

Śrī Śaṅkarācārya's Kāśī Pañcakam

With the commentary Tatva Prakāśikā by Svāmi Tattvavidānanda Sarasvati

Verse 2

यस्यामिदं कल्पितमिन्द्रजालं चराचरं भाति मनोविलासम् ।

सच्चित्सुखैका परमात्मरूपा सा काशिकाऽहं निजबोधरूपा ॥ २ ॥

yasyāmidam kalpitamindrajalam carācaram bhāti manovilāsam ।

saccitsukaikā paramātmārūpā sā kāśikā'ham nijabodharūpā ॥ 2 ॥

yasyām – In Which, idam – this, kalpitam – imagined, indrajalam – magic, manovilāsam – the playfulness of the mind, carācaram – moving and non-moving, bhāti – shines, saccitsukaikā – Existence-Awareness-Bliss, ekā - One, paramātmārūpā – in the form of the innermost core of the individual, sā – that, kāśikā' – Kasi; aham – I am, nijabodharūpā – having the form of one's own awareness.

I am the city of Kāśī in the form of my own pure awareness. In it shines this unreal magic called the world consisting of moving and non-moving life forms. This world is mere playfulness of the mind. That Reality is Existence-Awareness-Bliss, One, obtaining as the innermost core of the individual.

This universe that exists and shines in that primordial intelligence called Ātman is created by the movement of the mind. For example, as the light of the movie projector shines brilliantly, a movie is projected on the screen due to the movement of the film. The movie has all the elements of saṁsāra consisting of pleasure, pain, attachment, aversion etc., including the space and time. It has mountains, rivers, gardens, flowers, animals, birds and creatures. Everything exists and shines in the brilliance of the projector light. Our waking world is no different.

Where is the world when we are asleep? The moment we wake up, the primordial intelligence, 'I am', comes to light and then the body. The world also arises along with the body, and there is an instant identification with the body giving birth to the person. The body and the world arise and resolve together. Just as the film moving in the presence of the light makes a movie, so also the playfulness of the mind in the waking consciousness creates the world. The light is the brilliantly shining

Awareness Absolute. It is the Kāsi and the film is manovilāsa, the playfulness of the mind. The entire world of moving and unmoving, living and non-living, comes to light.

Sometimes, the movie world appears more attractive, tangible, and real than the real world. A tennis match watched on high-definition TV could be more engaging than watching it in a stadium. Yet it is kalpita, projected, unreal, and dream-like. The world that we experience is entirely a projection of the mind, a magic show, a captivating and binding illusion. One has to gradually grow into this vision.

What is the reality? Saccitsukhaikā, the one Existence-Awareness-Bliss. We have to negate nānā rūpa buddhi, the commitment to names and forms, to understand the truth. We have to negate all projections – name, form, opposites like attachment and aversion etc. There is a lot of confusion around 'I am'. 'I am' is not connected to any of the content of waking consciousness in any way. It is undefined, undesigned, undifferentiated, primordial awareness of being. It is saccit.

What is it that we want in life? We assume that we want different things like money, power, family etc., but what we really want is happiness. We are seeking happiness alone through money, power etc. We have a right to seek the happiness, but the methods are all wrong. We should not seek happiness in the other because the other is insentient and unreal, and hence, cannot give us happiness. Where do we get this feeling of goodness when we feel good watching a movie? Does it flow from the screen unto us or does it flow from us on to the screen? It flows from us to the screen. Happiness does not flow from the outside into our hearts. This is the truth that we refuse to realize. Those who know this truth conquer saṃsāra. How does one discover this truth? One has to abide in the awareness of the being in order to discover its fullness. As we discover saccit, the screen of thoughts created by the mind melts away and the inner reality flows into life making it spontaneously joyful.

Paramātmārūpā, the reality is the innermost Self, not the self identified with body-mind. We derive the sense of self from every possible non-self. For example, the rich man derives his sense of self from his riches. The parent or spouse derives the sense of the self from his relationships. One should not derive the sense of self from anything that one comes to know, because it is the other. Therefore, one has to drop all self-identification. There is nothing sacred in these identifications; they are indeed misleading. The enlightened find it very hard to identify with anything, while the worldly people readily identify with everything. Be nobody, not a somebody. Only then will the real Self shine gloriously.