

Svarajya Siddhah of Gangadharendra Sarasvati —Attaining Self-dominion

Swami Narasimhananda

(Continued from the previous issue)

REPPLY: WHAT IS THE NATURE OF *alaya-vijnana-dhara*? Is it the same as *kshanika-vijnana*, momentary state of consciousness or is it different? If it is the first, that is, if it is the same as *kshanika-vijnana*, then it would be the same as stating that the same reality is being perceived as having different names and forms and so would be identical to our standpoint. If it is the second, that is, if it is different from *kshanika-vijnana*, due to the non-contact with the preceding and the succeeding moment, there is no scope of communication and there is no possibility of the same standpoint being accepted since they are disconnected. Hence, there can be no connection between the desire and enjoyment and there cannot be the creation of an aggregate since that would not be logical.

Further, you hold that the enjoyer, who is meant for enjoyment, is not constant. However, enjoyment is only for being enjoyed by the enjoyer and cannot be desired by any other. Similarly, liberation is to be attained only by the person seeking liberation, the spiritual aspirant. Who would experience the enjoyments and who would get moksha or liberation? The idea is that going by your argument, no one would get moksha. Further, the futility of your standpoint is being established. O fool! Your philosophy or standpoint is successful by what result? It surely is not successful by

experience, because experience is not possible according to your thought. You also preach against the experience of enjoyment and advise to perform spiritual austerities and restrain the senses, and also lead a life of renunciation. Also, your school of thought cannot be said to be successful on account of moksha, since you do not believe in the permanence of the Atman till one attains moksha as holding such a standpoint would go against your philosophy. Moksha is the cessation of all sufferings. According to your school of thought everything is momentary and so, suffering too is momentary and would be destroyed the very next moment. Hence, all spiritual austerities that you preach are useless because not only are they not required, they do not produce anything.

The Advaitic refutations of Buddhist thought can be better understood from the analysis by Acharya Shankara in his commentary on the *Brahma Sutra*:

Even if the combination be supposed to arise from either of the two sets of causes, that will not materialize, that is to say, no combination will result—be it either a combination of the elements and the elementals arising from the atoms, or a combination of the five groups of things arising from those groups. ...

Because the components of such a combination are insentient and because consciousness can flash (from a contact between sense-organs

and objects) only if a combination of things (forming the body etc.) is already there, and because no other steady and independent entity is admitted which is sentient, an experiencer, and a ruler, and which can bring about the combination. If impulsion to activity be postulated for them independently of any agent, then there will be the possibility of such impulsion continuing interminably. Again, since currents (of ego-consciousness) cannot be determined to be either different or non-different (from the individual forms of consciousness constituting the current), and since everything (including the current) is supposed to be momentary, there can be no activity (in this momentary current), and hence no impulsion (apart from its own birth). Therefore a combination cannot emerge, and in the absence of combination, all mundane existence dependent on it will be nullified. ...

Buddhist: Even if no sentient and steady experiencer or ruler be admitted as the agent bringing about the combination, still the transmigratory existence will be possible, since nescience and the rest are the causes of one another; and if the transmigratory existence becomes a possibility, there remains no need for depending on anything else. Those nescience etc. are: nescience (the idea of permanence with regard to things momentary), attitudes (attachment, detachment, and delusion arising from that false knowledge), ego-consciousness, name (i.e. the four elements depending on names), form (or colour), the six sense-organs (having egoism, four elements, and form as their habitations), touch (contact among name, form, and senses), sensation, thirst (for objects), impulsion (caused by that thirst), merit etc. (which are the sources of birth), birth (of the body), maturity (of the groups coming into being), death, sorrow, wailing, pain, misery, etc. (i.e. evils like honour, dishonour, etc.)—these and others of the same class which are sometimes indicated briefly or sometimes state elaborately in the books of the Buddhists. These categories cannot be denied by other schools as well. So may it not be that when

these nescience and the rest go on revolving for ever like (the cups in) a Persian wheel, as the cause and effect of one another, a combination of things, emerging out of the force of circumstances, becomes a possibility?

Vedāntin: That cannot be so. ...

Because they are merely the causes of the origination (of one another). A combination may be possible if any cause for the combination can be ascertained; but as a fact, it cannot be ascertained. For although nescience etc. be the causes of one another, the earlier ones will merely give rise to the later ones. That may well be so; but nothing can possibly become the source of a combination.

Buddhist: Did we not mention earlier that nescience and the rest (revolving in order) lead to the assumption of the existence of a combination by implication?

Vedāntin: To this we say: If your idea is that since nescience etc. cannot emerge unless there is a combination (in the form of a body), therefore they, as a matter of course, imply its existence, then you have still to tell me the cause of that combination. But in the course of examining the Vaiśeṣika theory we said that this is not possible even on the assumption of permanent atoms and experiencing souls which can sustain the acquired merits; and can this be possible here, my dear friend, simply by assuming momentary atoms which have no experiencers and which are not related with everything by way of being the abider and the abode (or the benefited and the benefactor)? On the other hand, if this be your idea that nescience and the rest themselves constitute the source of combination, then how can they be the source of that combination when they themselves have to emerge into being by depending on that combination?¹⁰⁸

(To be continued)

References

108. Shankara's commentary on the *Brahma Sutra*, 2.2.18–9; *Brahma-Sūtra Bhāṣya of Śaṅkarācārya*, trans. Swami Gambhirananda (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1983), 403–5.