

# Lecture 1 – Soul, Mind, Body

January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2014

Jai Swaminarayan! Sahajanand Swami Maharajni jai, Bapashreeni jai, Sadguruoshreeni jai, Swaminarayan Bhagwanani jai, tatha anant anadi muktoni jai!

A humble prayer in their and our Guru AMPP Mama-Masi's lotus-feet to augment this assembly with their divinity and grace, and to enhance our knowledge and guide us towards them. I also humbly bow to my knowledge-guru PP Jitukaka. Someday when we have luxury of time, I will share the incident about how he became my knowledge-guru.

Our Guru AMPP NararayanMama always favored clear understanding over blind following. He has even mentioned in one of his speeches that he is confident to be able to answer any spiritual question in a scientific way. He said this in front of an entire assembly, not just 1-2 people. Anyone who has ever had the privilege of asking him a question would know how true this is. Shreeji Maharaj has also mentioned in Vachanamrutam that He likes intellectual and intelligent people. So, as a satsangi of Lord Swaminarayan and disciple of AMPP NarayanMama, we should put in our best effort to understand the philosophy as clearly as possible and become knowledgeable.

So let's embark on a knowledge sharing journey. Before we begin our humble journey, I would like to remember what Vishalbhai mentioned last week, that it is all about understanding how great is the Lord and placing that higher degree faith in the form we worship. So, during any of the interaction, the intent is to share the philosophy and supremacy of Lord Swaminarayan in a scientific way, with open mind and heart.

Another important thing that I wanted to share before we start, is that there is a lot of religious and scientific information and knowledge that is available for the earlier strata. Before I mention earlier strata, I should have mentioned that in spiritual world there are multiple stratum and deities in each. This is a lesser known fact, but during our course we will see that this is really the case. So in the earlier strata, there is more scientific discoveries, more religious references, through enlightened ones and scriptures like Shreemad Bhagwat, Ramayan, Mahabharat, Bible, Kuran, etc. Some of these scriptures are about life and times of enlightened ones, and some are about spiritual knowledge. What I would like to highlight is that all these scriptures at their best have references up to Vairaj Purush (and do not worry about these names. We will go through each one of these in details in the subsequent interactions). In none of these scriptures is there a reference beyond Vairaj Purush, except for Shreemad Bhagwat and Geeta. There is no reference beyond Pradhan Purush except in Geeta and there is no reference beyond Mul Purush whatsoever. There are some enlightened who have mentioned that there is something beyond Mul Purush as well. But there is no clear explanation on what it is. As I mentioned we will talk about each of these categories in subsequent interactions.

But for this group we will use cross-references and available knowledge to establish authenticity, truthfulness, and credibility of the knowledge imparted by Lord Swaminarayan, Sadgurus, Abaji Bapashree and PP NarayanMama. Beyond a certain point, there is no other reasoning, analysis and cross-reference to be taken, except for their knowledge. And we will accept that knowledge as it is, since we would build the faith that their knowledge is scientific and correct. Consequently, we will have a gradual start, but we will pick up momentum in subsequent interactions.

Lastly, please provide any feedback on pace, content, etc. to make this series more beneficial and meaningful. Also, this is an open interaction so please feel free to interrupt me, stop me, correct me and ask questions anytime. Last but not the least, I am not an orator, so kindly overlook any shortcomings that I may have.

A few weeks ago, we had talked about the enormity of the grace that Lord Swaminarayan and His Anadi Muktas have showered upon us. During that interaction, we had talked about how big is the universe that has been discovered so far. One of the things that physicists are doing today is using the understanding of the big to understand the small and vice versa. Along these lines there is an interesting video all the way back from 1977. I am sure all of us have probably already seen it and enjoyed watching it – I will share the link after our Satsang today. What this video does it takes us through 10 times magnification with every shot, and takes us to a cosmic level, showing us how big things look. And then it takes us through microscopic journey with 10 times reduction in every shot and showing us how things look at atomic level. Eventually both extremes look very similar. They don't exactly the same, but very similar. This idea has been around for quite some time and has evolved quite a bit.

Since we have already talked about how big is the big, let's talk about how small is the small. The smallest known particle until a few years ago was an atom, which consists of protons, electrons and neutrons. Our body is made up of 7 billion billion billion atoms. Mathematically computing, it is 27 zeroes after 7! That is more atoms than the number of stars found so far – and that is just in one body. Taking it one level deep, physicists have now gone to extent of breaking up the protons and electrons into sub-particles – they have found 17 from proton and 3 from electron so far. One of the 17 sub-particles in proton is the famous Boson-Higgs particle. We will come back to Higgs when we talk about Siddhis.

In that same hadron collider at CERN where Higgs was discovered, scientists are also working on creating tiny-micro blackholes. On the other hand, there is a super-massive blackhole at the center of every galaxy. There is one in our own milky-way. During our series of interactions, we may come back to blackholes again, but for now, let us understand that even at the size of a billionth of an atom, there is research going on to create a replica of what exists at a massive scale of a galaxy. There is also a lot of research going on in the field on astro-physics and mathematics to find similar patterns, from big to small. For example, pattern similarity between how an atom looks and how our solar system looks or any other star systems looks – smaller bodies revolving around the large ones through some force of attraction. There is also pattern similarity between how the network of galaxies looks and how the network of neurons in our brain looks. I can share a link from online newspaper Huffington post for those who are interested in some reading on this topic. There is a wealth of information available about

scientific discoveries I talking about on the internet. It is not my research; I am simply tying things together.

So do we understand this pattern matching that the scientists are doing? To understand this relationship of big & small and pattern matching, let's take a very small and simple example. For those on Webex, here is a slide of 2 similar triangles. Those not on Webex, don't worry I will explain the slide. In 6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> grade, we learnt about similar triangles. Similar triangles have all three angles exactly the same, but their size is different. That's what I am showing on the slide – there is a small triangle and a big triangle but they look exactly same. Another example, is that of a Russian doll – a doll, within a doll, within a doll.... I am sure we have seen the doll or played with it. Smallest looks exactly like the largest and any other in between. Now take this simple idea of 2 similar triangles or a Russian doll, to an extremely complex complex level and what do we get? We get similarity of body and universe – like the similarity of network of galaxies and network of neurons.

To summarize, scientists are now finding out that patterns seen in the larger universe also map to our body. Now, 200+ years ago, Lord Swaminarayan has mentioned – “Jetalun pindman chhe tetalun brahmaandman chhe” – meaning whatever is in the universe, is also in the body and vice versa. So what scientists are only finding out only now, has been explained by Lord Swaminarayan by “Pind-Brahmandni ekata (similarity of body and universe)” many years ago! Some philosophies merely make a mention along these lines, but do not explain. For example, Swami Vivekanand has mentioned that when we break everything down to its smallest possible size, everything is the same. Christians believe that we are made in the image of God. But that's where it ends. There is no further explanation.

Having established similarity of universe and body, let's talk a little bit about our own body. If we understand our body works, we will understand the universe and how it works. Almost all the religions in the world believe in mind, body and soul/spirit, and believe that there is God and messenger of God. However, the definition and understanding of what these are, is very blurry or confused. Some religions confuse mind with soul, some believe that resurrection of soul is actually going to be a resurrection of body and they preserve the body, whereas some believe that soul, mind and body are all distinct. Then there are atheists who believe that there is no God and no soul, and no afterlife, and nothing is far from truth than their belief.

Now talking about other religions, lets digress a little and look at some demographics – this is an age of information, data, statistics, classification, etc.– so a mentioning some data around religion may not be out of place – 32% of world population is Christian, 23% is Muslim, 15% is Hindu, 7% is Buddhist, 11% is atheist and rest is all other minor religions. Having talked about demographics, first of all I want to mention that, religion is not a number game – meaning more followers does not imply spiritual knowledge supremacy. For example, Galileo was imprisoned by Church for stating that Earth revolves around the Sun. It was due to the limited understanding on the leaders of the Church. Just because they outnumbered Galileo, did not mean they were right. Secondly, when it comes to Hinduism and explaining what it is, it is very confusing. Now this may not be a struggle for those who live in India, but it is quite challenging to explain what Hinduism is. I am sure when we go to school and strike off a conversation with our friends, this comes up. Not just for kids and youth but even for grown-ups like me

when we go out for lunch with our co-workers and order vegetarian, no onion no garlic food, it triggers a conversation about why and what is Hinduism. And I have found people fumble for words, and everyone explains Hinduism differently. Hinduism can be explained by a very simple example. Over the years, there is one example that has worked well for me and am sharing it here. When I came to US from India, I lived in Minnesota for a couple of years. MN a beautiful place with 10000 lakes and awe-inspiring natural beauty. But that was in summer. The winters were cold, cold, cold. During summer when life flourished, Minnesotans grew corn in the field. Some of them grew wheat but most of them grew corn. And corn was all they grew. A couple of years later I moved to California, and in CA, we have fields with all different types of fruits and vegetables like cherries, plums, nectarines, tomatoes, artichokes, avocados, including corn. Sometimes, in one single field, we find variety of fruits. Broadly classifying these are all edibles (fruits and vegetables), but one state (MN) grows only one type and other state (CA) grows all types. Hinduism is like CA. Just as there are multiple fruits and vegetables, Hinduism is a combination of several deities and several belief systems that are tied together in a single system. Though there is Shaivas, Vaishnavs and Shaktas, eventually, they all believe that our universe is governed by the trinity of Brahma-Vishnu-Mahesh and our knowledge and religious scriptures are Purans, Ved, Shreemad Bhagwat, Geeta, etc. Since we are talking about multiple Gods, I remember a story that my mother used to tell me when I was a kid. Moral of the story is worship of the single form of God. Once there was a Muslim and a Hindu stuck in a storm in a sinking boat. And for that matter it could be a Christian and a Hindu. They all they can to save their lives but eventually they realized that its all in the hands of the God. So they started praying. The muslim started praying to Allah and after sometime Allah came and saved him. The Hindu started praying to Lord Vishnu. So Lord Vishnu got up to help him, but by that time, the Hindu had started praying to Lord Shiv. So Lord Vishnu thought, "Well Lord Shiv is going to help him out. So I will sit back and relax." And then Lord Shiv got up to help him, but by that time, the Hindu had started praying to Lord Ganesh. So Lord Shiv thought, "My son is going to help him, so I will take it easy." Then Lord Ganesh got up to help out, but by that time, the Hindu had started praying to Goddess Shakti. And guess what? The boat sank and so did the Hindu. So the moral of the story is that while there are multiple Gods and multiple forms of God, we should have unflinching devotion in one form of God and we should worship that one single form of God. And since we are worshipping on form of God, why not understand how supreme is that form, and then place our faith in that supreme form? Lord Swaminarayan has therefore emphasized on "Pativrata Bhakti" or unflinching devotion in the Supreme form of God. AMPP NarayanMama used to say that one should not keep changing the form that one meditates upon – even if they are different idol forms of Lord Swaminarayan. That is the importance of having one single form to worship and meditate on. So though Hinduism is collection of many God and deities and belief systems, believe in one single form and understand how supreme that form is.

The reason for above digression – talking about demographics and explaining what Hinduism is, is that amongst all the religions in the world, when it comes to explaining mind, body and soul, nothing compares to Hindu philosophy. And the moment we mention Hindu Philosophy, a question would arise as to what is Hindu philosophy, so I digressed first and then came back to our topic of mind, body and soul. So, Hindu philosophy clearly explains the distinction of mind, body and soul, but there are different thought-streams about these are related to each other. Now amongst different thought-streams, their

relationship is expressed differently. Shreeji Maharaj, has explained some of these differences in the thinking of some thought-streams in Gadhada Pratham 52 Vachanamrutam. It is worth reading. Thought streams not limited to those that God Swaminarayan has mentioned. There are more, but the primary ones have been covered by Lord Swaminarayan. Given these differences in thought-streams, it confuses a spiritual aspirant. What is the truth and real knowledge? How does it all look in reality? So while in terms of belief all Hindu philosophies talk about distinct mind-body-soul, they are not as clear, as logical, as straightforward as Swaminarayan philosophy. Those who want, can research, and see if this makes sense. But for now, let's understand mind-body-soul as explained by Swaminarayan philosophy.

There are many ways of understanding this, but we will do it in a very simple way. We will walk through a very simple logic – simple thought – simple question. So when we say “My body”, whose body is it? We might say things like, “My body is acting up. I am feeling well today.” Or “My body is strong and I can climb mount Everest.”. Who is saying its my body? There is no need to answer this question to anyone, but introspect on the question. Who is saying “My”? The common belief in some religions is that it is the ego that is associated with anything that is “Me”, “My”, “Mine”, “Myself”, and that ego is the soul. From that perspective, the more egoist a person, the more soulful a person! Through observation, we all know that is not the reality. A soulful person is but far away from ego. Secondly, for example, I say “my laptop.” My laptop is in front of me right now and I say, “My laptop.” It means that I am not my laptop. I am different than my laptop. So when we say “My body,” it means I am not by body. I am different than my body. So I am not the ego and I am not my body. Then who am I? I am the Soul! Any feeling that I, the soul, have about me, mine, my, is the ego, and that feeling is associated to the outer world through my body. So my body is a medium.

The soul, as Lord Swaminarayan has explained in Shikshapatri verse 105, is as small as an atom, is sentient, is aware and knowledgeable. With its power of knowledge, it pervades in the entire body from head-to-toe. Soul cannot be pierced or penetrated, and does not age or die. Also, in Gadhada Pratham 7<sup>th</sup> Vachanamrutam, a Soul is mentioned as one of the 5 eternal entities. AMPP NarayanMama used to say that no matter how much science progresses, it will not be able to create a soul.

Shreeji Maharaj has said in Vachanamrutam and AMPP NarayanMama has also mentioned in his speeches that there is life in other star systems, galaxies, universes, and souls from those also get liberated. They have also confirmed that the shape and form of intelligent beings is more or less like ours. Now, about 18-19 years ago in 1995, there was a race between two physicists to find a planet around a star – not the Sun, some other star. These planets are called exoplanets. This was something that was never done before. Five years before that, the idea of having a planet around another star was far-fetched. So the two physicist racing to find an exoplanet - one in Sweden and another in the Bay Area – we can actually see that Bay Area observatory from our house. The physicist in Sweden won the race by 2 days fortunately for him and unfortunately for Bay Area scientist the visibility issues delayed his discovery by 2 days. That was the first exoplanet that was discovered. After that, more than 1000 exoplanets have been discovered. A possibility that we have discovered 300 exoplanets – just that their existence needs to be confirmed 100%. And counting the number of stars in each galaxy and number of galaxies in the universe, and habitable goldilocks zones of galaxies and stars, scientists now believe that it is not a matter of if there is intelligent life elsewhere, but a matter of when will we find it. Something

that Swaminarayan philosophers have known for a long time now! So soul is a universal existence – the same across all universes and galaxies. It cannot be created nor destroyed and does not age or die. And it is one of the five eternal entities.

The belief that I am the soul and not the body and dis-identification from body is called atmanishtha. It is Sanskrit word. Atma means self, Atmaa means soul and nishtha means belief. Belief in the real self – the soul, is therefore called AtmaNishtha. There are many examples on Atmanishtha. We will take a couple of them. One of our own Sadguru Anadimuktaraj Gopalanand Swami and second of Lord Buddha.

Once Gopalanand Swami was traveling through the villages of Saurashtra, Gujarat, with his group of disciples, preaching the knowledge and principles of Lord Swaminarayan. Villagers liked them more because what they imparted was blissful, intelligent and convincing. So villagers liked them more over other mendicants who used alchemy, tricks, magic and black magic to earn a living. So the mendicants got angry and upset with Gopalanand Swami and his disciples and one day they started throwing stones at them. Following the principles of non-violence and non-retaliation, the saints did not do anything but they sought refuge in a thorny bush nearby. After sometime the villagers saw the mendicants throwing stones. So they came over and mendicants ran away. The villagers came to the thorny bush and saw Gopalanand Swami and his disciples inside and gradually got them out. The disciples started complaining to Gopalanand Swami, “Swami it hurts. We have thorns all over our body. We have also been hurt by stones. We are in too much pain and misery. Please do something.” And Swami with help of the villagers got their thorns removed and filled the wounds with ash. Ash derived from burning wood with no impurities acts as an antibiotic. So Swami filled the wounds with ash and arranged for some bullock carts and got them to Gadhada where Shreeji Maharaj was seated. Upon arrival... and I always get goose bumps and when I think or talk about this. Upon arrival the disciple saints started complaining about how painful it was, and how much it hurt, and how much they had to go through for spreading the knowledge of enlightenment. Shreeji Maharaj patiently listened to them and then asked them only one question, “Did anyone remove Gopalanand Swami’s thorns?” It was only then that it dawned upon the disciples that they had not done so. And then Shreeji Maharaj Himself removed all the thorns from Gopalanand Swami’s body. They weighed about a pound. All along Gopalanand Swami did not utter a word because he was not identified with the body. Now that, is Atmanishtha.

The second incident I wanted to share from the life of Gautam Buddha. He was a strong preacher of non-violence and because of that hunters, meat-gatherers and bird-hunters were upset with him. So one such upset bird-hunter came to Gautam Buddha one day when he was meditating and started saying some bad stuff. Gautam Buddha did not react. So the bird-hunter got more angry and started yelling and screaming and still Gautam Buddha did not react because he was not identified with the body. He was identified with the soul. The bird-hunter got so angry that he created an inhuman act of pouring hot lead into the ears of Gautam Buddha. Gautam Buddha still did not react. After sometime the hunter realized his mistake and cried his eyes out. When Gautam Buddha woke up from his meditation he forgave the hunter right away. Now that is Atmanishtha.

We might say that, all that high level of atma-nishtha is seen in enlightened ones. It is not for us. We are meagre souls. We are young, small, we cannot do it. It is not for us. But we have to remember that we are souls, and we are capable of enlightenment. All we have to do is try. We can at least start with a constant reminder to ourselves that, "I am not the body. I am the soul. All the things that I am attached to, are related to the body. Body is a medium to experience external world and to project myself on the external world." We can start with thought once a day and increase the frequency gradually and then start identifying ourselves with the soul, not the body.

So we now understand at a basic level that our real identity is that of a soul – not the body. Let me go back to laptop example I mentioned earlier. Now if I have a laptop, I want to know the elements of the laptop - it has a display, a keyboard, power cord, camera, hard disk, DVD drive, etc. Likewise, we have been given a body and it makes sense to know what are the elements of the body.

One thing I want to mention that the religious scriptures are written to cater to entire population. So they may not go into the details of genetic code and inner workings of the body. They try to keep it at a level of abstraction that everyone can understand it. At that level of abstraction... for those on Webex, I will be running a slide show. For those not on Webex, do not worry, I will be talking to the slide.

We talked about the soul. Our body is made up of 24 elements. There is a detailed description of this in Gadhada Pratham Prakaran 12<sup>th</sup> Vachanamrutam, Sarangpur 14<sup>th</sup> Vachanamrutam – by Lord Swaminarayan Himself and further explained by AMPP Abaji Bapashree. BTW, Maninagar Mandir has published English e-book version of Rahasyarth Vachanamrutam for those who are interested. I will include a link to them in my email following our interaction today. I have not read those. Have not had a chance. But I know it is available.

I also want to mention that the description of 24 elements is also found in Shreemad Bhagwat, some parts of Ved and ISCON literature. So that is a cross-references across other religious texts to establish authenticity. Lets go over the 24 elements:

- Panch-Bhoot – 5 elements – Earth, Water, Fire, Wind, Sky
- Panch-Karmendriya – 5 senses/organs of action
- Panch Gnanendriya – 5 senses of perception
- 5 tanmantra – 5 quintessences
- 4 Antah-karan – 4 inner organs or inner senses

Now let's go into the details of what these are and review each one of them.

- Five elements
  - Earth, Water, Brilliance/Fire, Wind and Sky/Space
  - These five elements together constitute our body.
  - Earth represents all the solid material in the body
  - Water all the liquid material in the body
  - Brilliance and Fire represents all the thermal energy needed to run the body including endothermic and exothermic chemical reactions – burning of sugar to generate energy,

jathragni, fire in the belly. Brilliance is not the divine brilliance or brilliance of the soul – it is the brilliance of the thermal energy

- Wind represents anything related to air or gas or gaseous material – including Pran vayu (vital air) which is of five kinds. Pran Vayu is responsible for keeping us alive, for lubricating our joints, for keeping the fire in our belly running.
- Sky/Space represents any empty space within the body. Even an atom has an empty space (nucleus – tennis ball, circle of influence is 5 miles), what is in between neutrinos? so it should not be surprising that there is empty space in the body
- Five senses of action
  - Tongue (Speech)
  - Hand
  - Feet
  - Excretory Organs
  - Reproductive Organs
- Five senses of perception
  - Ear
  - Skin
  - Eyes
  - Tongue (Taste)
  - Nose
- 5 Quintessence
  - Sound
  - Touch
  - Vision
  - Taste
  - Odor/Olfactory
- 4 Inner organs/sense
  - Mind
  - Intellect
  - Sub-conscious mind
  - Ego
- 5 quintessences are the subtle than and cause of 5 elements and their external interface is the five senses of perception

Recap – similarity of body and universe, Unflinching devotion in one form of God, Soul, Atmanishtha, 24 elements, and details of 5 elements

Next week – types of body, related state of mind, scientific discoveries related to mind, senses, etc.

Send correction. Very open minded. It is a learning process for all of us.