

This mental equilibrium which refuses to entertain any revolting or choking disturbances from without; this mental poise and intellectual dexterity which make it possible for the mind to rise in revolt against itself, this endless peace cannot be gained, says Śaṅkara, through the wealth (vittam) of sense objects. Vittam, though it generally means 'wealth', here it means the 'wealth' that gives us immediate experiences and indeed, it is the sense objects that directly convey experiences to us from the external world. So a continuous and infinite experience of peace and tranquillity, joy and perfection, cannot be had through the satisfaction of our animal urges by procuring, maintaining and enjoying these ephemeral sense objects.

In this sense, this verse throws a flood of light on the previous one. No number of sense objects, be they as sacred as the Vaidika texts, no amount of activities, be they as sacred as yajñas or worship, can by themselves take us to that mental poise.

All Ācāryas, irrespective of their philosophical beliefs accept the declaration of the scriptures as absolute and as having unquestionable authority. This attitude is not acceptable to the modern youth, who, in his colossal ignorance thinks himself daring enough to question even the ṛṣis. He may not dare to question in his physics classroom and will silently and satisfactorily swallow a statement such as, that electrons and protons are moving with terrific frequency around a neutron in every atom. His spirit of enquiry and courage of understanding seem to freeze when it comes to modern science but the moment he hears the declarations in ancient texts, he finds in himself the audacity to question, but unfortunately has not the courage to examine or the stamina to experiment with those ideas. What a let down!

The great Ācāryas of yore were not the senile or idiotic dreamers, we are prone to label them. This is not only an insult to the intelligence, but also to our own and that of our ancestors who believed and followed them with benefit.

The Ācāryas accepted the declarations of the Śrutis because of the bonafide character and temperament of the ṛṣis who declared them. They did not, like politicians, go to the public to thrust their ideas down the throats of the listeners. They lived in complete contentment and happiness in their self-discovery and it was for the seekers to make a footpath and reach them with their questions and doubts upon life and its meaning, the goal and the path. To those seekers, out of sheer kindness, these Men of Realisation declared the Truth of their own experiences, in a burning spirit of inspiration and love. They had no intentions to misguide these precious young hearts of the generation.

These ṛṣis had no āśramas to build or missions to run, so they wanted no agents to hoodwink people and collect funds. They desired nothing, they asked for nothing, they demanded nothing. Physically, as far as they were concerned, they were dead and wanted the world to accept them as such. To such Men of Wisdom who had divorced themselves so completely from the world of desires and demands, to impute low motives for misguiding their generation would reflect only upon our lack of understanding of the literature. When we study a Shakespearean drama, we go to great lengths to understand the life of the dramatist and the England of Elizabethan times. But these scientific methods of study are totally ignored when we come to the scriptures, where we do not even try to understand the mental attitude, the intellectual accomplishments, the physical environments and so on, under which the great ṛṣis served, worked and lived.

The Ācāryas accepted the Śruti declarations as eternal aspects of the one Truth. Later on, for those, who want more logic and reason, we have a number of verses which support the assertion that work, no matter how noble or divine, cannot by itself tune the individual perfectly to that equanimous and peaceful mental attitude wherein he can come to experience, in this variegated world of pluralistic experiences, a continuous and unbroken peace of perfection.

