

Siddhantalessasangraha
Chapter 1. Topic 6
The theories of single jiva and multiple jivas

Theories of single jiva

1. Just as in dream, in the waking state also there is only one jiva. Therefore there is only one body with life. The other bodies are without life. Isvara and the entire universe are imagined by this one jiva due to ignorance. All concepts such as those in bondage, those liberated, Isvara and Guru are only like those in dream. This is the view of some followers of Vartika, according to which there is only one jiva and one body.

The liberation of Suka, etc., is only imagined, like the liberation of other persons seen in dream. All doubts in this regard have to be cleared by taking the example of dream.

2. Hiranyagarbha, who is the reflection of Brahman is the only main jiva. All other jivas are reflections of Hiranyagarbha. They are semblances of jiva and are like the clothings painted on the bodies of human beings in pictures drawn on cloth, which also look as if they are themselves cloth. They are subject to transmigration. This is the theory of one jiva with multiple bodies.

3. A single Jiva who is the reflection of consciousness in avidya simultaneously activates all bodies for his own enjoyment. This however does not mean that each body can experience the joy, etc., of the other bodies. Just as one does not remember what happened in his own previous birth, the different bodies cannot know one another's experiences. Yogis are able to know the thoughts of others because of the special powers acquired by them. This is another view in which there is a single Jiva with innumerable bodies.

Theories of multiple jivas

Others felt that the theories of a single jiva were not in consonance with the statement in Br.up. 1.4.10, "Whoever among the gods knew it also became That" and the statement about Suka's realization in the Bhashya on the topic commencing with Br. sutra 4.2.12. They have therefore

postulated theories of multiple jivas, by taking the internal organ, etc. as limiting adjuncts.

4. One view is—Though Nescience, located in Brahman, is only one, and its destruction is liberation, it consists of parts. When a person gets liberation only that part of Nescience in that particular limiting adjunct is destroyed. In the state of jivanmukti a trace of Nescience (avidya-lesa) is admitted to continue.

5. Some others take the example of the theory held by a section of Naiyayikas that the absolute non-existence of a pot on the ground depends on the pot not having the relationship of conjunction with the ground. (There is absolute non-existence of pot on the ground only when the pot is not in contact with the ground). Similarly, the presence of Nescience on pure consciousness depends on the mind. So when knowledge dawns in a particular mind the presence of Nescience in that mind comes to an end, but Nescience continues as before elsewhere.

6. Nescience has jiva as locus and Brahman as content. The jiva is a reflection of consciousness in the inner organ. Just as the genus (jaati), which resides in every individual (vyakti) of that species, leaves a particular individual when that individual is destroyed, so also nescience resides in all individuals and leaves a particular individual when he attains Self-knowledge. That is liberation for that jiva.

7. Yet another view is that nescience is different in each jiva. When a particular jiva attains Self-knowledge his nescience is destroyed and he is liberated.
