

# Swami Muktatmanandaji

*Aparoksanubhuti 96-110*

रज्जुरूपे परिज्ञाते सर्पखण्डं न तिष्ठति ।

अधिष्ठाने तथा ज्ञाते प्रपञ्चः शून्यतां गतः ॥ १६ ॥

रज्जुरूपे (On) the real nature of the rope परिज्ञाते being known सर्पखण्डं the appearance of the snake न not तिष्ठति remains तथा so अधिष्ठाने ज्ञाते the substratum (the reality behind) being known प्रपञ्चः the phenomenal world शून्यतां extinction गतः attains.

96. The real nature of the rope being known, the appearance of the snake no longer persists; so the substratum being known,<sup>1</sup> the phenomenal world disappears completely.

<sup>1</sup> *The substratum being known, etc.*—This illusory world has Brahman as its substratum which is hidden from one's view on account of ignorance. But when one realizes this Brahman by removing ignorance, one is no more deluded into seeing the phenomenal world which, like all other illusory things, vanishes completely before the knowledge of the truth.

देहस्यापि प्रपञ्चत्वात् प्रारब्धावस्थितिः कुतः ।

अज्ञानिजनबोधार्थं प्रारब्धं वक्ति वै श्रुतिः ॥ ६७ ॥

देहस्य Of the body अपि also प्रपञ्चत्वात् on account of phenomenality प्रारब्धावस्थितिः the existence of Prârabdha कुतः how (अस्ति is) श्रुतिः the Sruti अज्ञानिजनबोधार्थं for the understanding of the ignorant folk वै only प्रारब्धं Prârabdha वक्ति speaks.

97. The body also being within the phenomenal world (and therefore unreal), how could Prârabdha exist? It is, therefore, for the understanding of the ignorant<sup>1</sup> alone that the Sruti speaks of Prârabdha.

<sup>1</sup> *For the understanding of the ignorant*—Those who do not know the highest truth argue that if ignorance with all its effects is destroyed by Knowledge, how does the body of a Jnâni live, and how is it possible for him to behave like ordinary mortals? They, however, fail to see that it is they who, being still in ignorance, see the body of a Jnâni and speak of him as behaving this way or that, whereas the Jnâni himself never sees the body at all, as he is ever established in Âtman. To convince such persons the Sruti brings

in Prârabdha as a tentative explanation for the so-called behaviour of a Jnâni.

क्षीयन्ते चास्य कर्माणि तस्मिन् दृष्टे परावरे ।

बहुत्वं तन्निषेधार्थं श्रुत्या गीतं च यत् स्फुटम् ॥ ६८ ॥

तस्मिन् परावरे (On) that which is both the higher and the lower दृष्टे being realized अस्य his कर्माणि all actions च and क्षीयन्ते are destroyed (इति thus) श्रुत्या by the Sruti बहुत्वं the use of the plural number यत् which स्फुटं clearly गीतं is declared (तत् that) च also तन्निषेधार्थं for the negation of that (Prârabdha).

98. "And all the actions<sup>1</sup> of a man perish when he realizes that (Ātman) which is both the higher and the lower." Here the clear use of the plural<sup>2</sup> by the Sruti is to negate Prârabdha as well.

<sup>1</sup> "And all the actions," etc.—The Sruti text runs as follows: "The knot of the heart breaks, all doubts vanish and (all) his actions perish when a person realizes that which is both the higher and the lower" (*Mund. Up.* II.2.viii).

<sup>2</sup> Here . . . the plural, etc.—The Sruti by using the term 'actions' has very clearly declared that not only Sanchita and Kriyamâna Karmas but also Prârabdha Karma is destroyed by knowledge. The Gitâ also declares, "O Arjuna, the fire of knowledge reduces all actions into ashes" (IV.37). Moreover, it also stands to reason that Prârabdha, an effect of ignorance, must cease to exist when the latter is destroyed by knowledge.

उच्यतेऽर्थलाञ्छैतत्तद्वानर्थद्वयागमः ।

वेदान्तमतहानं च यतो ज्ञानमिति श्रुतिः ॥ ६९ ॥

वर्णः By the ignorant बलात् perforce एतत् this उच्यते is maintained च still तदा then अर्थद्वयागमः room for two

absurdities (भविष्यति will be) वेदान्तमतज्ञानं abandonment of the Vedântic conclusion च also (अतः) therefore यतः from which ज्ञानं knowledge (भवति arises) इति (सा) that श्रुतिः Sruti (ग्राह्या should be accepted).

99. If the ignorant still arbitrarily<sup>1</sup> maintains this,<sup>2</sup> they will not only involve themselves into two absurdities<sup>3</sup> but will also run the risk of forgoing the Vedântic conclusion.<sup>4</sup> So one should accept those Srutis alone<sup>5</sup> from which proceeds true knowledge.

<sup>1</sup> *Arbitrarily*—By sheer force of one's own predilections, and not on the strength of sound reasoning.

<sup>2</sup> *This*—i.e. the possibility of Prârabdha and its action even after knowledge.

<sup>3</sup> *Involve themselves into two absurdities*—The upholders of Prârabdha are driven to this absurd position: In the first place Moksha or liberation from the bonds of duality will be impossible for them, as there will always remain a second thing, Prârabdha, along with Brahman; and in the second place liberation, the sole aim of knowledge, being impossible, there will hardly remain any utility of knowledge, and in that case they have to give up the Sruti on which they build their theory, as useless, since the Sruti has no other function but to lead to knowledge. Such are the disastrous consequences one has to encounter if one is to maintain Prârabdha to the end.

<sup>4</sup> *Run the risk of forgoing the Vedântic conclusion*—The final conclusion of the Vedânta is that there is only one non-dual Brahman or Atman which is birthless, deathless and free from all modifications. The world of duality is the creation of ignorance and will cease to exist when the latter is destroyed by knowledge. So persons who maintain that Prârabdha will remain even after knowledge and thus uphold a sort of duality even in the last stage, surely sacrifice the ultimate Vedântic truth which is essentially non-dual in its character.

<sup>3</sup> *Those Srutis alone, etc.*—The realization of the non-dual Ātman alone constitutes the real knowledge, and the Srutis are the only means to such knowledge. But all of them do not bring about this knowledge. So those Srutis alone which teach the non-dual Ātman and thus directly lead us to the final realization, are to be accepted as the real, and all others that support duality are to be treated as secondary, as they have no direct bearing upon the knowledge of Truth.

[In connection with the main topic it may be said that one should abide by those Srutis alone which establish the non-dual Ātman by denying all actions of it, and not by those that maintain Prārabdha and thus lend support to duality].

त्रिपञ्चाङ्गान्यथो वक्ष्ये पूर्वोक्तस्य हि लब्धये ।

तैश्च सर्वैः सदा कार्यं निदिध्यासनमेव तु ॥ १०० ॥

अथो Now पूर्वोक्तस्य of the aforesaid (knowledge) हि (expletive) लब्धये for the attainment त्रिपञ्चाङ्गानि fifteen steps (अहं I) वक्ष्ये shall expound तैः सर्वैः by the help of them all च (expletive) निदिध्यासनम् profound meditation एव verily तु (expletive) सदा always कार्यम् should be practised.

100. Now, for the attainment<sup>1</sup> of the aforesaid (knowledge) I shall expound the fifteen steps by the help of which one should practise profound meditation at all times.

<sup>1</sup> *Now, for the attainment, etc.*—Verses 24-28 have set forth in detail the nature of knowledge which is the goal of life. But it is not sufficient only to know about the goal, one must acquaint oneself with the means of its attainment as well. The fifteen steps here inculcated are the means which, if earnestly followed, will gradually lead the initiate to the desired goal.

नित्याभ्यासादृते प्राप्तिर्न भवेत् सखिदात्मनः ।

तस्माद्ब्रह्म निदिध्यासेज्जिज्ञासुः श्रेयसे चिरम् ॥ १०१ ॥

नित्याभ्यासादृते Without constant practice सच्चिदात्मनः of the Âtman that is absolute existence and knowledge प्राप्तिः realization न not भवेत् arises तस्मात् so जिज्ञासुः the seeker after knowledge श्रेयसे for the highest good ब्रह्म Brahman चिरं long निदिध्यासेत् should meditate.

101. The Âtman that is absolute existence and knowledge cannot be realized without constant practice. So one seeking after knowledge should long meditate upon Brahman<sup>1</sup> for the attainment of the desired goal.

<sup>1</sup> Should long meditate upon Brahman—The realization of Brahman does not come in a day; it requires years of strenuous effort. One should not, therefore, give up one's practice even if one meets with failure in the initial stages, but should continue it with renewed vigour. Sri Ramakrishna used to say: a *bonafide* cultivator never gives up his cultivation even if there is no crop for a few years; he continues it with ever-increasing zeal till he reaps a good harvest. So should a true aspirant.

यमो हि नियमस्त्यागो मौनं देशश्च कालता ।

आसनं मूलबन्धश्च देहसाम्यं च दृक्स्थितिः ॥ १०२ ॥

प्राणसंयमनं चैव प्रत्याहारश्च धारणा ।

आत्मभ्यानं समाधिश्च प्रोक्तान्यङ्गानि वै क्रमात् ॥ १०३ ॥

यमः Control of the senses हि (expletive) नियमः control of the mind त्यागः renunciation मौनं silence देशः place कालता time च and आसनं posture मूलबन्धः the root that restrains च and देहसाम्यं equipoise of the body दृक्स्थितिः steadiness of vision च and प्राणसंयमनं control of the vital forces एव also प्रत्याहारः self-withdrawal धारणा concentration च and आत्मभ्यानं meditation on Âtman समाधिः complete

absorption च and वै (expletive) अङ्गानि the steps क्रमात् in order प्रोक्तानि are described.

102-103. The steps,<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>1</sup> *The steps*—These fifteen steps include the eight steps of Patanjali, but with a reorientation of meaning as will be evident from the following.

सर्वं ब्रह्मेति विज्ञानादिन्द्रियग्रामसंयमः ।

यमोऽयमिति संप्रोक्तोऽभ्यसनीयो मुहुर्मुहुः ॥ १०४ ॥

सर्वं All ब्रह्म Brahman (अस्ति is) इति विज्ञानात् from such knowledge इन्द्रियग्रामसंयमः the restraint of all the senses अयं this यम इति as Yama संप्रोक्तः is rightly called (सः this) मुहुर्मुहुः repeatedly अभ्यसनीयः should be practised.

104. The restraint of all the senses by means of such knowledge as "All this is Brahman" is rightly called Yama,<sup>1</sup> which should be practised again and again.

<sup>1</sup> *Yama*—Patanjali describes it as "non-killing, truthfulness, non-stealing, continence, and non-receiving" (II.30); but when one knows everything to be Brahman all of these follow as a matter of course.

सजातीयप्रवाहश्च विजातीयतिरस्कृतिः ।

नियमो हि परानन्दो नियमात् क्रियते बुधैः ॥ १०५ ॥

सजातीयप्रवाहः The continuous flow of one kind of thought  
 विजातीयतिरस्कृतिः the rejection of all that is foreign to it च  
 and (इति this) नियमः Niyama (उच्यते is called) (अयं this) हि  
 verily परानन्दः the supreme bliss (अयं this) बुधैः by the wise  
 नियमात् regularly क्रियते is practised.

105. The continuous flow of only one kind of thought,<sup>1</sup> to the exclusion of all other thoughts, is called Niyama,<sup>2</sup> which is verily the supreme bliss and is regularly practised by the wise.

<sup>1</sup> *One kind of thought*—Thought relating to the unity of the individual self with Brahman such as "This Ātman is Brahman," and "I am Brahman."

<sup>2</sup> *Niyama*—According to Patanjali Niyama is "internal and external purification, contentment, mortification, Vedic study, and worship of God" (II.32). These, however, are easily accessible to one who constantly dwells on Brahman.

त्यागः प्रपञ्चरूपस्य चिदात्मत्वावलोकनात् ।

त्यागो हि महतां पूज्यः सद्यो मोक्षमयो यतः ॥ १०६ ॥

चिदात्मत्वावलोकनात् Realizing it as the all-conscious  
 Ātman प्रपञ्चरूपस्य of the illusory universe त्यागः abandonment  
 हि verily महतां of the great पूज्यः honoured त्यागः renunciation  
 (अस्ति is) यतः because (अयं this) सद्यः immediately मोक्षमयः of  
 the nature of liberation (भवति is).

106. The abandonment of the illusory universe by realizing it as the all-conscious Ātman is the real<sup>1</sup> renunciation honoured by the great, since it is of the nature of immediate liberation.

<sup>1</sup> *The real renunciation*—Some explain renunciation as the giving up of all kinds of actions whether scriptural or mundane, and thus attaining to a state of inactivity. This, however, is far from what is really meant by renunciation



which, in its deepest sense, is all positive. It is when one realizes Ātman everywhere and thus covets nothing, that one is said to have real renunciation. The Sruti also declares, "Clothe everything in this transitory world with God and thus maintain thyself by that renunciation," etc. (*Isd.* I).

यस्माद्वाचो निवर्तन्ते अप्राप्य मनसा सह ।

यन्मौनं योगिभिर्गम्यं तद्भवेत् सर्वदा बुधः ॥ १०७ ॥

वाचः Words (तत् that) अप्राप्य without reaching मनसा सह with the mind यस्मात् from which निवर्तन्ते turn back यत् which मौनं silence योगिभिः by the Yogins गम्यं attainable बुधः the wise सर्वदा always तत् that भवेत् should be.

107. The wise should always be one with that silence<sup>1</sup> wherefrom words<sup>2</sup> together with the mind turn back without reaching it, but which is attainable by the Yogins.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *That silence*—Here it denotes Ātman which is ever quiescent.

<sup>2</sup> *Wherefrom words, etc.*—It is a reference to the Taittiriya Upanishad (II.9).

<sup>3</sup> *Attainable by the Yogins*—Because it is their very Self.

वाचो यस्माद्निवर्तन्ते तद्भक्तुं केन शक्यते ।

प्रपञ्चो यदि वक्तव्यः सोऽपि शब्दविवर्जितः ॥ १०८ ॥

इति वा तद्भवेन्मौनं सतां सहजसंशितं ।

गिरा मौनं तु बालानां प्रयुक्तं ब्रह्मवादिभिः ॥ १०९ ॥

यस्मात् From which वाचः words निवर्तन्ते turn back तत् that केन by whom वक्तुं to be described शक्यते is capable यदि if प्रपञ्चः the phenomenal world वक्तव्यः to be spoken of सोऽपि even that शब्दविवर्जितः devoid of words ( भवति is ) or this इति

वा or this (यत् which) सतां among the sages सहजसंशितं called congenital तत् that मौनं silence भवेत् is गिरा by (restraining) speech मौनं silence ब्रह्मवादिभिः by the teachers of Brahman बालानां for children प्रयुक्तं ordained.

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.<sup>1</sup> This,<sup>2</sup> to give an alternate definition, may also be termed silence known among the sages as congenital.<sup>3</sup> The observance of silence by restraining speech, on the other hand, is ordained by the teachers of Brahman for the ignorant.

<sup>1</sup> *Even that is beyond words*—Even this world, when one attempts to describe it, is found to be inexpressible, since it cannot be called either Sat (existent) or Asat (non-existent). If it were Sat it would not disappear in deep sleep, and if Asat, it would not at all appear now. Therefore this world is also Anirvachaniya (inexpressible).

<sup>2</sup> *This*—The inexpressibility of Brahman and the world.

<sup>3</sup> *Congenital*—Inseparable from Ātman.

आदावन्ते च मध्ये च जनो यस्मिन्न विद्यते ।

येनेदं सततं व्याप्तं स देशो विजनः स्मृतः ॥ ११० ॥

आदौ In the beginning अन्ते in the end च and मध्ये in the middle च as also यस्मिन् in which जनः people ( i. e. the universe ) न not विद्यते exists येन by which इदं this (universe) सततं always व्याप्तं is pervaded सः that विजनः solitude देशः space स्मृतः is known.

110. That solitude<sup>1</sup> is known as space, wherein the universe does not exist in the

beginning, end or middle, but whereby it is pervaded at all times.

<sup>1</sup> *That solitude*—Here it is Brahman that is indicated, for Brahman alone is solitary since It admits of no second at any time.