



10. Loving Advice of the Guru (41-47)

तथा वदन्तं शरणागतं स्वं संसारदावानलतापत्सम् ।
निरीक्ष्य कारुण्यरसादृदृष्ट्या दद्यादभीतिं सहसा महात्मा ॥ ४१ ॥

*tathā vadantam śaranāgataṁ svam saṁsāradāvānalatāpataptam,
nirikṣya kāruṇyarasādṛdṛṣṭyā dadyādabhītimiṁ sahasā mahātmā.* (41)

41. As he speaks, afflicted by and seeking protection from the conflagration of the fire of *samsāra*, the noble Teacher looks at him in all pity and kindness and spontaneously bestows upon him protection from fear.

Just as the śāstra lays down a code of behaviour for the student, with equal emphasis does it formulate laws for the Teacher. There is a school of thinkers in Vedānta which believes that a perfect Master is beyond laws, that he is a law unto himself that not even the Vedas dare lay down codes of morality or rules of behaviour for the perfect Master. This does not mean that he is free from all moral obligations and ethical norms of behaviour. No laws are applicable to him in the sense that because of his perfection, whatever he does, will automatically become the code of perfect action. He cannot go wrong because his actions can never be low and egocentric. He has surrendered himself completely to the Supreme and as such, the only music that can emanate from his action is the music of the Spirit. The very śāstras and Vedas are the codified expressions of the perfect behaviour of such Masters. Therefore, such critics who would object to the interpretation that the verse lays down codes for the Gurus, would be right.

What is meant here by ‘laws prescribed for the Teachers?’ It is merely a restatement of what they would do under given circumstances. If they are true to their full experience of perfect

tranquillity, they will not run away from sincere seekers but unquestioningly oblige them with their vast experience and knowledge. To him who has approached the Master with infinite fear he (the Master), should immediately give a message of hope, assuring him that there is nothing for him to fear nor is there cause for despair.

Later on, we shall find that when the student crystallises his thoughts into definite questions, the Master also uses less sweeping generalisations and gives more and more definite and pointed answers.



विद्वान् स तस्मा उपसत्तिमीयुषे मुमुक्षवे साधु यथोक्तकारिणे ।
प्रशान्तचित्ताय शमान्विताय तत्त्वोपदेशं कृपयैव कुर्यात् ॥ ४२ ॥

*vidvān sa tasmā upasattimīyuṣe mumukṣave sādhu yathoktakāriṇe,
prāśāntacittāya śamānvitāya tattvopadeśam kṛpayaiva kuryāt.* (42)

42. *To him, who in his anxiety for Liberation, has sought the protection of the Teacher, who abides by (scriptural) injunctions, who has a serene mind and who is endowed with tranquillity, the Master should pour out his knowledge with utmost kindness.*

The Teacher is advised to initiate the student only after testing whether the knowledge given out will take root in his heart. This testing of the student and the qualities for a spiritual seeker are enumerated in Vedānta not for the purpose of denying this benefit to any single individual. It is out of sheer kindness that Śruti prescribes these qualifications, for unless an individual has these mental and intellectual qualities, it will be a sheer waste of the Teacher's energy to impart knowledge and its concomitant strength will be misplaced in an imperfect student as he will make use of it for his own annihilation as well as the annihilation of the world. When an unscrupulous man comes to power in any country, we know what a menace he can be to society.