

कथं तरेयं भवसिन्धुमेतं का वा गतिर्मै कतमोऽस्त्युपायः ।
जाने न किञ्चित्कृपयाऽव मां प्रभो संसारदुःखक्षतिमातनुष्व ॥ ४० ॥

*katham tareyaṁ bhavasindhumetam kā vā gatirme katamo'styupāyāḥ,
jāne na kiñcicikṛpayā'va mām prabho saṁsāraduḥkhaksatimātanuṣva.* (40)

40. *How to cross this ocean of relative existence? What is to be my ultimate destination? Which of the many means should I adopt? I know nothing of these. O Lord! Please save me and describe in all detail how to end the misery of this life in the finite.*

This is the type of question the student should ask when he approaches the Master after having served him long enough and perfectly tuned up to him. These questions in themselves speak volumes of clear thinking and logical conclusions which the student has reached of his own accord. He has lived intelligently his life of varied experiences and has evaluated it correctly. He is neither despaired because of the insurmountable difficulties experienced by him nor is he ready to make any compromise with Truth. He has analysed his experiences in life and has come to the conclusion that finite objects cannot give him anything but finite satisfaction. He has looked within himself and has estimated correctly his own demands in life as nothing short of infinite perfection, which alone can yield to him infinite happiness. He wants to know from the Master how he can come to experience the Infinite and thereby gain a complete transcendence of the finite. Hence he asks, 'How can I cross this ocean of relative existence?'

Unless one, somehow or the other, fulfils this self-evolution and reaches the portals of the Infinite and experiences the Real, one wonders as to what would be his 'ultimate destination'. The question, therefore, does not necessarily mean that he is ignorant of what the destination would be. In fact, it is a dreadful premonition of the consequences of getting entangled in the finite world of desires, excitements and endless responsibilities of satisfying each nerve tickling, unless he experiences the Transcendental.

Though he has come to an independent conclusion about the life he is living and though he knows the goal, yet he feels unsure as to what exactly is the method by which he can end his delusions and reach the goal. The student has already read a lot of the science of life as expounded in the literature on religion and he finds therein, different methods of self perfection prescribed. He wants to know from the Guru, what exactly should be the path for him. Through a process of trial and error one can, for oneself, find the right path but it is more convenient, and indeed, a sacred blessing if one can have a true Teacher to show the correct path of self-development. Therefore, the student asks, 'Which of the means should I adopt?'

The expression, 'I know nothing', is not the student's dull-witted confession of ignorance but it is an expression of modesty, and devotion and reverence for the Teacher.

