

The lecture below is part of a series of lectures delivered by Sri Shyam Sundar Goswami (recorded verbatim by the late Gertrud Lundén). It is dedicated to the riddle of life and consciousness, with particular focus on the theme of *Different Levels of Creation*. Through the usage of geometric illustrations*, the author delivers a candid version of the origins of the cosmos and mind, as revealed to the rishis of ancient India.

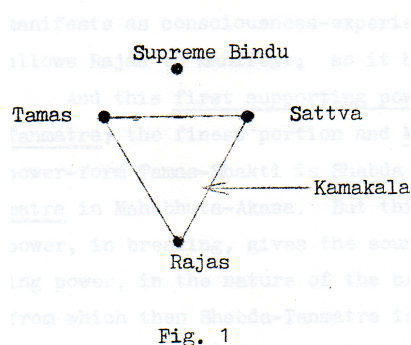
For a better understanding of the abstract concepts, the reader is invited to first read Lecture I.16. See also Sri Shyam Sundar Goswami's book, *Layayoga* (Inner Traditions), which is an advanced exposition of the immaterial centers of creation in humans (the *chakras*) and their origin.

Note by Basile Catoméris

*copied directly from the original texts

Lecture by
Shyam Sundar Goswami
(I.23)

The Nascent Rise of Cosmos and Mind



When emerging from the equilateral triangle *kâmakalâ*, the three entities (*bija*, *nâda* and *bindu*) are paradoxically no longer a whole and yet not separate entities in their own line. They remain united, although with three fundamental aspects, which in mantric terminology sounds as *bija*, *nâda* and *bindu*. (In yogic literature, they are usually identified as *tamas*, *rajas* and *sattva*, or *kriya*, *iccha* and *jñana* from the *Shakti* point of view.) Their interrelation and interdependency does not allow them to function as separate entities, but only in conjunction with the other two. Their operational proportion will vary in accordance with the pattern to be built and the evolution expected. In following up their respective lines, they also represent different levels of knowledge.

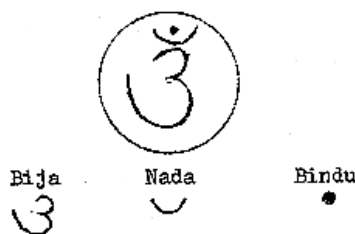


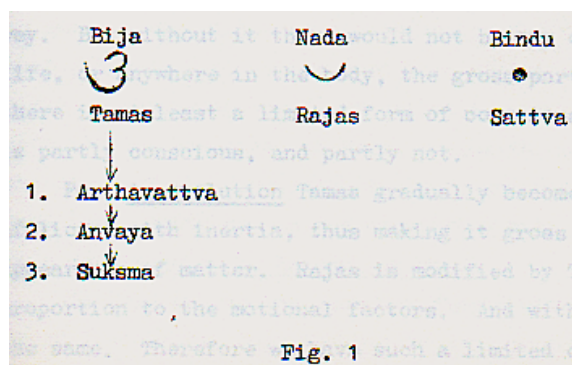
Fig. 1

Amidst recognizable phenomena, *arthavattva* is the first and subtlest form of *bija*. It is not recognizable in any other form except as a reflection on the vast mind or *mahat*, in the state of *bhoga* that operates at the evolutionary stage, or as *moksha* in the reverse process of dissolution.

This subtle form emerges as an effect of the *gunas*, the three original principles in any phenomenon of creation. A second constitutive form of these *gunas* is the *anvaya*-form of *bija*. As fundamental principles operating in both evolution and dissolution (and as fundamental powers), the *gunas* produce different effects according to their interrelation. For instance, *tamas* will cause different effects in evolution and dissolution, respectively.

The state of *anvaya* is the manifestation of *bija* at the 2nd level of evolution consisting of these *gunas*, which may also be called primary attributes or fundamental patterns. While they form a single entity in the equilateral triangle of *kâmakalâ* (*bija nâda bindu*), they become three powerful, continuously interrelated entities at the moment the *kâmakalâ* triangle breaks out and releases *pranava* (*Om*). Here, it is the inertial power, *tamas*, that predominates independently from both *rajas* and *sattva*.

Anvaya is said to embrace the three *gunas*, as all three are in the *guna* that predominates. Further down, *tamas* becomes more and more prominent, progressively specializing the powers which, at the summit, are *bija*-powers. However, the three are still functional powers, none of them being isolated.



Three Interactive Gunas

Depending on *pranava*'s three constituents, *bija*, *nâda* and *bindu*, the *gunas* are endowed with distinct characteristics: *sattva* (the sentient, self-illuminated principle with the faculty of operating on anything else), *rajas* (the energetic principle characterized by transformational power and the subtle, throbbing manifestation called *spanda*) and *tamas* (the inertial principle which stands for absorption, among other things). These are, in brief, the fundamental properties of the three *gunas*.

Tamas, acting upon *rajas*, makes the purely motional factor which is partially absorbed by the former. It moves in a specific manner and thus releases the picture of specific forms of movements, differing from the original motional forms under tamasic influence. When interacting with *sattva*, tamasic absorption of light limits consciousness while restricting the field of knowledge.

On the other hand, *rajasic* action is positive on *tamas*, which as such is potential inertia insofar as it initiates motion. Tamasic influence on *sattva* introduces the motional principle into consciousness as an illuminating principle that causes the mind to oscillate, among other things. (Without *rajas*, the mind would not oscillate.)

The sattvic role in relation to *rajas* is to impart consciousness to the motional factor, which thus becomes conscious. At a lower stage, *rajas* is motion endowed with a specific purpose, where it otherwise would be purposeless. Thus, the motional becomes a conscious phenomenon. The sattvic effect on *tamas* is ambiguous because the manifestation of consciousness there is limited.

Without it, there would not be the faintest trace of consciousness in life or anywhere in the body, the gross aspects of which are tamasic in nature. There is at least a limited form of perceptible consciousness.

Under the process of evolution, the power of inertia (*tamas*) becomes gradually more and more concentrated, rendering whatever falls under its influence gross, grosser and grossest, down to the level of matter. *Rajas* is modified by *tamas* with the proportional absorption of the motional factors. The same applies to *sattva* or consciousness. This is the picture in the evolutionary process of the limits of human consciousness.

In the reverse process of dissolution, *tamas* develops successively and increasingly whatever it has covered and absorbed during evolution, thereby releasing the effects of what was produced by both *rajas* and *sattva*. What then remains at the summit of the field of dissolution is an unconditional, unrestricted Supreme Consciousness, ever unmodified by anything.

Tamas is such a subtlety at the stage of *arthavattva* that it is only known by its effects on the *mahat-tattva*, the whole and full consciousness in the form of a "vast" I-ness. In this highly conscious I-ness, there is the feeling of an I-existence and nothing else.



Fig. 2

On this conscious "vast I" (*mahat*), *arthavattva* acts as evolution unfolds. It produces two things: the sensual pleasure (or *bhoga*) and liberation (*moksha*). While unfolding, *bhoga* acts on consciousness with the faculty to react to it in appropriate manner.



Aham

Fig. 3

When reacting to *bhoga*, the I is no longer endowed with that "vast I" consciousness (*mahat*). Instead, there is an I-ness that shrinks at once to identify with that "something else" and specializes in the accommodation process to fit that "something else." The whole is *bindu*, and as such it does not shrink. However, when the "something else" appears, the "vast I" reacts, and in that reaction it becomes restricted down to become individual I-ness, or *ahang* (also spelled, *aham*).

From *mahat*, the next evolutionary result is thus *ahang* plus something else. It is at this evolutionary level of *mahat-tattva* that a first object is available. The inclination towards something that is no longer *ahang* itself occurs as a reaction to the experience of enjoyment or *bhoga*. This relation, or response, is called *râga*. There is now the encounter of something, of a first object and whatever remains in the I-ness as a result of this experience is *vâsana*. The very first object is born in parallel to the birth of *ahang*. What *ahang* thereafter exhibits in connecting

to the object is pleasure related to the principle or *râga*. The whole experience is confined within the I, and established there as *vâsanâ*, a latent subliminal impression of feeling. The pleasure principle of *râga* then continues as the connection with the object, and the consequence of this continuation is *ânanda*, great pleasure or bliss.

This is how *bhoga*'s influence of *arthavattva* acts on the "vast I"-feeling, the non-oscillatory, calm feeling of pure Being which is *prajñaloka*, consciousness in the form of light, or *prajña*. At the level of *mahat* and *tattva*, this is almost a top-level. Allowed to develop to its maximum, this *prajñaloka* ultimately develops and transforms into *vivekâja-jñana*, or superknowledge, where *mahat-tattva* then disappears. When *vivekâja-jñana* vanishes, *mahat-tattva* arises. After this there is no "vast I" any longer, as it gets more and more absorbed. On moving further down, *mahat-tattva* gradually vanishes and that "something else" arises to become *ahang*. Both in evolution and dissolution, when one form gets absorbed and vanishes, the next one appears at the following level.

At this level, because of the emergence of *râga*, the I-ness (*ahang*) will include "something else," an object within the *bindu*-consciousness. The object then fills in the whole consciousness except the consciousness attached to I-ness. This means that the I sees, but whatsoever it sees is all seen as consciousness. At this level, the I-ness (as *ahang*) experiences the whole consciousness except the I-consciousness itself.

This consciousness consists of almost the whole consciousness. It appears in 2 stages, the top and the bottom, both being almost the same. At the top, consciousness is turned into Supreme consciousness (*para-shiva*). At the bottom, it is somewhat limited (or *sadâ-shiva*), with no link between the I being which is in direct contact with the object. However, despite lack of a direct connection, there is also *râga*, whose connection produces *vâsanâ*.

At the third level from *arthavattva* (which is the first level of *bija*), there is a subtler form or *sukshma*. There lies *tanmâtra* at the top and consciousness in itself as I-existence. There, I-ness experiences a type of consciousness minus the consciousness of the I itself. *Sukshma* impregnates this consciousness, external to the I-consciousness, where the I now clearly perceives both the *tanmâtras* and *mahâbhutas*. The faculty of perceiving and knowing these supra-sensory phenomena does not compare with common cognitive faculty, which ignores the extreme subtleties of *sukshma*, *tanmâtra* and *mahâbhuta*. This means that the *sukshma* type of knowledge stands at a superconsciousness level, where its revealed truth is *ritambhara-prajña*. When that appears in the course of downward evolution, the state of *prajñaloka* or *samprajñata* disappears altogether, leaving the I-ness as a restricted individual phenomenon with yet a trove of potentialities.

At the bottom level emerges *vishayavati-pravritti*, the consciousness that allows the realization of supersensory patterns. It is also at this stage when *ritambhara-prajña* disappears through the influence of the tamasic *bija* on the sattvic *bindu*, in its successive downward orbit next to the *prajña*-level. Downward the *ritambhara-prajña*, at the level of *paramanu*, *jñana* operates below the *anu*-level with *vishayavati-pravritti*. It is the specific power of consciousness (*vishayavati-pravritti*) that allows these kinds of supersensory experiences beyond the *anu* level. Suprasensory experiences occur out of any sensory idea or concept; they simply come to I-ness via *vishayavati-pravritti*.

Sensory knowledge is subject to limitation because of the three main factors: size, distance, and obstacle. Next to this state of consciousness comes the state of *jyotivati-pravritti*, a faculty acting at the extra-sensory level where the three fundamental limits can be effaced in relation to sensory perception and perceptual knowledge.

Thus, knowledge may be classified from the suprasensory level to the level of sensory perception, where *pravritti* normally promotes worldly knowledge and wisdom, or *prajña*.

Co-edited by Jim Earles

