



Guru Is the Light within Your Heart

The Sanskrit term “Guru” literally implies, “He who illumines the cave of the heart.” “Gu” means “cave” and “ru” means “to illumine.”

Raja Yoga of Patanjali Maharshi says that God is the Guru of Gurus, the supreme Guru. But since a human being does not have direct access to the Divine Self until his mind is highly advanced, another person is needed as an intermediary. That person symbolizes the higher Self, and that person is known as Guru.

Thus, by turning towards Guru an aspirant is actually turning towards their higher Self. Guru is like a bridge from the aspirant's lesser plane of consciousness to the Divine Consciousness. Guru enables the aspirant to understand the nature of Divine Consciousness so that they may more effectively follow the mystic art of personality integration.

Guru is described in the Upanishads as one who is both a *Brahmanishtha* and *Brahmashrotriya*, meaning that he is established in *Brahman* (or has a firm footing in the knowledge of the Self), and at the same time is able to explain the scriptures. If he is only established in *Brahman* and does not communicate with aspirants, then in spite of his Enlightenment the many people who come to him may receive indirect influence, but cannot be directly guided. Therefore, the Upanishad states that these two qualities are needed for the Guru who teaches aspirants.

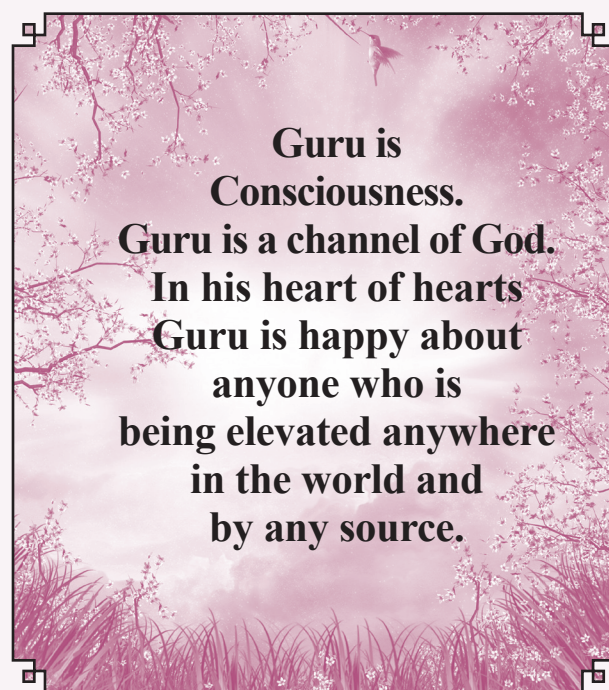
Similarly, a true disciple must possess certain qualities in order to be effectively guided by Guru. According to Vedanta an ideal aspirant must have or promote the fourfold qualifications of *viveka* (discrimination), *vairagya* (dispassion), *shat sampat* (the six-fold virtues of serenity of mind, control of senses, renunciation, endurance, faith and tranquility), and *mumukshutwa* (burning aspiration for Self-realization).

If you are sincere and have performed good karmas in the past, you are mysteriously led to a spiritual preceptor. And through the guidance of a spiritual preceptor you begin to develop all the qualifications that are needed for spiritual aspiration and, ultimately, Self-realization.

The source of the spiritual knowledge of the Vedas is not intellectual but intuitive,

and intuitive knowledge transforms one's personality. While intellectual knowledge is only like a painting of fire, intuitive knowledge is alive and vital, like fire itself. You can have a wonderful painting of a fire with all its colorful leaping tongues and burning embers, but it will not give you warmth or remove darkness. Intuitional knowledge, on the other hand, is like a real fire, and even if you catch only a spark of it, that spark will gradually help you to create a living fire within yourself. Thus, the mystical works of the Vedic culture give great importance to Guru.

In fact, all over the world, in every mystical system, Guru is given great prominence. All mystical movements require a personal touch. It was the touch of Jesus that brought Enlightenment to his immediate disciples, who in turn propagated his teachings among others. It was the touch of the prophet Mohammed that brought inspiration and transformation to so many lives. So too it was with the compassionate touch of Buddha.



Thus that process has been adopted and carried on through great Saints and Sages, and all those who come in contact with them become great personalities, great Gurus.

Finding a Guru

Just as the soul is mysteriously drawn to a particular family according to its karma, so too, in the Divine Plan, as an aspirant becomes sensitive to spiritual truth, he is automatically drawn to a spiritual preceptor. However, people who are looking for a Guru, but have not developed sufficient sensitivity within themselves, may pass by the greatest of Gurus without recognizing his greatness.

Therefore, instead of trying to find a Guru, try to be a qualified aspirant. Many people wander throughout their lives searching for the ideal Guru. They go from one ashram to another, study a little here, a little there, but only to find defects everywhere. People found

defects even in Jesus. People quarreled in front of Buddha. This is because they had already formed a picture in their minds of what Guru should be. But they had not formed a picture of what a disciple should be.

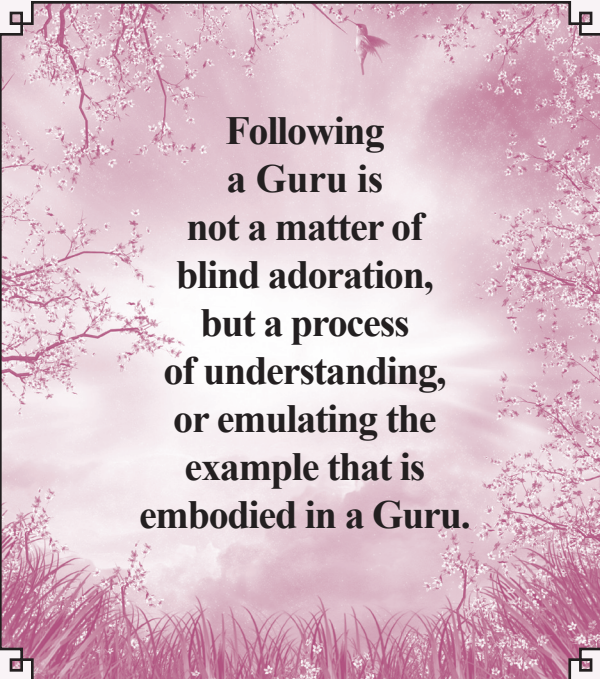
If an aspirant is not growing in sensitivity within himself, he cannot have a proper grasp of what Guru should be. And if he seeks a Guru on the basis of his established concepts without having an internal movement within himself, then he will either be frustrated everywhere or he will become highly fascinated with someone who is a mere pretender.

When sensitivity is there, an aspirant will not look for external traits in a Guru. He will not hold within his mind a rigid image of what Guru should be. He will realize that the internal life of a Guru cannot be revealed or shown. Guru is Consciousness. So therefore, sensitivity on the part of the aspirant is very important in recognizing the Guru and in being guided by him in the unique Guru-disciple relationship.

The Universality of Guru

Although there are many teachers who are equally great, aspirants are usually discouraged from running from ashram to ashram because mental concentration, perseverance and tenacity are needed on the part of an aspirant in order to advance. If you develop the habit of being in one ashram one month and in another ashram another month, you will not gain much.

However, although aspirants are encouraged to stay with one teacher, they should not develop a narrow-minded concept of their spiritual teacher. Suppose, for example, that a



**Following
a Guru is
not a matter of
blind adoration,
but a process
of understanding,
or emulating the
example that is
embodied in a Guru.**

person has been under the guidance of a Hatha Yoga teacher. Then he realizes that Raja Yoga is necessary, and that since his particular Hatha Yoga Guru cannot give him insight into Raja Yoga, he should go to a Raja Yoga Guru. If he has evolved enough and seeks Vedanta, he must go to a Vedanta Guru. In these cases, the aspirant must avail himself of the sincere teachings of several Gurus. If, on the other hand, there is a person who has all these insights, he will not have to run from one place to another.

Similarly, suppose a person had chosen a particular Guru who told him not to do Hatha Yoga exercises. Since the Guru has now passed away, there is no way to contact him for a better view of the situation, and the person decides to forever ignore the benefits of Hatha Yoga. Sticking to that type of devotion to Guru is not devotion; it is narrow-mindedness. A true Guru would be highly pleased if you advanced and integrated your personality, even if it were through someone else's inspiration. Guru is not really a personality; he does not have disciples for his own individual glory. He is not interested in keeping you with him, in perpetuating the Guru-disciple relationship. Guru is Consciousness. Guru is a channel of God. In his heart of hearts Guru is happy about anyone who is being elevated anywhere in the world and by any source.

Guru's teaching has three aspects: his verbal teaching, his example and his subtle influence. A disciple gains that teaching according to his sensitivity. Some people receive only the verbal lessons, some are inspired by the example of Guru's actions in daily life, and some who are more sensitive receive his subtle influence. Subtle influence is realized when you

discover a clarity of understanding in yourself. If you find that during a certain tempting situation you have the strength not to give in to that temptation, you must understand that there is a subtle influence penetrating your personality. When you discover that you are growing in dispassion and discrimination, there is a subtle influence penetrating your personality.

In conclusion, you must realize that following a Guru is not a blind behavior, but a process of understanding, or emulating the example that is embodied in a Guru. For example, if Guru happens to stammer, you do not have to stammer. Being a disciple does not mean that you have to imitate everything that the Guru does like a monkey. Rather, follow the fire that blazes in your Guru's heart, the fire of wisdom. Worship Guru as a living temple, and, in doing so, adore the Divine Self blazing through their personality. Kindle the fire of spiritual aspiration in your heart, follow the Guru's essential teachings, and attain Enlightenment.

