon from different standpoints, and after being in that state for a long time, there arises in one the spiritual wisdom that Sachchidānanda Brahm is himself alone. This is what is called indirect wisdom. Then ceasing to perform even the actions that relate to this indirect wisdom and giving up all Abhimāna, such as "I am the doer, this is *my* Karma; I am of such a caste, order of life," etc., and others, and having abandoned even the (thought of) enjoyment of "I am Brahm," and "Brahm is myself," as also efforts in that direction and (thought of) agency therein, one is in that state of habitual silence without any longing for objects, as in the dreamless sleeping state, when his internal organs become merged in Brahm, like salt mixed

with water; then in that Mahâtâmâ (great soul), in that par-excellent state, there arises of itself that par-excellent Divine Wisdom. This is the self-cognition of direct wisdom. It is only when such self-cognition arises, that one knows his own reality. Then only he is of the nature of bliss (itself). He only and none else can cognize the glory of that bliss. Vedântas which treat of this bliss are not able to cognize or describe it. Even that exalted personage who experiences such a bliss can only enjoy it, but will never be able to describe it to another, or to think of it through his mind, as it is like that happiness experienced in the dreamless sleeping state (the three distinctions of the knower, the known and the knowledge having become one). Then he is able only to enjoy such a bliss. Even Îshvara (the Lord), who comes through his grace in the guise of a teacher to initiate men in the higher path, is *not* able to describe this bliss of Brahm. Such a great personage who has such self-cognition may be roving about the world like an ignorant person.