

Vedanta Mission Online Tattva Bodha Course

by

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Introduction of Tattva Bodha

Part-1 / Lesson-1

Tattva Bodha means 'Knowledge of the Truth'. This small introductory text of Vedanta reveals the fundamentals of the various aspects of the topic of knowledge of truth. What is the essence of myself and this world? What is the nature of the knowledge of truth? Who is the right student for this specialized knowledge? What is the process of the dawn of this understanding? and, What are the indications of a man of such knowledge? The author of this lovely text is Sri Adi Sankara.

Knowledge of Truth :

Knowledge of Truth is the door to a free & contented living. It is the door to Moksha. Moksha means freedom. Real freedom is not from something outside, but freedom from our own conditionings, and also from the limitations of time & space. Ignorance of our true essence is the only cause of all miseries of mankind. The Vedic Rishi's see no other problem in the world or in man except the ignorance of the truth of our self as the one & only problem. The world is all very perfect & beautiful. Not knowing the truth of ourself, we imagine something else as our reality. But what ever we imagine, is no where near the truth, and is always something limited, and thus is born a limited person, and rest is all history. Life becomes an endless struggle to eliminate a problem which is not really there. Thus a funny game is going on, we first imagine a problem and then are endlessly & also unsuccessfully busy through out our lives to remove the 'problem'. Knowledge of the tattva alone brings an end to this funny yet terrible game.

Knowledge of Self :

Knowledge of Self is a very different game. It is unlike any other knowledge. It is a class by itself, because here the very knower has to be known. Normally for any 'knowledge' to take place, the 'knower' takes resort to some 'means' of knowledge and then objectifies the 'object of knowledge'. Clarity of knowledge depends upon the clarity in this objectification. However, in the knowledge of Self, there can be no objectification, and still knowledge has to take place. The very subject which was knowing all objects is now the target. The subject by its very definition is not an object, it is not something 'seen', so the million dollar question is that how can the subject be an object of knowledge. While it is obvious that this knowledge is entirely of a different class yet we have to know the Self. There is no choice about it. Not knowing our own self properly is the door to all miseries, seeking & transmigration.

Six Means of Knowledge :

Before we go into how we know the self, we should first get an idea about the various 'means' of knowledge which are available to us. The means of knowledge is called 'Pramana'. There are six recognized pramana's. They are :

1. Pratyaksha : is direct sensual perception. Under it comes the knowledge of the five objects (Sabda, Sparsh, Rupa, Rasa & Gandha) and also the thoughts & emotions in our minds. They are also directly known & seen.

2. Anumana : is Inference. We do not directly see the object of knowledge yet we come to know a particular thing because of the well established association of two things. Like we come to the existence of fire on seeing the smoke. We know many things in this way.

3. Upamana : is comparison. Like we see a new animal and come to know about it with reference to a similar thing seen earlier.

4. Arthapatti : is presumption. When we see someone getting fatter everyday, and the fellow says that he is not eating during the day, then we 'presume' that he is eating at night.

5. Anupalabdhi : means non-availability or non-existence. We 'know' very clearly the absence of a particular thing or person by its non-availability at this time & place.

6. Sabda : means the words of a knowledgeable person. It is revelation about something by some wise person.

Out of all these pramana's, the first five require some perceptual basis, while the sabda operates even without it. We can talk, discuss & come to 'know' about something which is not an object of our knowledge. Thus sabda operates in a very wide spectrum. One should learn to see all these pramana's in action in our day to day life. We use all of them. Thus we will see that the knowledge of Self can take place only by Sabda Pramana. The words of wise people alone is the means of knowledge in this case. That is why the Upanishads have such a reverential place. They are the words of the awakened & enlightened Rishi's. We just have to understand their teachings and this paves the way for the dawn of the knowledge of Self.

How is Atma known :

There is a famous statement in Chandogya Upanishad where Yagnavalkya Rishi tells his wife that the 'Atma is really worth seeing. One should 'see' the Atma by Sravana, Manana & Niddidhyasana'. Which means that one should first hear these scriptures from a 'right teacher', then reflect on what is being revealed by him, and finally meditate on it till the knowledge is assimilated thoroughly. In this light when we see the present question (of how is the subject known) then we get a clear direction. We have to study these scriptures properly. This alone is the means and not something after this study. Thus the scriptures & the Guru become very important for us. In other knowledge we can afford to take it lightly because other knowledge are just a means and not the ultimate pramana, but this should never be the case here. One should enter the portals of Tattva Bodha with this knowledge & conviction.

Other Lessons :

Thus ends the first lesson of the first part of this online course on Tattva Bodha. Now please read the above explanation properly, and then answer the questions given at the end of lesson. Please note here that only this first lesson is 'open' to all. Rest are password-protected. Access to them will only be possible when we first receive the answers to the enclosed questionnaire. So any one who wishes to study the entire Course will have to submit the answers available at the end of each lesson. Systematic study alone is helpful, so go ahead and answer the questions.

The subject matter of other lessons are :

Remaining Lessons of Part-1 of Tattva Bodha Course

Lesson 2	- Bondage & Liberation
Lesson 3	- 1 st Shloka & Role of Guru
Lesson 4	- Qualities of a student of Vedanta
Lesson 5	- Viveka explained
Lesson 6	- Vairagya explained
Lesson 7	- 6 Qualities of Shama etc
Lesson 8	- 6 Qualities – contd..
Lesson 9	- The desire of Liberation
Lesson 10	- Conclusion

Self-Test

Hari om !

This questionnaire is for your own Self-Test. As such we advise you that:-

1. Please study the lesson carefully, if required 1-3 times, and then close the lesson and then answer the questions in a separate email.
2. Copy the questions and write your answers in a separate email and send them to us at: vmission-at-gmail.com. Replace -at- with @.
3. We shall send you the next lesson by email itself - as an attachment. So please organize your spam protection facility accordingly.

1. Pl write subject of the mail as: **Ans of TB 1-1**
2. Your Full Name (as would like to have in the Certificate).
3. Your Complete Address :

Questions

Q-1: What does the name Tattva Bodha mean?

- A secret knowledge.
- Knowledge of the Self.
- Knowledge of the Stars.
- Knowledge of Dharma.

Q-2: Who has written Tattva Bodha?

- Yogindra Vasudeva
- Veda Vyasa
- Acharya Bodha
- Sri Adi Sankara

Q-3: How is the knowledge of Self different from other knowledge's?

- Because this knowledge is old
- It is prasad of Guru
- Here the 'knower' himself has to be 'known'
- It is uncommon

Q-4: Please write in not more than five lines as to what could be the right methodology of knowing the Self?

Best Wishes !
