

come to deny entirely all your superimpositions’, is the repeated advice of Ācārya Śaṅkara.



अन्नादानविसर्गाभ्यामीषन्नास्ति क्रिया मुनेः ।
तदेकनिष्ठया नित्यं स्वाध्यासापनयं कुरु ॥ २८२ ॥

*annādānavisargābhyāmīṣannāsti kriyā muneh,
tadekaniṣṭhyā nityaṁ svādhyāsāpanayaṁ kuru. (282)*

282. Since he has no idea of eating or evacuating, the sage has no relationship with action. Therefore, through continuous involvement in the contemplation of Brahman, deny entirely all your superimpositions.

‘Eating’ is not only putting food into the mouth and swallowing it, but also the anxiety for it, plans for its preparation, all the excitement for it, the sweet expectation of its taste, its mouth-watering smell and ultimately eating it – all these are not there to distract him who is engrossed in the study and reflection of the scriptures. Food (annam) in the Upaniṣads also means, ‘all sense objects eaten by the sense organs’. So eating food (anna-ādāna), means ‘reception of sense objects’. Our responses to the stimuli received represent excretion or expulsion (visarga). Receiving stimuli from the world of objects and responding to them with egocentric identification are not done by a man of reflection (Muni).

One who is striving to learn the art of meditation must slowly and carefully develop in himself an attitude of holding himself neutral in all receptions of stimuli and in his responses to them. A man of reflection does not identify with these. They may go on at the physical level because of the prārabdha of the body, but he is not involved in them. He is otherwise busy. This Truth has a universal applicability. Even in ordinary life we find, a man of reflection, a serious thinker, is not normally available for petty reflexes. When the examinations are near, students are very busy with their studies, no movies, no picnics, vigorously

studying. When the mind has taken up any idea seriously, it gets engrossed in it. The absent-mindedness of great scientists and artists is attributed to their devotion to the theme of their deep contemplation and pursuit.

Always contemplating upon the one ideal (tat-eka-niṣṭhā),¹ act on in the world. Get engaged, be wedded to the theme of Brahman, the supreme Self, and deny entirely all your superimpositions.



तत्त्वमस्यादिवाक्योत्थब्रह्मात्मैकत्वबोधतः ।
ब्रह्मण्यात्मत्वदाढ्याय स्वाध्यासापनयं कुरु ॥ २८३ ॥

*tattvamasyādivākyotthabrahmātmāikatvabodhataḥ,
brahmaṇyātmadvadāḍhyāya svādhyāsāpanayaṁ kuru. (283)*

283. By means of the realised knowledge of the identity of Brahman and Ātman, arising from such great maxims of the Vedas as 'That thou art', deny entirely your superimpositions in order to strengthen your identification with Brahman.

The great declarations of the Upaniṣads point out the identity of the individual Self with the Self present everywhere. The substratum for my life is the very substratum for the whole universe. In order to gain intimate experience of this great declaration, end your superimpositions. In order to be firmly established in Brahman, end all misconceptions about yourself.

For deep confirmed experience (dāḍhyāya), the spiritual experience of the Self should not be a passing fancy or some super-sensuous experience only. It must be a firm and deep experience as firm as our experience today that we are this body bundle and as deep as our daily experiences of the world around us.



¹ niṣṭhā – nitarāṁ sthitiḥ