

Tatvas and Gunas - (The Origin of the Universe)  
by R C Ganjoo        Bookmark and Share

Swami Maheshwarananda has developed a comprehensive master system called "Yoga in Daily Life", based on original yoga tradition and specially directed to the situation and needs of modern civilization. The system can be lived and practised regardless of age, social status, nationality or denomination. It is internationally recognised and practised. On "Yoga in Daily Life" by Swami Maheshwarananda as told to R C GANJOO.

In the beginning was SHUNYAKASHA - "emptiness" Or "the void". Shunyakasha is more than "nothingness", it is an immense potency of dormant energy in which "everything" exists in a latent state of potentiality. Everything conceivable can be brought into existence , just like text written, or pictures drawn, on an empty sheet of paper.

As creation began , the divine, all-encompassing consciousness took the form of the first and original vibration manifesting as the sound "OM". Just like light, sound is vibration, energy. Light and sound are the forms that the Divine Self takes in the Universe . OM is the reflection of the absolute reality. Om is "Adi Anadi" - without beginning or end. In the Veda (The Vedas are the oldest and most well known holy revelations), it is said.

NADARUPA PARABRAHMA - (The form of the Supreme is sound)

The vibrations of OM symbolises the manifestation of God in form. The silence between two OM -sound reveals the formless ,divine principle.

OM embraces "all that exists"-past ,present and future, all spheres of the Cosmos, the world and its underlying reality , mind and matter, cause and effect, the path and the goal. The Mantra ( Holy syllable , holy word, name of God) OM is the " name of God",the vibration of the Supreme ,the all-encompassing Mantra. The essence of all wisdom has its roots in this sound. In the triad A-U-M the divine energy (Shakti) is united in its three elementary aspects as:

BRAHMA SHAKTI- the creative power that manifests the Universe

VISHNU SHAKTI - the preserving power that sustains the Cosmos.

SHIVA SHAKTI - the liberating power that brings about transformation and renewal .

At the beginning of creation, as the sound of OM divided the unity of Shunyakasha, two powers emerged from it:

PURUSHA- original consciousness

PRAKRITI- primordial nature

Prakriti is the eternal stream of divine energy and Purusha is the divine Self, the unchanging, omnipresent and omniscient witness of all events and mutations of Prakriti . To ensure that nature ( Prakriti) would always maintain a connection to the divine (Purusha) , the force of attraction developed as an aspect of Prakriti.

The desire for union and the striving for expansion me "natural", they are intrinsic of nature. Why does the seed that was planted in the lap of the earth sprout ? Because the impetus for growth and duplication lies in its nature - uniting ,unfolding, growing, multiplying, protecting, preserving and nourishing, put concisely ,"loving" is the fundamental characteristic of Prakriti. Love contains the impulse for development and expansion , and this love is part of the Divine Being.

In a progressive sequence the three GUNAS ( essential qualities) and the five TATTVAS ( elementary principles) emanated from Prakriti . These form the basis of all manifestations, of all manifestations, of all subtle and gross forms.

The five TATTVAS are:

PRITHVI- Earth  
APAS - Water  
TEJAS- Fire  
VAYU- Air  
AKASHA- Space

However, without some impetus the Tattvas cannot unite. For that they require the participation of the Gunas, which are characterised by the following qualities:

RAJAS - activity, movement, restlessness, passion  
TAMAS - rigidity ,laziness, darkness, ignorance  
SATTVA - harmony ,light, purity, knowledge

Tattvas and Gunas are the primordial forces that have an effect on both the physical and astral planes. They influence all forms of life physically, psychically and spiritually from the beginning of their earthy existence to their end. Through the multi-layered combination of these powers the human body, with its highly complex organ, nerve and brain functions, comes into existence and the psyche and mind are formed.

The diverse interactions between the five gross Tattva, which form the physical body, are known as Prakritis ( natural forces). There are twenty-five Prakritis that influence and regulate the system of the body.

The Tattvas that are flowing aimlessly around in space are independent forces without visible effect. It is not until several of these primordial, undirected forces are concentrated at one point that something qualitatively new is produced . However, first and assembly point must be formed so the energy can be focused and assimilated. The most highly developed and most powerful and centre on earth is human. So just as bees collect around the queen bee, all forces and Tattvas follow when the Atma enters the embryo . In order for a human form to be constructed , the orderly combination of an immense number of effects is necessary. In the same way, but at a lower intensity , animal and plant life come into being.

The Cosmic forces are collected within the human body at certain central points, the CHAKRAS. These function like powerful power stations. They draw in cosmic energy, transform, store and distribute it, and then radiate it out into the Cosmos again.

The Tattvas the combine to form the body as a dwelling for the soul again detach from one another at death and return to the Cosmos. The soul then continues to wander , waiting to produce a new form again under suitable conditions. This cycle is known as CHORASI KA CHAKRA. "The Wheel of Rebirth and Death".

According to Indian philosophy , there are 8.4 million type of living beings that are divided into three categories : NABHA CHARA, THALA CHARA AND JALA CHARA- living beings that exist in the air , those that live on or under the earth and those that live in the water. They are further divided into four different classifications according to their method of birth in these earthly spheres.

JARAYUJA - in the womb (humans and animals)  
ANDAJA - in an egg that hatched (birds, reptiles, fish, etc.)  
SVEDAJA - through division(lower forms of life, bacteria, etc.)  
UDBHIJJA - through seed(vegetation)

Each of these groups has certain aptitudes and abilities called KALA in Sanskrit. Plants possess one Kala, lower life forms two, egg laying animals three, and mammals and humans four. While plants and animals remain at the level of their genesis, humans can develop up to sixteen Kala through exercises, concentration and following the principles of Yoga. They can acquire twelve supernatural powers in addition to their natural aptitudes.

Without faltering , the wheel of rebirth keeps turning , and the soul wanders through the circle of existence driven by God's plan and KARMAS (actions). Human life offers the only possibility of ending this cycle. The cyclic of nature also bind humans, but with the help of the intellect they are capable of exploring the world, themselves and also the supernatural powers. Only humans are capable of understanding "What is God". Only humans can realise God. That is why it is possible for them to emerge from the cycle of rebirth and, as a consequence , also help others to do so.

Self-Realised Yoga Masters are known as BRAHMANISHTA SHROTRIAA, the knowers of Brahman, and TATTVA DARSHI, the knowers of the Tattvas . Their knowledge and experiences are unlimited, they transcend time, and intellect. One who possesses self-knowledge and knowledge of the Tattvas has acquired the highest knowledge realisable by a human-with this one becomes the "Knower of God" (BRAHMA GYANI) and the Self merges into the divine consciousness and becomes one with God.

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