

Guru

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Table of Contents:

Introduction

The Sadguru

The Need for a Guru

How to Choose Your Guru

Mysterious Help from the Lord

Siksha Gurus and Diksha Guru

Stick to One Guru

Guru-Parampara

Initiation-Its Meaning

Sakti-sanchar

Grace and Self-effort

INTRODUCTION

The Guru is God Himself manifesting in a personal form to guide the aspirant. Grace of God takes the form of the Guru. To see the Guru is to see God. The Guru is united with God. He inspires devotion in others. His presence purifies all.

The Guru is verily a link between the individual and the immortal. He is a being who has raised himself from *this* into *That*, and thus has free and unhampered access into both the realms. He stands, as it were, upon the threshold of immortality; and, bending down he raises the struggling individuals with his one hand, and with the other lifts them up into the *empyrean* of everlasting joy and infinite Truth-Consciousness.

THE SADGURU

To be a Guru, one must have a command from God.

Mere study of books cannot make one a Guru. One who has studied the Vedas, and who has direct knowledge of the Atman (Self) through Anubhava (experience), can alone be enrolled as a Guru. A Jivanmukta or liberated sage is the real Guru or spiritual preceptor. He is the Sadguru. He is identical with Brahman or the Supreme Self. He is a Knower of Brahman.

A Sadguru is endowed with countless Siddhis (psychic powers). He possesses all divine Aisvarya (powers), all the wealth of the Lord.

Possession of Siddhis, however, is not the test to declare the greatness of a sage or to prove that he has attained Self-realisation. Sadgurus generally do not exhibit any miracle or Siddhi. Sometimes, however, they may do so in order to convince the aspirants of the existence of superphysical things, give them encouragement, and instill faith in their hearts.

The Sadguru is Brahman Himself. He is an ocean of bliss, knowledge, and mercy. He is the captain of your soul. He is the fountain of joy. He removes all your troubles, sorrows, and obstacles. He shows you the right divine path.

He tears your veil of ignorance. He makes you immortal and divine. He transmutes your lower, diabolical nature. He gives you the rope of knowledge, and takes you up when you are drowning in this ocean of Samsara (cycle of birth and death). Do not consider him to be only a man. If you take him as a man, you are a beast. Worship your Guru and bow to him with reverence.

Guru is God. A word from him is a word from God. He need not-teach anything. Even his presence or company is elevating, inspiring, and stirring, His very company is self-illumination. Living in his company is spiritual education. Read the Granth-saheb (the holy scripture of the Sikh religion). You will come to know the greatness of the Guru.

Man can learn only from man, and hence God teaches through a human body. In your Guru, you have your human ideal of perfection. He is the pattern into which you wish to mould yourself. Your mind will readily be convinced that such a great soul, is fit to be worshipped and revered.

Guru is the Moksha-dvara (door to liberation). He is the gateway to the transcendental Truth-Consciousness. But, it is the aspirant who has to enter through it. The, Guru is a help, but the actual task of practical [Sadhana](#) (spiritual practice) falls on the aspirant himself.

THE NEED FOR A GURU

For a beginner in the spiritual path, a Guru is necessary. To light a candle, you need a burning candle. Even an illumined soul alone can enlighten another soul.

Some do meditation for some years independently. Later on, they actually feel the necessity of a Guru. They come across some obstacles in the way. They are

unable to know how to obviate these impediments or stumbling blocks. Then they begin to search for a Master.

Only the man who has already been to Badrinath will be able to tell you the road. In the case of the spiritual path, it is still more difficult to find your way. The mind will mislead you very often. The Guru will be able to remove pitfalls and obstacles, and lead you along the right path. He will tell you: "This road leads you to Moksha (liberation); this one leads to bondage". Without this guidance, you might want to go to Badrinath, but find yourself in Delhi!

The scriptures are like a forest. There are ambiguous passages. There are passages which are apparently contradictory. There are passages which have esoteric meanings, diverse significance, and hidden explanations. There are cross-references. You are in need of a Guru or Preceptor who will explain to you the right meaning, who will remove doubts and ambiguities, who will place before you the essence of the teachings.

A Guru is absolutely necessary for every aspirant in the spiritual path. It is only the Guru who will find out your defects. The nature of egoism is such that you will not be able to find out your own defects. Just as a man cannot see his back, so also he cannot see his own errors. He must live under a Guru for the eradication of his evil qualities and defects.

The aspirant who is under the guidance of a Master or Guru is safe from being led astray. Satsanga or association with the Guru is an armour and fortress to guard you against all temptations and unfavourable forces of the material world.

Cases of those who had attained perfection without study under any Guru should not be cited as authority against the necessity of a Guru; for, such great men are the anomalies of spiritual life, and not the common normality. They come into existence as spiritual masters as a result of the intense service, study, and meditation practised in previous births. They had already studied under the Guru. The present birth is only its continuative spiritual effect. Hence, the importance of the Guru is not lessened thereby.

Some teachers mislead their aspirants. They say unto all: "Think for yourself. Do not surrender yourself to any Guru". When one says, "Do not follow any Guru!", he intends to be the listeners' Guru himself. Do not approach such pseudo-Gurus. Do not hear their lectures.

All great ones had their teachers. All the sages, saints, prophets, world-teachers, incarnations, great men, have had their own Gurus, however great they might have been. Svetaketu learnt the nature of Truth from Uddalaka, Maitreyi from Yajnavalkya, Bhrigu from Varuna, Narada from Sanatkumara, Nachiketas from Yama, Indra from Prajapati; and several others humbly went to wise ones, observed strict [Brahmacharya](#), practised rigorous discipline, and learnt Brahma-vidya (the science of God) from them.

Lord Krishna sat at the feet of His Guru Sandeepani. Lord Rama had Guru Vasishtha who gave Him Upadesha (spiritual advice). Lord Jesus sought John to be baptised by him on the banks of the river Jordan. Even Devas (celestial beings) have Brihaspati as their Guru. Even the greatest among the divine beings sat at the feet of Guru Dakshinamurti.

A neophyte must have a personal Guru first. He cannot have God as Guru to begin with. He must have a pure mind. He must have ethical perfection. He, must be intensely virtuous. He must be above body-consciousness. Then alone can he have God as Guru.

HOW TO CHOOSE YOUR GURU

If you find peace in the presence of a Mahatma (great soul), if you are inspired by his speeches, if he is able to clear your doubts, if he is free, from greed, anger, and lust, if he is selfless, loving, and I-less, you can take him as your Guru. He who is able to clear your doubts, he who is sympathetic in your Sadhana, he who does not disturb your beliefs but helps you on from where you are, he in whose very presence you feel spiritually elevated-he is your Guru. Once you choose Your Guru, implicitly follow him. God will guide you through the Guru.

Do not use your reason too much in the selection of your Guru. You will fail if you do so. If you fail to get a first-class Guru, try to follow the instructions of the Sadhu (a spiritual person) who is treading the path for some years, who has purity and other virtuous qualities, and who has some knowledge of the scriptures. Just as a student of the Intermediate class will be able to teach a student of Third Form when a professor with M.A. qualification is not available, just as a sub-assistant surgeon will be able to attend on a patient when the civil surgeon is not available, this second-class type of Guru will be able to help you.

If you are not able to find out even this second-class type of Guru, you can follow the teachings contained in the books written by realised saints like [Sri Sankara](#), Dattatreya, and others. You can keep a photo of such a realised Guru, if available, and worship the same with faith and devotion. Gradually you will get inspiration, and the Guru may appear in dream and initiate and inspire you at the proper time. For a sincere Sadhak (aspirant), help comes in a mysterious manner. When the time is ripe, the Guru and the disciple are brought together by the Lord in a mysterious way.

MYSTERIOUS HELP FROM THE LORD

Just see how the Lord has helped the devotees in the following instances. Eknath heard an Akasvani (a voice from the sky). It said, "See Janardan Pant at Deva Giri. He will put you in the proper path and guide you." Eknath acted accordingly and found his Guru. Tukaram received his Mantra, Rama Krishna Hari, in his dream. He repeated this Mantra and had Darshan (vision) of Lord Krishna. Lord Krishna directed Namdev to get his higher initiation from a Sannyasin (renunciate) at Mallikarjuna. Queen Chudalai assumed the form, of Kumbha Muni, appeared before her husband Sikhidhwaja in the forest, and initiated him in the mysteries of Kaivalya (state of absolute independence). Madhura Kavi saw a light in the firmament for three days consecutively. It guided him and took him to his Guru Nammalvar who was sitting in Samadhi underneath a tamarind tree near Tinnevely. Vilvamangal was very much attracted to Chintamani, the dancing woman. The latter became his Guru.

Tulasidas received instructions from an invisible being to see Hanuman and, through Hanuman, to get Darshan of Sri Rama.

Competent disciples are never in want of a competent Guru. Realised souls are not rare. Ordinary ignorant-minded persons cannot easily recognise them. Only a few persons, who are pure and embodiments of all virtuous qualities, can understand realised souls, and they only will be benefited in their company.

So long as there is a world, there are Gurus and Vedas to guide the struggling souls in the path of Self-realisation. The number of realised souls may be less in the Iron Age when compared with the Satya Yuga (age of Truth), but they are always present to help the aspirants. Let each man take the path according to his capacity, temperament, and understanding. His Sadguru will meet him along that path.

SIKSHA GURUS AND DIKSHA GURU

Man has a twofold duty here on earth-to preserve his life, and to realise his Self. To preserve his life, he has to learn to work for his daily bread. To realise his Self, he has to serve, love, and meditate. The Guru who teaches him the knowledge of worldly arts is the Siksha Guru. The Guru who shows him the path of Realisation is the Diksha Guru. Siksha Gurus can be many-as many as the things he wishes to learn. The Diksha Guru can be only one-the one who leads him to Moksha.

STICK TO ONE GURU

Do not dig here and there shallow pits for getting water. The pits will dry up soon. Dig a very deep pit in one place. Centralise all your efforts here. You will get good water that can supply you throughout the year. Even so, try to imbibe thoroughly the spiritual teachings from one preceptor alone. Drink deep from one man. Sit at his feet for some years. There is no use of wandering from one man to another man, out of curiosity, losing faith in a short time. Do not have the ever-changing mind of a prostitute. Follow the spiritual instructions of one

man only. If you go to several people and follow the instructions of many persons, you will be bewildered. You will be in a dilemma.

From a doctor, you get a prescription. From two doctors, you get consultation. From three doctors, you get your own cremation. Even so, if you have many Gurus, you will be bewildered. You will be at a loss to know what to do. One Guru will tell you: "Do Soham Japa". Another will tell you: "Do Japa of *Sri Ram*". A third Guru will tell you: "Hear Anahat (mystic) sounds". You will be puzzled. Stick to one Guru and follow his instructions.

Listen to all, but follow one. Respect all, but adore one. Gather knowledge from all, but adopt the teachings of one Master. Then you will have rapid spiritual progress.

GURU-PARAMPARA

Spiritual knowledge is a matter of Guru-parampara. It is handed down from Guru to disciple. Gaudapadacharya imparted Self-knowledge to his disciple Govindacharya; Govindacharya to his disciple Sankaracharya; Sankaracharya to his disciple Suresvaracharya. Matsyendranath imparted knowledge to his disciple Gorakhnath; Gorakhnath to Nivrittinath; Nivrittinath to Jnanadeva. Totapuri imparted knowledge to Sri Ramakrishna, and Ramakrishna to Swami Vivekananda. It was Ashtavakra who moulded the life of Raja Janaka. It was Gorakhnath who shaped the spiritual destiny of Raja Bhartrihari. It was Lord Krishna who made Arjuna and Uddhava get themselves established in the spiritual path when their minds were in an unsettled state.

INITIATION-ITS MEANING

A Bhakta will be initiated by a Bhakta saint in the path of devotion. A Jnani will initiate a student of Vedanta in the Mahavakyas. A Hatha Yogi or a Raja Yogi can initiate another in his particular path. But, a sage of perfect realisation, a Purna-jnani (full-blown sage) or Purna-yogi, can give initiation in any particular path. A sage or saint like Sri Sankara or Madhusudana Sarasvati can initiate a Sadhak in any particular path for which the aspirant is fit. The Guru will find

out by close study of the aspirant his tastes, temperaments, and capacity, and decide for him the most suitable path. If his heart is impure, the teacher will prescribe selfless service for a number of years. Then the Guru will find out for what particular path the student is fit and initiate him in that.

Initiation does not mean reciting a Mantra into another's ears. If Rama is influenced by the thoughts of Krishna, the former has got initiation already from the latter. If an aspirant treads the path of truth after studying the books written by a saint, and imbibes his teachings, that saint has already become his Guru.

SAKTI-SANCHAR

Just as you can give an orange to a man, so also, spiritual power can be transmitted by one to another. This method of transmitting spiritual powers is termed Sakti-sanchar. In Sakti-sanchar, a certain spiritual vibration of the Sadguru is actually transferred to the mind of the disciple.

Spiritual power is transmitted by the Guru to the proper disciple whom he considers fit for Sakti-sanchar. The Guru can transform the disciple by a look, a touch, a thought or a word, or mere willing.

Sakti-sanchar comes through Parampara. It is a hidden mystic science. It is handed down from Guru to disciple.

Lord Jesus, through touch, transmitted his spiritual power to some of his disciples. A disciple of Samarth Ramdas transmitted his power to that dancing girl's daughter who was very passionate towards him. The disciple gazed at her and gave her Samadhi. Her passion vanished. She became very religious and spiritual. Lord Krishna touched the blind eyes of Surdas. The inner eye of Surdas was opened. He had Bhava Samadhi. Lord Gouranga, through his touch, produced divine intoxication in many people and converted them to his side. Atheists even danced in ecstasy in the streets by his touch and sang songs of Hari.

The disciple should not rest satisfied with the transmission of power from the Guru. He will have to struggle hard in Sadhana for further perfection and attainments. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa touched Swami Vivekananda. Swami Vivekananda had superconscious experience. He struggled hard for seven years more, even after the touch, for attaining perfection.

GRACE AND SELF-EFFORT

Realisation cannot come to you as a miracle done by your Guru. Lord Buddha, Lord Jesus, Rama Tirtha have all done Sadhana. Lord Krishna asks Arjuna to develop Vairagya (dispassion) and Abhyasa (practice). He did not say to him, "I will give you Mukti (liberation) now". Therefore, abandon the wrong notion that your Guru will give you Samadhi and Mukti. Strive, purify, meditate, and realise.

Guru-kripa-grace of a Guru-is very necessary. That does not mean that the disciple should sit idle. He must do rigid Purushartha, spiritual practices. The whole work must be done by the student. Nowadays, people want a drop of water from the Kamandalu (water-pot) of a Sannyasin and desire to enter into Samadhi immediately. They are not prepared to undergo any Sadhana for purification and Self-realisation. They want a magic pill to push them into Samadhi. If you have got such delusion, give it up immediately.

The Guru and the Shastras can show you the path and remove your doubts. Anubhava (direct experience) of the Aparoksha kind or direct intuitive knowledge is left for your own experience. A hungry man will have to eat for himself. He who has a severe itching will have to scratch for himself.

No doubt, the Guru's blessing can do everything. But how can one have his blessings? By pleasing the Guru. A Guru can be pleased with his disciple only if the latter carries out his spiritual instructions implicitly. Carefully follow, therefore the instructions of the Guru. Act up to his instructions. Then only will you deserve his blessings, and then alone his blessings can do everything.