

*mokṣasya kāmksā yadi vai tavāsti tyajātidūrādvīṣayānviṣam yathā,
piyūṣavattoṣadāyākṣamārjavaprasāntidāntīrbhaja nityamādarāt.* (82)

82. *If you have indeed a craving for Liberation, avoid sense objects from a distance, just as you avoid things known to be poisonous; and with respectful reverence, daily cultivate the nectarine virtues – contentment, forgiveness, straightforwardness, calmness and self-control.*

So far, Śaṅkara (through the Guru) was advising the seekers in Vedānta on what they should do in order to realise the Self, and thus end their misunderstandings and sorrows in life. He has, so far, insisted upon the importance of viveka and vairāgya. Now he is slowly coming to a discussion to encourage the development of the noble qualities of the head and heart which, as we have earlier discussed, is the third item of adjustments to be made by a student before a guaranteed success in Self-realisation is assured to him.

Having known a thing to be poisonous, however thirsty you may be, you will not be tempted to drink it: so too, however tempting the sense objects may look, an individual who seeks Liberation should totally renounce the idea that they contain even a trace of potency to supply joy.

By withdrawing the sense organs from their field of activity, we conserve a tremendous amount of energy which would otherwise be wasted. If this new found energy is not immediately harnessed to do special work, the chances are that we will spend this dynamism in mentally dreaming of sense indulgence. This brings about an ugly deformity in our personality. To remain physically inert but mentally sensuous develops a distorted personality, drained of all brilliance and beauty through suppressed desires and unseen mental dissipations.

It is to avoid such dangerous consequences at the mental plane that we should have the guidance of the Teacher. Fresh fields have been discovered where the energy so conserved could be used up to raise smiling crops of beauty and profit.

We are told how an individual who has learnt to shun sense objects must immediately take up the constructive scheme of developing the positive qualities such as, contentment, compassion, forgiveness, straightforwardness, calmness and self-control. When we analyse them we find that each one of these qualities is in itself an attitude of the mind which will not suffer even the least disturbance in itself. As we diligently practise them, necessarily will we seek and establish our identity with our fellow beings and enjoy the intimate brotherhood of man and the divine fraternity of the soul.

