

shri mUlarAmo vijayate

shri laxmi cha.ndralAparameshvarI prasanna

shri gururAjo vijayate

jIva kartrva vichAra

With many namaskaras to our teacher Sri Keshava Rao and at his suggestion, I will now attempt to summarize the questions and answer sessions that appear at the end of the teleconferences on jIva kartrva lecture series.

INTRODUCTION: Is jIva a kartru or not? If he is then how does one explain the Lord's all doer-ship and independence ? If not, then how come the jIva experiences the fruits of actions not done by the jIva? These questions are at the heart of the jIva kartrva discussion.

These and many more similar questions that are an offshoot of the above questions are elaborately discussed in the kartrvAdhikaraNa in the Brahma Sutras by Bhagavan Vedyavyasa. That the issue of jIva kartrva is of substantial importance is indicated by the fact that kartrvAdhikaraNa, comprising 10 sutras, is the second largest adhikaraNa or section in the Brahma Sutras. It occurs in the second Adhyaya third Pada of the Brahma Sutras.

Sri Keshava Rao has elected to explain jIva kartrva vichara by analyzing the kartrvAdhikaraNa. Sriman Madhvacharya has commented upon the Sutras. His commentary has been commented upon by the luminaries of our tradition, including Sri Jayatirtha Muni, Sri Raghottama Tirtha Swamiji and Sri Raghavendra Swamiji. Detailed Sanskrit texts of the Bhashya and the sub-commentaries have already been distributed. An English translation of the Acharya's bhashya by Sri S. Subba Rao, published in 1904 has also be distributed and could be a good review of Sri Keshava Rao's lectures.

SUTRA 1: OM kartA shaAshtrAthavatvat OM:

Basic Info: (The jIva is also a kratru since) the Shashtras have a purport.

Sri Keshava Rao went thru the Acharya's Sutra Bhashya and the commentatires of Sri Trivikrama Panditacharya, Sri Jayatirtha Swami, Sri Raghottama Swami and Sri Ragnavendra Swami. The question answer session then followed.

QUESTION: Sri Rayaru says that jIva and Paramatma are both kartas. Paramatma is the svatantra karta and the Jiva is paratantra karta. Did he establish this via Agama or Yukti?

Answer: Sri Rayaru has harmonized and established this with both. First of all, Yukti or Anumana without either Agama or Pratyaksha is futile. For, using Yukti independently, one might establish or debunk any concept. Such Yukti, which is divorced from Agama or Pratyaksha, is called “shushka-tarka” or dry logic. In this case, there are clear Agama statements that the Lord alone is a doer. Then there are statements that Jiva is a doer. There are no statements that say Jiva alone is a doer. One would then use Yukti to harmonize these statements to say Paramatma is the independent doer and Jiva is the dependent doer. One might even bring in Pratyaksha here to support the above as each individual has the experience of being a doer, but also of not being in total control of all his own doership.

Question: Is it not the case the case that Pratyaksha and Agama have their own domains and that issues such as jiva karttva are natively established via the Agama? Else, there could be a clash between Pratyaksha and Agama. If Pratyaksha is brought in, for example, is it not the case that each individual actually has the notion of doing things independently. For instance, I see an apple on the table, I want an apple, I get the apple. Where is my lack of independence established and where is the Lord’s independence established here. One might say, quite the contrary, my own independence is established via my perception. Would it not then be considered as a clash of Pratyaksha and Agama?

Answer: There can never be a clash between verified perception and un-ambiguous scriptural statements. That is to say, there cannot be a clash between parixita pratyaksha and niravakasha Agama vAkyas. After all, the Agama is the perception of the realized souls.

As far as we are concerned, there is a place of importance for Agama and Pratyaksha. Agama deals with extra sensory objects. The Lord is known only through the Agamas for example, there, the pratyaksha does not rule. In case of worldly objects, pratyaksha rules and the Agama takes a back seat. But that is not to say that they are in conflict. Where there appears to be a conflict, the pratyaksha and the Agama have to be resolved through anumana or yukti. Yukti is also used to resolve apparently contradictory Agama vakyas as well, just as yukti is used to resolve apparently contradicting pratyaksha as well.

Think about this as this ...pratyaksha can be Praikshita pratyaksha or aparixita pratyaksha. Agama vAkyas could be niravakasha agama and savakasha agama. We further know the Agama as the voice of what the realized souls perceived. Now, where there appears to be a clash between pratyaksha and Agama vakyas, one would have to investigate whether the perception is wrong because it was not perceived right or if the Agama vAkyas are being misinterpreted.

Take for example the apple. A little contemplation will show us how dependent we are. First of all, many times, even the thought of apple may come to us inspite of ourselves. And if we were in a coma, we would not even have the capability to think. The apple itself was not created by us, it was created due to a tree which was in turn not created by us. In fact the apple was harvested and brought to the table which also we did not create. Finally, for us to be able to reach out and get the apple, our muscles are with us. If there was a paralytic attack at the moment or before, then there is also no question of lifting the apple. In English there is a saying “many a slip between the cup and the lip” even those that do not believe in God have a saying that reflects this reality.

The Agamas say the jiva is paratantra, even the perception when it is examined says the same thing.

Question: We would have to contemplate on this. Since examining pratyaksha and arriving at the parikshita pratyaksha is not everyone's cup of tea. Not all are able to fathom their limitation in respect of their thoughts or actions. Therefore, would the Agama Vakyas be a strong force to arrive at the conclusion of jivas dependence?

Answer: Sure, Agama vAkyas are a great help and are infact required to establish the jlvAs dependence. The point that is being made here is that there is no conflict between the Agama vAkyas and pratyaksha. As we just saw,

1. There is no conflict between parikshiata pratyaksha and niravakAsha Agama by definition
2. There could be a conflict between aparikshita pratyaksha and niravakAsha Agama. In this case, one would reanalyze the perception and bring it in line with the Agama. For example, there are clear Agama statements that say the Lord is Independent and the Jiva is dependent. If an individual perception is of independent doing, like the reaching out for an apple above, a little analysis will show that the Jiva is not in control, therefore the Jiva is dependent. The independence o fthe Lord is therefore not in conflict with Pratyaksha
3. There could be a conflict between parikshita pratyaksha and sAvakAsha Agama. For example, there are Agama statements like "the mud spoke". Clearly violation parikshita pratyaksha. In this case, one would reinterpret the Agama statement saying "the abhimAni devata of the mud – he or she spoke". Even here, the abhimani devata reinterpretation is not in conflict with pratyaksha
4. There could be a conflict between aparikshita pratyaksha and sAvakasha Agama. This is the lot of us mere mortals! Because of our endless nescience, forgetfulness, delusion, and confusion (aj~Ana, vismriti, bhrAnti, sanshaya)

ANALYSIS: One can similarly analyze the sutra as well ... The sutra says the shashtra with their various vidhi and nishedhas have a purport. For them to have a purport, they should apply to someone.

1. We know that there are three broad entities, Paramatma, Jiva and Jada.
2. Of these, we know that the Jada does not have kartrtva. That leaves Paramatma and Jivas
3. Since the Paramatma is independent, the Shashtras do not apply to him. The Paramatma being independent is not bound by the vidhis and nishedhas. That now leaves only the Jiva.
4. In case of the Jivas, there are the mukta jivas and the amukta jivas. The mukta jivas are not bound by the Shashtra Vidhi That leaves the amukta jivas.
5. For the Sutra statement to be meaningful, then, this class of jivas necessarily should be under the purview of shashtras.
6. Since the Shashtras comprise vidhi nishedha vakyas, the Jivas are supposed to follow them, which in turn indicates that the Jivas have doership, for without this doership, the vidhi nishedha vakyas would be without purport, thus contradicting the sutra.

Since we know that the jiva is dependent, we say that the jiva is also a dependent doer. We further know that the Pramatma is independent. Therefore, the paramatma is the independent doer. But what about the mukta jivas, do they also have doership or not? This is answered by the next sutra "OM vihAropadeshAt OM".