

को नाम बन्धः कथमेष आगतः कथं प्रतिष्ठास्य कथं विमोक्षः ।  
कोऽसावनात्मा परमः क आत्मा तयोर्विवेकः कथमेतदुच्यताम् ॥ ४९ ॥

*ko nāma bandhaḥ kathameṣa āgataḥ  
kathām pratiṣṭhāsyā kathām vimokṣāḥ,  
ko'sāvanātma paramaḥ ka ātmā  
taylorvivekaḥ kathametaducyatām.* (49)

49. *What is bondage? How has it come? How does it continue to exist? How can one get out of it completely? What is the not-Self? Who is the supreme Self? And what is the process of discrimination between these two (Self and not-Self)? Please explain all these to me.*

This is series of seven questions which the student asks the Teacher, who will now take them up one by one and answer them exhaustively.

These questions exhaust almost the entire field of ignorance and ignorance created confusions. Therefore, they are not to be treated as a set of questions just casually asked by some individual; they are questions that would be asked by sincere seekers who are intellectually curious to know, to understand, to evaluate and to have it explained, the confusing world of endless plurality. Thus, these questions give us inkling into the type of questions to be asked and the spirit in which to open our discussion when we approach a divine Master.

To go to a saint with flowers and camphor, fruits and sweets, is not the correct way of approaching one's spiritual Guru. This tradition, though with the best of intentions, has only created a set of fruit-gatherers as gurus and flower offerers as disciples and together the two have dug deep the grave of sacred Vedānta and have there hoisted the skeleton of Hinduism!

These thirsty questions, demanding an explanation for the sense of limitation and confusion experienced by us are, each in itself, an exhaustive declaration of the student's observations on life, as it is available to him within and without.

Again, they show the perspicacity with which the student has followed what the Master has said so far. In all the previous verses, the Teacher spoke in terms of 'bondages', 'Liberation', 'not-Self', 'supreme Self', and the 'discrimination between the Self and the not-Self', till now these terms were freely used but the student is not satisfied with a mere understanding of the theories of Vedānta. He wants to live them in life. So he is now holding the Teacher by the collar, as it were and is pointedly asking him to explain more clearly. Naturally, the Teacher catches the contagion of the body's enthusiasm and we shall see how beautifully he warms up to the discussion.

