When viewed grammatically, the sentence ‘ntlam utpalam asti – there is a blue lotus’ and the Mahavakya ‘Tat tvam asi’, look similar. Both nilapada (word ‘blue’) and utpalapada (word ‘lotus’) in ‘ntlam utpalam asti’ are in the same prathamā vibhakti (nominative case). So too both the tatpada (word ‘tat’) and tvampada (word ‘tvam’) in the Mahavakya ‘Tat tvam asi’ exist in the same prathamā vibhakti (nominative case). Because of this similarity we first started understanding the process by which we grasp the meaning of the sentence ‘ntlam utpalam asti’. We discovered that both nilapada (word ‘blue’) and utpalapada (word ‘lotus’) enjoy saṃmanadhikaranya-sambandha because they exist in the same prathamā vibhakti (nominative case). This applies to ‘Tat tvam asi’ also wherein both the tatpada (word ‘tat’) and tvam pada (word ‘tvam’) enjoy saṃmanadhikaranya-sambandha because they exist in the same prathamā vibhakti (nominative case).

This overt resemblance between the two sentences ‘ntlam utpalam asti’ and ‘Tat tvam asi’ gives a deceptive feel that both are identical in nature. But the conspicuous difference between the two sentences becomes evident when we apply anyonya-viṣeṣaṇa-viṣeṣyatā-sambandha to their respective padārthas. Application of anyonya-viṣeṣaṇa-viṣeṣyatā-sambandha to ni latva-padārtha and utpalatva-padārtha leads us to the knowledge of a vastu-puṣpa (object-flower) which has both the characteristics of ni latva (blueness) and utpalatva (lotusness). But the application of the same anyonya-viṣeṣaṇa-viṣeṣyatā-sambandha to tat-padārtha-
Tīvra and tvam-padārtha-jīva does not help us discover the vastu (object) with the properties of both tīvra and jīva. This has to be naturally so, for, it is incongruous and totally incompatible to basic commonsense and rationality to have a vastu (object) which is both tīvra and jīva at the same time. These ideas have already been discussed in the last essay.

It is now obvious that the sentences ‘nilam utpalam asti’ and ‘Tat tvam asi’ are dissimilar even though there is a semblance of similarity between them. The only similarity is the presence of sāmānādhikaranāya-sambandha2 between the two padas in each sentence. The resemblance stops there and goes no further. This point is emphasised by Swami Sadananda in Vedānta-Sūra: “Asminvākye nilamutpalam iti vākyavad vākyārtho na saṅgacchate — In this sentence (Tat tvam asi), the meaning of the sentence is not revealed as in the case of the sentence nilam utpalam asti”.

Failure As Success

It is imperative at this juncture to take note of the crucial failure of viśeṣaṇa-viśeṣyatā-sambandha in providing the.akhaṇḍārtha3 (unitary meaning) of the mahaāvākya ‘Tat tvam asi’. This failure forces a paradigm shift in the interpretative processes employed in deciphering the mahaāvākya. It pressurises us to use lakṣanā-ortti4 and rederive the meanings of tatpada and tvam-pada. This in turn paves the way for the application of the third and the final step in understanding ‘Tat tvam asi’ which is the lakṣya-lakṣaṇatā-sambandha-jiñānam.

1 Viśeṣaṇa-viśeṣyatā-sambandha was elaborated in Tat Tvam Asi – Part IV, November 2004 issue of Tapovan Prasad.
2 Sāmānādhikaranāya-sambandha was elaborated in ‘Tat Tvam Asi – Part III’, October 2004 issue of Tapovan Prasad.
3 For a concise elaboration of the term ‘akhaṇḍārtha’ refer to the subheading ‘Three steps’ in ‘Tat Tvam Asi – Part II’, September 2004 issue of Tapovan Prasad.
4 For a concise elaboration of the term ‘akhaṇḍārtha’ refer to the subheading ‘Three steps’ in ‘Tat Tvam Asi – Part II’, September 2004 issue of Tapovan Prasad.

The new terms used in this paragraph - lakṣanā-ortti and lakṣya-lakṣaṇatā-sambandha-jiñānam are elaborated in due course. Lakṣya-lakṣaṇatā-sambandha-jiñānam has already been briefly explained as the knowledge (jiñānam) of the relation (sambandha) of the implication (lakṣaṇa) and the implied (lakṣya), in ‘Tat Tvam Asi – II’ published in the September 2004 issue.
The failure of mere viśeṣaṇa-viśeṣyatā-sambandha in deciphering the meaning of the mahāvākyā and the need to take recourse to lakṣaṇa-vṛtti has been clearly emphasised by the Acharyas (great Teachers) of Vedānta. The following is a sample verse from Sarvajnatma Muni’s Saṅkaṭepaśārīraka (Verse 1.196):

Sāmānāḍhikaranyamatra bhavati prāthamīyabhāgaṇvayah
pāścādeṣa viśeṣaṇetaratayā pāścādevirodhodhavah
utpanne ca virodha ekarasake vastunyakhandaṭātmak
evṛttir lakṣaṇayā bhavatyayamīhi jñeyah kramaḥ sūribhiḥ

"First there arises the knowledge that the two words (tat and tvam) have sāmānāḍhikaranyam. Then the meanings of the two words are related as substantive and adjective. As this presents incompatibility, the secondary signification of the words is taken, to signify the partless Self. And the learned know that this is the sequence through which the Knowledge of the Absolute arises”.

All successes are not true successes and all failures are not real failures. Since it is only the failure of viśeṣaṇa-viśeṣyatā-sambandha that paves the way for lakṣya-lakṣaṇatā-sambandha-jñānam, this viśeṣaṇa-viśeṣyatā-sambandha-jñānam is considered an essential and unavoidable step in interpreting the mahāvākyā ‘Tat tvam asi’. In this context the very collapse of viśeṣaṇa-viśeṣyatā-sambandha is its success. But for its failure, it would never have guided us to lakṣya-lakṣaṇatā-sambandha and it would never have found its undeniable place in the three sambandhas required for deciphering ‘Tat tvam asi’.

Moving Forward

Now the onus is on lakṣya-lakṣaṇatā-sambandha — the relation (sambandha) of the implication (lakṣaṇa) and the implied (lakṣya).
When we apply the lakṣya-lakṣaṇatā-sambandha, ‘tat tvam asī’ is easily deciphered and the akhandārtha stands revealed effortlessly. However, before we actually start discussing lakṣya-lakṣaṇatā-sambandha-jñānam, there are some important concepts that we need to equip ourselves with. These concepts are:

a. Vṛtti
b. Mukhya-vṛtti
c. Mukhyārtha or Vācyārtha
d. Lakṣaṇa-vṛtti
e. Lakṣyārtha
f. Jalal-lakṣaṇā or jahatī lakṣaṇā
g. Ajahal-lakṣaṇā or ajahatī lakṣaṇā
h. Jajad-ajahal-lakṣaṇā or jahatī-ajahatī lakṣaṇā

Once we understand these introductory notes it would be very easy to accurately understand the purpose, nature and methodology of lakṣya-lakṣaṇatā-sambandha-jñānam. This essay and the next are wholly devoted to laying the foundation for lakṣya-lakṣaṇatā-sambandha-jñānam.

Two types of Vṛtti

Vṛtti is connotation or signification. Every pada (word) connotes a meaning or what is termed ‘word-sense’ — a ‘padartha’. For example, the pada (word) ‘book’ connotes a padartha — an ‘object book’. Grammarians define vṛtti as the relationship between a pada (word) and its padartha (meaning or word-sense). The following definition emphasises this:

\[ \text{Padasya arthena sambandhaḥ vṛttiḥ} \]

“Vṛtti is the relationship between a word and its meaning”.

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5 Also called bhāgatyāga-lakṣaṇā.
6 In this present essay we will be covering vṛtti, mukhya-vṛtti and mukhyārtha. Lakṣaṇa-vṛtti and lakṣyārtha will only be briefly explained and will be elaborated further in the next essay. The remaining three concepts will also be taken up in the next essay.
7 Vṛtti is derived from the Sanskrit verbal root vṛt, which means 'to be' or 'to exist'. A whole gamut of meanings is indicated by vṛtti. a) That which exists is called vṛtti. 
   b) The modification of antahkāraṇa or avidyā is termed vṛtti. c) Livelihood is also given the appellation of vṛtti. d) The pāñcabāndha's activities are also given the name vṛtti. e) Connotation in grammar is also vṛtti.
This vṛtti or connotation is of two types:

- *mukhya-vṛtti* i.e., primary connotation or direct connotation
- *lakṣaṇā-vṛtti* i.e., secondary connotation or implied connotation.

For example, take the sentence – ‘Muncaḥ krošanti – the galleries are shouting’. The *muṇcapada* (word ‘gallery’) primarily signifies a *padārtha* which is the ‘balcony of a theatre’. This primary connotation is called *mukhya-vṛtti* (primary or direct connotation). And the *padārtha* understood by *mukhya-vṛtti*, i.e., ‘the balcony’, is the *mukhyārtha* or the primary meaning.

But since the ‘gallery’ cannot shout because of it being inert in nature, we take *muṇcapada* (word ‘gallery’) to connote and imply ‘the people sitting in the gallery’. This non-primary implied connotation is called *lakṣaṇā-vṛtti* (implied connotation or secondary connotation). The implied meaning or secondary derived meaning of *muṇcapada* (word ‘gallery’) which is the ‘people sitting in the gallery’ is termed *lakṣyārtha* (implied meaning or secondary meaning).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vṛtti (Signification or Connotation)</th>
<th>Nature</th>
<th>mukhya-vṛtti</th>
<th>lakṣaṇā-vṛtti</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Term for the padārtha</strong> (word-sense or meaning)</td>
<td>Primary Signification or Direct Connotation</td>
<td><em>mukhyārtha</em> (primary word-sense or direct meaning)</td>
<td><em>lakṣyārtha</em> (secondary word-sense or implied meaning)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Elucidation with an example: ‘The galleries are shouting’</strong></td>
<td>‘The galleries’ – (this is the <em>mukhyārtha</em>).</td>
<td>‘The people in the galleries’ – (this is the <em>lakṣyārtha</em>).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To summarise: when a *pada’s* *padārtha* (word’s word-sense or meaning) is understood using *mukhya-vṛtti* (primary connotation), the *padārtha* is termed *mukhyārtha* (primary meaning) or *vācyārtha* (direct meaning); and when the same *pada’s* *padārtha* (word’s word-sense) is construed using *lakṣaṇā-
vṛttī (secondary or implied connotation) the padārtha is called laksyārtha (implied meaning).

**Mukhya-vṛttī**

Mukhya-vṛttī is usually translated as primary connotation, primary signification, direct connotation or direct signification. Sanskrit grammarians have extensively researched the topic of connotation and have conclusively proved that in mukhya-vṛttī, a pada connotes its padārtha (word-sense) only through one of the four mediums mentioned below. They are:

1. **jāti (genus):** The word 'cow' connotes its padārtha — the 'object cow' through the medium of 'cowness'. 'Cowness' is a jāti i.e., genus or universal property of all cows. This is an example of how pada (word) communicates its padārtha (word-sense) through the medium of jāti.

2. **kriyā (action):** The word 'cook' signifies a 'person who does the act of cooking'. In this example the medium of kriyā (action) is used to connote the padārtha (word-sense).

3. **guna (quality):** When we say 'blue lotus', the word blue signifies its padārtha (word-sense) which is 'blueness' and the lotus thus stands described as having the quality of blueness. The connotation herein is through the medium of a guna (quality).

4. **sambandha (relation):** The expression 'king's servant' connotes the servant through the relationship of the individual being a servant of the king. In this example sambandha (relation) is used as a medium of connotation.

A padārtha (meaning or word-sense) which is arrived at by using any one of the four means is said to be understood through mukhya-vṛttī and such a padārtha is termed mukhyārtha or the word's primary meaning or primary word-sense. The mukhyārtha or the primary meaning is in fact the literal or direct meaning of the word. Literal meaning or direct meaning is termed vācyārtha or abhidheyaartha.

Grammarians use the term 'sāktī' to indicate the capacity of the word to reveal its meaning. The padārtha revealed through
the pada’s śakti is called śakyārtha. This śakyārtha is the same as mukhyārtha.

Now we have four terms: mukhyārtha, vācyārtha, abhidheyārtha and śakyārtha — all meaning the same — the primary, literal or the direct meaning of the word.

**Mukhya-Vṛtti cannot reveal Brahman**

‘Cowness’ is distinct from ‘horseness’ and both of them are different from ‘humanness’. It is clear that jāti (genus) comes into play only in the realm of multiplicity. Upanishadic sentences like ‘ekam eva adwaitīyam — One alone without a second’ (Chāndogya Upanishad – 6.2.1) vehemently deny even a trace of duality in Brahman. Since Brahman is one without a second and admits no duality whatsoever, Brahman cannot be categorised under any genus.

A ‘cook’ can be described through his kriyā (action) of cooking. But Brahman does no action. It is described by the Upanishads as being niṣkriyāḥ or actionless (vide Śvetāsvatara Upanishad 6.19). Hence Brahman cannot be signified through the medium of actions also.

Further Brahman has no qualities. It is often explained in the Upanishads as being nirguṇa or qualityless (kevalo nirguṇaḥsa - Śvetāśvatara Upanishad 6.11). Hence the medium of guṇa or quality also cannot be used to connote Brahman.

Any relation involves a minimum of two components. Husband is related to wife, mother to child, student to teacher and so on. All sambandhas or relations are possible only in the realm of duality. Brahman admits of no such duality. It is one, infinite, non-dual and unattached. The Upanishads declare Brahman to be asaṅgaḥ (unattached) in sentences such as ‘asaṅga hi ayaṁ puruṣaḥ – This being is verily unattached’ (Brhadāranyaka Upanishad 4.3.15). This being the case, Brahman cannot be described using the medium of relationship also.

While śakti is the power in the word to reveal its padartha, vṛtti is the relationship between the pada and its padartha. The pada’s śakti reveals its sakyārtha. The term śakti-vṛtti is fashioned from the expression ‘śakti’ and is used synonymously with mukhya-vṛtti. The sakyārtha of the pada is in fact the pada’s mukhyārtha.

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Since Brahman does not fall under a jāti (genus), does not do or instigate any kriyā (action), does not possess any guna (quality) and does not have any sambandha (relation) with anything else, Brahman cannot be revealed through mukhya-vṛtti. Hence Brahman cannot be the mukhyārtha (or vācyārtha) of any word.

Also there should be the knowledge that 'this word (pada) signifies this sense (padartha)' for mukhya-vṛtti to operate. While the word 'pot' or 'book' brings to our mind the picture of its respective padārtha, the word Brahman does not bring out any mental construct of Brahman. In fact, if any mental picture of Brahman 'flashes', it is certainly not Brahman, for Brahman is verily the subject and never the object. Jāti, kriyā, guna and sambandha are no doubt the means through which the mukhya-vṛtti connotes the mukhyārtha of a pada, but without the 'knowledge of the pada connoting a particular padārtha', mukhya-vṛtti is powerless to connote. All this establishes that mukhya-vṛtti cannot connote Brahman.

Conclusion

The question which arises naturally at this juncture is whether laksanā-vṛtti, the second kind of connotation, can signify Brahman. But before we can answer that question we need to be clear about the nature of laksanā-vṛtti. Laksanā-vṛtti is sub-divided into three types. After understanding what laksanā-vṛtti is we will then study its three types and then we will have to find out which of the three types helps us in understanding the mahāvākyā 'Tat tvam asi'. Then comes the application of the third knowledge step, the lakṣya-laksanatā-sambandha-jñānam. Once that is done 'Tat tvam asi' stands revealed crystal clear – to use the Sanskrit expression – 'kara-tala-amalakavat – like a myrobalan fruit (similar to a gooseberry) in the palm of one's hand'.

Refer to Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayanandaji's commentary on Taittireya Sruti (2.4) — 'yato vaco nicartante aprāpya manasā saha – whence speech turns back without reaching it along with the mind'. 