Introduction

The Mahāvākyā ‘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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tat-pada-vācyārtha-Īśvara</th>
<th>Tvam-pada-vācyārtha-jīva</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sarvaśaktimān – all powerful</td>
<td>Alpaśaktimān – possessing limited power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarvajñāḥ – all knower</td>
<td>Alpaśajñāḥ – possessing limited knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vībhū – all-pervading</td>
<td>Paricchinnāḥ – limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iśvara - Lord</td>
<td>Anāśaḥ – not-Lord</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Svatantraḥ - independent</td>
<td>Karmādhīnaḥ – dependent on ‘karma’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parokṣaḥ – known mediatelY</td>
<td>Nitya-āparokṣaḥ – known always as immediate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Māyaḥ – one who wields māyā</td>
<td>Māya-mohitaḥ – deluded by māya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bandha-mokṣa-rahitah – devoid of bondage and Liberation³</td>
<td>Bandha-mokṣabhaḥ – enjoying both bondage and Liberation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ For further elaboration on the differences between Īśvara and jīva refer to ‘Tat Tvam Asi – 1’ — August 2004 issue of Tapovan Prasad.
² Since Īśvara is never bound, there is no question of Liberation also.

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

a. jahallaksana (exclusive secondary connotation)

b. ajahallaksana (inclusive secondary connotation) and
c. jahad-ajahal-laksana (exclusive-inclusive secondary connotation).

The question here is – ‘Of the three laksanās, 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. Īśvara is the Caitanya-vastu with the upādhī (conditioning or limiting adjunct) of the samsāti-sthūla-sūkṣma-kāraṇa-śarīra (total-gross-subtle-causal-body) while jīva is the same Caitanya-vastu with the

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3 The three laksanās 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 deśātā (duality) and the term ‘ananta’ negates deśātā. Therefore it would not be inappropirate to say that the common core of Īśvara and jīva is ‘satyam-jñānam-anantam-vastu’ or ‘sat-cit-ānanda-vastu’. 
upādhi of vyaṣṭi-sthūla-sūkṣma-kāraṇa-śarīra (individual-gross- subtle-causal-body). The bhedas (differences) between Īśvara and jīva – like sarvasaktimān-alpaśaktimān, sarvajñāḥ-alpa-jñāḥ – which were enumerated earlier, are merely upādhika i.e. based on the upādhis and are hence valid only from the upādhika-dṛṣṭi (standpoint of the upādhis). Bereft of their respective upādhis, both samaṣṭi-sthūla-sūkṣma-kāraṇa-śarīra (total-gross-subtle-causal-body) and vyaṣṭi-sthūla-sūkṣma-kāraṇa-śarīra (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, upādhika or anaupādhika?’ The Advaitin emphatically declares that the upādhis are mithyā (illusory) for they are either māya or māya-kārya. And this mithyātva (illusoriness), he establishes with ease through the vaidika-adhyāropa-apavāda-prakriyā (Vedic methodology of deliberate superimposition and consequent negation).

The acceptance of the illusory nature of the upādhis has far reaching consequences. The distinction between Īśvara and jīva based on upādhika-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.

3 Īśvara’s upādhi is māya and jīva’s upādhi is māya-kārya — kāryopādhirayaṁ jīvAH kāraṇopādhirīśvārah.

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. To explain — while construing the **vācyārtha** (sentence-sense) of the sentence ‘Gāngāyāṁ ghōṣah — there is a village on the Gāṅgā’, the whole **vācyārtha** (direct meaning) of the Gāṅgā-pada (word ‘Gāṅgā’), 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 **ādhāra-ādheya-bhāva** (the relationship of container-contained) between the River Gāṅgā and the village, it is absurd to construe that ‘the village is on the River Gāṅgā’. It is because of this reason that the whole **vācyārtha** — River Gāṅgā had to be dropped. But this type of total rejection of the **vācyārtha** is not required in the case of the **Mahāvākyā ‘Tat tvam asi’** as there is no total contradiction between the **Tat-pada-vācyārtha-Iśvara and tvam-pada-vācyārtha-jīva**. There is contradiction in the **upādhi-bhāga** (upādhi portion) of Iśvara 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 Iśvara and jīva. Sri Swami Sadananda in Vedanta Sūra explicitly states this:

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

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

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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 jahallaksanā.

Reason II

If jahallaksanā is accepted, then along with the upādhis, the Caitanya-vastu will also have to be abandoned, because jahallaksanā 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 jaṭa (inert), which by logic will turn out to be anṛta (false) and duḥkha (sorrowful). And there is no puruṣārtha-siddhi (mokṣa) with the acceptance of such a 'anṛta-jaṭa-duḥkha-vastu' — false-inert-sorrowful-principle' as the meaning of the Mahāvākyā. With no puruṣārtha-siddhi the Śāstras become nisprayojana (without benefit). Therefore there is no purpose served in employing jahallaksanā for construing the vākyārtha of the Mahāvākyā.

Even though it has thus been proved that jahallaksanā 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
and substituted with jīva as the lakṣyārtha. Let us investigate whether this is feasible.

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

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 samaśti-sthūla-sūkṣma-kāraṇa-sārīra (total-gross-subtle-causal-body) is also rejected. The vyaśti-sthūla-sūkṣma-kāraṇa-sārīra (individual-gross-subtle-causal-body), being a part of the samaśti-sthūla-sūkṣma-kāraṇa-sārīra, 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 Iśvara. This is absolutely untenable – when we replace tvam-pada-vācyārtha-jīva by Iśvara (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’. 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 Śāra, rejects

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12 Iśvara is the svāmi and the jīva belongs (sva) to Iśvara. Thus the relationship of jīva and Iśvara 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.

"In the sentence the word 'bank' is not mentioned, and therefore the meaning, which is not explicit can be derived through implication (laksana-optti). 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 jahallaksana, the laksyartha is something which is not part of the sentence. The tira (banks) is not part of the sentence 'Gangayam ghosa'. But in the case of the above two options, the ingeniously contrived laksyartha 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 laksyartha derivation cannot even fall under the category of jahallaksa.

Ajahallaksa also Inadmissible

In the case of ajahallaksa, the whole vacyartho is retained and a new related component is added to the vacyartho so as to arrive at the laksyartha. For example, in the sentence 'Sono dhavati – the red runs', we retain the vacyartho of sono-pada which is the quality 'red' and to it we add its related component – 'horse' and arrive at the laksyartha of sono-pada as 'sonah asvah – red horse'. This ajahallaksa is not suitable for construing

\[\text{Laksyartha by ajahallaksa} = \text{new component related to vacyartho + vacyartho. Refer to 'Tat Tvam Asi – VI'—February 2005 issue of Tapovan Prasad.}\]
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.

"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 *ajahallaksanā* is inadmissible."

**Conclusion**

Thus it is has been clearly established that both jahallaksanā as well as *ajahallaksanā* are incompatible and inadmissible for construing the *vākyārtha* (sentence-sense) of the *Mahāvākyā ‘Tat tvam asi’*. This leaves us with the third *lakṣaṇa-vṛtti* - the jahadajahallaksanā 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 Vedaś, 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.