

SRI SHANKARACHARYA

A THOUSAND TEACHINGS (V)

UPADESA SAHASRI

57. Disciple: “The objections that the Self as the is non-existent, non-eternal and so on, hold good if the Self which is not conjoined with the body were superimposed on it. The body would then be without a Self and so the Nihilist position comes in.”

58. Teacher: “No. (You are not right). For, we admit that, like the ether, the Self is by nature free from contact with anything. Just as things are not bereft of the ether though it is not in contact with them, so the body etc., are not devoid of the Self though It is not in contact with them. Therefore the objection of the Nihilist position coming in does not arise.”

59. “It is not a fact that the absolute non-existence of the body contradicts sense-perception etc., inasmuch as the existence of the body in the Self is not known by these evidences. The body is not known to exist in the Self by perception etc., like a plum in a hole, ghee in milk, oil in sesame or a picture painted on a wall. There is, therefore. no contradiction to sense-perception etc.”

60. Disciple: “How can then there be the super-imposition of the body etc., on the Self which is not known by sense-perception etc., and that of the Self on the body?”

61. Teacher: “It is not a (valid) objection. For the Self is naturally well-known. As we see the form of a frying pan and blueness superimposed on the sky there cannot be a rule that it is things known *occasionally* only on which super-impositbn is possible and not on things *always* known.”

62. Disciple: “Sir, is the mutual superimposition of the body and the Self made by the combination of the body *etc.*, or by the Self?”

63. The teacher said: “Does it matter if it be made by the one or the other?”

64. Questioned thus, the disciple said, “If I were only a combination of the body etc., I would be non-conscious and would exist for the sake of another only. Therefore the mutual superimposition of the body and the Self could not be made by me. If, on the other hand, I were the Self I would be characteristically different from the combination of the body etc., would be conscious and, therefore, would exist entirely for myself. So it is I, a conscious being, who makes that superimposition, the root of all evils, on the Self.”

65. Thus told, the teacher said, "Do not make any superimposition if you know it to be the root of all evils."

66. Disciple: "Sir, I cannot but make it, I am not independent. I am made to act by someone else."

67. Teacher: "Then you do not exist for yourself as you are non-conscious. That by which you are made to act like one dependent on another is conscious and exists for itself. You are only a combination (of the body and other things)."

68. Disciple: "If I be non-conscious then how do I cognise pain and pleasure and also of what you say?"

69. The teacher replied: "Are you different from the cognition of pain and pleasure and from what I say, or not?"

70. The disciple said, "It is not a fact that I am not different from them. For, I know them to be objects of my knowledge like jars and other things. If I were not different I could not cognise them. But I know them; so I am different. If I were not different the modifications of the mind called pain and pleasure and the words spoken by you would exist for themselves. But that is not reasonable. For pleasure and pain produced by sandal paste and a thorn respectively, and also the use of a jar are not for their own sake. Therefore the purposes served by sandal paste etc., are for the sake of me who am their cogniser. I am different from them as I know all things pervaded by the intellect."