Introduction

The earlier essay was devoted to the process of pañcīkaraṇa1 – the pentamerous division and combination of the five elements by which the sūkṣma-tanmātras (subtle elements) transform themselves into sthūla-paṅca-mahā-bhūtas (gross elements). It is to be noted that the whole process of creation – the creation of the tanmātras, the process of pañcīkaraṇa and so on – happens only by the will of Īśvara. After pañcīkaraṇa the sthūla-bhūtas i.e., the gross elements of space (ākāśa), air (vāyu), fire (agni), water (āpah) and earth (prthīti) in various permutations and combinations combine amongst themselves to create the gross world that we perceive. This essay will be devoted to the various aspects of this sthūlasṛṣṭi or creation of the gross world which includes the creation of

1. the brahmāṇḍa (cosmos),
2. the four types of sthūla śarīras and
3. the creation of food and water etc., for the inhabitants of the brahmāṇḍa.

Brahmāṇḍa

A total of fourteen lokas (worlds) together constitute a brahmāṇḍa (cosmos). There are infinite brahmāṇḍas. The fourteen worlds of the brahmāṇḍa are divided into two categories – ārdhva (higher) and adhah (lower) depending upon their position from bhūḥ loka

---

1 Refer to March 2004 issue of the Tapovan Prasad — 'Sthūlasṛṣṭi – Part I' for explanation of pañcīkaraṇa.
(earth). The bhūḥ loka is taken as part of the upper world. The fourteen worlds are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Upper Worlds</th>
<th>Lower Worlds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bhūḥ</td>
<td>Atala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhuvaḥ</td>
<td>Vītala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Svāḥ</td>
<td>Sūtala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahaḥ</td>
<td>Rasātala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janah</td>
<td>Talātala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tapah</td>
<td>Mahātala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satyam</td>
<td>Pāṭāla</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are elaborate descriptions of these worlds— as to their nature, their denizens, the internal worlds within the lokas themselves, the inter-distances between the lokas and so on. But we shall not enter into those descriptions now, as that will be a digression (though quite an entertaining one!). It is enough to remember that all these fourteen worlds, which are as real and as false as this world, are without any exception made from the sthūla-bhūtas by the will of Īśvara.

**Sthūlaśarīra**

From the sthūla-bhūtas (gross elements), the sthūla-śarīras (gross bodies) of the beings are created. Beings are classified into four categories depending upon the type of gross body they possess. It is interesting to note the way our rṣis have very beautifully divided the beings based on the types of bodies they possess. Sri Swami Sadananda in *Vedānta-sūtra* elaborates on the four kinds of beings:

**jarāyuja:** Those born (ja) from the womb (jarāyu).

जरायुजनी जरायुभयो जातानि मनुष्यपशुवादीनि

jarāyujaṇi jarāyubhyo jātāni manusyapasyāvadini

Those that are born of the womb refer to men, beasts, etc.
Those born (ja) from eggs (anḍa).

Those that are born from the egg are birds, reptiles etc.

Svedaja: Those that are born (ja) from sweat (sveda). Though the word 'sveda' literally means 'sweat', what is meant is moisture contaminated with dirt.

Those that are born from moisture are lice, mosquitoes, etc.

Udbhijja: Those that are born (ja) by breaking through the earth (udbhid).

Those that spring from the soil are the creepers, trees, etc.

Along with the creation of the bodies of the various beings, food, water and other nourishment required for the maintenance of these gross bodies are also created by the compassionate Iśvara.

Thus the fourteen worlds, the four types of gross bodies and the food-water nourishment for the denizens of the brahmāṇḍa—all these three together form the sthūla-śrṣṭi or gross creation.

Annamayakośa

The gross body or sthūla-śarīra is produced by the generative fluids of the parents. These generative fluids are nothing but transformations of the food that is consumed by them. Also the gross body is sustained by the food that is eaten. Finally the gross body perishes and becomes food for other beings. Since the sthūla-śarīra (gross body) is thus born from food, sustained by food and on destruction becomes food for others, it is called annamayakośa—the food-sheath. Sri Shankaracharya makes this amply clear in Tattva-bodha.
The gross body which is born from the essence of food, grows by the essence of food and merges into the earth, which is of the nature of food, is called the food sheath.

What is the significance of calling the gross body a kosa (sheath)? A sheath covers an object's true identity. The gross body is called a sheath as it veils the Self by being the locus of ignorance-bred-thoughts like 'I am fat', 'I am lean', 'I am dark in complexion' and so on. The Self is neither fat nor lean nor dark! It is pure sat-cit-dananda. Sri Shankaracharya in Sarva Vedanta Sara Saengrahah says:

अच्छादकत्वादेखेतस्यायसः: कोशवदात्मनः।
ācchādakatvādētasyāpyaseh kośavadātmanah

It (gross body) is referred to as a kosa (sheath) in as much as the Self lies encased in it like a sword that is hidden in its sheath.

śadvikāra

The sthūla-śarīra is described as having six (sad) modifications (vikāra)³. Tatwa Bodha summarises these six modifications:

अस्ति जावले वर्धते विपरिणामते अपक्षीयते विनियति इति षड्विकारवद पुत्त स्थुलशरीरीमूः॥

Asti jāyate vardhate vipaṛiṇāmate apakṣiyate vināśyati iti śadvikāravad etat sthūlaśarīram

The six modifications of the gross body are to exist, to be born, to grow, to change, to decay and to die.

² For further elaboration of the word kosa or sheath refer to March 2004 issue of the Tapovan Prasad.
³ For further description of the gross body, refer to Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayanandaji’s commentary on Tatwa Bodha – CCMT Publication.
These six modifications are:

1. *Asti*: ‘It exists’. This is the existence of the body prior to the birth in its foetal form. Though the body also exists in its other five vikāras (the modifications which are described below) this foetal state is specifically described as ‘exists’ just to counteract the possibility of someone denying the body’s prior existence before birth.

2. *Jayate*: ‘It is born’. The foetus develops and is born after its period of gestation in the mother’s womb.

3. *Vardhate*: ‘It grows’. Nourished by the food-water (anna-pāna), the gross body grows in size.

4. *Viparinamate*: ‘It changes’. Even after the full maturity is attained, the gross body still undergoes changes like losing the old cells, building up new cells to replace the dead ones, getting a new hue, colour, texture and so on. Also the body suffers through diseases and sicknesses which too produce modifications in it. These changes that keep happening on and off are meant by the term ‘viparināma’.

5. *Apakṣṭyate*: ‘It decays’. After due time the body slowly starts weakening. It starts losing its strength and vitality and we say that it has become old.

6. *Vinasīyati*: ‘It dies’. Finally it perishes, disintegrates and becomes one with the five elements from which it was created.

**Jāgradāvasthā**

The state (*avasthā*) that is experienced due to identification (*abhimāna*) with the kāraṇa śarīra (causal-body) is the suṣupti avasthā (deep-sleep state); with the sūkṣma śarīra (subtle body) it is the svaapna avasthā (dream-state), and with the sthūla śarīra (gross body), it is the jāgrad-avasthā (waking state). In the jāgrad-avasthā though there is also the identification with the sūkṣma śarīra and the kāraṇa śarīra, it is only in this state that we identify particularly with the gross body and experience the gross world.
Sri Shankaracharya in Tatva Bodha defines the *jāgrad-avasthā* as that state of existence in which the sense objects like sound, touch, form, taste and smell are perceived by the sense-organs - *srotrādi-jñanendriyaiḥ sabdadi-vișayahaiśca jñayate iti ya sa jāgrad-avasthā.* It is in the waking-state of existence that one perceives the external world of objects through the senses. In the dream state there is only the internal mind-projected-world, unlike the waking state, where there is an outside world which is perceived by the mind through the senses. And in the deep-sleep state there is no perception of the world whatsoever since the senses as well as the mind have withdrawn their functions.

The following tabular column summarises in a nutshell the states of experience, the experience gained therein, and the special identification that exists in these states.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Special Identification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Suṣupti-avasthā</em></td>
<td>No world</td>
<td>kāraṇa śarīra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Swapna-avasthā</em></td>
<td>Mental world</td>
<td>sūkṣma śarīra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Jāgrad-avasthā</em></td>
<td>Physical world</td>
<td>sthūla śarīra</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Viśva and Vaiśvānara or Virāṭ**

Just as we have seen in the earlier essays that the causal and the subtle world can be looked at from two standpoints, the individual (*vyāṣṭi*) and total (*samaṣṭi*), the gross world can also be

---

4 This explanation is in line with the methodology of *ṣṛṣṭi-dṛṣṭi-vāda*, called also as *bahu-jīva-vāda* where the gross world is given a *vyāvahārika-satya* (transactional reality). Here the mind with the help of the senses perceives a world which exists outside. It is only in *dṛṣṭi-ṣṛṣṭi-vāda*, called also as the *eka-jīva-vāda*, that the world is considered as a mere creation of the mind and given a *prāṇabhāṣika-satya* (illusory reality). This footnote is for those who have already a grasp of the Vedantic methodology. Others may wish to skip this.

5 Refer to August 2003 and February 2004 issues of the Tapovan Prasad for the individual and total aspects of the causal body and subtle body respectively.
viewed similarly. At the individual level we have a gross body but at the total level we have the whole gross cosmos made of the fourteen worlds, the four types of gross bodies pertaining to the inhabitants of the worlds, as well as their food, water etc.

The consciousness identified with the total gross cosmos is called \textit{vaiśvānara} or \textit{vīrāt} and the same consciousness identified with the individual gross body is called the \textit{viśva}. The terms employed to describe the consciousness identified with the total and individual gross bodies are very significant.

\textit{Vaiśvānara} comprises two words – ‘\textit{viśva}’ and ‘\textit{nara}’. The word ‘\textit{viśva}’ means ‘total’ and ‘\textit{nara}’ means ‘person’. Thus \textit{vaiśvānara} stands for the One who is identified with all beings.

\textit{Vīrāt} is a word which comes from the Sanskrit verbal root ‘\textit{rāt}’ – to shine. To this root is added the prefix (\textit{upasarga}) ‘\textit{vi}’ which means ‘special’. Hence the Consciousness that specially manifests in all beings is called \textit{vīrāt}.

\textit{Viśva} literally means ‘all’. Thus the word ‘\textit{viśva}’ signifies the Consciousness that is identified with each and every individual gross body.

Sri Shankaracharya in \textit{Sarva Vedānta Saṅgrahāḥ}, explains the significance of these terms:

\begin{quote}
एतत् समस्तयत्वैविचित्र चेतन्यं फलसंयूतम्।
प्राहुः वेदान्त्यं इति विराधिंति च वैदिकं॥
\end{quote}

\textit{etat samaśṭyavacchinnam caityanyam phalaśamyutam}
\textit{prahuro vaiśvānara iti virāditi ca vaidikāḥ}॥

The wise therefore call the consciousness which is reflected in and through the aggregate of all gross bodies by the name of \textit{vaiśvānara} or \textit{vīrāt}.

\begin{quote}
\textit{vaiśvānaro viśvanareśvātmāteśvābhavabhinnatāḥ}
\textit{vīrāt syādvividhatvena svayameva virājanāt}॥
\end{quote}
It is called vaiśvānara because it symbolises the Consciousness which identifies with all gross bodies. As the Consciousness identified with all gross bodies, it feels through all beings, for it identifies itself with them. It is also called virāt for it makes itself manifest in and through the diverse forms of life.

यत्स्ततो विश्व इति नामा सार्थो स्वत्त्वयम्।
व्यास्तिरेषाय विश्वस्य भवति स्थूलविश्वः॥

yatstato viśva iti nāma sārtha bhavatayam
vyāstireṣasya viśvasya bhavati sthūlavishvāḥ

The term viśva is very appropriate because it signifies that the universal Self becomes identified with the multitudinous forms of existence and lives in them in all their manifold variety.

Conclusion

We have in this essay seen in detail the various components of the sthūlasrṣṭi. Also with this essay we have completed the description of the entire adhyāropa or deliberate superimposition as described by the śrutis and āchāryas (teachers) of Vedānta. Adhyāropa started with the positing of māyā. The two powers of māyā – āvaraṇa and vikṣepa sakti were then described. This was followed by elaborations on sūkṣma and sthala srṣṭi. We have thus traversed a lot on the road of Vedānta. It is time we enter into the next phase of Vedāntic thought development viz., apavrāda or the negation of the adhyāropa.

For the complete description of the Vedāntic Adhyāropa please refer to the series of ten essays starting from June 2003 issue of the Tapovan Prasad.

Thoughts can make us or mar us. If rightly harnessed, they can be used for constructive purposes; if misused, they can destroy us totally.

Swami Chinmayananda

Sri Krishna Sweets