

degree the individual raises himself in his potency to face life and to remain equanimous in all circumstances.

Here a student of Vedānta is asked to surrender himself to the Guru and to praise him in kīrtana and serve him with meek surrender. This prescription is not meant to make the student intellectually a slave to the Teacher but these practices, when pursued for some time, easily make the student fully tuned up to the Teacher's heart. What the Teacher has to convey is the experience of the Transcendental and as the Infinite cannot be defined in finite words, the words of the Master can echo their message only in a bosom that has been stilled in complete love.

Any discordant notes arising in the bosom of the disciple create disturbances which molest, rape and disturb the true significance of the scriptural words used by the Master during his discourses. In order that we ourselves may not create any discordant notes and destroy the harmony, we, as students, are asked to serve and surrender, to pray and worship at the Master's feet.



दुर्वारसंसारदवाग्निताप्तं दोधूयमानं दुरदृष्टवातैः ।  
भीतं प्रपन्नं परिपाहि मृत्योः शरण्यमन्यद्यदहं न जाने ॥ ३६ ॥

*durvārasaṁsāradavāgnitaptaṁ dodhūyamānaṁ duradṛṣṭavātaiḥ,  
bhītaṁ prapannaṁ paripāhi mṛtyoḥ śaraṇyamanyadyadahaṁ na jāne. (36)*

36. I am being roasted in the blazing infernal fire of change; I am being tossed by the cruel storms of misfortune; I am terrified (within and without). O Lord! Save me from death; I seek refuge in thee, for I do not know of any other harbour wherein to seek shelter.

A comparison of the rhyme and rhythm of this verse with those of the previous one gives us an idea of the mastery of Śaṅkara's pen in poetry. If the former is a melodious flow of peaceful tranquillity, a flow that removes all the clogs of the heart and allows it to move

freely into molten love and liquid surrender, this verse, in its brisk trot, exhibits in its very rhythm and sound an irresistible impatience and pressing urgency.

The first line in the verse explains the dangers to which the seeker is exposed, while in the second line we have an indication of the dangers that he realises are besetting him from within. In the outer world of contact with things he is overwhelmed by sorrows of an ever-changing pattern, while in himself he recognises an endless storm caused by his likes and dislikes, his loves and hatreds, his hopes and disappointments. These two lines beautifully summarise the experience of finitude which is the lot of every seeker before he enters the hall of wisdom.

It is only when an individual develops his sensibility, subtle enough to recognise these weaknesses in life that he comes to feel such a pressing urgency for Liberation. When he experiences this, he comes to demand of the Guru, safety and shelter from the threatening cries of death with their poisoning evil experiences in life. We should not construe death to mean only the experience of dying which is the lot of all beings, but it is to be understood in its broadest sense as the poison of finitude. Every moment there is death, as each experience dies away, and out of its ashes springs the next circumstances to be experienced. The disciple is asking for guidance to the realms beyond death, a state of living in which the experience of life is the continuous, homogenous, Bliss Absolute.

This verse again is a prayer addressed to the Guru coming from the bottom of the student's heart, thereby making his attunement with the Guru perfect and complete.



शान्ता महान्तो निवसन्ति सन्तो वसन्तवल्लोकहितं चरन्तः ।  
तीर्णाः स्वयं भीमभवार्षवं जनानहेतुनान्यानपि तारयन्तः ॥ ३७ ॥

*śāntā mahānto nivasanti santo vasantavallōkahitam carantaḥ,  
tīrṇāḥ svayaṁ bhīmabhavarṣaṇvaṁ janānāhetunānyānāpi tārayantaḥ. (37)*