

Panchadasi

I.

The Discrimination of the Self from Objects

- 1. Salutation to the lotus feet of my guru Sri Shankarananda, who destroys self-ignorance, the cause of attachment to the belief that the pursuit of happiness through objects can bring lasting peace.*
- 2. This discussion unfolding the discrimination between the self and the non-self is undertaken for the clear understanding of those whose hearts have been purified by service at the feet of the guru.*
- 3. The objects of sense knowledge (sound, sight, taste, touch and smell) that are perceived in the waking state have different properties, but the consciousness/awareness of these is one.*
- 4. In the dream state, the perceived objects are transient; in the waking state, they seem permanent. But the consciousness/awareness that knows both dream and waking objects is the same.*
- 5. Waking from deep sleep, one consciously remembers a lack of the perception of objects. Because one only remembers previously experienced objects, it is clear that in deep sleep a lack of knowledge of objects is experienced.*
- 6. Ignorance of objects is the object of awareness in deep sleep. The awareness of the objects in the waking and dream states and the awareness of the lack of objects in deep sleep are the same.*
- 7. Awareness is unchanging throughout all cycles of time past, present and future. Unlike the sun, awareness does not rise or set. It is never born. It does not die. It is self-revealing.*
- 8. This awareness is the self of all beings. Its nature is bliss because it is for the sake of the self that people wish to never die and to live forever.*
- 9. Others are loved for the sake of the self, but the self is loved for none other. Therefore, the love for the self is the highest.*

10. Scripture establishes **by reasoning** that the individual self and the impersonal self are of the nature of existence, awareness and bliss. The Upanishads teach that the individual and the limitless self are one.

11. If it is not clearly known that the self is limitless bliss, there will not be intense love for it. When it is known, there is no attraction for worldly objects because all one's love goes to it. It is difficult to say that the self is either completely known or completely unknown.

12. For example, a single child's voice singing in a chorus is drowned by the simultaneous voices of the other children. The bliss of the self is easily obscured by the daily small blisses occurring when desired objects are attained.

13. Experience of everyday objects leads to the conclusion that they are self-existent and self-revealing. An obstruction, like blindness, prevents an appreciation of the self-existence and self-revelation of objects.

14. The universal obstruction to the appreciation of oneself as awareness is beginningless Ignorance (Maya).

15. Nature (Prakriti), composed of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, is a subtle inert form of awareness that is capable of reflecting awareness. It is of two kinds.

17. The individual embodied self is apparently conditioned by Avidya (Sattva mixed with Rajas and Tamas.) The Jiva is multi-faceted and complex due to the many possible combinations of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas and the Five Sheaths, which have many parts. Ignorance of the self (Avidya) is called the Causal Body. The Jiva identified with the Causal Body is called Prajna.

18. By the will of awareness in the form of Isvara and for the experience of Prajna, the five subtle elements (Space, Air, Fire, Water and Earth) arose from the part of Prakriti in which Tamas predominates.

19. From the Sattvic part of each of Prakriti's five subtle elements arose in turn the five sense organs: hearing, touch, sight, taste and smell.

20. From a combination of the Sattvic portions of the five subtle elements the organ of inner experience arose. It is called the Subtle Body, Antahkarana. The Antahkarana functions in two ways: it doubts and it determines. In its doubting

function it is called Mind (Manas). Its determining, discriminating function is called Intellect (Buddhi).

21. From the Rajas portion of the five elements arose in turn the organs of action: speech, hands, feet, anus and sex.

22. Prana, the Vital Air, arose from the Rajas portion of the Five Subtle Elements (Tanmatras). It divided into the Five Physiological Functions: respiration (prana), excretion (apana), assimilation (samana), circulation (vyana) and the power to eject unwanted objects. It expels the Subtle Body from the Gross body at the time of death (udana).

23. The Five Sensory Organs, the Five Organs of Action, the Five Vital Airs, Mind, Intellect and Ego together form the Subtle Body.

24. When Prajna, the Jiva, identifies with an individual Subtle Body it is called Taijasa, "The Shining One," or the dreamer. When Isvara identifies with all subtle bodies, it is known as Hiranyagarbha, "The Golden Egg."

25. Isvara sees all subtle bodies as itself. Taijasas are only identified with themselves. They see differences.

26. To provide individual Jivas with objects of enjoyment and make their bodies fit for enjoyment, awareness as Isvara causes each of the subtle elements to share a part of each of the other subtle elements.

27. Dividing each subtle element into two equal halves and again dividing one half of each into four equal parts, Isvara mixed the subtle elements so that the resulting gross elements would contain one half of their original natures and one-eighth portion of each of the other four.

28. From these composite elements the cosmic egg arose and from it evolved all the worlds, the objects of experience and the bodies in which experience takes place. When Hiranyagarbha identifies with the totality of Gross Bodies it is known as Vaisvanara. When Taijasa identifies with the Gross Bodies of animals, men or gods it is known as Viswa.

29. Viswas, waking-state Jiva entities, see only external things and are devoid of the knowledge of their true nature. Therefore, they perform actions for results they

believe will make them happy. They enjoy performing action.

30. They pass from birth to birth like insects that have hatched and fallen into a river. They are swept from one whirlpool to another by samsara's restless currents, never attaining peace.

31. When their good deeds bear fruit they enjoy temporary rest, as if they had been removed from the river by a kind person and set on the shore.

32. Similarly, individuals caught in the whirlpool of samsara sometimes receive teaching from a teacher who has realized the self and, differentiating the self from its Five Sheaths, attain the supreme bliss of release.

33. The Five Sheaths of the self are: Food, Vital Air, Mental, Intellect and Bliss. Identified with them it apparently forgets its real nature and is apparently subject to transmigration.

34. The Gross Body is known as the annamayakosa, or the Food Sheath. That portion of the Subtle Body which is composed of the Five Vital Airs and the Five Organs of Action evolves from Rajas and is called the prana-mayakosa, or the Vital Air Sheath.

35. The doubting mind and Five Organs of Knowledge make up the manomayakosa, the Mind Sheath. The Intellect and the jnanindriyas make up the vignanamayakosa, the Intellect Sheath. They evolve from Sattva.

36. The impure Sattva, which is the Causal Body, bliss and other mental modifications in seed form (vrittis), is called the anandamayakosa, or the Bliss Sheath. When the self identifies with the various Sheaths it seems to take on the attributes of the Sheath with which it is identified.

37. By differentiating the unchanging self from the ever-changing Five Sheaths one can realize the nature of the self with and without the Sheaths.

38. The physical body, present in the waking state and absent in the dream state, is an inconstant factor but the witnessing element, pure awareness, is present in both and is therefore the invariable factor.

39. Similarly, in the state of deep sleep the Subtle Body does not exist but

awareness witnesses that state, so the Subtle Body is inconstant and the self the constant factor.

40. Using the Subtle Body, one discriminates the Sheaths, which are the result of the Three Gunas, from the self.

41. In the state of nirvikalpa samadhi the microcosmic Causal Body does not exist, so it is an inconstant factor. In nirvikalpa samadhi the self exists as the witnessing awareness and therefore it is invariable.

42. As the pith of the munja grass can be drawn out from its gross covering, the self can be distinguished through reasoning from the three bodies or the Five Sheaths. It is then recognized as unconditioned awareness.

43. In this way the identity of awareness and Jiva is demonstrated through reasoning. This identity is taught in the sacred texts in sentences such as “You are That.” The method of self-realization is through the elimination of variable attributes.

44. The self, awareness, becomes the material and efficient cause of the world when it is associated with those aspects of Maya in which there is a predominance of Tamas and Sattva respectively.

45. When the self is under the spell of Avidya, Ignorance, it associates with Rajas and Tamas and becomes a Jiva, pursuing its desires by means of various activities. “You” in the statement “You are That” refers to the Jiva.

46. When the Three Gunas are rejected as apparent realities, the self alone remains. The self’s nature is existence, awareness and bliss. This is revealed by the statement, “You are That.”

47. In the sentence, “This is that Devadatta,” “this” and “that” refer to different times, places and circumstances. When the particulars of “this” and “that” are eliminated, Devadatta remains as their common basis.

48. Similarly, when the apparently conditioning adjuncts Maya and Avidya are removed, the self alone remains. The nature of the self is existence, consciousness and bliss.

Verses 49-52 omitted

53. *Understanding the meaning of the identity of the individual self (Jivatman) and the limitless self (Paramatman) by contemplating the great sayings such as “You are That” is known as sravana. Eliminating logical fallacies brought about by the apparently contradictory nature of reality is called mananam.*

54. *When sravana and manana result in the hard and fast conviction that the self is limitless, it is called nididhyasana, firm, clear knowledge (samyak darshanam), which is tantamount to freedom from insecurity, incompleteness, etc.*

55 to 58. *When the mind gradually lets go of the idea, “I am meditating,” and is merged in the self alone it becomes steady like the flame of a lamp in a breezeless spot. Though in this samadhi there is no awareness of meditator and the object of meditation, the existence of the merged mind is inferred after coming out of the samadhi. The mind continues to be fixed in the self in the state of samadhi as a result of an effort of will helped by the merits acquired in previous births and strong impressions (vasanas) created through the constant efforts to attain samadhi.*

59. *As a result of nirvikalpa samadhi countless results of actions accumulated in this beginningless world over past and present births (vasanas) are destroyed, and the dharma that is helpful to self-realization grows.*

60. *The experts in Yoga call this samadhi a rain cloud of dharma (punyam) because it pours forth countless showers of the bliss of dharma.*

61. *The network of desires is destroyed and the accumulated merits and demerits are rooted out by this samadhi.*

62. *Then the great statement “You are That” frees one of all doubts about one’s nature and gives rise to direct realization of the self – which previously was known indirectly.*

63. *The knowledge of awareness obtained indirectly from the Guru that teaches the meaning of “You are That” renders the vasanas in play before the attainment of self-knowledge non-binding.*

64. *The direct realization of self-knowledge obtained from the teaching “You are That” is like a scorching sun, dispelling the darkness of self-ignorance, the root of transmigration.*

65. *Thus a person distinguishes the self from the Five Sheaths, concentrates the mind on it according to the teaching, becomes free from the bonds of repeated births and deaths and immediately experiences limitless bliss.*

II.

The Differentiation of the Five Elements ~ Beautiful, Intelligent Ignorance

1. *The Upanishads say the self is non-dual and can be known by differentiating it from the Five Elements. This process will now be discussed in detail.*

2. *The properties of the Five Elements are sound, touch, color, taste and smell. The number of properties of the Five Elements successively are one, two, three, four and five.*

3. *Because sounds arise in Space we infer that the property of Space is sound. Air makes a rustling sound when it moves and it feels neither hot nor cold to the touch. Flames make crackling sounds.*

4. *Fire is hot and its color is red. Water makes a rippling sound, is cold to the touch, colorless and sweet in taste.*

5. *The Earth makes a rattling sound, is hard to the touch, comes in variegated colors and is sweet, sour and so forth in taste.*

6. *The Earth emits both pleasant and unpleasant smells. Thus the characteristic properties of the five elements are enumerated.*

7. ***The five properties are cognized by the five sense organs. The organs (indriyam) belong to the invisible Subtle Body. The sense instruments (golakam) are in the perceivable Gross Body.***

8. *The five senses function through the gross organs: the ears, the skin, the eyes, the tongue and the nose. The senses are subtle; their presence is inferred from their functions. They usually move outwards.*

9. *But sometimes we hear the sounds made by our ingoing and outgoing breaths and we hear a buzzing sound when our ears are stopped. We feel an internal sensation of hot and cold when food and water are swallowed.*

10. *When our eyes are closed, we see the absence of light inside, and in belching we experience taste and odor. **Thus the sense organs give rise to experience of things** within the physical body.*

11. *The actions of human beings can be classified into five main groups: speech, grasping, movement, excretion and sexual intercourse.*

12. *The five types of action are performed through the five organs of action – the mouth (speech, taste), the hands (grasping), the feet (locomotion), the anus (excretion) and the genitals (procreation).*

14. ***The mind inquires into the merits and defects of objects perceived by the senses.** Sattva, Rajas and Tamas cause the mind to undergo various modifications.*

15. *Non-attachment, forgiveness, generosity, etc. are the result of the influence of Sattva. Desire, anger, avarice, effort, etc. are the result of the influence of Rajas.*

16. *Lethargy, confusion, drowsiness, procrastination, etc. are the result of the influence of Tamas. When Sattva functions, merit is acquired; when Rajas functions, demerit is produced.*

17. *When Tamas functions, neither merit nor demerit is produced, but life is wasted.*

18. *The ego, or I-thought, is the agent that acts out the modifications of the mind.*

19. *It is evident that the clearly discernible sense stimuli are caused by the Five Elements. With the help of scriptural texts and reasoning it can be seen that the subtle elements are the basis of the senses and the mind.*

20. *Whatever is perceived by the senses, experienced by the organs of action,*

known by the mind and intellect is referred to as “this” (idam) in the Upanishad text that follows.

21. “Before all this was created there was only non-dual being, alone, one without a second. There was neither name nor form.” ~ Chandogya Upanishad

22. Differences are of three kinds: (1) The differences within and object. (2) The difference between members of the same class. (3) The difference between two classes: species, for instance.

23. The doubt may arise that the self, the one and only reality, may also have differences. But all differences in the three worlds (Gross, Subtle and Causal) are dismissed by the Upanishads in the words, “All this is the non-dual self.”

24. One cannot doubt that awareness, the self, the one and only reality, has no parts. As creation is only the appearance of names and forms – parts cannot exist before creation.

25. Therefore the self, limitless awareness, is partless like space and there are no differences in it.

26. The difference between objects of the same class does not apply to awareness, because nothing else exists. One object differs from another on account of its name and form, whereas the self is without name and form.

27. Because non-existence does not exist, it cannot be used as an argument to disprove the existence of the self.

28. It is established by scripture that the self (sat) is non-dual.

Verses 29-39 Omitted

40. What remains after the Sheaths have been negated is an unmoving and ungraspable, unnamed, unnameable, unmanifest, apparently indefinite, all-pervading, space-like something, beyond light and darkness.

Verses 41-42 omitted

43. During sleep all objects and the experiencing entity itself is resolved, yet I remain as pure existence. I sleep because I know that I happily exist beyond time

and space and thought. And there are times in the waking state when the mind becomes free of duality. No thoughts are there to seemingly divide it yet I happily exist without thoughts and my existence is not localized. I am not a knower then. I experience myself without the aid of a mind. Furthermore, I experience myself as the “silence,” or the “space,” between thoughts.

Objector: During silence we do not experience pure existence, we experience nothingness.

44. The self, pure being, can be experienced when all the activities in the Subtle Body cease. At that time what is experienced is not nothing, because one cannot be conscious of nothing. Either you are conscious of things, in which case you are awareness or, in the absence of things, you are aware of awareness. If you are aware of awareness, you are awareness.

45. Objector: Okay, I accept your argument. However, the nothingness thought and the existence thought is not present in silence. You need thoughts, a means of knowledge, to prove the existence of pure existence/awareness.

46. During sleep I am experientially pure, blissful consciousness until the Subtle Body becomes active and thought and emotional transactions begin. Similarly, before Maya/Isvara appeared, pure, blissful consciousness existed.

47. As you cannot separate fire and its power to burn, there is a power, Maya Shakti, in awareness, which is totally dependent on awareness. It cannot be known directly but can be inferred by its effects.

48. One cannot say that Maya is “nothing,” because nothingness is an idea, an effect of Maya. An effect cannot be identical with its cause, because the cause is subtler than the effect. Maya is neither non-existence (asat) nor existence (sat, awareness) but something altogether different.

49. The peculiar nature of Maya is mentioned in an Upanishad. It says that before creation there were neither objects nor non-existence, but there was “darkness,” by which is meant Maya. This does not mean that Maya exists independently of the self, but that it borrows whatever degree of reality it has from the self.

50. Hence, like nothingness, Maya is not a standalone entity. In the apparent

reality too Jivas are not considered to be different from their abilities.

51 to 53. Objector: How can you discount Shakti? It makes a difference. People with high energy have more successful lives. Actualized energy is real.

54. The power of the earth to produce pots does not apply everywhere but only to those places where clay exists. Maya does not operate on the whole of the self but only on a small part of it.

55 to 57. Scripture makes the following statements: “Creation is only a small fraction of the vast limitlessness of awareness. The remainder is self-revealing; it does not depend on Maya to reveal itself. The world is sustained by a small part of the self. The self pervades the world on every side and extends ten fingers beyond.”

58. Although the self is a partless whole, the Upanishad speaks in terms of parts to make it easier to understand its non-dual nature to someone who is accustomed to thinking in dualistic terms.

59. With awareness as its substrate, Maya creates the objects of the world, just as an artist draws many-colored pictures on a white canvas.

The Evolution of the Elements

60. The first product (vikara) of Maya is Space. Space provides a field in which objects and beings can come into existence, grow and die. It accommodates things. Space is not a standalone principle, but derives its existence from awareness, its substratum.

61. The nature of awareness, the self, is existence. There is no Space in it.

62. The property of Space is sound. Awareness is soundless because there is nothing other than it. For sound, duality – friction – is required. Thus Space has two properties, sound and existence, whereas awareness is only existence.

The Reversal

63. The power of Maya projects Space on the self, creating an apparent duality and reversing the relationship between existence and the objects appearing in it.

65 to 66. It is common knowledge that correct understanding born of a legitimate

means of knowledge makes things appear as they are and that a projection causes them to appear to be different from what they are. Now the teaching on Space is unfolded.

68. Existence/awareness, is the substance of Space. It pervades Space but Space does not pervade it, because Space is less subtle. Space pervades the elements that subsequently evolve from it. When by the exercise of reason Space is separated from awareness, Space disappears and is robbed of its power to accommodate objects.

70. There are two types of non-existence: (1) non-appearing non-existence – a rabbit's horn, for instance, and (2) appearing non-existence – a snake in a rope.

71. Objector: How is this possible? You are actually asking us to appreciate two as one, duality as non-duality.

72 to 73. Objector: I understand clearly as it is explained, but I can't seem to apply it at other times. I am not able to derive the benefit of this wisdom. What should I do? I have self-knowledge, but it is not firm.

74. Meditation will not produce an experience that will prove non-duality and validate this knowledge.

75. Space presents itself to me, awareness, and is revealed in my light. Awareness ever reveals itself to me because I am awareness and I am always present.

76. When the discrimination vasana is sufficiently nourished through constant practice, the enlightened person is wonderstruck at the worldly person's belief that the world, i.e. Space, is real.

77. When one is firmly convinced that Space and the self are not the same, one should differentiate the other elements from the self, using the same logic.

78. Awareness is all-pervasive. Maya is dependent on awareness, and is more limited than awareness, but less limited than its effects, i.e. Space and the elements that evolve from Space. Air is more limited than Space because it is an effect of Space, but it is more pervasive than Fire, which evolves from it. Etc.

79. The properties of Air are ability to absorb moisture, perceptibility to touch and

the power to move. Existence and the properties of Maya and Space are also found in Air.

80. When we say Air exists, we mean that it does so by virtue of the non-dual universal principle, existence. If existence is subtracted from Air, only the potential idea of Air remains in Maya. The sounds experienced in the Air belongs to Space, which pervades it. Sound is the property of Space.

81. What is “real” in Air is existence. (Its existence is borrowed from awareness. Air becomes non-existent when separated from awareness.) The other borrowed properties of Air, such as sound, are apparently real. Understanding the apparent reality of air by reason and contemplation, give up the false notion that it is real.

87. Apply the same discrimination to the Fire element. It is less pervasive (extensive) than Air. Water and Earth are successively less pervasive. Fire is superimposed, i.e. it evolves, from Air.

88. Fire is formed from a ninety-percent portion of Air, and in this way each element is ten percent less pervasive than the preceding one. This is the traditional theory described in the Puranas.

89. Heat, light and color are the specific properties of Fire in addition to the properties of Maya, Space, Air and awareness. Fire can be heard, felt and seen. By discrimination understand that the properties of Fire are only apparently real.

91. Make sure you have internalized the preceding discriminations by listening (sravanam) and thinking (mananam) before you discriminate Water from existence/awareness. Water evolves (is superimposed) and ten percent less pervasive than Fire.

92. Its seeming reality apart from existence, i.e. its perceptibility to the sense of sound, touch and sight, is derived from Maya, Space, Air and Fire respectively. Its specific property is taste.

93. Since the apparent reality of Water, considered apart from existence has thus been established, let us now consider Earth, which is ten percent less extensive than Water.

94. Earth exists. It borrows its existence from existence/awareness. Apart from that,

it is perceptible to the sense of sound, touch, sight and taste. Its specific property is smell. Its difference from awareness is obvious, its reality less so.

95. Now we consider the Cosmos (Baudika Prapancha). The first is Bramandam, the cosmic “egg.” It is elliptical in shape. It is one-tenth less extensive than the Earth element. It exists in the middle of the Earth element.

96. The cosmos contains the seventeen worlds and the bodies suited to each world. The Jivas enjoy the world in which they find themselves by virtue of the law of karma.

97. If the Cosmos is separated from the existence which underlies it, all the worlds and all objects are reduced to appearances (mithya).

Conditioned Superimposition Is Liberation

98. It does not matter if one continues to experience a world once it is understood to be mithya. All worlds exist in the lower order of the one reality and I, the observing non-experiencing witness, am situated in the higher order of reality.

99. When a deep impression (jagan mithya vasana) has been created in the mind about the apparent nature of Maya, the elements and their derivatives, the knowledge of the nature of the self becomes permanent.

100. Whatever classifications of objects one finds in various philosophies are fine with us because they are all mithya.

101. Vedanta is only concerned with two existential classifications: satya and mithya. If you complain that we ignore or discount the world of duality, we wonder why you ignore non-duality.

102. Understanding the relationship between satya and mithya should become natural. When “I am awareness” and “I am not the body” have the same meaning, you are liberated while living. Clear knowledge is liberation as you live.

103 to 105. Referring to a liberated person, scripture says, “When duality disappears as a result of discriminating the self from the elements, the person of steady wisdom abides in awareness as awareness. He is free of ‘rebirth,’ re-identifying with a fear or desire when it arises in the mind, because the vasanas

that cause rebirth have been neutralized by the knowledge 'I am awareness.' He does not forget who he is when the body dies."

106. The liberated person is not affected by delusion, and is awareness whether the body dies healthy or from illness, sitting in meditation or writhing in agony, conscious or unconscious.

107. The knowledge of one's name in the waking state is lost during the dream and deep sleep states, but it returns when one wakes. Similarly, self-knowledge is never lost.

108. The knowledge of awareness, based on the teachings of Vedanta, cannot be dismissed, because there is no evidence that contradicts them.

109. Therefore the knowledge of non-dual Reality established by Vedanta is not negated however one interprets the phrase "at the last moment." The discrimination of the elements from awareness ensures abiding peace.