

love inspired acts of service, become receptive and establish an intimate rapport filled with reverence; such a relationship alone will yield results. Therefore, Vedānta is almost overemphasising the method of approaching the Teacher. These days, unfortunately, we find seekers who think nothing about calling over the phone to enquire from the Teacher at the other end of the city about the goal of life, the path and the means and so on. Such a telephone tuition is not possible in spirituality and the seeker of a spiritual life and religious truths is asked to approach the Master in an attitude of reverence and surrender. Then alone can the Teacher acquaint the disciple with the knowledge of the Self.

In this verse, it has been indicated very clearly that seekers should not misuse the Teacher and discuss with him secular questions or domestic problems; it is almost prohibited. He should be asked only about the special knowledge of the Self in which he is perfect.



स्वामिन्नमस्ते नतलोकबन्धो कारुण्यसिन्धो पतितं भवाब्धौ ।
मामुद्धरात्मीयकाटाक्षदृष्ट्या ऋज्व्यातिकारुण्यसुधाभिवृष्ट्या ॥ ३५ ॥

*svāminnamaste natalokabandho kārūṇyasindho patitaṁ bhavābdhau,
māmuddharātmīyakaṭākṣadr̥ṣṭyā ṛjvyātikārūṇyasudhābhivṛṣṭyā. (35)*

35. O Master! O friend of those who reverentially surrender to thee! Thou ocean of mercy! I salute thee; save me, fallen as I am into this sea of change, with a direct glance from thy eyes which rain nectarine grace supreme.

Characteristically oriental in style, the poet in Śaṅkara here extends himself beyond the pale of the philosopher in him. Any estimate of Śaṅkara as a philosopher cannot be complete without recognising the poet in him, for there are moments when, even while writing his commentaries upon the Upaniṣads, he forgets that he is a philosopher to whom economy of words and precision of expression should be a religion. At times, the poet Śaṅkara

outranks the philosopher Śaṅkara. This verse is an example where he uses expressions full of hyperbole. The modern newspaper reading generation may not easily appreciate the poetic beauty of the verse unless it is hauled up and made to notice it.

This is a verse that provides the seekers with a perfect prayer addressed to the Guru. Prayer is not begging, although in all religions of the world today, it has come to gather almost a scandalous and painful meaning of beggary. To beg of the Lord for something or the other for the sake of which we chant and sing glorified words of praise along with offering sweets and candles, is an act of pulling down the edifice of the immortal and the perfect to the level of desire ridden human creatures. God in His own glory needs none of our glorifications nor has He any desire to partake of the objects that the devotee in his love can offer Him, He being the giver of all and ever the perfectly satisfied.

Yet, how is it that every Prophet, irrespective of the place and the period of his manifestation has invariably advised his devotees to approach the Lord with offerings and prayers? In the sayings of these Prophets, the eternal Masters of the world, we invariably notice that they have emphasised the idea that God is not purchasable nor is He available for one's persuasions to be an ally in one's animalistic activities. But a true devotee is advised to surrender himself at the feet of the Lord through prayer, love and devotion in order that during the surrender, the nobler and the diviner in him now lying dormant may come to manifest itself.

Here is a trick of 'stooping to conquer!' While the loving devotee prostrates to the idol, he also surrenders his ego, the vanities of false values in him and his attachments to his body, mind and intellect.

It is these false attachments that lower one to the level of an animal and effectively screen one away from one's true divine nature. The surrender of the ego is the unveiling of the Divine in oneself and the degree to which the Divine is manifested; to that