



## SRI SHANKARACHARYA<sup>1</sup>

### A THOUSAND TEACHINGS (VI) UPADESA SAHASRI

71. The teacher said to him: "As you are possessed of consciousness, you exist for yourself and are not made to act by anyone else. For an independent conscious being is not made to act by another as it is not reasonable that one possessed of consciousness exists for the sake of another possessing consciousness, both being of the same nature like the lights of two lamps. Nor does one possessed of consciousness exist for the sake of another having no consciousness; for it is not possible that a thing exists for itself for the very fact that it is non-conscious. Nor again is it seen that two non-conscious things exist for each other's purpose."

72. Disciple. — "But it may be said that the servant and the master are seen to serve each other's purpose though they are equally possessed of consciousness."

73. Teacher. — "It is not so. For I speak of consciousness belonging to you like heat and light to fire. It is for this reason that I cited the example of the lights of two lamps. Therefore, as changeless and eternal consciousness, like the heat and light of fire, you know everything presented to your intellect. Thus when you always know the Self to be without any attribute why did you say, 'I experience pain and pleasure again and again during the states of waking and dream after intervals of rest in deep sleep? And why did you say, 'Is it my own nature or causal?' Has this, delusion vanished or not?"

74. To this the disciple replied, "The delusion, Sir, is gone by your grace; but I have doubts about the changeless nature which, you say, pertains to me." Teacher. — "What doubts?" Disciple. — "Sound etc., do not exist independently as they are non-conscious. But they come into existence when there arise in the mind modifications resembling sound and so on. It is impossible that these modifications should have an independent existence as they are exclusive of one another as regards their special characteristics (of resembling sound etc.,) and appear to be blue, yellow, etc. (So sound etc., are not the same as mental modifications). It is therefore inferred that these modifications are caused by external

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<sup>1</sup> 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, it they are studied over and over again [*Oriens*].

## A thousand teachings (VI)

objects. So, it is proved that modifications resemble sound etc., objects existing externally. Similarly, these different modifications of the mind also are combinations and therefore non-conscious. So, not existing for their own sake, they, like sound etc., exist only when known by one different from them. Though the Self is not a combination, it consists of Consciousness and though it exists for Its own sake. It is the *knower* of the mental modifications appearing to be blue, yellow and so on. It must, therefore, be of a *changeful* nature. Hence is the doubt about the changeless nature of the Self."

75. The teacher said to him, "Your doubt is not justifiable, for you, the Self, are proved to be free from change, and therefore perpetually the same on the ground that all the modifications of the mind without a single exception are (simultaneously) known by you. You regard this knowledge of all the modifications which is the reason for the above inference as that for your doubt. If you were changeful like the mind or the senses (which pervade their objects one after another), you would not simultaneously know all the mental modifications, the objects of your knowledge. Nor are you aware of a portion only of the objects of your knowledge (at a time). You are, therefore, absolutely changeless."

76. The disciple said, "Knowledge is the meaning of a root and therefore surely consists of a change, and the knower (as you say) is of a changeless nature. This is a contradiction."

77. Teacher. — "It is not so. For the word knowledge is used only in a secondary sense to mean a change called an action, the meaning of a root. A modification of the intellect called an action ends in a result in itself which is the reflection of Knowledge, the Self. It is for this reason that this modification is called knowledge in a secondary sense, just as the action of cutting (a thing), producing and including the ultimate result viz., its separation in two parts is secondarily called the meaning of the root (to cut)."

78. Told thus, the disciple said, "Sir, the example cited by you cannot prove that I am changeless." Teacher. — "How?" Disciple. — "For, just as the action of cutting, producing and including the ultimate change in the thing to be cut, is secondarily called the meaning of the root (to cut), so the word knowledge is used secondarily for the mental modification which is the meaning of the root (to know) and which ends in the result that is a *change in knowledge*, the Self. The example cited by you cannot, therefore, establish the changeless nature of the Self."