

Tat Tvam Asi – Part VIII



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Introduction

The *Mahāvākya* 'Tat tvam asi – That thou art' envisages the identity between 'Tat' and 'tvam'. The *Tat-pada-vācyārtha* (literal meaning of the word 'Tat') is *Īśvara*, the Creator of the cosmos, and the *tvam-pada-vācyārtha* (literal meaning of the word 'tvam') is *jīva*, the limited individual. Their diametrically different nature is summarised in the following chart:¹

<i>Tat-pada-vācyārtha-Īśvara</i>	<i>Tvam-pada-vācyārtha-jīva</i>
<i>Sarvaśaktimān</i> – all powerful	<i>Alpaśaktimān</i> – possessing limited power
<i>Sarvajñāḥ</i> – all knower	<i>Alpajñāḥ</i> – possessing limited knowledge
<i>Vibhu</i> – all-pervading	<i>Paricchinnāḥ</i> – limited
<i>Īśvara</i> – Lord	<i>Anīśaḥ</i> – not-Lord
<i>Svatantraḥ</i> – independent	<i>Karmādhīnaḥ</i> – dependent on 'karma'
<i>Parokṣaḥ</i> – known mediately	<i>Nitya-aparokṣaḥ</i> – known always as immediate.
<i>Māyī</i> – one who wields <i>māyā</i>	<i>Māyā-mohitaḥ</i> – deluded by <i>māyā</i>
<i>Bandha-mokṣa-rahitaḥ</i> – devoid of bondage and Liberation ²	<i>Bandha-mokṣabhāk</i> – enjoying both bondage and Liberation

¹ For further elaboration on the differences between *Īśvara* and *jīva* refer to 'Tat Tvam Asi – I' – August 2004 issue of *Tapovan Prasad*.

² Since *Īśvara* is never bound, there is no question of Liberation also.

Even though the *Tat-pada-vācyārtha-Īśvara* and *tvam-pada-vācyārtha-jīva* are different in nature, the *Mahāvākya 'Tat tvam asi'* asserts the oneness between them, thus forcing us to renounce *mukhya-vṛtti* (direct connotation) and take recourse to *lakṣaṇā-vṛtti* (indirect or implied connotation). The application of *lakṣaṇā-vṛtti* is a quantum leap in the analysis of '*Tat tvam asi*'. *Lakṣaṇā-vṛtti* was already analysed and pointed out³ to be of three types:

- a. *jahallakṣaṇā* (exclusive secondary connotation)
- b. *ajahallakṣaṇā* (inclusive secondary connotation) and
- c. *jahad-ajahal-lakṣaṇā* (exclusive-inclusive secondary connotation).

The question here is – 'Of the three *lakṣaṇās*, which one is appropriate and admissible for construing the *vācyārtha* (sentence-sense) of '*Tat tvam asi*'? To answer this question, it is important to understand that *jīva-Īśvara-bheda* (difference between *jīva* and *Īśvara*) is *aupādhika* (based on conditionings) and illusory.

Īśvara-Jīva-Bheda is aupādhika and Illusory

Even though *Īśvara* and *jīva* are seemingly different, the essential core of both of them is the one common homogenous *Caitanya-vastu* (Consciousness Principle) alone.⁴ *Īśvara* is the *Caitanya-vastu* with the *upādhi* (conditioning or limiting adjunct) of the *samaṣṭi-sthūla-sūkṣma-kāraṇa-śarīra* (total-gross-subtle-causal-body) while *jīva* is the same *Caitanya-vastu* with the

³ The three *lakṣaṇās* have been exhaustively dealt with in '*Tat Tvam Asi – VI*' and '*Tat Tvam Asi – VII*', which appeared in the February and March 2005 issues of *Tapovan Prasad* respectively.

⁴ In the *Vedāntic* literature, the *Caitanya* core of *Īśvara* is described as '*satyam-jñānam-anantam* — existence-consciousness-infinite' – and the *Caitanya* core of *jīva* is explained as '*sat-cit-ānanda* — existence-knowledge-bliss'. '*Satyam* 'is same as '*sat*'; *jñānam* is '*cit*'; and that which is '*anantam*' (infinite) is '*ānanda*' (bliss) for all *duḥkha* (sorrow) is only in the realm of *dvaita* (duality) and the term '*ananta*' negates *dvaita*. Therefore it would not be inappropriate to say that the common core of *Īśvara* and *jīva* is '*satyam-jñānam-anantam-vastu* 'or '*sat-cit-ānanda-vastu*'.

upādhi of *vyāṣṭi-sthūla-sūkṣma-kāraṇa-sārīra* (individual-gross-subtle-causal-body). The *bhedas* (differences) between *Īśvara* and *jīva* – like *sarvaśaktimān-alpaśaktimān*, *sarvajñāḥ-alpajñāḥ* – which were enumerated earlier, are merely *aupādhika* i.e. based on the *upādhis* and are hence valid only from the *aupādhika-dṛṣṭi* (standpoint of the *upādhis*). Bereft of their respective *upādhis*, both *samaṣṭi-sthūla-sūkṣma-kāraṇa-sārīra* (total-gross-subtle-causal-body) and *vyāṣṭi-sthūla-sūkṣma-kāraṇa-sārīra* (individual-gross-subtle-causal-body) – both *Īśvara* and *jīva* become identical, with no difference whatsoever between them. This non-difference or *abheda* is thus from the *anaupādhika-dṛṣṭi* (standpoint of no-conditionings).

The above analysis naturally leads us to the next question – ‘Which *dṛṣṭi* (standpoint) is true, *aupādhika* or *anaupādhika*?’ The *Advaitin* emphatically declares that the *upādhis* are *mithyā* (illusory) for they are either *māyā* or *māyā-kārya*.⁵ And this *mithyātva* (illusoriness), he establishes with ease through the *vaidika-adhyāropa-apavāda-prakriyā* (Vedic methodology of deliberate superimposition and consequent negation).⁶

The acceptance of the illusory nature of the *upādhis* has far reaching consequences. The distinction between *Īśvara* and *jīva* based on *aupādhika-dṛṣṭi* (standpoint of the *upādhis*) becomes falsified; and the vision of oneness between *Īśvara* and *jīva* based on *anaupādhika-dṛṣṭi* (standpoint of the no-*upādhis*) alone stands certified as true.

This essential common *Caitanya* core, which is the basis for the *anaupādhika-dṛṣṭi*, becomes the common *lakṣyārtha* for both *Tat-pada* and *tvam-pada*. This will become clear as and when we take recourse to *lakṣaṇā-vṛtti* for discovering the identity between *Tat-padārtha-Īśvara* and *tvam-padārtha-jīva*.⁷

⁵ *Īśvara*'s *upādhi* is *māyā* and *jīva*'s *upādhi* is *māyā-kārya* — *kāryopadhirayaṁ jīvaḥ kāraṇopādhirīśvaraḥ*.

⁶ Refer to the essay ‘*Adhyāropa* and *Apavāda*’ as well as ‘*Apavāda*’ which appeared respectively in the June 2003 and June 2004 issues of *Tapovan Prasad*.

⁷ While studying this essay from this point refer to the overview chart of all the three *lakṣaṇās* presented in ‘*Tat Tvam Asi* – VII’— March 2005 issue of *Tapovan Prasad*.

Jahallakṣaṇā inadmissible

The *lakṣyārtha* in *jahallakṣaṇā* is arrived at by entirely giving up the *vācyārtha* (literal meaning) of the *pada* (word) and substituting it with its related new component.⁸ To explain – while construing the *vācyārtha* (sentence-sense) of the sentence ‘*Gaṅgāyāṁ ghoṣaḥ* – there is a village on the Gaṅgā’, the whole *vācyārtha* (direct meaning) of the *Gaṅgā-pada* (word ‘Gaṅgā’), which is the *jala-pravāha* (flowing river) is given up totally, and its related component, the *tīra* (earthen banks) is accepted as the *lakṣyārtha* (implied meaning).

Jahallakṣaṇā is not appropriate to construe the sentence-sense of ‘*Tat tvam asi*’ for the following reasons.

Reason I

Since there is no *ādihāra-ādheya-bhāva*⁹ (the relationship of container-contained) between the River Gaṅgā and the village, it is absurd to construe that ‘the village is on the River Gaṅgā’. It is because of this reason that the whole *vācyārtha* – River Gaṅgā had to be dropped. But this type of total rejection of the *vācyārtha* is not required in the case of the *Mahāvākya* ‘*Tat tvam asi*’ as there is no total contradiction between the *Tat-pada-vācyārtha-Īśvara* and *tvam-pada-vācyārtha-jīva*. There is contradiction in the *upādhi-bhāga* (*upādhi* portion) of *Īśvara* and *jīva* alone. The *Caitanya-bhāga* (the Consciousness-Principle portion) remains the same between them. That being the case, there is no need to drop the entire *vācyārtha* of *Īśvara* and *jīva*. Sri Swami Sadananda in *Vedānta Sāra* explicitly states this:

⁸ *Lakṣyārtha* by *jahallakṣaṇā* = new component related to *vācyārtha* – *vācyārtha*. Refer to ‘*Tat Tvam Asi* – VI’—February 2005 issue of *Tapovan Prasad*.

⁹ There is *ādihāra-ādheya-bhāva* (relationship of container and contained) between the table and the book that is placed on the table. The table is the *ādihāra* and the book is the *ādheya*. That kind of relationship does not exist between the River Gaṅgā and the village. The traditional example given to elucidate *ādihāra-ādheya-bhāva* is ‘*ghaṭam bhūtale asi* — the pot is on the ground’.

अत्र तु परोक्ष-अपरोक्ष-चैतन्य-एकत्व-लक्षणस्य वाक्यार्थस्य भागमात्रे विरोधाद्
भागान्तरम् अपि परित्यज्य अन्यलक्षणाया अयुक्तत्वात् जहल्लक्षणा न सङ्गच्छते ॥

*atra tu parokṣa-aparokṣa-caitanya-ekatva-lakṣaṇasya vākyārthasya
bhāgamātre virodhād bhāgāntaram api parityajya anyalakṣaṇāyā
ayuktatvāt jahallakṣaṇā na saṅgacchate ॥*

“Here, on the other hand, as the import of the sentence, viz., identity between the Conscious Principle characterised by mediacy etc., and the Conscious Principle characterised by immediacy etc., is only in partial conflict, it is not proper to reject the remaining part also and understand an altogether different thing as implied, by taking recourse to *jahallakṣaṇā*”.

Reason II

If *jahallakṣaṇā* is accepted, then along with the *upādhis*, the *Caitanya-vastu* will also have to be abandoned, because *jahallakṣaṇā* requires the rejection of the entire *vācyārtha*. After abandoning the *vācyārtha* when we have to take something new as the *lakṣyārtha*, the new component will have to be other than the *Caitanya-vastu*. And that which is other than *Caitanya* (Consciousness) can only be *jaḍa* (inert), which by logic will turn out to be *anṛta* (false) and *duḥkha* (sorrowful).¹⁰ And there is no *puruṣārtha-siddhi* (*mokṣa*) with the acceptance of such a ‘*anṛta-jaḍa-duḥkha-vastu*’¹¹ — false-inert-sorrowful-principle’ as the meaning of the *Mahāvākya*. With no *puruṣārtha-siddhi* the *Sāstras* become *niṣprayojana* (without benefit). Therefore there is no purpose served in employing *jahallakṣaṇā* for construing the *vācyārtha* of the *Māhāvākya*.

Even though it has thus been proved that *jahallakṣaṇā* cannot give a cogent meaning to ‘*Tat tvam asi*’, a vigorous intellect would like to consider the following two far-fetched options.

Option I: Replacement of *Tat* by *Tvam*:

In this first option the *Tat-pada-vācyārtha-Iśvara* is abandoned

¹⁰ *Yad jaḍam tad anṛtam, yad anṛtam tad duḥkham* — that which is inert is false and that which is false can only be of the nature of pain.

¹¹ *anṛta-jaḍa-duḥkha-vastu* is the opposite of *sat-cit-ananda-vastu*.

and substituted with *jīva* as the *lakṣyārtha*. Let us investigate whether this is feasible.

By employing *jahallakṣaṇā* when the *Tat-pada-vācyārtha-Īśvara* is entirely rejected we will have to substitute the *vācyārtha* of *Tat-pada* with a *lakṣyārtha* that is related to the *Tat-pada-vācyārtha-Īśvara*. Is it possible to substitute *Tat-pada-vācyārtha-Īśvara* with *tvam-pada-vācyārtha-jīva* on the basis that *jīva* is a *sambandhī* (relation) of *Īśvara* (*sva-svāmi-sambandha*)? ¹²

This option is not at all tenable for the following reasons:

- The *mahāvākya* 'Tat tvam asi' will then become 'tvam tvam asi – you are you'. No *Veda* is required to reveal that, 'I, Mr. So and So, am in fact I, the same Mr. So and So'. Even the most dull-witted person knows this.

- When we abandon the whole *vācyārtha* of *Tat-pada* the whole *samaṣṭi-sthūla-sūkṣma-kāraṇa-śarīra* (total-gross-subtle-causal-body) is also rejected. The *vyāṣṭi-sthūla-sūkṣma-kāraṇa-śarīra* (individual-gross-subtle-causal-body), being a part of the *samaṣṭi-sthūla-sūkṣma-kāraṇa-śarīra*, is also rejected automatically. If that is so, where is the question of taking the individual *jīva* as the *lakṣyārtha* of *Tat-pada* when it has already been rejected?

Option II: Replacement of *Tvam* by *Tat*:

In this second option, the *tvam-pada-vācyārtha-jīva* is abandoned and is replaced by *Īśvara*. This is absolutely untenable – when we replace *tvam-pada-vācyārtha-jīva* by *Īśvara* (using the same *sva-svāmi-sambandha*), the sentence will become 'Tat Tat asi'. This is a wrong grammatical sentence for the verbal form corresponding to 'Tat' has to be 'asti' and can never be 'asi'.¹³ Hence this replacement cannot even be considered as an alternative, leave alone being accepted as a viable option.

Sri Swami Sadananda, the author of *Vedānta Sāra*, rejects

¹² *Īśvara* is the *svāmī* and the *jīva* belongs (*sva*) to *Īśvara*. Thus the relationship of *jīva* and *Īśvara* is *sva-svāmi-sambandha*.

¹³ The third person, second person and first person pronouns — 'Tat', 'tvam' and 'aham' respectively — require 'asti', 'asi' and 'asmi' as their corresponding verbal forms — *tad asti*; *tvam asi*; and *aham asmi*.

outright both these options by putting forth a formidable argument.

तत्र तीर-पद-अश्रवणेन तदर्थ-अप्रतीतौ लक्षणया तत्प्रतीत्यपेक्षायामपि तत्त्वम्पदयोः श्रूयमाणत्वेन तदर्थप्रतीतौ लक्षणया पुनः अन्यतरपदेन-अन्यतरपदार्थ-प्रतीति-अपेक्षा-अभावात् ॥

tatra tīra-pada-aśravaṇena tadartha-apratītau lakṣaṇayā tatpratītyapekṣāyāmapi tattvampadayoḥ śrūyamānatvena tadarthapratītau lakṣaṇayā punaḥ anyatarapadena-anyatarāpadārthapratīti-apekṣā-abhāvāt ॥

“In the sentence the word ‘bank’ is not mentioned, and therefore the meaning, which is not explicit can be derived through implication (*lakṣaṇā-ṛtti*). But in the sentence (*Tat tvam asi*), the words ‘*Tat*’ and ‘*tvam*’ are mentioned and their meanings are explicit; therefore there is no need for taking either ‘*Tat*’ or ‘*tvam*’ as implying what is directly signified by the other”.

To explain, in *jahallakṣaṇā*, the *lakṣyārtha* is something which is not part of the sentence. The *tīra* (banks) is not part of the sentence ‘*Gaṅgāyām ghoṣaḥ*’. But in the case of the above two options, the ingeniously contrived *lakṣyārtha* of (a) *Tat-pada* as ‘*tvam*’ or (b) *tvam-pada* as ‘*Tat*’, is verily part of the actual sentence ‘*Tat tvam asi*’. Hence truly speaking, this kind of *lakṣyārtha* derivation cannot even fall under the category of *jahallakṣaṇā*.

***Ajahallakṣaṇā* also Inadmissible**

In the case of *ajahallakṣaṇā*, the whole *vācyārtha* is retained and a new related component is added to the *vācyārtha* so as to arrive at the *lakṣyārtha*. For example, in the sentence ‘*Śoṇo dhāvati* – the red runs’, we retain the *vācyārtha* of *śoṇa-pada* which is the quality ‘red’ and to it we add its related component – ‘horse’ and arrive at the *lakṣyārtha* of *śoṇa-pada* as ‘*śoṇaḥ aśvaḥ* – red horse’.¹⁴ This *ajahallakṣaṇā* is not suitable for construing

¹⁴ *Lakṣyārtha* by *ajahallakṣaṇā* = new component related to *vācyārtha* + *vācyārtha*. Refer to ‘*Tat Tvam Asi* – VI’—February 2005 issue of *Tapovan Prasad*.

the *vākyārtha* of 'Tat tvam asi' because, as long as the whole *vācyārtha* of Tat-pada and tvam-pada, which are *Īśvara* and *Jīva* respectively, are maintained, in spite of the addition of a new component to their respective *vācyārthas*, the inherent contradiction continues to exist as before, without any reconciliation.

अत्र तु परोक्षत्व-अपरोक्षत्वादि-विशिष्ट-चैतन्य-एकत्वस्य वाक्यार्थस्य विरुद्धत्वात् तदपरित्यागेन तत्सम्बन्धिनो यस्य कस्यचिदर्थस्य लक्षितत्वेऽपि तद्-विरोध-परिहार-असम्भवाद् अजहल्लक्षणा न सम्भवत्येव ॥

atra tu parokṣatva-āparokṣatvādi-viśiṣṭa-caitanya-ekatvasya vākyārthāsya viruddhatvāt tadaparityāgena tatsambandhino yasya kasyacidarthatasya lakṣitatve'pi tad-virodha-parihāra-asambhavād ajahallakṣaṇā na sambhavatyeva ॥

"But here (in the sentence 'Tat tvam asi') the literal meaning, conveying an identical Consciousness associated with mediacy and immediacy etc., is self-contradictory. If, without abandoning this meaning, any other idea connected with it be implied, still the contradiction will not be reconciled. Therefore in this case *ajahallakṣaṇā* is inadmissible."

Conclusion

Thus it has been clearly established that both *jahallakṣaṇā* as well as *ajahallakṣaṇā* are incompatible and inadmissible for construing the *vākyārtha* (sentence-sense) of the *Mahāvākya* 'Tat tvam asi'. This leaves us with the third *lakṣaṇā-vṛtti* – the *jahadajahallakṣaṇā* or what is popularly described in *Vedāntic* literature as *bhāga-tyāga-lakṣaṇā*. It is by using the *bhāga-tyāga-lakṣaṇā* that the *akhaṇḍārtha* of 'Tat tvam asi' is derived. This will be the topic of the next essay. All this analysis only goes to show that our ancient masters accepted nothing blindly just on its face value, even if it was enunciated by a great authority. Every idea and concept, including that of the *Vedas*, had to stand the fire of rigorous intellectual scrutiny. Also, they paid meticulous attention to all details of the analysis. Our salutations to these great masters of yore! May their blessings be with us in the Realisation of the Supreme Reality as the very Self within.