

who are now facing a blind alley in their progress may, very well look back upon their own wasteful days and re-equip themselves for a surer and faster flight to success. A correct understanding about themselves will certainly give them the secret key to the halls of success.

In those, who have, neither the spirit of detachment from the unreal, nor a consistent aspiration to evolve, true calmness and so on, cannot flourish. The Ācārya says that in such people self-control, self-restraint, joy and happiness are all mere delusion, they are only a similitude of Reality, they do not thrive well and flower forth to bear fruits. This, we can observe even among many of our present-day Mahātmās who, by their dress and profession, declare their detachment and mumukṣutva and yet, in their life, they seek to enjoy no calmness and so on, to experience no joy, to practise no self-control. In such individuals where true vairāgya and mumukṣutva are absent, śama, dama and so on, can never bear fruit or grow or even germinate.





8. Bhakti – Firm and Deep (31)

मोक्षकारणसामग्र्यां भक्तिरेव गरीयसी ।
स्वस्वरूपानुसन्धानं भक्तिरित्यभिधीयते ॥ ३१ ॥

*mokṣakāraṇasāmagryāṁ bhaktireva garīyasi,
svasvarūpānusandhānam bhaktirityabhidhīyate.* (31)

31. *Among the instruments and conditions necessary for Liberation, bhakti alone is supreme. A constant attempt to live up to one's own real nature is called single pointed devotion.*

Assuming that the seeker has a large share of intelligent detachment, a conspicuous amount of anxiety to liberate himself from his inborn weaknesses and also a fully developed moral and ethical life, the question comes to one's mind, 'What practice should one adopt in order to integrate oneself into a proportionately beautiful, divine existence?'

According to Vedānta, the means of self-integration on the path of knowledge is ātma-vicāra or constant meditation upon the nature of the eternal Self, but Śaṅkara makes use of a popular word to indicate the subtle practice of meditation. For this, there are critics who complain that the Pracchanna Bouddha (the 'veiled buddhist' as they sometimes call Śaṅkara) is playing upon the credulity of the people and luring them into his own den. There are dvaitins who criticise this verse and say that the Ācārya is deceiving true seekers by the word 'bhakti', misinterpreted and misconceived as pure meditation.

Śaṅkara says that bhakti is the path but he adds a codicil explaining the term 'bhakti'. According to him, bhakti is not