

Master. This does not take away from us our liberty to talk to the Master in our attempt to evaluate him. Śaṅkara only means that having accepted him as your Teacher, when you approach him for correct initiation into the subtle truths of Vedānta, you should not destroy the sanctity of the atmosphere by an exhibition of your knowledge or sentiments.

The questions asked by the student were all couched in a precise aphoristic style, indicative of his independent attempts at understanding the preliminary thoughts in the philosophy. These questions pregnant with secret thoughts, are not obvious in their literal word meanings. Also, their discussions are not just Sunday magazine themes, written to entertain the vulgar tastes and cheap demands of an idle holiday crowd. They rake up the innermost depths of investigations undertaken in all tranquillity, possible only for a human intellect blessed with acute reasoning capacity. These topics are of interest only to those who wish to get away from their limitations, to experience the essential freedom of their own pure nature as the Self.



श्रृणुष्वावहितो विद्वन्यन्मया समुदीर्यते ।
तदेतच्छ्रवणात्सद्यो भवबन्धाद्विमोक्षसे ॥ ६८ ॥

*śrūṇuṣvāvahito vidvanyanmayā samudīryate,
tadetacchravaṇātśadyo bhavabandhādvimokṣyase. (68)*

68. Listen attentively, O learned one! to what I shall now tell you. Listening to it, you shall immediately gain a thorough Liberation from the bondages of *samsāra*.

The Ācārya gives the student full assurance that if he listens attentively and looks for the subtle meaning in the words of the Teacher, he shall attain a sense of complete fulfilment in life.

'Indeed, this Vedānta is cheap. A seeker of Liberation has only to discover a great Teacher and listen carefully to his

words and immediately he shall experience a total release from all physical imperfections, mental debilities and intellectual weaknesses created by his own spiritual ignorance. How easy! Just listen and you will be Liberated. Can there be an easier path? Vedānta is truly cheap' – thus one may be tempted to exclaim.

Here is a clear example which amply illustrates that literal word meanings do not convey the right philosophical implications in the literature of Vedānta. If, by listening, one could liberate oneself, mokṣa would have been so cheap that it could be easily dispensed universally. But the scripture cannot be false and mere listening cannot be the path for a total spiritual redemption. Therefore, we must understand that the word, 'listening' is used here in a sense much more ample and accommodative than its dictionary meaning.

From what you have been told so far, you know how essential it is for a student to be completely attuned to the Master. The student already has, through a process of self-discipline, made his inner kingdom clean and peaceful, wherein he stands in all devotion and meekness, receptivity and alertness. When he 'listens' to the inspired words of the Master, full of subtle suggestions, he within himself, starts living the unworded implications coursing through the words.

As the tongue of the temple bell strikes the bell cup, there is a harsh metallic sound. But as we listen to it, it warbles out a lingering melody before it slowly dies out into the very silence in which it was born. Similarly, the words of the scriptures have a harsh sound but a lingering ringing music. The harsh sounds are caught in a web of language and preserved in textbooks but the warbling notes are to be produced in the secret cave of the seeker's heart.

This preparation is indicated by the practices of reflection and meditation, concentration and devotion, self-control and celibacy, moral purity and ethical goodness advised for the sādhakas.