



SRI SHANKARACHARYA¹

A THOUSAND TEACHINGS (III) UPADESA SAHASRI

CHAPTER I

A METHOD OF ENLIGHTENING THE DISCIPLE

31. If *Vedic* rites were to be performed and not meant to be renounced, the *Sruti* would neither have declared the identity of oneself with the Supreme Self unrelated to those rites, their means, castes, orders of life, etc., which are the conditions of *Vedic* actions, in unambiguous sentences like 'That is the Self, thou art That;' nor would it have condemned the acceptance of (the reality of) difference in clauses such as 'It is the eternal glory of the knower of *Brahman*,' 'Untouched by virtue, untouched by sin,' and 'Here a thief is no thief,' etc.

32. The *Srutis* would not have stated that the essential nature of the Self was in no way connected with *Vedic* rites and conditions required by them such as a particular class, and the rest, if they did not intend that those rites and *yajnopavita* etc., their means, should be given up. Therefore, *Vedic* actions which are incompatible with the knowledge of the identity of oneself with the Supreme Self, should be renounced together with their means by one who aspires after liberation; and it should be known that the Self is no other than *Brahman* as defined in the *Srutis*.

33. If he says, "The pain on account of burns or cuts in the body, and the misery caused by hunger and the like, are distinctly perceived to be in me. The Supreme Self is known in all the *Srutis* and the *Smrtis* to be 'free from sin, old age, death, grief, hunger, thirst, etc., and devoid of smell and taste.' How can I who am different from Him and possess so many phenomenal attributes, possibly accept the Supreme Self as myself, and myself, a transmigratory being, as the Supreme Self? I may then very well admit that fire is cool! Why should I, a man of the world entitled to accomplish all prosperity in this

¹ We have to remember that René Guénon considered the Hindu tradition coming directly from the Primordial Tradition, and even though, today, many are more concerned with what it seems to be more "contemporary" traditions, disregarding India, the Hindu tradition is a fundamental source for meditation and spiritual achievement, regardless of someone's religious faith. Texts, like the present one, are very beneficent, if they are studied over and over again [*Oriens*].

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world and in the next, and realize the supreme end of life, i.e., liberation, give up the actions producing those results and *yajnopavita* etc., their accessories?"

34. The teacher should say to him, It was not right for you to say, 'I directly perceive the pain in me when my body gets cuts or burns.' Why? Because the pain due to cuts or burns, perceived in the body, the object of the perception of the perceiver like a tree burnt or cut, must have the same location as the burns etc. People point out pain caused by burns and the like to be in that place where they occur but not in the perceiver. How? For, on being asked where one's pain lies, one says, 'I have pain in the head, in the chest or in the stomach.' Thus one points out pain in that place where burns or cuts occur, but never in the perceiver. If pain or its causes viz., burns or cuts, were in the perceiver, then one would have pointed out the perceiver to be the seat of the pain, like the parts of the body, the seats of the burns or cuts.

35. Moreover, (if it were in the Self) the pain could not be perceived by the Self like the colour of the eye by the same eye. Therefore, as it is perceived to have the same seat as burns, cuts and the like, pain must be an object of perception like them. Since it is an effect, it must have a receptacle like that in which rice is cooked. The impressions of pain must have the same seat as pain itself. As they are perceived during the time when memory is possible (i.e., in waking and dream, and not in deep sleep), these impressions must have the same location as pain. The aversion to cuts, burns and the like, the causes of pain, must also have the same seat as the impressions (of pain). It is therefore said, 'Desire, aversion and fear have a seat common with that of the impressions of colours. As they have for their seat the intellect, the knower, the Self, is always pure and devoid of fear.'

36. 'What is then the locus of the impressions of colours and the rest?' 'The same as that of lust etc.' 'Where again are lust etc.?' They are in the intellect (and nowhere else) according to the *Sruti*, 'lust, deliberation, doubt.' The impressions of colours and so forth are also there (and nowhere else) according to the *Sruti*, 'what is the seat of colours? The intellect.' That desire, aversion and the like are the attributes of the embodiment, the object and not of the Self is known from the *Sruti*, 'Desires that are in the intellect,' 'For he is then beyond all the woes of his heart (intellect),' 'Because It is unattached,' and 'Its form is untouched by desires' and also from *Smrtis* such as 'It is said to be changeless,' 'Because It is beginningless and without attributes' and so on. Therefore, (it is concluded that) impurity pertains to the object and not to the Self.

37, 38. Therefore you are not different from the Supreme Self inasmuch as you are devoid of impurities such as the connection with the impressions of colours and the like. As there is no contradiction to perceptual evidence etc., the Supreme Self should be accepted as oneself according to the *Srutis*, 'It knew the pure Self to be *Brahman*,' 'It should be regarded as homogeneous,' 'It is I that am below.' 'It is the Self that is below,' 'He knows everything to be the Self,' 'When everything becomes the Self,' 'All this verily is the Self,' 'He is without parts,' 'Without⁹ interior and exterior.' 'Unborn, comprising the interior and exterior,' 'All this is verily *Brahman*,' 'It entered through this door,' 'The names of pure knowledge,' 'Existence, Knowledge, Infinite Brahman,' 'From It,' 'It

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created and entered it,' 'The shining One without a second, concealed in all beings and all-pervading,' 'In all bodies Itself bodiless,' 'It is not born and does not die,' ('Knowing,) dream and waking,' 'He is my Self, thus one should know,' 'Who (knows) all beings.' 'It moves and moves not,' 'knowing It, one becomes worthy of being worshipped,' 'It and nothing but It is fire,' 'I became *Manu* and the sun,' 'Entering into them, He rules all creatures,' 'Existence only, my child' and 'That is real, That is the Self, thou art That.'

It is established that you, the Self, are the Supreme Brahman, the One only and devoid of every phenomenal attribute from the *Smrtis* also such, 'All beings are the body of One who resides in the hearts of all,' 'Gods are verily the Self,' 'In the city of nine gates.' 'The same in all beings.' 'In a Brahmana wise and courteous,' 'Undivided in things divided' and 'All this verily is Vasudeva (the self).'

39. If he says "If, Sir, the Self is 'Without interior or exterior,' 'Comprising the interior and exterior, unborn' 'Whole,' 'Pure consciousness only' like a lump of salt, devoid of all the various forms, and of a homogeneous nature like ether, what is it that is observed in ordinary usage and revealed in *Srutis* and *Smrtis* as what is to be accomplished, its (appropriate) means and its accomplishers, and is made the subject-matter of contention among hundreds of rival-disputants holding different views?"

40. The teacher should say, "Whatever is observed (in this world) or learnt from the *Srutis* (regarding the next world) are products of Ignorance. But in reality there is only One, the Self who appears to be many to deluded vision, like the moon appearing to be more than one to eyes affected by amaurosis. That duality is the product of Ignorance; follows from the reasonableness of the condemnation by the *Srutis* of the acceptance of (the reality of) difference such as, 'When there is something else as it were,' 'When there is duality as it were, one sees another,' 'He goes from death to death,' 'And where one sees something else, hears something else, cognizes something else, that is finite, and that which is finite is mortal,' 'Modifications (i.e., effects e.g., earthen jars) being only names, have for their support words only, it is earth alone (i.e. the cause) that is real' and 'He is one, I am another.' The same thing follows, from the *Srutis* teaching unity, for example, 'One, only without a second,' 'When to the knower of *Brahman*' and 'What delusion or grief is there?' "