

ACTIVITIES OF THE YOGA INSTITUTE
OF SANTA CRUZ, INDIA

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The false sense of 'I' that we create, and identify with our name or our body or our thoughts and ideas, or our ego is this projection on the screen. Most of us will opt for believing in this projection of 'I', to be our true self. In reality the sense of 'I.', is just a product of our awareness, reflected in our thoughts.

It is by gradual discarding of these false layers of identification, that we reach the inner core of our true personality. We have to learn to give, to get dispossessed, to remain disinterested, if we are to gain this inner reality. We could not have it both ways, viz., to be in full possession of material trinkets and, at the same time, to enjoy experiences of pure consciousness. Some people remain so engrossed in material life that like the legendary King Midas, they metamorphosise their most precious possessions their near and dear ones, into material things. They ultimately materialise themselves. Life has no meaning for them, ideals, social relationships, and social duties lose their significance. Material prosperity, inflation of ego, power etc. are the common sole objectives. Spirituality is, of course, quite far, far away from such individuals.

A WRONG INTERPRETATION OF THE FOUR STATES (AVASTHA) OF AVIDYA

by RAM SHANKAR BHATTACHARYA

While commenting on *Mahābhārata* 1.75.52, Nīlakaṇṭha remarks that *kāma* has four states (*avasthā*), *viśprasuptā*, *tanvī*, *vicchinna* and *udārā* (the words are used in feminine gender since the word (*avasthā*) is feminine.) Evidently this division is based on *Yogasūtra* 2.4 which reads. अविद्या क्षेत्रम् उत्तरेषां प्रसुप्त-तनु-विच्छिन्नोदाराणाम्¹

Nīlakaṇṭha uses the word *kāma* for *pāpa* in the original verse 75.52 (पापं कामम्) This *kāma* may rightly be regarded as *rāga*, a *kleśa* (affliction) defined in the *Yogasūtra* 2.7. *Kāma* or *rāga* has been said as one of the four products of *avidyā* (vide *Yoga sūtra* 2.4) and as such it is justified to regard it as *pāpa*.

The aforesaid four states of *avidyā* are explained by Nīlakaṇṭha as follows :² "This *prasuptā* (dormant) state is of the nature of *bījamātravasēṣa* (the state in which *kāma* or *kleśa* remain in a seedy or potential state) and such a state happens either in *pralaya* or in dreamless sleep. The *prasuptā* state arises in such a *manas* as possesses nothing but the *vāsanās*. *Tanvī* (attenuated) state arises in that *manas* in which the fluctuations have appeared. In essence, this state is of the nature of *manoratha* (wish, desire). This state comes into existence after one has perceived the objects like colour etc. The

1. Vide *Tattvavaiśārādi* 2.4 where a verse on these four states has been quoted with the remark इति संग्रहः. The expression, इति संग्रहः indicates that the verse is a *saṅgraha śloka* which is defined as a verse in which a long discussion has been summarised in a few words. A similar verse is found in the *Devībhāgavatapurāna* quoted by Bhaskarācārya in his commentary on the *Lalitāsahasranāma* (p. 94 Nirṇayasāgar ed.) तदुक्तं देवीभागवते - प्रसुप्तास्तत्त्ववैलूणां दग्धदेहास्तु योगिनाम् । अविच्छिन्नोदार रूपाः क्लेशा विषय सङ्गिनाम् ॥ The reading of the verse is corrupt. दग्ध देहास्तु should be corrected as तन्ववस्थास्तु and अविच्छिन्न as विच्छिन्न adding तु or च after रूपाः

2. चतस्रो हि कामस्यावस्था प्रसुप्ता तन्वी विच्छिन्ना उदारा च । तत्र सुप्तिप्रलययोर्बीजमात्रावशेषा प्रसुप्ताः, वासनामात्रशेषे मनसि स्थिता । तन्वी तु लब्धवृत्तिके मनसि रूपादिदर्शनेन उद्भूता मनोरथात्मिका । (Nil. on Mah. I. 75.52)

vicchinna (intercepted) state arises while a person remains in *samādhi*. In this state, there exists the absence of the original *ajñāna*. The *udāra* (active) state is to be found in the time of experiencing objects."

The expositions of the four states appear to be faulty. They are not always based on the *Vyāsabhāṣya* also.

(1) Nilakaṇṭha says that the *prasuptā* state (of *kāma*) arises in dreamless sleep. It is untenable in the view of the Yoga school, for *nidrā* is a *vṛtti* and in a *vṛtti*, *kāma* or any *kleśa* remains in an active state. While a person sleeps *kleśas* do not remain in a potential state. Since in *śuśupti*, many bodily functions exist (though in a lesser degree), it must be accepted that *kāma* or the *kleśas* play their part in *śuśupti* also. Truly speaking in *śuśupti* the *kleśas* remain in active state though their activity is checked by the flow of *tamogūṇa*. This checking of flow of the *kleśas* is not the same as the *vāsanā-mātraśeṣa* state. Nilakaṇṭha, however, is correct while he says that the *prasuptā* state arises in a *manas* that is *vāsanā-mātraśeṣa*. In *pralaya* also, a similar state arises as is clearly stated in the *śāstras*.

(2) The definition of *tanvī avasthā* as given by Nilakaṇṭha is wrong, for no *tanutva* (the state of being attenuated) is observable in a *labdhavṛtti* (one in which *vṛttis* have appeared) *manas* as stated by Nilakaṇṭha. The *manoratha* form that arises in a dynamic *manas* as a result of perceiving external objects can never be regarded as an example of attenuation, for *tanutva* means the state in which a thing is reduced to some degree. The state *tanutva* arises as a result of severe practice of *kriyāyoga* (of प्रतिपक्षभावेनोपहृताः क्लेशाः तनवोभवन्ति Vyāsa 2.4) Is this state the same as *manoratha*? Nobody can equate these two states.

(3) Nilakaṇṭha observes that the *udāra avasthā* arises in *bhogakāla* (at the time of experiencing pleasure or pain as a result of contact with subtle or gross objects). It is correct and it is based on *Vyāsabhāṣya* 'विषये लब्धवृत्तिः स उदारः' But one can rightly ask: Does this state differ materially from the aforesaid *tanvī* state as defined by Nilakaṇṭha? The *udāra* state also arises in a *labdhavṛtti manas* and this rise has also some cause (i.e. object). Even in *bhogakāla* nobody

can say that there is total absence of *manoratha*. Even *manoratha* is not out of the field of *bhogakāla*. Thus it can reasonably be said that the *tanvī* and the *udārā* states have not been properly distinguished by Nilakaṇṭha. These two states appear to be more or less of the same character if the definitions as advanced by Nilakaṇṭha are accepted.

4. Nilakaṇṭha declares that the *vicchinna avasthā* arises in the state of *samādhi*. Though there is no harm in accepting this opinion, yet we are afraid that this opinion might give rise to the wrong notion that the *vicchinna* state arises in *samādhi* only. As a matter of fact the *vicchinna* state comes into existence while there arises a *vṛtti* different from a previous one and such a rise can easily be noticed always in the *vyuthāna avasthā*. As for example in the rise of *rāga* (passion), *krodha* (wrath) becomes *vicchinna* (interrupted). Yogins say that whenever a *kleśa* remains as *bhaviṣyat vṛtti* (i.e. it is waiting to play its part in the future) it is called *vicchinna*. We always observe this *vicchinna avasthā* of the *kleśas* in our ordinary life, where there is no touch of *samādhi*.

5. Nilakaṇṭha further remarks that in *samādhi* there happens absence of the *mūla ajñāna*. It cannot be denied that such an absence arises in the *asamprajñāta samādhi*: but in all the four forms of *samprajñāta samādhi ajñāna avidyā* persists—it is not annihilated totally. It can easily be understood that in the fourth aspect of the *samprajñāta samādhi* (known as the *sāsmīta samādhi*, vide *Yogasūtra* 1.17) there remains *avidyā* for *asmitā* presupposes the existence of *avidyā*. In all the forms of *śabīja samādhi*, *mūla ajñāna* cannot be uprooted as the existence of *bīja* depends upon *avidyā*.