



Aparokshâñubhuti (VII)

[Self-realization]

text attributed to the great master **Shankarâchârya**

Text and comments by Swami Vimuktananda (Advaita Ashrama 1993)

95. Just as a person out of confusion perceives only the snake leaving aside the rope, so does an ignorant person see only the phenomenal world without knowing the reality.
96. The real nature of the rope being known, the appearance of the snake no longer persists; so the substratum being known, the phenomenal world disappears completely.
97. The body also being within the phenomenal world (and therefore unreal), how could Prarabdha exist? It is. Therefore, for the understanding of the ignorant alone that the Sruti speaks of Prarabdha
98. "And all the actions of a man perish when he realizes that (Atman) is both the higher and the lower." Here the clear use of the plural by the Sruti is to negate Prârabdha as well.
99. If the ignorant still arbitrarily maintain this, they will not only involve themselves into two absurdities but will also run the risk of forgoing the Vedantic conclusion. So one should accept those Srutis alone from which proceeds true knowledge.
100. Now, for the attainment of the aforesaid (knowledge) I shall expound the fifteen steps by the help of which one should practice profound meditation at all times.
101. The Atman that is absolute existence and knowledge cannot be realized without constant practice. So one seeking after knowledge should long meditate upon Brahman for the attainment of the desired goal.
- 102-103. The steps, in order, are described as follows: the control of the senses, the control of the mind, renunciation, silence, space, time, posture, the restraining root (Mulabandha), the equipoise of the body, the firmness of vision, the control of the vital forces, the withdrawal of the mind, concentration, self-contemplation, and complete absorption.
104. The restraint of all the senses by means of such knowledge as "All this is Brahman" is rightly called Yama, which should be practiced again and again.

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105. The continuous flow of only one kind of thought, to the exclusion of all other thoughts, is called Niyama, which is verily the supreme bliss and is regularly practiced by the wise.
106. The abandonment of the illusory universe by realizing it as the all-conscious Atman is the real renunciation honoured by the great, since it is of the nature of immediate liberation.
107. The wise should always be one with that silence wherefrom words together with the mind turn back without reaching it, but which is attainable by the Yogins.
- 108-109. Who can describe That (i.e. Brahman) whence words turn away? (So silence is inevitable while describing Brahman). Or if the phenomenal world were to be described, even that is beyond words. This, to give an alternate definition, may also be termed silence known among the sages as congenital. The observance of silence by restraining speech, on the other hand, is ordained by the teachers of Brahman for the ignorant.
110. That solitude is known as space, wherein the universe does not exist in the beginning, end or middle, but whereby it is pervaded at all times.
111. The non-dual (Brahman) that is bliss indivisible is denoted by the word "time," since it brings into existence, in the twinkling of an eye, all beings from Brahma downwards.
112. One should know that to be real posture in which the meditation of Brahman flows spontaneously and unceasingly, and not any other that destroys one's happiness.
113. That which is well-known as the origin of all beings and the support of the whole universe, which is immutable and in which the enlightened are completely merged—that alone is known as Siddhasana.
114. That (Brahman) which is the root of all existence and on which the restraint of the mind is based is called the restraining root (Mula-bandha) which should always be adopted since it is fit for Raja-yogins.
115. Absorption in the uniform Brahman should be known as the equipoise of the limbs (Dehasâmya). Otherwise mere straightening of the body like that of a dried-up tree is no equipoise.
116. Converting the ordinary vision into one of knowledge one should view the world as Brahman Itself. That is the noblest vision, and not that which is directed to the tip of the nose.
117. Or, one should direct one's vision to That alone where all distinction of the seer, sight and the seen ceases and not to the tip of the nose.