

The human mind is disintegrated because of its desires and it cannot be brought back to its state of healthy integration without its renouncing the very germs of its present disease. So, in Vedānta, great stress has been laid upon the necessity of avoiding the mind's running amok with its uncontrolled appetites.

This idea is explained again in a very powerful style. Śaṅkara crisply repeats what the ṛṣis have been continuously saying in the pages of the scriptures that the path of sensuousness leads straight to mortality while the path divine leads to immortality. Physiology also, in a much more limited sense of the term, declares that overindulgence impoverishes our vitality, bringing the physical structure to doom and death. In Vedānta, however, the term 'death' connotes not only the condition of the body when life has ebbed out from it, but includes the very principle of change and finitude.

Thus sensuous activities with motives of pleasure and indulgence harden the animal impressions in our minds and thereafter, thoughts begin to flow in that direction more and more powerfully. Such a stupid man becomes increasingly daring in his criminalities, until at last he becomes irredeemable and slips down the ladder of evolution to be ultimately destroyed.

On the other hand, the way up the evolutionary ladder is also open to man by climbing which he can slowly ascend to the very pinnacles of total fulfilment. This path has been beautifully described in the third line of the verse which insists that he must follow the instructions given by reliable guides, the Gurus, on the path of spirituality.

The Gurus must be well-meaning and worthy. These epithets speak volumes of suggestions. They must be well-meaning in the sense that they should not be mere gramophone records repeating what the śāstras say but must be men so well-established in their own experiences and so familiar with the path, that they can interpret it to different types of students belonging to different times and of different ages.

Also, the Teacher must be a worthy man (sujana). There are many gurus all over the world who are scriptural in word but cruel in actions. Like a tape recorder, they repeat what the ṛṣis have said but in their daily activities they follow faithfully what the rākṣasas did. Such ones are not worthy to be guides for true seekers on the path of God-seeking. The Guru must be perfect in all his conduct; there is no excuse for him to be vulgar in any aspect of his living.

Even if there be a sacred Guru and the disciples surrender unto him, this in itself cannot bear any fruit unless they are ready to actively cooperate with the Teacher and cultivate for themselves the perfection indicated to them by him.

Each of the disciples must, all through his contact with his Guru, bring into his field of enquiry his entire powers of reasoning, bright and intelligent, independent and original. He should not, on any score, allow himself to be overwhelmed by the Master. No Teacher worth the name will allow the disciple to choke his independent reasoning faculty. The best of Teachers have always endeavoured to cultivate a better crop of reasoning in the intellect of their disciples.

A student who has turned away from the tragic path of sensuousness and has stepped on to the glorious highway of the Divine, who is prepared to go forward under the guidance of a true Teacher, with nothing but his independent discriminative reasoning to supply him with mental agility and strength, will surely reach his goal. In order to prove the validity of these declarations, the last line ends with a powerful rejoinder, an emphatic assertion, 'Know this to be true'.



मोक्षस्य कांक्षा यदि वै तवास्ति त्यजातिदूराद्विषयान्विषं यथा ।
पीयूषवत्तोषदयाक्षमार्जवप्रशान्तिदान्तीर्भज नित्यमादरात् ॥ ८२ ॥