

GURU



With kind regards, ॐ and prem

Swami Niranjan Swami Satyasopande

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‘Guru’ is an offering to Paramguru Swami Sivananda and our beloved Pujya Gurudev Swami Satyananda. It is compiled, composed and published by the sanniyasin disciples, devotees and well-wishers of Paramahansa Satyananda, as a part of nishkam seva, selfless service.

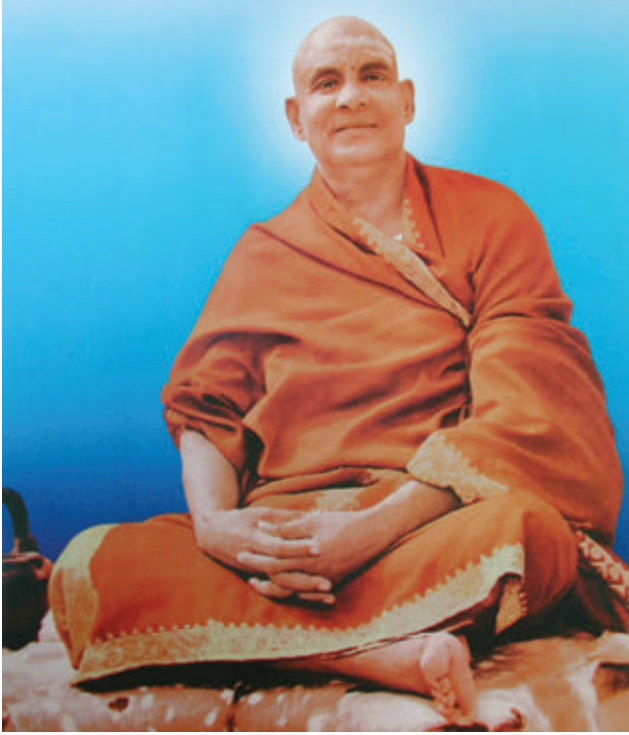
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# GURU

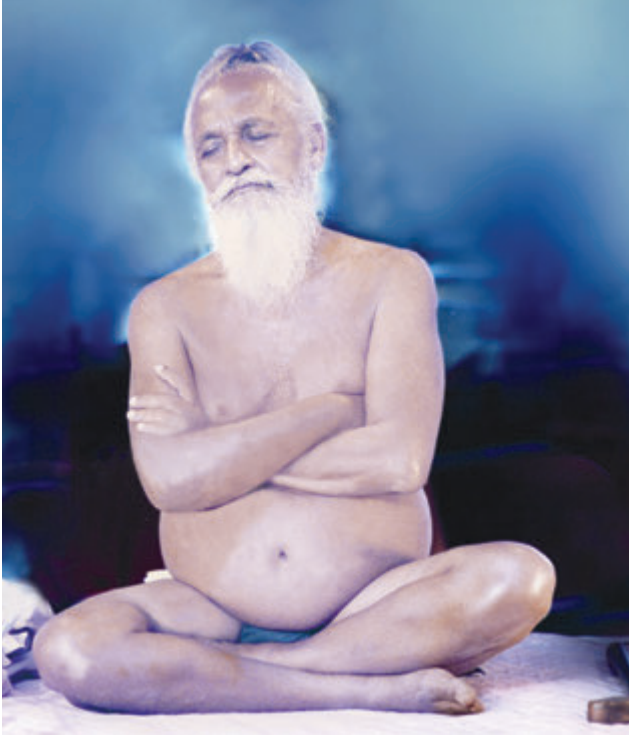


## Offering



In humility we offer this compilation of teachings on the subject of Guru to Sadguru Swami Sivananda Saraswati, who initiated Pujya Gurudev Swami Satyananda Saraswati into the secrets of yoga.

## Dedication



गुरु गोविन्द दोऊ खड़े काके लागूँ पाय।  
बलिहारी गुरु आपनो, जिन गोविन्द दियो बताए॥  
— कबीरदास

Guru and Govinda are both before me, whose feet shall I venerate first? Undoubtedly I shall choose my Guru, thanks to whom I was introduced to Govinda.

— Kabir Das



Guru Paduka puja during Guru Purnima, 2012

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# Introduction

Guru is not a social necessity. Nor is Guru a status symbol like a car or a mansion in the country which can be discarded when something better comes along. Guru is not a dustbin or a waste-basket into which all negativity and neurosis can be thrown.

Guru is the pure effulgent spirit, the dispeller of darkness, the epitome of what each individual should aspire to be. Guru's domain is the spirit and it is to guide us into this realm that a Guru appears in our lives.

Once the link with Guru is established, time cannot change it, nor death eradicate it. It is a permanent union. Guru stays with you life after life.

The spiritual journey, the inner life, cannot mature without the presence of Guru in one's life. This collection of talks given at Rikhiapeeth on Guru, by Paramahansa Satyananda, is brought out with the hope that aspirants may find inspiration and encouragement, to understand the necessity of Guru in the life of each and every seeker.



## Guru Stotram

The *Guru Stotram* contains selected verses from the *Guru Gita*, a dialogue between Shiva and Uma (Shakti) featured in the 'Uttarakhand' section of the *Skanda Purana*.

Akhaṇḍamaṇḍalākāraṃ vyāptaṃ yena charācharam  
Tatpadaṃ darśitaṃ yena tasmai śrī gurave namaḥ

I prostrate to the Satguru by whom the whole world, comprising unbroken Consciousness, is pervaded and filled through and through in every moving and unmoving object. Sublime salutations to the Guru who is established in That and who has awakened me to its realisation. (1)

Ajñānatimirāndhasya jñānāñjanaśalākayā

Chakṣurunmīlitaṃ yena tasmai śrī gurave namaḥ

Prostration to that Guru who, through the collyrium of knowledge, opens the eyes of all those blinded by the darkness of ignorance. (2)

Gururbrahmā gururviṣṇuḥ gururdevo maheśvaraḥ

Guruḥ sakṣātparambrahma tasmai śrī gurave namaḥ

Guru is Brahma, Guru is Vishnu, Guru is Lord Maheshwara. Guru is verily the Supreme Reality. Sublime prostration unto him. (3)

Sthāvaraṃ jaṅgamaṃ vyāpaṃ yatkiñchitsacharācharam  
Tatpadaṃ darśitaṃ yena tasmai śrī gurave namaḥ  
Whatever is moving and unmoving, and that which pervades  
whatever is animate and inanimate, to that Guru who reveals  
all these things, sublime salutations. (4)

Chinmayaṃ vyāpitaṃ sarvaṃ trailokyaṃ sacharācharam  
Tatpadaṃ darśitaṃ yena tasmai śrī gurave namaḥ  
I prostrate to the Guru who has made me realise that Essence  
which pervades past, present and future, and all things  
moving and unmoving. (5)

Sarvaśrutiśiroratra virājītapadāmbujaḥ  
Vedāntāmbujasūryā ya tasmai śrī gurave namaḥ  
All the shrutis say that the lotus feet of the Guru is the highest  
abode. Guru is like the sun, he is Supreme Knowledge. My  
sublime salutations unto him. (6)

Chaitanyaṃ śāśvataṃ śāntaṃ vyomātītaṃ nirañjanaḥ  
Bindunādakalātītaḥ tasmai śrī gurave namaḥ  
Prostration to that Guru who is eternal, peaceful, unattached,  
full of light and knowledge, beyond the stages of nada, bindu  
and kala, and who transcends even the ether. (7)

Jñānaśakti-samārūḍhaḥ tattva-mālā vibhūṣitaḥ  
Bhukti-mukti-pradātā cha tasmai śrī gurave namaḥ  
He who is established in spiritual knowledge and power,  
who is adorned with the garland of Truth, the reality, he who  
bestows both liberation and enjoyment here in this world, to  
that Guru, sublime salutations. (8)

Aneka janmasamprāpta karmabandhavidāhine  
Ātmajñāna pradānena tasmai śrī gurave namaḥ  
To the Guru who imparts self-knowledge, which burns the  
karmic bondage of many births, sublime salutations. (9)

Śoṣaṇaṃ bhava-sindhoścha jñāpanaṃ sāra-saṃpadaḥ  
Gurorpādodakaṃ samyak tasmai śrī gurave namaḥ

The water blessed by the touch of the Guru's feet ceases  
my endless search, enlightening me in the Eternal Truth.  
Prostration to that Guru. (10)

Na guroradhikaṃ tattvaṃ na guroradhikaṃ tapaḥ  
Tattva-jñānāt paraṃ nāsti tasmai śrī gurave namaḥ

There is no reality beyond Guru. There is no austerity  
beyond Guru. There is no knowledge beyond Guru. Sublime  
prostration to him. (11)

Mannāthaḥ śrī jagannāthaḥ madguruḥ śrī jagadguruḥ  
Madātmā sarvabhūtātmā tasmai śrī gurave namaḥ

My lord is the Lord of the universe. My Guru is the Guru of  
the whole world. My self is the Self of all beings, therefore I  
prostrate to my Guru who has shown me this. (12)

Gururādiranādiścha guruḥ parama-daivatam  
Guroḥ parataraṃ nāsti tasmai śrī gurave namaḥ

Guru is the beginning of the Universe, yet he himself is  
without beginning. The Guru is the Supreme Deity. There is  
none higher than the Guru. Sublime prostration to him. (13)

Dhyānamūlaṃ gurormūrttiḥ pūjāmūlaṃ gurorpadam  
Mantramūlaṃ gurorvākyam mokṣamūlaṃ gurorkṛpā.

The Guru's form is the object of meditation. Real worship is  
of the Guru's feet. The basis of all mantras is the word of the  
Guru. The bestowal of liberation is the Guru's grace alone. (14)

*Om shanti shanti shanti*





# Land of Light



India is a country of gurus and it has been watered by the great rivers of this land – the Ganga, Yamuna, Saraswati, Kaven and many others. There are innumerable pilgrim places, *tirthas*, from north to south India. Every state has such *tirthas*. Every province has many ashrams. There are twelve *vyotirlingas* and fifty-two *shaktipeethas* in this land of ours. We have sixty-four *yoginipeethas* too. You will find all that you aspire for there. Where else will you go then? You can find discotheques anywhere, if that is what you want, but you cannot find spirituality anywhere else except in this country. This land of great seers is a spiritual land. All those who aspired for knowledge and realisation came here.



India should always be understood as a cradle of knowledge, spirituality and dharma. It is a country of teachers, gurus and preceptors. For spiritual life you come to India. For a job you go to America. As simple as that. That is the land of jobs and this is the land of God.

### **Source of knowledge**

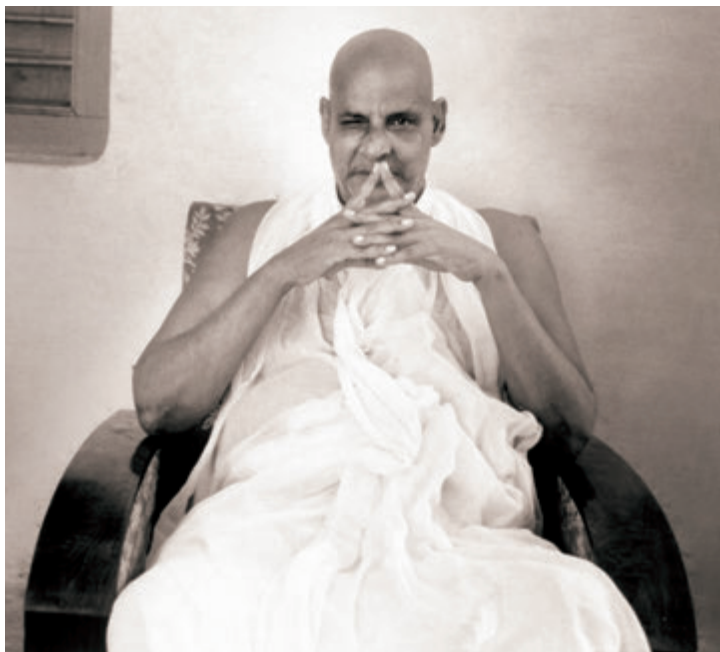
Even Christ came here. As a child Christ used to question the leaders of the Essene community and they gave him whatever knowledge they had. However, they were not able to answer all his questions on spirituality. They told him that there were many questions which only the Indian seers could answer. Christ came to India by the overland route. He travelled all over India and took with him the philosophy that was prevalent here two thousand years ago.

In those days Vaishnavism and Buddhism were prevalent here. What you find in Christianity today is an amalgam of bhakti and raja yoga from the Vaishnava tradition and the



universality of Buddhism. In Christianity you find the yamas and niyamas – *satya*, truth; *ahimsa*, non-violence; *asteya*, non-stealing; *aparigraha*, non-accumulation; *shaucha*, cleanliness *brahmacharya*, continence. That is raja yoga. Raja yoga is one of the most important components of Christianity. What is bhakti? God you are everything. I am Thine, My Lord, Let Thy will be done – that is Vaishnava bhakti.

So, Christianity can easily be said to be a confluence of raja yoga and bhakti yoga. When Christ came to India at that time these two cultures, Buddhism and Vaishnavism, were flourishing here. In Buddhism there is *achara*, good behaviour, and *vichara*, reflection, which are rules of conduct. In Vaishnavism there is bhakti, bhakti and bhakti – total surrender to God. Vaishnavism is bhakti. Buddhism is a way of living. Christ took these two philosophies with him and their amalgam was known subsequently as Christianity.



## **Places of power**

There are many places on earth which, for some reason, have a particular force or vibration. It may be because it is the site of a great soul's samadhi, or someone may have done some ascetic practice there, or when God incarnated on earth he may have done something there. There is a reason why one place has more energy than another place. In the same way that you can notice a difference between people, someone is very intelligent and another is very foolish, you can also be aware that one place is ordinary and another is special. Temples are built at such special places.

In India, the temples are built in remote places. The reason is that temples are not built just with money. There should be a magnetic force, a divine vibration, in the places where temples are built. The stone of the idol is not God. There is a force within the idol. Every idol, whether of Shiva, Kali or Ganesha, has a force within it. If there is a force, then build a temple.

A temple is a special place. Our important temples and spiritual centres are all centres of energy. In India, there are sixty-four places dedicated to Devi and twelve centres dedicated to Shiva. Besides these, the Vaishnava sect has its own places, like Dwarkadheesh – where Mirabai merged into light, or Jagannath Puri – where Chaitanya Mahaprabhu merged into light. A temple is, therefore, a place of worship and also a place where you experience energy.

## **Remoteness**

Now, the question arises as to why many temples are built in remote places. Where is the difficulty? If you leave Rishikesh in the morning, you will reach Yamunotri by evening. It is only half a day's journey. Where is the problem? It takes half a day to reach Kolkata from Rikhia. Earlier, to travel from Rikhia to Kolkata you had to climb a mountain and cross the Ganga by boat. Everyone had to face difficulty. It was as difficult for people from Kolkata to reach Bihar as it was for Biharis to reach Kolkata, and for people from Rishikesh to go

to Yamunotri. Whether you went to Rameshwar or Gangotri or Kolkata, it was difficult everywhere. Today, a pilgrimage to Yamunotri can be done in two days. You can visit all four dhams in five days.

Earlier, there were problems everywhere, not just in Yamunotri. The people of Madhya Pradesh used to visit Somnath. Mirabai went all the way from Chittor to Mathura-Vrindavan. It must have been so far, so difficult and taken her so many days. What must she have eaten and drunk on the way, where must she have slept? This happened five hundred years ago. A young girl, the daughter-in-law of a royal family, how must she have reached there? She must have faced some difficulty. Just measure the distance of Chittor, the road from Chittor to Vrindavan. How long it is and how many days would it have taken her to get there? It is a road through the desert. You have to climb on a camel, walk some of the way and stop at heights. You meet all kinds of people. After that, she left Vrindavan and went to Dwarka, which is even further away.



Finally she said, *Gunjanvana chhaari re, kahaan jaun Ghanashyama* – a tired and dejected woman is saying “Oh, Ghanshyam! Where do I go now?” What could have happened to make her leave Vrindavan? History does not reveal this at all. History only talks of all the good and sweet stories about Mira. What was Mira’s situation at the palace and in Vrindavan?

Mirabai faced difficulties. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu also faced many difficulties. In his time, it was so difficult to reach any place of pilgrimage. The person who wants no difficulties will never be able to go anywhere. The path to success is like climbing a mountain. You do not find success in your pocket. Everyone has to struggle.

### **The Himalayas**

Kedarnath, Badrinath, Gangotri, Yamunotri and other places of pilgrimage were very famous at one time. There used to be a lot of people living in these places, including kings and saints. If you wish to go on a pilgrimage, you will go to these places, as the river Ganga is there. The Ganga is India’s sushumna nadi.



The rishis and learned men wrote all the Puranas, the Upanishads, the *Brahma Sutras* and other holy books on the banks of the Ganga. Shankaracharya has written very clearly: *Bhagavati tava teere nirmaatraashano'ham* - "Oh Devi, Oh Mother, I am taking your blessings by sitting on your banks and drinking your water." The Ganga has the power to improve the mind. You begin thinking of the *Brahma Sutras* and of Sri Rama. The Himalayas are sacred land. The kings of these places used to give shelter to sadhus and mahatmas. Giving shelter did not mean they had to perform the marriage ceremonies of their daughters. It was enough to give them four rotis at ten am. When we went to Gangotri, we would carry our *khappars*, begging bowls. We would go to any house and the householders would give us two rotis and some vegetables, which we used to eat while sitting somewhere. It was a beautiful place. We should never say that it is an inaccessible place, because nothing is inaccessible.

At one point in time, the Himalayas were not only full of greenery and abundance, but were a well-populated kingdom as well. Parvati's father, Himalaya, was its king. Parvati was born in the Himalayas, in Kumaon. Her birthplace is called Gaura Village. That is why we say Parvati hails from Kumaon. Kankhal, which is close to Haridwar, is where King Daksha performed a yajna in which Sati immolated herself. For this reason, Kankhal has been a highly populated place. These days, people from the villages are slowly leaving and coming down to cities like Bareilly in search of work. Many younger people are coming down and only old people are left in the villages. This happens everywhere. When the population changes, the whole structure of society also changes.

There must have been someone to support all the learned and spiritually advanced men who wrote such vast holy books. It is a proven fact that all these books, as well as the commentaries on these books, were written in the Himalayas.



Vyasa wrote his works in Badrinath. Shankaracharya's caves are located on the Saraswati, a little beyond Badrinath. The gurukuls of Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata and Shatrughna were all located in the Himalayas. At a distance of sixteen kilometres from Rishikesh, on the banks of the Ganga, are the Vasishtha Caves where Sage Vasishtha used to live. Shatrughna used to live on Muni ki Reti next to the Sivananda Ashram. Bharata used to stay in Rishikesh, where the city is located today. Lakshmana used to live on the other side of the river, on the far side of Lakshmana Jhula. All these princes used to live at different locations. There were appropriate arrangements for them. They used to go to study. In those days there were large gurukuls. This is not today's situation. This was prevalent in the Treta Yuga, thousands of years ago.

I have stayed overnight in the Vasishtha Caves. I did not go there to experience it, but only to see it. Lions and tigers visit it at night. We lit a fire outside and had a bath in the Ganga. Swami Ramatirtha used to live a little further down in the Brahmapuri Cave. It is right on the riverbank.



The nearer a thing is to you, the less is its value, and what is far away becomes more valuable. If Badrinath was close by, we would not even care to think about it. Since it is so far, we are discussing it. What is close to us is less valuable. That is why it is better if it is far away.



## Opening the Eye of Knowledge



**G**uru means one who dispels the darkness which is obstructing the passage to higher consciousness. 'Dispeller of ill-merits, of psychic darkness', is the literal meaning of *guru*, but in worldly terms, one who teaches the subjects pertaining to spiritual life is a guru.

From the very beginning, man has been wanting to retreat from external life and experience the glory of inner life, but he does not know how to do it. Many times he has tried to find the correct way to go inside, but every method has failed. This led him to conclude that, to have inward consciousness, one needs correct guidance and this guidance can only be given by one who has already



explored the deeper realms of his own mind. Such a person is the guru.

In order to realise various things in life, man has expressed himself in different ways. To realise understanding, compassion and simplicity, he has fulfilled within himself different kinds of relationships, such as father and son, husband and wife, brother and sister. After having realised various forms of understanding, love and compassion, he still found that he needed something more for fulfilment. So, the saints and sages revealed a transcendental relationship between two individuals which does not come within the confinements of the senses, mind and emotions. That is the relationship between guru and disciple. Just as the husband and wife have emotions which they share with each other, in the same way, the guru has wisdom, light and knowledge which he shares with his disciple.

In spiritual terminology, the disciple is known as *shishya* or *chela*, and the dispeller of darkness is known as guru. Just as the sun and moon rise from the east and disperse the total darkness, in the same way, the guru comes into the life of a disciple in order to awaken and illumine the dormant potentials.

It should always be remembered that everybody is essentially light. Darkness and ignorance are an illusion. Due to maya, we have lost the knowledge of our own greatness and have become unaware of the infinite potentiality which is inherent within each and every one of us.

Just as Hanuman was not aware of his great shakti until Sri Rama stood before him and reminded him of the fantastic deeds he had performed, so the guru comes before the disciple to remind him that he is not just a bundle of flesh and bones. That behind this physical body, behind these incapacities, ignorant ideas and actions, there is the shakti of consciousness, *chaitanya* or *atma*. That shakti is the light which is indwelling at the core of everyone's existence.

The relationship between guru and disciple is a peculiar relationship which transcends all descriptions, definitions

and explanations. It is love, affection and protection, but it is beyond all of these. Guru lives in the body as does the disciple, but the guru-disciple relationship does not have anything to do with physical, emotional or sensory interactions. It is like two souls conversing with each other in another realm where body, mind and sensory aggregates do not function.

Many people feel that a guru is not necessary, while others believe a guru is an absolute must. In actual fact, the real guru and the real God are one's own self. They are not outside, but it is very difficult to locate them. Therefore, one has to have a symbolic expression outside oneself. That is why most spiritual aspirants seek a guru in the physical form. In order to explode the inherent divinity in a being, an external detonator has to be planted, and the guru is that external detonator.

Not only guru or God, but mother, father, brother, husband and son are not outside, they are within you. They are different forms of emotions, but in order to express them you need an external symbol, and that symbol is the father, mother, husband, son, or maybe even an enemy, that is also an emotional channel in man.

To have an alliance with the guru or with God is also to experience some type of emotion. Speaking very practically, although all the emotions are inherent in man, still he needs an external form to direct them towards. Therefore, he should have a father, mother, wife, brother, child and guru or God apart from himself, until he realises that everything is within him. Once he has communication with his inner guru he can go his own way, the external guru is no longer necessary for his development.

The disciple is passing through the stage of ignorance – he is a seeker, searching for light. Therefore, he looks to his guru and the guru in turn transforms the entire personality of his disciple. This transformation is gradual. It is not the surrender of one's personality, but the handing over of one's limited self

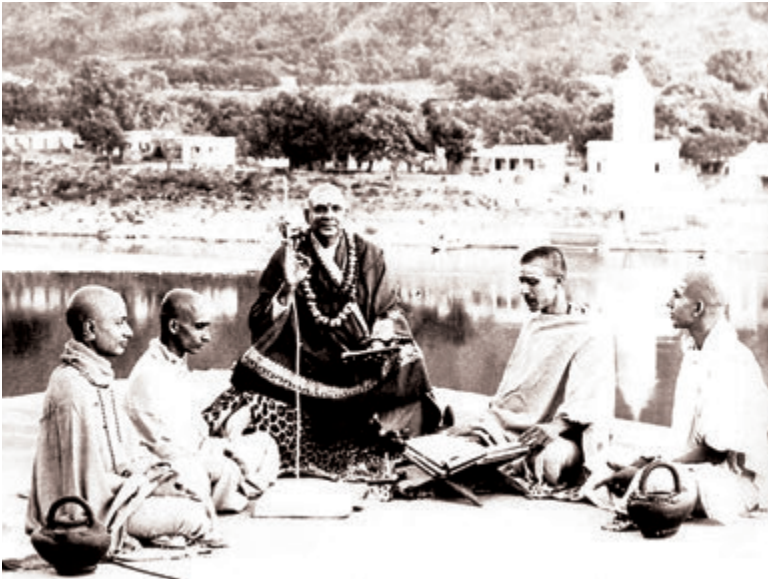
to one who will change it into the infinite self. The guru will add the raw materials to the furnace and finally steel, copper or gold will be produced. The disciple is the raw material and the guru makes him pass through this furnace of spiritual evolution until he becomes pure material.

We must remember that when we surrender to the guru, it is not because we want to become a slave, but because we want to become a master. A disciple should never feel that he is working for his guru. When the disciple begins to think that he is doing a great service to his guru, then his ego is becoming great. While the disciple is serving his guru, it is with the awareness that he is serving the guru for his own spiritual evolution.

In spiritual life, discipleship is the most important thing. There should be innocence, one-pointedness and stability in the disciple. Guru is only the symbol. Guru is necessary, no doubt, but the disciple is more important. It is not the guru who makes the disciple, but the disciple who makes the guru.



## The Guru Tradition



Guru is the one who shines like the full moon on a dark night. Guru is the one who has completely transformed his consciousness. Guru represents the highest stage of illumination for which we are striving. He lives in this world, but his spirit is always soaring in the highest dimension beyond space and time. Having completed his evolutionary cycle, there is nothing left for him to do, but help raise the consciousness level of humanity.

The guru tradition is not a modern one, it is most ancient. Even before the advent of man, guru existed in the form of nature which guided the seasons, the plants and the animals. Prehistoric and Stone Age man had gurus. The animists,

naturists and idolaters had gurus. Those who practised animal sacrifice, who believed in abstract gods, who wanted to learn magic, siddhis and witchcraft had gurus. The guru tradition is not only confined to India. The Atlantis civilisation had more gurus than any other civilisation up to date. South America, Europe, Egypt, Mesopotamia, Tibet, China and Japan had gurus. The guru tradition is universal, but with so many wars and the ravages of time, it was gradually destroyed all over the world. No country was able to preserve it except India.

### **Preserving spiritual knowledge**

The guru-disciple relationship is one of the most significant aspects of human development. This relationship forms the basis of all cults, organisations and institutions, whether spiritual or otherwise. When we think about the great cultures that have flourished in the past, as well as those in existence today, we realise that they too are based on this same vital relationship. All the traditions, arts and sciences have been handed down generation after generation from guru to disciple, master to apprentice, father to son.

The guru-disciple relationship is man's link with the higher faculties, the greater dimensions of his being. Without it, we would be hopelessly lost in the external world of diversities. It is only the saving grace of the gurus and masters which guides us back to the inner source from which all our higher potentials emanate.





This is why the great teachers have always been regarded as the cornerstones of higher culture. Without their knowledge and inspiration, traditions would not be enduring and culture would not last.

### **Higher culture**

In India we consider the gurus and rishis from ancient times right up to the present day as the light and strength of our cultural heritage. What they taught and wrote in the Vedas, Upanishads and Tantras was not empty philosophy, but a complete science of living. They encouraged people to strive to fulfil their lives with abstinence, self-control, inner vision and self-knowledge. These qualities have a powerful influence on the whole society. If all people were to cultivate them, you can imagine the heights to which such a culture would rise.

Our gurus and rishis had in their minds the creation of exactly such a culture. After thousands of years of experimentation, they came up with a system by which every individual could reorientate himself and push open the doors



of his perception. This is the science of yoga. Just as the potter fires his clay pots to make them strong, so yoga provides heat treatment for the vulnerable mind. It tempers and makes it strong enough to bear the upheavals of life.

Although the gurus envisioned an evolved human race, and knew that such a culture had once flourished throughout the world, they were unable to effectively introduce yoga into the society of their times due to the adverse political situations. So, they remained in isolation and preserved the knowledge of this system for the time when mankind would again be ready for it.

The period in which the knowledge of the Upanishads and Vedanta came, when people were doing yajnas in the villages, was the peak of prosperity in India and one day this knowledge will return. It will happen again in India and at that time there will be no need for us to propagate yoga. We will not go to your door, but you will come to ours and ask where the guru lives. You will say, as many of you do say, "Guruji, we want to learn tantra." "We want to learn asana." "We want to learn the *Yajur Veda*." "We want to do yajna. We have twenty lakh rupees." This period is going to come in this country.



# The Guru



Sometimes gurus are in search of disciples, then the disciples do not have to worry because the guru will find them. This is a fact, but disciples are very impatient, they want the best guru, without understanding and knowing that they have to be the best disciple. A disciple can only get a guru according to his own development.

Where does the disciple stand? What is his spiritual attainment? What is the level of his detachment? Whether he is a beginner or he is advanced, accordingly the guru will pick him up. Gurus keep wandering throughout the world in search of disciples. They do not search for disciples in order to increase their tribe. They are selfless souls inspired by



higher inspiration, who want to help all those souls groping in *avidya*, darkness.

Do not worry and waste your time searching for gurus. Maybe you will get the wrong material. It is better that you prepare yourself. Develop your detachment, improve your sincerity to the purpose, correct the order of your thinking and living, improve the quality of your concentration, and go to satsang, kirtan, bhajan, puja, swadhyaya, lectures and *Gita* discourses.

### **Guru – one who has experience**

It is said that a guru has to be a *brahmanishta*, one who is established in supreme consciousness, but what I have found is that a brahmanishta guru is Veda in himself. Kabir was not learned in the Vedas, nor were Mirabai, Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Ramana Maharishi and many more. It is important that a guru must be a sadhaka. Even if he cannot sing or deliver lectures, even if he cannot interpret the *Brahma Sutras* and the *Bhagavad Gita*, he should be in a position of experience. If he has no experience, if he is just a logician, a person with intellect who can explain the scriptures, he is an acharya, not a guru.

People like Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Ramana Maharishi or Anandamayi Ma, Kabir, Mirabai, Tukaram and Gyandev could tell you the nature of every type of reality, because they had experienced it by removing *avidya*. When Kabir died, his material body turned into flowers. When Mirabai left the body, she just transformed her physical form into light, she became  *jyoti*. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu also transformed his body into light – he entered a temple and remained there.

One who has control over the *tattwas*, the elements, who has control over the *samskaras*, who can travel within himself and outside, who has been endowed with the vision of light, who can lose his consciousness with no fear of death – such a person is the guru.



Guru is a word composed of two letters, *gu* meaning 'darkness' and *ru* meaning 'dispeller'. *Guru* means dispeller of darkness. What is darkness? *Avidya* is darkness. We are all in darkness because we cannot see the light. What is the light? *Atmajyoti*, the self, is light.

### **Disciple - an instrument**

Let us become good disciples and then we shall find a guru. Gurus are born as gurus, disciples are born as disciples. If the guru is great, the disciples are also great. Don't think that when disciples are promoted they become the guru. Disciples are never promoted to guru. My disciples may call me guru, but I am a disciple for all time because I was born a disciple and I shall remain a disciple. Disciples are those who evolve and come to a point of perfection. Gurus are those who descend with the particle of divinity from the higher realm of awareness to our plane of consciousness. Therefore, we remain disciples and they remain gurus.

Unless you have a guru, you cannot become a disciple. It is very clear as far as I am concerned. I am always a disciple to my guru and I cannot and will not become a guru because, if

a disciple is full of glory, he is greater than guru. If I become a guru, my ego will become as fat as a buffalo. The ego is the greatest enemy of a spiritual aspirant. "I am a great man" – this is a time bomb. "I am a guru" – this is a poison, a virus. "I am a disciple" – this is humility, this is simplicity, because if you consider yourself humbler than a blade of grass, you are nearer to yourself and to God, and much nearer to his creation. So, I have always lived with the consciousness of a disciple because I am working as a medium, an instrument for my guru.

### **The shepherd**

A great disciple is not a good disciple. There has to be total humility, egolessness, total submission, as if you don't exist, as if you are a flute. A hollow bamboo can be made into a flute, but there must be no knots at all. Only then can you produce a sweet melody. It is a sort of self-denial. As long as you exist, the guru cannot be in you. In order to allow him to function through you, you will have to empty yourself. This process of emptying oneself is the only practice or *sadhana*



that a disciple has to do. He need not practise hatha yoga, raja yoga, karma yoga or bhakti yoga, he has just to empty himself.

My Lord, before you, I do not exist. I cannot think. You think through me. I leave the choice of my life in your hands. This is the type of self-surrender – *atma samarpan* we call it. Self-surrender is the key to what we call higher knowledge. How long can you hold your head high if it is full of arrogance and ignorance, if it is full of conflict and duality? To rend this duality will take life after life.

Maybe your guru is not great. He may be an ordinary man. Maybe my guru was much more ordinary than I was, I don't know, but when I emptied myself and surrendered myself completely in total humility and obeisance to him, things happened.

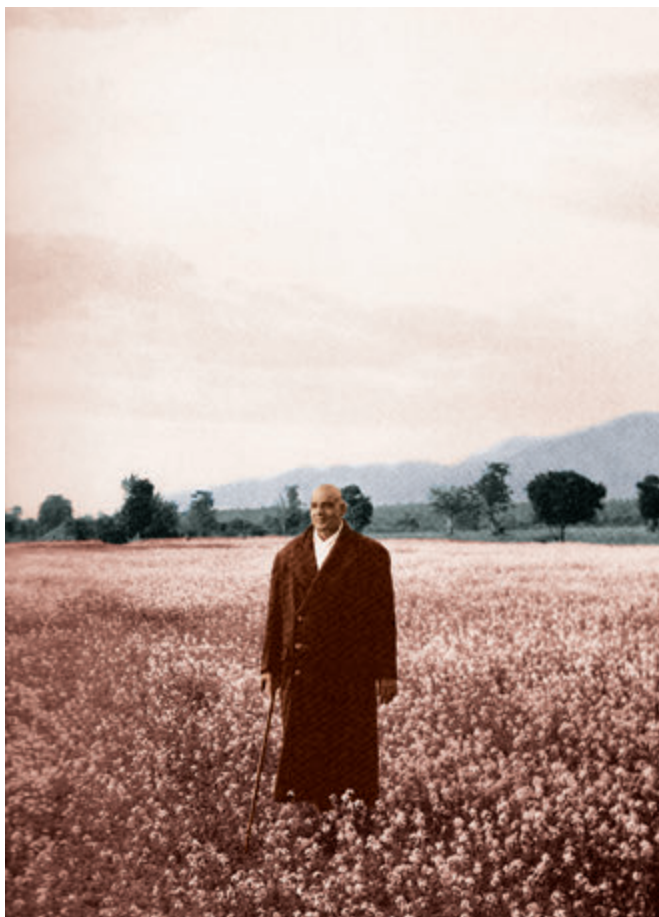
Guru represents two realities – the teacher and the permeating reality. Guru is a teacher and the indweller of your heart. As a teacher he can teach you and, as an indweller of your heart, he guides the steps and the passages of your evolution and fulfilment. Let things happen. Guru is the shepherd, if you let him, he will take care of you.

### **He who dwells within**

Throughout my life as a disciple I have observed many important points which are very dangerous in the life of a disciple. When I was living with my guru, Swami Sivananda, many of the swamis, including myself, often thought we knew more than he did. In fact, we believed that the growth and development of the institution was only taking place because of our efforts.

There was a lot of intellectualism in us and, because of it, none of us could approach our guru like a child. Once we brought this problem to him. We said, "Often we feel that we know more than you do, and there are times when we feel that you make mistakes." Swamiji replied, "You are right." That was his greatness and that was our mean-mindedness.

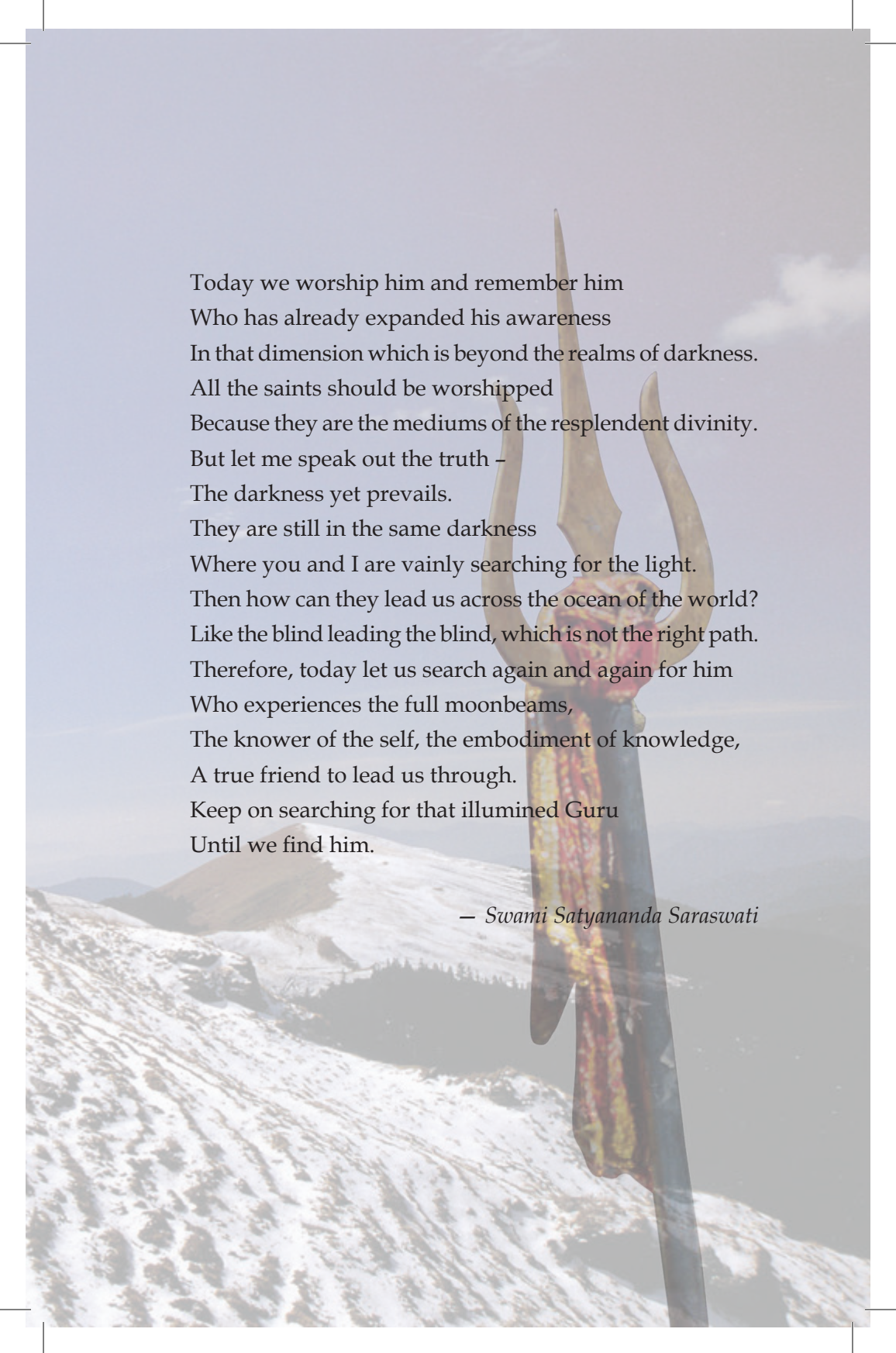
When you become a disciple, either a lay disciple or a sannyasin disciple, and you have accepted a mantra from your guru, then it becomes very important that he lives in your heart like a constant light. By maintaining constant awareness of the guru, you will be able to develop the *satguru*, that guru who dwells within.





## Guru and Turiya

Hari Om, to the Guru as a sadhaka,  
Whose atma illumines with its fullest splendour.  
To him all the knowledge  
Of different levels of consciousness follows.  
All enjoy the awake, dream and sleeping states,  
But few experience the turiya state beyond these three.  
Guru is the knower of turiya.  
Whether one becomes wise, strong, famous,  
Siddha, the knower of scriptures, the conquerer of the world,  
Virtuous, brahmin or kshatriya,  
These are not the qualifications of an enlightened Guru,  
But the qualifications of a common man.  
Guru is the only one who experiences that turiya  
In the same way as we experience the waking,  
The dreaming and the sleeping states.



Today we worship him and remember him  
Who has already expanded his awareness  
In that dimension which is beyond the realms of darkness.  
All the saints should be worshipped  
Because they are the mediums of the resplendent divinity.  
But let me speak out the truth –  
The darkness yet prevails.  
They are still in the same darkness  
Where you and I are vainly searching for the light.  
Then how can they lead us across the ocean of the world?  
Like the blind leading the blind, which is not the right path.  
Therefore, today let us search again and again for him  
Who experiences the full moonbeams,  
The knower of the self, the embodiment of knowledge,  
A true friend to lead us through.  
Keep on searching for that illumined Guru  
Until we find him.

— Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Swami Sivananda  
— Luminous Man



I heard a voice from within –  
“Siva, wake up  
And fill the cup of your life  
With this nectar.  
Share it with all.  
I shall give you strength, energy, power and wisdom.”  
I obeyed his command.  
He did fill the cup  
And I shared it with all.

— *Swami Sivananda Saraswati*



Swami Sivananda lived life in all its completeness. He was at once a great saint of the calibre of Christ; an administrator in the highest position; a sannyasin with total detachment from life; a man brimming over with compassion, love and charity but living a life of austerity and dispassion; a bhakta and devotee of God and, side by side, a jnani, a philosopher of superior intellect; a man with discipline and strictness, as well as loving kindness for every sentient and insentient creation of God.

Such a man can be an example to us all. Most of us are puzzled by the day-to-day problems of our life. We are swayed by passions and emotions, and dejected when we face the ups and downs of our emotional life. Definitely, to sincere people, the question arises, "How is it possible for me, a person with so many limitations, to reach the highest pinnacle of life?" To such sincere people, who are disappointed and dejected by the cruelties of life, Swami Sivananda is like a beacon of light. To hear about him is to invest the time properly. Even though he lived in the physical body, he was not a physical soul and his presence developed the inner awareness without any difficulty.

In one of the Upanishads there is a parable. A disciple asked his guru, "How does a man walk? How does a man move?" The guru replied, "In the light of the sun he moves and walks." Then the disciple asked, "If the sun is set, how does he move and how does he walk?" The guru replied, "In the light of the moon." Then the disciple asked again, "When the sun is set and the moon is set, in whose light does one walk?" The guru replied, "In the light of the stars." Again the disciple asked, "When the sun is set and the moon is set, and the stars are twinkling no more, in whose light does he walk?" The guru replied, "In his own light."

What is this light he is talking about? When the mind is swayed by passion, when the intellect is filled with confusion, when your own beliefs betray you, when your own concepts do not help you any more in life, then you will have to raise

your own consciousness. You will have to awaken your own spirit. In order to awaken the spirit, it is very important that a satguru is sought. Such a guru was Swami Sivananda, not only in his own time, but even today when the message of his life and teaching is a lamp for those who have yet to awaken their inner light.

### **A man**

When you compare the life of Swami Sivananda with the life of other sannyasins and saints, you find that his was a different personality altogether. He did not behave like a miracle man, a great pontiff or a preacher. He just lived the life of a simple man. It was very difficult to change his human qualities. He was a shining example of all the great virtues that you read about in the books.

For me, it is more important for a man to be a man than a saint. It is easy to be a venerable man, a guru, anything exalted, but not a man. It is very difficult to give, it is most difficult to love and it is impossible to understand. Today, man has reached the point where he finds himself incapable of realising his fundamental humanity. If a man can be a man, he can be everything, because to be a man he has to kill everything in him. Before you can play music on a bamboo flute, the bamboo must be hollowed out. In the same way, you have to empty yourself. You have to bear the kicks, face the criticism and live with the passions. You must end your fears, and be prepared to be persecuted and abused. You should not expect to be loved and honoured. That is imperative.

Many times when people talk about love, I just laugh at them. I have never met any other person who I think knows love, but I can definitely say that Swami Sivananda was a man whose very being emanated love. Nevertheless, he was the least emotional person I have known, completely calm, quiet, unruffled and absolutely detached. He was the best of men I have seen in my life. I have never seen Christ, but I have



seen Swami Sivananda and therefore I believe Christ must have existed. He was a man whose kindness and compassion knew no bounds. He was nothing but sweetness, nothing but smiling eyes.

In everything he did throughout his life, he maintained only one attitude – to do good to everybody. He was never a dictator and never interfered with his disciples. In fact, he used to touch the feet of his disciples, just as a disciple touches his master's feet. Many times I made mistakes, both in my life and in the ashram, as an inmate and as an executive. I thought that he would rebuke me or admonish me, or tell me what was right or wrong, but he never said one word. When I used to go to him, he would never raise the point. He would just say the usual things. He never recognised the mistakes in man. He always used to say that everyone had in him the spark of divinity.

His attitude towards people was unique. If anyone was concerned about being criticised, he explained very simply, "It is a divine test. When you purchase a steel



rod of gold, you examine it thoroughly and if you go to purchase a diamond, you don't pick up the first one you see. Likewise, when God is choosing you, he should test you. It is not your karma that is coming to you in the form of suffering – it is the test of the divine, so that you may pass through it and then you will be given the higher wisdom."

### **The divine life**

Swami Sivananda started out practising medicine in the states of Malaysia. When he came to Rishikesh, he plunged headlong into spiritual life. He was so sincere and devoted that all the swamis who were living nearby were very much influenced by him. Sometimes he used to collect a few chapathis from his daily bhiksha and keep them in a box. When he had a sufficient number, he would close the doors from the inside for a week and practise his own sadhana. Sometimes, in the middle of the night, you would see him chest deep in the Ganga chanting *Om ... Om ... Om*.

With this sincere devotion to spiritual life, he soon became a darling of the swamis there. In reaction to this, there naturally developed a gang of rascals who used to harass him and actually cause him injury as well. His attitude towards these people was superhuman. He used to say, "If someone kicks you, give him love," and he practised this every day. Later, when Swami Sivananda became very famous, he would give those very same people great respect and hold them in esteem.

He was very generous and gave people anything they asked for. His main motto was, 'give, give, give'. Even if he had been alerted that a man had come to cheat him, he would not listen. He would say, "That is his karma and this is my karma." He freely distributed food, money, books, clothes, blankets and so on. If somebody told him, "Swamiji, this man is dishonest, do not give him a blanket," Swamiji would say, "God has given it to me for him. The money does not belong to me, the ashram does not belong to me."

### Head and heart

Swami Sivananda was a sannyasin belonging to the highest order of Vedanta philosophy. This Vedanta philosophy holds that, 'I am Brahman', and does not accept any lesser form of idol worship. It is a philosophy of pure monism, in which the truth is formless and nameless, and all experience exists within the mind. At the same time as being a true jnani, who spoke of the philosophy of the Absolute, he was also a bhakta, one who is devoted to God. He believed that devotion to God, and repetition and singing of the name alone were enough to enable one to cross the barriers of worldly consciousness.

His faith in name was very non-intellectual. He used to say, "Name alone can take you across the world." So, in 1943 he started a wonderful program of continuous, unbroken chanting of the name: *Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna*



*Krishna, Hare Hare*. This very ancient mantra is known as the *Mahamantra*, which forms a part of the *Kali Santarana Upanishad*, one of the one hundred and eight Upanishads.

On the day of inauguration of the ashram, Swamiji said, "This kirtan will continue as long as the world lasts." We became greatly worried. I thought, "For one, two, three or four years maybe, but as long as the world lasts!" And this was precisely the program of Swami Sivananda which has become the nucleus of the whole structure that you find today.

### **Strength of innocence**

Swami Sivananda was a man who believed in everybody and never thought that anyone was bad. He was a man without ego and ambition, who never posed as a great swami. Thousands of people came to him and were helped out of difficult situations, but his only comment was, "It is God's grace." They would all say to him, "Swamiji, you are a great siddha, you are a great master. On account of your blessings, my child has come through his crisis." He would say, "No, no, no. It is God's grace and your prarabdha karma."





Swami Sivananda was not an intellectual, he was purely a bhakta with a very innocent mind. If anyone came to him or wrote to him with problems, at once he would ask everybody to please sit down, close their eyes and repeat the mantra for that person's recovery. He had such faith that immediately after the mantra was repeated, he would have us write a letter saying, "We have conducted the mantra prayer for you and now you will be all right."

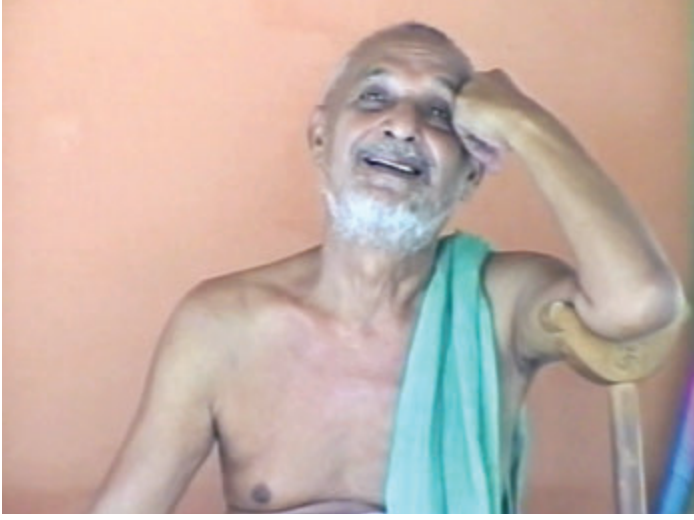
Unless you have faith, you cannot believe in this. We are all intellectuals. We know all the mantras, but we have no faith in them. If we practise a mantra for someone who is sick, we will not dare to write and tell him that he has recovered completely, because we cannot be sure he got better. Whereas faith leaves no room for doubt, knowledge has fissures in it. I am not against intellect, but at the same time its limitations must be pointed out.

Faith is very innocent, but it is so powerful that the miracles you see in the lives of great saints are a product of that innocence. Innocence is not childishness, it is the blossoming of the purity in man's structure. To be innocent you don't have to do anything or be anything. Rather, whatever you have acquired you have to throw away – knowledge, proceeds, wealth, power, status and political and religious background. You have to believe, "I am nothing." When this attitude takes hold within you, it becomes the centre of faith, and in Swami Sivananda I found this faith in absolutely living form.

### **Guiding hands**

One time I was writing a commentary on the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*. I had a sound intellectual knowledge of Sanskrit and philosophy, but nevertheless I had great difficulties in writing the commentary on this Upanishad. From time to time, when I used to go to Swamiji for clarification, he used to direct me to Swami Tapovanam Maharaj. He was not a disciple of Swamiji's and lived, not in Rishikesh, but in Uttarkashi, a place on the way to the origin of the Ganga.





He was a venerable swami, a master of the Upanishads and a great Sanskrit scholar.

During his life, Swami Sivananda wrote approximately three to four hundred books. In the period I was there, he had already finished two hundred and fifty of them. However, it was a very important part of his philosophy not to pose, even before his disciples, that he knew everything. You are deluding the disciple if you do not direct him to the proper authority for whatever he is trying to learn. Swami Sivananda could have also guided me by referring me to a few books here and there, but he was my well-wisher and knew that it was best to send me to a great authority like Swami Tapovanam.

So, whenever Swami Tapovanam visited Rishikesh during the snowy winter, Swami Sivananda would say to me, "Swami Tapovanam is here, go and study with him." So I would go to Swami Tapovanam with all my philosophical queries and grammatical complications. I used to sit with him for hours discussing philosophy and when I returned, I always found Swami Sivananda waiting for me. He would call me to his

kutir and question me, "What did you ask and what did he say?" I would tell him everything I had learned and, while I was talking, Swamiji would be busy writing it all down. The next morning he would get these notes typed out and develop a story, an article or a poem out of all those ideas I had received from Swami Tapovanam and then narrated to him.

### **The humility of enlightenment**

There are many people in this world who think that they know everything already and are not open to the positive effects of learning from others. If you tell them something you have just learned, they say, "Oh, I already knew that!" This is a peculiar characteristic of man's nature which represents his deep-rooted and inherent egoism, and where there is egoism there is bound to be ignorance.

All of the scriptures in Christianity, Islam and Hinduism say the same, that egoism is not a product of knowledge or enlightenment. Where there is enlightenment, there is humility; the more enlightened you are, the smaller you feel. This is true not only in the life of a saint or swami, but also for an artist, a poet, politician, scientist or musician. The more enlightenment comes, the less you think about yourself, and when you feel that you are little, how can there be egoism?

Newton said about his discoveries that he was only collecting the pebbles on the shore while the ocean still remained untouched before him. A great man, a true man, an enlightened personality, is always open to every form of knowledge. Whether he learns from saints or sinners makes no difference because they are only social distinctions, categories and castes. For a mother, it makes no difference whether her child is a boy or a girl, healthy or unhealthy, plain or beautiful, a swami or a drunkard.

Saints never criticise and are never afflicted by prejudice or attachment. They interact on spiritual levels. Of course, to talk about saints is not an easy matter. They are like icebergs, you can see a small part of them above the water, the rest

is hidden. Therefore, it is definitely not possible for me to make an accurate assessment of the personality of Swami Sivananda, with whom I lived for only a short period of time, but who was also responsible for changing the whole current and concept of my life.

### **Fusion**

In 1956, Swami Sivananda called me and he just said, "What sadhana are you doing?" In twelve years he had not asked me any questions like this. I did practise asana, pranayama and so on, but not at the command of guru, just as a matter of personal choice. The quantity of mantra I had practised was very great and at the same time I practised karma yoga day and night.

I told him, "I do asana, pranayama, mantra japa", and a few more things that I did. He asked, "You don't practise kriya yoga?" I said, "No, I have heard about it, but I don't know it." He took me to his room and in ten minutes he taught me kriya yoga. Or, to put it another way, in ten minutes I learned kriya yoga. Then he gave me one hundred and eight rupees and said, "Now you can go from here. This ashram is no longer the place for you. Keep moving and spread the message of yoga from shore to shore and from door to door."

According to this instruction, I left the ashram and kept moving. I was still young and it was very difficult because there were so many different movements and gurus that a man like myself could hardly survive. I could never tell lies, cheat people or complicate matters. Nevertheless, I managed to keep moving for many years.

### **Awake within**

In 1963, on July 14th I believe, I suddenly woke up from inside. I was in Munger at that time and a vision swept across my mind. I was in Rishikesh, near the beautiful Ganga, and on it a ship was sailing across to the other side. Swami



Sivananda was standing on the deck looking towards me with his hands joined in namaskara. Trumpets and conches sounded, drums were being beaten and bells rang. At one point, the ship moved very close to me and the current was so strong that the flywheel sprinkled water all over my head, throat and body.

When this inner vision was finished, I understood that it meant Swami Sivananda had left his mortal body and had transferred his blessings to me. Swamiji loved the Ganga very much. I cannot begin to tell you how much. During the rainy season, when its water became so muddy, he would still drink it. When the Ganga rose high in the rain and floods, and his room became half-flooded, still he would refuse to shift to any other building.

That very same day I took my bag, went to the railway station, purchased a ticket and went to Rishikesh. I was correct, he had already left. From that time on, even to this day, at least once a year, I can wake up within myself, and that experience is as true, as real, as deep, as concrete as this one. It is not a dream, it is not hypnosis, it is not imagination.

It has the same dimension as this reality. There, I can find him and receive clear guidance from him.

My life has been exceptional, I've never had any difficulties, and therefore when I go to guru I don't go with any desire in my mind. Many times I've thought I should try to pray for something, but I don't know what to pray for. He has given me everything and what he has not given me, I think I should not have. In my interaction and my life with Swami Sivananda, the discovery of self was the primary goal of the relationship between us. The period of twelve years that I lived with him was a time for me to polish my inner mirror. The ego had to be erased, the passions settled, the desires properly fixed, and ignorance erased. How can one do this unless he serves his guru?

### **Oneness**

Once, Swami Sivananda told me that we are all instruments, we are all mediums. We have to love and serve everybody without passion and attachment, without expectation. We have to love God without asking anything from him. The purpose of our spiritual life has to be to have the vision of the divine. God has given us everything, we did not ask for it. Then why do we ask him for anything at all? He knows what we need, he knows what we deserve, he knows what we should not have. So, we must throw off the desires and just submit everything to the divine will. Whether we are in pain or happiness, wealth or poverty, we are in his hands.

If you ever meet such a person as Swami Sivananda, then please let me know, and until you find such a one, keep on doing your sadhana. Unfortunately, today the world is devoid of such persons. I have been keenly and eagerly trying to discover if there is one such person around me. I find good speakers, I find very good people, but I don't find God-intoxicated people.

In everything he did throughout his life, he had only one attitude – to do good to everybody. In so far as the spiritual

life of Swami Sivananda was concerned, it was complete. The whole twenty-four hours he would remain immersed in the thought of his mantra. When he was leaving the body, a lady who was by his side asked him to give his last message to humanity. He took a pen and wrote, 'God is real, all else is unreal'. That was the philosophy of Swami Sivananda throughout his life and nothing else.



## The Mahatma



There are many holy places in the Himalayas and, even to this day, rishis and munis, realised sages and saints, inhabit these places. It is not fiction. Yogis do live in the remote Himalayas even today.

In order to grasp the spiritual energy, we have to turn to the *mahatmas*, or great souls, who are the generators and repositories of spiritual power. They live in complete solitude and isolation. You cannot get a direct line from a generating station; energy first has to go to a transforming station to be converted into domestic power.

Once, we were returning from Gangotri by car. Down below us flowed the Ganga. On the other side of her banks



there were two caves where some sadhus were living. Someone asked, "What must these people eat?" I replied, "Have they come all this way just to eat?"

The sages and saints who live in such places are of a very high stature. They are realised souls who have arrived and have nothing to do with this mundane world. You cannot make a direct connection to the place where electricity is generated. Similarly, these sages are the generators of power, but how can you contact them? You look for those who have put up a spiritual signboard. We are spiritual venders, but they are different. They do not set up a shop, they cannot even be easily located. If you go to them you will get nothing. They will only ask, "Why have you come here?"

Once, I went to see a mahatma. He asked me what I was doing there. I said, "I have come to have your darshan." He said, "You fools, idiots, coming for darshan! What will you see? There is nothing here for your eyes." So I said, "I have heard your name." He replied, "What is there in a name? Those with big banners can also be small-time shopkeepers. Go, go away from here!" Then he asked, "Where are you staying tonight? Surely not here!" He did not let me stay there, he drove me out. At that time I thought to myself, "What a crackpot he is!" But today I realise his worth.



## The Role of Guru



The role of guru is to realise the karma of his disciple, to realise the total destiny of the disciple. According to that, he will suggest to him what to do. That is the main role of a guru in the life of a disciple. Just as a jeweller analyses the jewels in detail, similarly the guru analyses the total destiny, nature and quality of the disciple.

Before I teach what you have to do, I have to find out the level of your evolution and I will also have to find out what your limitations are. I have to find out to which degree you are attached to worldly things and to which degree you can transcend them. Then a disciple allows the guru to handle his ego.

If you allow me to handle your ego, then I can tell you what to do, because ego is very hard stuff. That is the basis of your individuality; it is because of your ego you are different from me. If you remove your ego, then there is no difference, we are one.

Sometimes in an individual there are two egos. If you have two egos you will find difficulty in adjusting with yourself. In the same way, I have an ego and you have an ego, therefore we are two and not one. A disciple withdraws his ego and then the guru can understand him.

Without removing the ego it is not possible for guru to understand the disciple. Ego is like a hard shell and if I want to penetrate into you I can't because you are closed. Therefore for spiritual life, the guru and disciple relationship is not only most important, it is the only important thing.



## What is the Way to Brahman?



There are four *mahavakyas*, supreme utterances, in the Vedas:

*Prajnanam Brahma* – Brahman is knowledge and realisation.

*Aham Brahmasmi* – I am the higher consciousness.

*Tat Twam Asi* – You are that.

*Ayamatma Brahma* – My soul is the higher consciousness.

The essence of the vedic thought is contained in these four mahavakyas. They contain the truth. You are Brahma. However, it is difficult to realise this, for when you think about yourself, you feel you are a robber or a dacoit, a rascal or a liar. How then can you know yourself?

The saints and learned people teach that you must first purify yourself. You must bring your mind to one point, concentrate and bring it under your control. How do you bring this mind to one point? You cannot force the mind to concentrate. A way to bring it to one point is through worship with form. Worship with form is not an end; it is a means, a way. Worship with form includes kirtan and bhajan, rituals arati, pilgrimage, having a guru, becoming a disciple – these are all external ways.

A stick of wood has fire within it, but if you look at a stick, you see only a stick. Fire is hidden in the stick, it is not apparent. It will appear only by rubbing it. An atom bomb is made from uranium. Uranium is found in a yellow stone which is mined. When its purity is thirty-six percent, you can make electricity from it. When its purity is ninety-six percent, you can make a bomb out of it. It has such tremendous strength that if it were dropped here, half of Bihar would be destroyed. Just as nuclear power is hidden in uranium, fire is hidden in a stick of wood, or a pearl hidden in an oyster, in a similar way Brahma is hidden in the individual soul. What is the method of separating it? You do not become Brahma simply by saying, *Aham Brahmasmi* – “I am Brahma.” You can make a parrot chant the name of Rama for his entire life, yet at the time of death it will still say, “Tweet.” You say, “I am Brahma” easily, yet if the food has not been cooked properly, how angry you get! At that time, you do not consider yourself Brahma, you get so angry with the cook.

### **Guru seva**

First, you must make someone your guru. After that, serve your guru. The meaning of ‘guru seva’ is not just to fill his *hookah*, smoking pipe. If he says, “Serve the lepers”, then do that. Whether he asks you to cultivate the land, clean the toilet or cut the vegetables, doing what the guru says is called selfless service. You should not say, “I have a BA and so I will

only work on the computer,” or “I am a doctor so I will only check pulse.” Seva means giving up your ego. Suppose you are a brahmin from a rich family and I say to you, “Go and pick up the cow dung every morning and bring it here.” You will think, ‘He doesn’t know my capability. Let me inform him that I am a chartered accountant and can do accounting work.’ This is ego. ‘I am a learned person’, ‘I am a rich man’s son’, ‘I am a woman’ or ‘I am a man’. Thinking this is pride. The meaning of pride is thinking, ‘I am someone.’ If you think, ‘I am a woman’, it is pride. Therefore, the first thing is seva, and seva is difficult.

### **Mysterious ways**

There was a yogi in Tibet by the name of Milarepa. His guru was a student of Nalanda. When Milarepa came to his guru, his guru said, “You think you are great because you have left your home and family. Go and sleep out there on the veranda.” He used to kick him on his way in and out, “Sleep properly, you ignorant fool!” He always rebuked him and would give him leftovers after he had finished eating his own food. One day, the guru had gone out, so the guru’s wife gave him a piping hot piece of meat and said, “Eat this quickly before Guruji returns.” Just at that moment, the guru returned and said, “Oh, so in my absence all this is going on now.” He accused him and said, “You will not stay here anymore. Go and build your house on that mountain.”

The poor boy must have been just twelve or fourteen years old. He would lift a stone, take it to the mountaintop and come back again. One day, while building the house, he felt very tired. He left the stone in the middle of the road and went off to sleep. The guru saw this and said, “So you were sleeping. You will not stay up there. Bring all the stones down again.” Once again he brought down all the stones he had carried up. In this manner, the guru made him build the house and break it down several times. If you had been there you would have said, “Guruji has lost his head!”



One day, while carrying the stones, he slipped and fell. The stone went tumbling down the mountainside the guru was coming up and he was caught making a mistake. The guru asked, "What happened?" He said, "Guruji, the stone fell down." The guru said, "Why didn't you fall instead of the stone?" Saying this, he kicked Milarepa. Milarepa started falling from the mountain, but not for long. Soon he became light as a flower and flew through the air, and fell at the feet of his guru. To this day, he is known and respected in Tibet as the 'Flower Yogi'.

Milarepa was unconcerned by the whole drama enacted by the guru. His only thought was, 'Whatever Guruji tells me I will do.' At that point his guru told him to do a particular sadhana. He said, "Your work is not yet over. Only the test to see if you are my disciple has been completed." He showed him the cave where he had to perform his sadhana and said, "Do not eat any food, place a lamp on your head and sit in padmasana. Do not get up until the flame is extinguished."



Milarepa lived in the cave and drank the water from a nearby river. There was a lot of moss accumulated in it. As he went on drinking the mossy water, his body turned green in colour. His sister came looking for him, and when she reached him she saw that he had turned completely green. Milarepa is famous all over the world and in Tibet he is highly revered.

A person must make someone his guru and then he must have his head cut off before his guru. The head means the ego. This is a very difficult task since every disciple has his ego – the pride of capability and of education. The ego is of various kinds. Swami Sivananda used to tell us:

Kings and landlords, give up pride.  
Collectors and tehsildars, give up pride.  
Sannyasins and gurus, give up pride.

A guru also has pride. Believing you are a guru is also pride. It is necessary, therefore, to ensure that a disciple does not become proud. It is only then that the guru reveals



things to you and you get results in a very short time. If the tip of the match is wet, it will not light, however, if it becomes dry, it will light up in just one try. This has been said in all religions.

### **Intellect and emotion**

Intellect and emotions are two different things. Emotions are natural, determined by your personal nature. Nobody creates them or teaches them. Who taught you affection, fear or lust? No one taught you to cry, to laugh, to feel sad or experience happiness. These are emotions which are distinct from intellect. Intellect can be acquired. Intellect refers to the brain. Debate and discussion, thought and deliberation – these are manifestations of the intellect. The knowledge of hot and cold, of black and white comes from the intellect. Emotions involve an experience, whether it is one of anger, affection or pain. Emotion is an experience, intellect is knowledge.

All knowledge comes from the intellect, and the basis of intellect is study, contemplation and deliberation. Read books, think, listen to me, listen to him – all this is knowledge. Knowledge means information. Everything I am saying is information. All that you are grasping is being processed by the brain. This is not the subject matter of emotion; if it becomes a subject matter of emotion, humankind will be liberated! The foundation of emotions is faith and belief, and they are never questioned. Faith and belief are never destroyed. If my faith is broken then it was not faith, but an intellectual notion. Faith will never be shaken.

Faith and belief are based on emotions, and they are the foundation of a number of relationships in society, for example, the relationship between a guru and disciple. After all, I am from one place and you are from another. There is no blood relation, and yet a bond is established based on faith. In the same manner, you marry someone from a different family. You do not have the same bloodline, nor are you from the same family, yet you say, “You and I are

one.” This is faith. This consists of the emotion of love, the emotion of affection, the emotion of sweet love, all kinds of emotions are involved.

The guru-disciple relationship is very nice to hear about, however, very few people are able to fulfil it. There are all kinds of people in this world. When a thief enters your house in the guise of a servant, he washes your utensils, your clothes, cooks food for you, does everything, yet his eyes are always on your wealth. Similarly, there are a lot of disciples who come to their guru to gain *siddhis*, psychic powers. Someone runs away from home, someone else does not feel happy at home; the wife has died or the son has passed away; he has suffered a loss in business, or someone has said something offensive, and so for a short while a feeling arises of wanting to be free from worldly desires. This is known as *kshanika vairagya*, a momentary wish to be free from desires. The mind moves away from the world and the person thinks, ‘Let’s go to the ashram, shave off the hair and comfortably sing the Lord’s praise.’ A lot of people come here thinking like this. Many people used to come to me thinking, ‘Swamiji will send me abroad.’ They would stay for four to five years, and when they realised that Swamiji was not sending them abroad, they would leave saying, “Swamiji is not a good person.” I knew all this very well.

When people come here to become disciples, they come with different perspectives, and they receive exactly in accordance to the perspective they come with. However, if someone comes to live with the guru thinking, ‘I am going to live here and die here,’ and he does not have the desire to become someone, to do something or bring about something, then, whether the guru puts him on a pedestal or treats him with scorn, it makes no difference to him. After marriage, when a girl comes to a different house, she does not think, ‘After some time I will leave everything and go back. If my husband is an alcoholic or an adulterer,

I will leave him and go back.’ For her, it is a situation of living there and dying there. However, such disciples are very few. A guru may receive just one out of hundreds of thousands of disciples.

It is very difficult to be a true disciple. Read the stories of the Sikh gurus. They are very strange stories. There was a Sikh called Angad who used to clean utensils and drains in his guru’s ashram. When his guru’s time of death arrived, all the well-educated disciples thought it was now time for them to occupy his position. Everyone’s eyes were on his seat, but the guru’s eyes were on someone else. He said, “Call Angad.” Angad was called. The guru said, “He will be your guru from today, Guru Angad Dev!”

### **Proximity to God**

There have been many gurus like that. The stories are found everywhere. It is not necessary for a guru to be well-educated. He should be humble like a blade of grass, patient like a tree,



give respect to others and sing bhajans all the time. These are the attributes of a guru, according to the scriptures:

*Trinaadapi suneechena tarorapi sahishnuna*

*Amaaninaa maandena keertaneeyaha sadaa hariha*

(A guru is one), who is humble like a blade of grass,  
patient like a tree, who respects others and sings kirtans  
of Hari all the time.

A guru is one who does not say that others are beneath him, that they are beggars or thieves or bribe-takers or adulterers or people with bad intentions. A sadhu or guru has no right to say this. His time is used only for chanting the name of God and singing kirtan. Kirtan does not mean just playing the harmonium or the tabla. *Kirtan* means to ponder the power of God, to spread the glory of God.

Guru Nanaka was a great guru of his time. He was from the vaishya caste and he was given work in the government grain warehouse. In those days, grains were measured on a weighing scale. Once, he was weighing the grains and when he reached the count of thirteen, instead of continuing to count, he went on repeating: *Terah, terah* – “Thirteen, thirteen.” Phonetically, *terah* means ‘yours’. He was absorbed in the thought of God, and while repeating, “*Terah, terah ...*” he gave away all the grain. He emptied out the entire government warehouse! He didn’t stay there for long. He became a fakir.

Once he travelled to Mecca, which is a centre of pilgrimage for Muslims. The peculiarity of this pilgrimage centre is that no one from another religion can go there, even if he is the president of America. They do not even allow photographs to be taken. Nevertheless, Guru Nanaka reached there. It was afternoon and he had found a comfortable spot to sleep in. A man came to him and said, “Hey! Move your leg from here. Your leg is facing the Kaaba, the shrine.” Guru Nanaka replied, “I am a very old man. Shift my leg to a direction where the Kaaba is not.”

Having said this, he went back to sleep. The man tried to move his leg, and wherever he moved his legs, the Kaaba also moved in that direction! This story is approximately five hundred years old. Apart from Guru Nanaka, no other non-Muslim has ever visited Mecca. No one can go there, but Nanakaji managed to do so.





## The Counterforce to Maya



Man is subjected to laws of evolution. The law of evolution is obligatory for each and every speck of this creation. Therefore, in order to reach the higher consciousness or higher stages of life, one has to fulfil the necessary rules or conditions of evolution. There is a certain law of gravity with human destiny known as *maya*. It is a force which binds everybody to this lower existence. If you are not able to go beyond maya, then you have to remain bound to this lower existence.

In order to overcome the force of maya, you need an extra force in your life. This extra force is known as *vidya*, or higher experience. When you throw a stone high up in the air, it again comes down to the centre of gravity, but if you

give speed to the stone and throw it much higher than you did before, this stone can penetrate much deeper into space. Likewise, in spiritual life there are certain elements which one has to adopt in order to overcome the gravitational force of maya.

Maya operates through the mind. When the mind is clogged by ignorance, maya has a greater effect on you. Most of us are full of *avidya*, ignorance, therefore the force of maya is able to influence us through our minds and, as such, we are not able to have a higher experience. With the help of the mind, maya imposes lower instincts in our life.

There are three things you must understand – instinct, intellect and intuition. Instinct controls animals; all animal creatures behave, live and act through instinct. In human life there is a predominance of intellect, but at the same time we have instincts also. Therefore, in our human incarnation we are partly controlled by instincts and partly controlled by intellect, but by the practices of yoga you can operate through intuition directly. Higher human beings operate through intuition. Human beings operate through intellect. Animals operate through instinct.

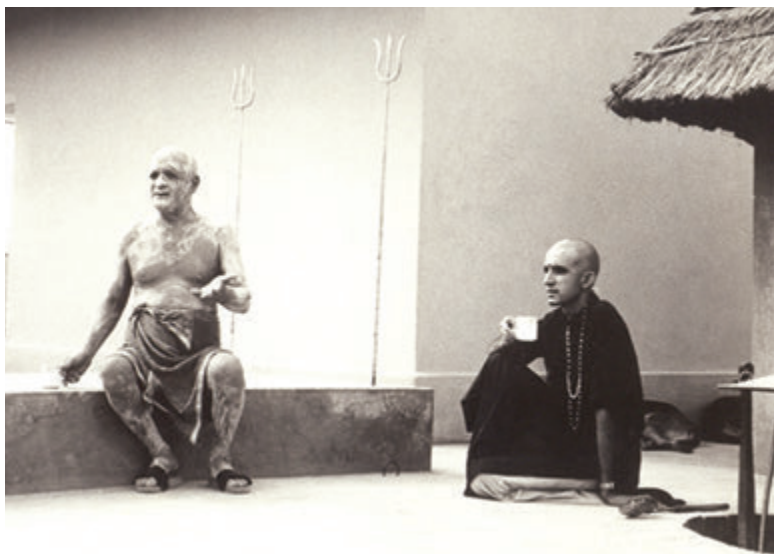
What are the instincts? Acquiring food is one form of instinct, the instinct of self-preservation. Progeny or the sexual act is another instinct in animals, it is necessary for propagation and pleasure. The third instinct is sleep and the fourth instinct is what we call fear or insecurity. These four instincts are predominant in every animal, but animals do not know that they have them because they do not have intellect. Human beings also have these four, but at the same time they have intellect.

If you want to make maya ineffective, it is necessary to transcend your instincts bit by bit. It is very difficult, I tell you, it is very difficult to transcend instinct, but if you want to go high you will have to do something because the force of maya operates through the mind. Therefore, in spiritual life there are a few supports. First, is the support of guru,

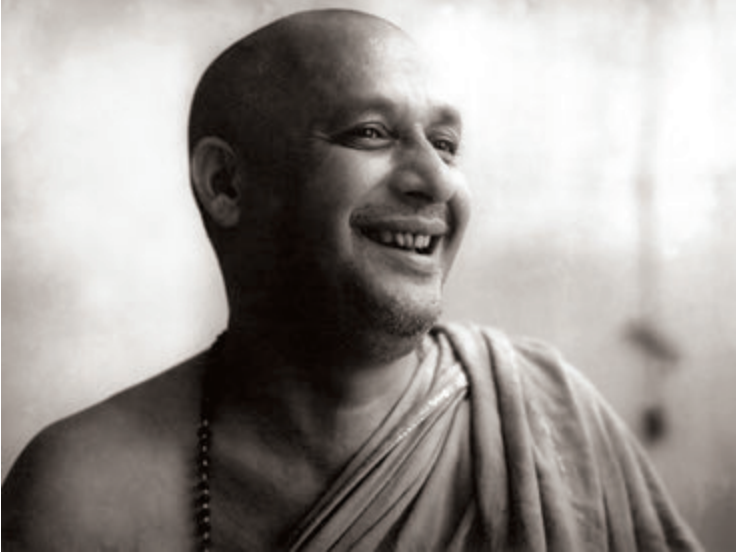
second is the support of satsang and the third support is *swadhyaya*, self-study.

Guru is the primary support. *Satsang* means association with the wise. When you listen to good ideas, it helps you. You may not be able to put these good ideas into practice, but they will definitely inspire you and help you. When you expose yourself to satsang, you are improving the vibration of your personality, and you are also initiating into yourself a process of self-analysis. The third support is *swadhyaya*. *Swadhyaya* is a process of reading and studying the books which relate to spiritual life. When you make a study and read the books I have spoken about, it gives you a lot of inspiration.

When you want to heat milk you keep it near the fire. If the fire goes off, what will happen? The milk will go cold. If you want the milk to be heated, again you will have to put it on the fire. If you want to maintain the temperature of the milk, you will have to maintain the temperature of the fire. In the same way, if you want to maintain your spiritual temperature you will need these three types of support.



## Yoga



There are two types of *chetana* or consciousness – *bahiranga*, or external, and *antaranga*, or internal. Through *bahiranga chetana*, or external consciousness, we get all our worldly and material thoughts, all our objective sense experiences, all our dreams in sleep and even visions in meditation. *Antaranga chetana*, the internal consciousness, comes during meditation. In this state there is consciousness, but the thoughts are absent and the senses do not register external impressions. However, it is not a state of the void. It is not *chetana laya*, the absence of consciousness, where you go into deep meditation and come out of it and feel very happy at your success. Someone asks, “What did you experience

within?" and you say, "Nothing, it was all blank." This is laya, and it is a deceptive condition, because you feel happy that you are making great progress, whereas actually you are stuck.

When you reach the stage in which the bahiranga chetana is absent and antaranga chetana is present, there also comes into existence a field of consciousness which I call the karana chetana. At this stage, you require guidance from an advanced guru because you are entering the very portals of real yoga. As long as you are in the bahiranga or external consciousness, you can carry on the sadhana independently. You can practise nada yoga, kriya yoga, etc., and make progress. Then comes the boundary wall, which must be crossed over. You cannot cross it without the help of a guru. You may not believe in the principle of surrender to the guru, because it hurts your ego, but I must emphasise that if you want to overcome the laya condition and go beyond, then you cannot do without the help of a guru.



I used to do sadhana even before I took sannyasa. In due course, I began to experience this void, this blank, in my meditation and I congratulated myself that I had reached the goal. I became elated, until I met a sannyasin. He shook his head and said, "You are stuck. You must cross this state if you want self-awakening, but only an advanced guru can help you, I cannot."

I left my home, not for sannyasa, but for this self-awakening. I met Swami Sivananda, and my self-purification and karmic dissolution started in the service of the guru. The 'I' has to be subdued and whatever work is entrusted by the guru is to be done without demur. In this way, the disciple becomes attuned with the guru. With this attunement, a mental telepathy is established with the guru. The disciple begins to hear his guru's instructions in the unconscious when in deep meditation. Thus, the guru takes him beyond the dead end of the void in which the disciple is stuck.

Worldly relationships give happiness of some kind or the other. The guru-disciple relationship is different. It leads you to self-realisation because therein you empty yourself and go forward. You must have *advaita bhava*, or feel unity with the guru. For this, admissions of imperfection, self-surrender and humility before the guru are necessary. You may be very smart, but don't be smart with the guru. You may be a great judge of human beings, but don't try to judge your guru – do what he says.

The disciple can carry on sadhana in the conscious only, while the guru helps him in the unconscious. He opens the closed door for him. If you follow any other path, you may





possibly not require a guru, but in yoga the guru is a must, otherwise there is no progress. Again, an ordinary guru can help you in asana, pranayama and simple meditation practices. He has his limitations, but the one who knows how to come to you without himself moving an inch is the guru. He has no limitation – he leads the ignorant and the blind to the path of self-realisation by opening their third eye. Such a guru is a real *avadhuta*, free from all worldly attachments or mental illusions. He is a child with children, a man with men, a woman with women, a simpleton with simpletons. He is the master.

If yoga is your goal, then give up all empty intellectual talks and have a guru. I was with Swami Sivananda for twelve years, during which all my worldly ways and all my abnormalities came to an end. When you switch off the external current, only then can you switch on the internal light. This happened to me. If any of our scriptures say one can do without a guru, you should throw that scripture away. Scriptures are not the final word, but what self-realised saints say is the final word. All great saints have underlined the necessity of a guru.



# Sadhana



When you wish to begin doing sadhana, first find a guru. Don't try to practise sadhana without a guru. This is particularly true for a householder.

## Guidance

Guru is not just someone from whom you receive a mantra. Guru and disciple work together the way a car and driver always work together. The guru observes every aspect of the disciple – how he eats, sleeps, cries, spits, walks. The way a doctor examines a patient, the guru examines the disciple. Until you find such a guru don't go into sadhana and, certainly, don't try to do it by reading books, or you will go mad.



If you want to practise sadhana on your own, do it after the age of fifty. At this age, the brain starts becoming slower. As one thinks slowly, the sadhana is fruitful, but if you practise sadhana at an age when your brain is moving at a superfast speed, your car will fall into a ditch. You cannot drive a car by merely pressing the accelerator. The brakes and the clutch also need to be in order.

The guru is the driver and you are the car. Your steering should be in his hands. Your brakes, the clutch and the speed should be controlled by him. That's when the sadhana works properly. If, by merely practising sadhana from books, you could find God, millions would have done it. Many have come and gone, but you hear the names of only a few who attained that. Why? The way there is no husband and wife without marriage, there is no disciple without a guru. A man and a woman can have a relationship without marriage, but a marriage is performed because it is a spiritual necessity. In the same way, a guru is a spiritual necessity. If you start practising japa and pranayama from books, without

the guidance of a guru, you will find yourself in a mental asylum. It is believed:

*Guru-Govinda dono khare kaake laagoon paaya,  
Balihaaree vaa guru kee jina Govinda diyaa bataaya.*

Both guru and God stand before me, at whose feet should I prostrate first? Glory to the guru who showed me the way to God.

This means that the place of guru is considered higher than that of God. The kind of bhakti that you have towards God should be towards guru.

### **Blessings**

The greatness of guru is held in very high esteem in the Indian tradition. In hatha yoga and tantra, the satguru is worshipped both internally and externally as Lord Shiva because he has attained that status. Such a guru leads, guides and cajoles his disciple every step of the way. In attaining the higher states, it is not that the disciple is only following the guru's instructions and receiving his best wishes, a transmission of the guru's consciousness and energy into the disciple is occurring. The guru is revealing, sharing and bequeathing something which he has attained.

A light can only be kindled from one which is already burning. This is why, in the yogic tradition, no adequate repayment can ever be made to that illumined one who kindles the divine light in his disciples.

Once the disciple has chosen the guru and the guru has recognised the disciple, only the meaning and application of the guru's advice, and instructions and the regularity of the practices have utmost importance in the disciple's life. The interaction with the inner and outer personality of the guru is all important in removing egocentricity. The deep-rooted and inherited impressions, which stand as blockages to the greater flow of awareness and limit the expression of greater

energy in the practices, are to be systematically exposed and rooted out.

The external guru is the only means to understanding your internal guru. He is considered as the manifestation of Ishwara. Of course the inner guru, the *atman*, has no form or shape. In order to perceive it we have to give some form and identity to it. Atman with form is known as Ishwara.

To the yogi, God is purely the highest state or experience. Through guru, that state of experience can be reached, therefore it is said that he is That. Externally, guru has a physical body, ego and mind, just like anyone else, but his individual consciousness is illumined by the light of atma. He has realised his own inner guru, and therefore, by contemplation on his form, by following his words and instructions, that experience can also come to the seeker. For the disciple, the guru represents the supreme experience and existence, *Ishwara*.

It is Lord Shiva who witnesses through the eyes of the guru established in sahaja samadhi. Those who can recognise this have perceived the true nature of their guru, and joyfully pay homage and worship at his lotus feet.



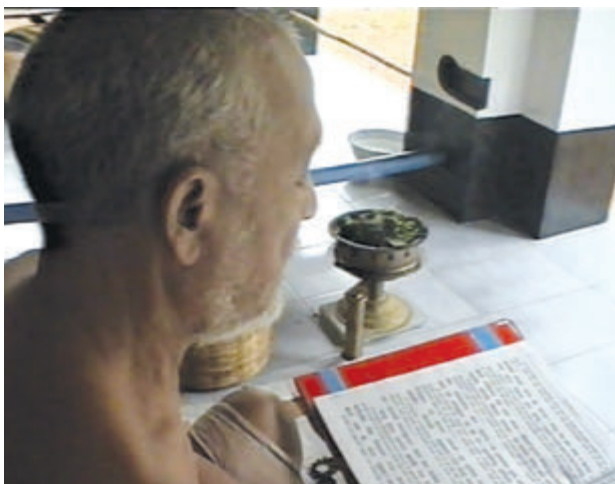
## Ishta Devata and Guru



I was born into an Ikshwaku family. My ishta is Sri Rama. I took diksha, initiation, in the Shaiva sect and was given the mantra *Om Namah Shivaya*. I worship both Sri Rama and Sri Shiva. What difference does it make? After all, whether you take milk in the form of rasagulla or pedha, all you should care about is keeping your head in place, on your shoulders.

Maybe you are meditating on your *ishta devata*, or personal deity, but your guru doesn't come as the focus of your awareness. Externally, ishta devata and guru are only two different names, but internally they are one. The basic principle is atma – Ishwa tattwa, atma tattwa, parabrahma, parameshwara, anadi, avinashi, abhokta, akarta – the one who





is beyond name, form, place, speech and the sense perceptions. To attain that ultimate principle, you may worship the ishta or the guru, because they are not separate in essence, they are merely two different forms. The principle is one and the same, whether you attain the ishta or the guru. The point is how to focus the mind which is forever running after maya, the mind that is so engrossed in worldly objects, the mind that is running after the shadow, the mirage. This fickle, capricious, covetous mind needs to be focused, to be applied somewhere to make it one-pointed. You need a prop to act as a focal point. The guru is necessary because he can act as a focal point.

Without formal admission, you cannot enter a college. Without the rituals of the wedding ceremony, you cannot be called husband and wife. Even if you stay together day and night, you will be considered only as boyfriend and girlfriend, not as husband and wife, but the moment you go around the holy fire seven times and perform the marriage ritual, you will be accepted as husband and wife. Similarly, until you accept someone as your guru you cannot be called a *sadhaka* or a pupil. Unless and until you get a guide, a guru, you cannot be a traveller on the spiritual path.

You have not yet received the imprint of the guru, therefore you need a guru. The guru shows you the path. He directs and guides you. The mantra that your guru gives you is the master key to all the locks of your life. Our spiritual masters, the supermen, tell us that far ahead on this path of sadhana, there comes a stage where only undivided awareness resides. Neither the ishta nor the guru survives. *Phutaa kumbha jala jala hi samaanaa*, which means that when the ego breaks, when this puny, petty earthen pot of 'I' shatters, the water inside the pitcher and the water outside become one. Therefore, there is no essential difference between you, me, the guru and the ishta.

In any science or field of knowledge, you need to have a guru. You have different teachers such as a science teacher, a sports teacher, a music teacher or a dance teacher. There are, as I have told you many times, two types of science – empirical and transcendental. Empirical science, *apara vidya*, knowledge of the material, worldly aspects, you know about. Transcendental science, *para vidya*, is the science of God, *Brahma vidya*, knowledge of God. That is the greatest science and it is the only science that is transcendental. All other sciences are empirical. Whether you want to become proficient in a transcendental or an empirical science, you need a guru in both spheres. Nobody can become proficient in either of these pursuits without a guru.

In the Indian tradition there are many gurus at different stages of life. The first and foremost guru is the mother. The second guru is the priest or the purohit who gives the Gayatri mantra, the sacred thread, the religious samskara. The third guru is the academic teacher who initiates and trains you formally in the different arts and sciences of material life. The fourth guru is the one who puts your mature mind on the spiritual path, who guides you towards mystic union with God or the immortal principle. He gives you the guru mantra and prescribes a sadhana that is suited to your individual need. Therefore, know that there is no difference between the guru and the ishta devata.

## Shiksha Guru and Diksha Guru



A sannyasin has the same difficulty knowing God as a householder does. For this you have to find a guru. Seeking answers to questions is only satsang, it is not imparting diksha. I am giving my opinion, but the purpose will not be served just by giving opinions. One has to accept a guru who will show one the path because everybody has different samskaras and karmas. There is not one husband for all women or one wife for all men. Every father has a particular son and every son has a particular father. In the same way, every disciple has his guru.

A wife without a husband, a husband without a wife, a disciple without a guru or a guru without a disciple cannot

move along. Just as a wife is a necessity, a desire and is essential for a husband, in the same way a guru is essential for a disciple. A guru has to be searched for.

Not everybody is lucky enough to find a guru. But every girl gets a husband. Sometimes the marriage fails, but that is another matter. Just as a husband has to be searched for and many things found out about him, in the same way one has to know more about the guru.

There is no dearth of gurus in the world, nor of disciples. The main thing is that you cannot catch hold of a man on the street and say, "You are my guru." You drink water only after it is filtered and you accept a guru only after you know everything about him.

In the spiritual world there is one type of guru who gives opinions and information, the *shiksha guru*, and another type who imparts experience, the *diksha guru*. The information that a rasgulla is sweet is incomplete. Only after having eaten the rasgulla will the information change into experience and be complete.

There are some satsang gurus who give opinions and information, and there are some who will lead the aspirant on the spiritual path, as you lead a child by holding his hand. The spiritual path is not sitting in meditation all day. The guru instructs the disciple, gives the mantra, and explains the sadhana. When the disciple is married and has children the sadhana is changed. When he is fifty and the children have grown up, he retires and the sadhana is changed again. The spiritual guru gives all these instructions.

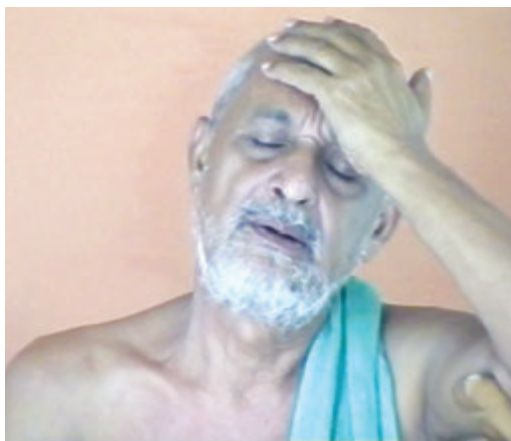
It is not that people do not accept another guru. We accept that a teacher is needed in any field of knowledge, *vidya*. Whether it is physics, chemistry, biology, ecology, law or medicine, a teacher is always essential, but the teacher must be an expert in that subject or science.

Sri Rama took initiation from Sage Vasishtha, but he also received knowledge from Rishis Vishwamitra and Agastya. While fighting with Ravana on the battlefield, Sri Rama

became tired. Meghnad was dead, Kumbhakarana had also been killed, all the rakshasas had been killed, but Ravana would not die as his ten heads kept reappearing. Sri Rama was perplexed and full of anxiety. At that moment Agastya gave him the *Aditya Hridayam* mantra and said, "Rama, repeat this mantra and all your obstacles will be removed." Sri Rama repeated the mantra and started to fight, and Ravana was killed. Does this mean that Sri Rama had three gurus? It does not matter, as vidya, knowledge, can be learnt from anyone.

Good knowledge and good thoughts can be acquired from the guru you find at the proper time. Dattatreya had twenty-four gurus. Agastya gave Sri Rama a lot of knowledge. During his exile in the forest Sri Rama went to Sharbang ashram where he also received a lot of knowledge. He went to Shabari who directed him towards Pampa lake. After all, it is the guru's duty to show the path. Through Shabari, Sri Rama's path was cleared.

There can be many gurus, but the diksha guru should be one. Sri Rama's diksha guru was Sage Vasishtha. Sandipani was Sri Krishna's diksha guru. The final statement of our great saints and rishis is that, just as the lifespan is fixed and the time of death is fixed, so the guru is decided. This is the truth.



## Lord Dattatreya and the Twenty-Four Gurus



Dattatreya is one of the greatest avadhutas. It is said that he is the incarnation of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. Dattatreya received knowledge from twenty-four gurus of nature.

Dattatreya was the son of Rishi Atri and his wife, Anusuiya. There are several stories about them which can be found in the Mahabharata. Once, Anusuiya commanded the sun not to rise and the sun did not rise. Sati Anusuiya preached to Sri Rama when he was moving from Chitrakoot to Dandakaranya. She also gave *upadesh*, guidance, to Sita



in the forest. This Anusuiya gave birth to such a great son, Dattatreya, the great yogi, founder of a sannyasa sect, the great siddha. An extract from the *Dattatreya Stotram* composed by Narada reads:

You are Brahma in the beginning,  
Vishnu in the middle and Shiva at the end.  
I bow down to Dattatreya,  
Who embodies the three gods.  
You, whose attitude is full of jnana,  
Whose dress is the sky and the earth,  
I bow down to Dattatreya,  
Knower of the deepest knowledge.  
I remember Dattatreya, who is an avadhuta,  
An ever blissful embodiment of the Almighty,  
Epitome of truth and godly behaviour,  
Who is an ascetic under the shelter of truth.

Dattatreya was not born an ordinary infant. As soon as he was born, he could walk about. He told his mother, "I won't stay at home, I'm going away. I've come here only to awaken people to the higher spiritual life." His mother asked, "What is higher spiritual life?" Dattatreya replied, "Where there is no duality, no diversity, where there is only one substance, God, atma, paramatma." She told him to at least wear a *langoti*, a loincloth. He said that he did not need one, "I will live just as I have come." He threw away all his clothes and started on his journey. He spent his whole life as an avadhuta.

### **Spreading light**

As he walked along the road he gave mantra and diksha. He initiated hundreds and thousands of ordinary people into spiritual life. He gave sadhana to anyone regardless of caste, creed, religion, ability or inability. Where he found a thirst for knowledge he authorised it, even for one born in a low-caste family. His attitude was, "If you have a thirst

for knowledge, then you have the right. We do not say that you should be born a brahmin or that you should be born in a well-to-do family. Knowledge is for everyone.” He had a great following.

When someone went to touch his feet he would say, “I am not a body of senses. I am a body of manifest consciousness.” Dattatreya was born long before Shankaracharya. If you are interested in his life, read the *Avadhuta Gita* which is a wonderful book on Advaita Vedanta.

### **Avadhuta guru**

Dattatreya’s tradition is that of the naga babas, who remain unclothed. He himself used to remain unclothed. He is the avadhuta guru. Dattatreya had only one principle – make your life austere and refrain from sensuality. Where there is merriment and comfort in life, your mind is bound to become polluted, no matter how good a person you may be, how strong your willpower is, or how pure your thoughts are. Dattatreya, therefore, used to tell his followers to follow the sadhu mahatmas and to lead a hard life, to live under the open sky and to make a fire in order to ward off the cold.



It is said that when Dattatreya put his hand on someone's head, even of an idiot, that person instantly acquired the knowledge of the Vedas and the shastras. One day, his hand inadvertently touched the head of a milkmaid who used to come to his residence. On her way home, she was taunted by some pandits, "O milkmaid! What do you learn there?" She replied, "I learn brahmajnana." They asked, "What is brahmajnana?" She replied, "It is the same as separating pieces of stone from rice with the help of a winnowing basket. You throw away the stones and keep the rice to use." The pandits were taken aback by the milkmaid's reply. She answered all their questions with understanding.

### **Twenty-four gurus**

Dattatreya had twenty-four gurus in his life. His life was very strange and full of adventure. Once, he saw an eagle flying with a piece of meat in its beak. Another eagle snatched the piece of meat. The eagle that had lost the piece of meat was left free, but the other eagles started fighting over that piece of meat. This shows that where there is accumulation there is insecurity. Where there is no accumulation, nobody cares about you. There are no robberies in a beggar's house.

In the same way he learnt something from the earth, the moon, a prostitute, a serpent – he learnt from everyone. They all became his *vidya gurus*, ones who give knowledge.

In twenty-four different situations, Dattatreya gained knowledge of twenty-four different types of gurus. In our lives also, events which take place in front of our own eyes can teach us various things. It is possible that we also learn from them, not only Dattatreya, but we don't have that philosophical attention. For example, while sitting in his garden one day, Newton saw an apple fall from a tree. He started thinking about why the apple had fallen down and not up. The law of gravity was discovered as a result of a simple incident.

The incidents that took place in the life of Dattatreya have also been taking place in our lives. However, our attention,

alertness, concentration of mind and mental approach is not philosophical. Everything in life should be seen from scientific, philosophical and metaphysical viewpoints, and the reasons behind every incident should be understood, but no one can be bothered finding out the causes of an incident. When a mother scolds her child, it gives pain, and when she fondles him, it gives pleasure. When a mother slaps or reprimands her child, he feels bad. Why? Why do we feel affection and hatred? We never ask such questions because our nature is not metaphysical or scientific.

A discerning person tries to understand the reason behind every event and process, and he learns from that. This is what Dattatreya practised. Dattatreya was a great spiritual scientist, like the material or physical scientists of the twentieth century. Dattatreya, Lord Buddha, Lord Mahavira, Adi Shankaracharya and others like them were the scientists of spiritual life. They raised questions pertaining to the realities of life. What is the purpose of this creation? Where did we come from? What is the basis of creation? How do we remain alive and where will we go after death? There are many such questions which seldom come to our minds. We do not ponder over the divine, but Dattatreya did and





he received twenty-four commandments from twenty-four different places.

Dattatreya propounded the philosophy of Advaita Vedanta long before Adi Shankaracharya, who lived and worked during the period when Buddhism was at its zenith. Dattatreya's Vedantic principles are incorporated in the Upanishads. He declared, "I am not the body, I am not the creature, I am not the soul, I am not the matter, but I am the glowing atma in which Brahman resides." His four pronouncements have been compiled in the *Avadhuta Gita*: *Aham Brahmasmi* – I am Brahma; *Shivoham* – I am Shiva; *Shivah Kevaloham* – I am only Shiva; *Shiva Swaroopoham* – I am a form of Shiva.

Dattatreya attained enlightenment under the gular tree. Dattatreya influenced, not only his own generation, but future generations down through history.

### **Pathways for all**

In India, Dattatreya is respected as God. Although he was born in a human body, he is called Lord Dattatreya, Bhagavan Dattatreya. He is the guru of all tantrics and the founder of *Aghora panth*, the path of tantra. This path is not for everyone. It is only for those who live in this world without being

affected by *maya*, illusion. They live like a lotus leaf which grows in water and still remains unaffected by it.

Dattatreya says that wherever you are, whoever you are, whatever are your psychological, biological, spiritual, cultural limitations, you must start from that point – everything is a way to God. There are rough roads, good roads, highways, and they all lead to God. There are roads which are full of potholes and bumps, but nevertheless, they are paths. Which way do you want to go? You have to discover what is the most natural way for you. This whole life is a pilgrimage to God. This is your way, your main purpose. You are not born for what you have been doing. Whatever has to come, children, family, money, wealth will come, but are not the goal of the journey. The only goal of our life, for which we are born, is to realise God.

Whether you are born in the house of a brahmin, a shoemaker or a businessman does not make any difference. Nor does it matter whether you are fat or thin, a noble person, a thief, a dacoit, a gambler or a drunkard. If you have realised why you were born, the goal of your life, it doesn't matter what you do, but if you are ignorant of this goal then, despite being a noble brahmin, your life has no purpose. You may not eat meat, chicken, onion or garlic, you may worship Tulsi and Rama, but if you are ignorant of the goal of your life and the purpose of your birth then you have achieved nothing. In the *Srimad Bhagavata*, Dattatreya says:

This human body is an open door for liberation.  
Having gained this, if one remains closed  
In his house like a bird locked in a cage,  
He has fallen from a great height.

Do not think that unless you become a good person you cannot pursue spiritual life, or that the divine path is only open to pious people. No, that is not so at all. The divine path is open to all.



## Searching for a Guru



When searching for a bridegroom for your daughter, you look for thirty-six qualities in the boy. In the same way, you have to search for certain qualities in the guru. The foremost quality is that he possesses, not only scriptural knowledge, but also experiential knowledge. Knowledge is of two types – one is scriptural, the other is experiential.

There are many qualities to look for in a guru, of which I will enumerate a few. Guru is one who has acquired knowledge through experience, who has seen the world. Guru is one who has had some experience with God and can explain these things. Guru is one who is balanced and has control over himself. Guru is one who is not interested in

cheating and for whom gurudom is not a career, a profession or a source of employment.

Such gurus exist, they are not unavailable. However, one must be careful in selecting, just as during the monsoon one filters water before drinking. In this monsoon age, society is flooded with gurus, therefore, filter the water before drinking it.

According to the sannyasa tradition, all gurus, whether Vaishnava, Shaiva or Udasi, are of two kinds, depending upon their initiation. One type has received initiation directly from the akhara and the other from the mandali. For example, the disciples I had initiated would be known as sannyasins of a mandali. One would be known as a sannyasin of the akhara only if one has received initiation directly from the akhara. Initiations from an akhara or a mandali are more reliable. My guru, Swami Sivananda, was initiated by his guru in the Niranjani Akhara. However, I was not initiated in the akhara. I have accepted sannyasa from an extremely renowned sannyasin of the akhara and therefore I belong to the Niranjani Akhara, but I am a sannyasin of the mandali. It is a reliable source.

Sannyasins belonging to the akhara need to act in a very correct manner. In the akhara, those who discredit the



tradition are beaten up mercilessly. Naga sadhus may even beat a defaulter to death with the *chimta*, tongs. Such things happen in our tradition. Nowadays, however, sadhus are not interested in attaching themselves to any tradition. They operate independently according to their whims and fancies, without commitment to any tradition. So, one must be very alert.

In this day and age, there are some gurus who may cheat, but the majority are not frauds. Honesty has not yet taken a back seat. It is idealistic to expect that only saints sit under the huge banyan tree. Dacoits may come and sit there too. This happens because the destructive elements have an opportunity to breed there. The banyan tree gives shelter to all.

That is why in every situation which promotes truth and dharma, you will come across such elements. This world is a mixed bag, everything is a combination of good and bad. Just as a bird or an ant takes the sugar and leaves behind the sand, just as a swan drinks milk and leaves behind water, so one should use one's *viveka*, discrimination, and search for a true guru.

A guru is necessary for *satsang*, the company of truth. It is not possible to deal with spiritual life without satsang because there are many nuts and bolts to be adjusted. You cannot always be sure how much each one needs to be tightened. When you sit down with your guru, he can tell you how to adjust which nut, bolt and screw. This is very important and, therefore, a guru is a must.

There are certainly very good gurus. I am not pessimistic about it. Gurus must teach principles which are neither fanatic nor lunatic, but intimately and immediately related to the divine. You cannot deny God, it is impossible. You may not be able to prove His existence, but you cannot deny it. Therefore, our speech, our relationships, our meetings, our discussions should always begin with God. First, we utter God's name and then we utter whatever else needs to be discussed.

## Diksha



The Sanskrit word for initiation is *diksha* meaning the 'desire to give'. Mantra diksha is the giving of a mantra. There are also some higher initiations. However, these are not given unless the disciple is absolutely steady, physically, emotionally and mentally. For instance, before the guru leaves his earthly role or body, he may want to transfer certain spiritual powers to different people. This is done with great care. The first thing the guru makes certain of is that the disciple's mind will not waver or lose control at any time. You can cut off his nose, shoot him, pierce his ears or throw him into the Ganges, but he will always remain steady and unaffected. When the mind has lost all worldly and lower sensitivity, it

is completely receptive to higher vibrations and unreceptive to lower ones. The lower sphere of the mind is paralysed, but the higher sphere has become active and sensitive. Only then are the higher initiations given, the transfer of psychic and spiritual power or traditional knowledge. This is what everybody seeks.

Initiation may be given anywhere – on the banks of a river, in a chapel, underneath a tree, in a lonely forest, in an ashram or in a small room. Great yogis, like Swami Sivananda, could even impart initiation by letter. To receive initiation, everything should be quiet. The body must be still, it should not shake or move around. The mind must be relaxed and receptive.

On receiving the divine spark from the guru, the disciple begins to have experiences according to his disposition. If he is intellectual, his intellect will be sharpened so that he understands subtle subjects and finds satisfactory answers to his questions. If devotional, he will experience intense love. The awakened shakti firmly sets the disciple on the road to spiritual perfection.

Devotion to the guru is essential. The divine power is all-pervasive, yet it is the guru who removes the veil of ignorance. As a seeker progresses he has to become his own guru, remaining a witness to his inner processes while surrendering to the inner shakti.

The true guru does not make his disciple renounce the world, but his limited self. He takes away, not limited wealth and riches, but sins and anxieties. The greater the disciple thinks his guru to be, the greater he himself will become. The guru is Brahma because he creates for his student a new and wondrous world; he is Vishnu because he sustains and protects him; he is Shiva because he annihilates his world of individuality.

## Crossing the World-Ocean



When your guru lives very far away and you do not know where he is, yet still you are in love with him, it is mentally projected devotion. This is possible and it has happened to many people. However, let me tell you one thing. The only basis of relationship between guru and disciple is *shraddha*, faith. Guru is the image, the reflection of the disciple's faith. If the faith of the disciple diminishes, he will see less of it reflecting from the guru. If the faith of the disciple is strong, the reflection from the guru will be very strong. The



personality of the guru is the image of the faith of the disciple. Mirabai has said:

Now I have fallen in love with the guru's feet.  
I want nothing, but the shelter of his sacred feet.  
The illusory world has now become a dream.  
For me the ocean of the world has dried up.  
Now there is no anxiety to cross it.  
The Lord of Mira is the clever Krishna,  
And she is hopeful of the guru's refuge alone.

It is said in the *Ramacharitamanas* that none can cross the world-ocean without the help of the guru, even if he is Brahma or Lord Shiva. No one can challenge this fact. If my faith is unshakable and my belief is deep and strong, my guru's personality will dazzle me. Kabir Das said:

Guru is greater than God,  
Because those created by God  
Sink in the ocean of samsara  
Due to their worldly attachment,  
While those trained by guru  
Are sure to cross over.



## Spiritual Love



The guru-disciple relationship is a vast matter. We have had this tradition from ancient times. The guru-disciple relationship is a very high realisation. It is very difficult to explain.

### **Spiritual growth**

The guru-disciple relationship is necessary because a guru is needed for spiritual growth. All religions, philosophies, sages and seers have said in one voice that it is necessary to take guru mantra. The relationship starts with the mantra and it is the main basis of the guru-disciple relationship. The beginning is the mantra and later, when the guru feels that the

disciple is making progress, other sadhanas are given. After all, not all sadhanas can be given right at the beginning. The guru will not give you all the lessons at one go. You have to start from A, B, C, D. First do your *japa* and after a year or two years, he will tell you to do something else. If you are a singer, he may ask you to chant *Om* every morning. He may ask you to do *bhramari* at four in the morning because he can see that you are inclined that way. Or, if he finds that your mind is very restless – you go to sleep at one am, wake up at two pm, travel around the world, deal with taxes – he may ask you to do some *pranayama* in the morning so that your nervous system is not adversely affected. If you are trying to overcome a big obstacle, he may ask you to perform an *anushthana*. In this way, by handling the disciple slowly, the guru brings him to such a state that the disciple realises that whatever is happening in his life, whatever will happen or has happened, was fixed. You acquire the knowledge of karma and of the one who makes karma. You acquire the knowledge of destiny.



## **Basis of guru**

Many people search for gurus. What is the basis of a guru? On what basis do you make a guru? Just as there has to be a basis for finding a husband or wife, there has to be some basis for finding a guru. The basis has to be something that keeps the relationship stable. The guru-disciple relationship should be consistent and eternal. Many people go on searching for a guru and go on measuring him with a measuring tape. "He is not five inches and seven centimetres long. Cancel!"

The relationship between a guru and disciple is the same as that between a boy and a girl. One look and you have fallen in love! Bhakti has awakened. The mind has become completely quiet. You should not have any parameters to judge the guru with. When you have just entered a school, you do not ask the qualifications of the master. You are a fool, so how will you understand his qualifications? You are trying to investigate whether or not the guru is good enough for you when you do not have the capability to do so! Go to the guru with an empty mind, search for a guru with an empty mind. The relationship between the guru and disciple is such that when you go to the guru, the mind becomes quiet.

When I left home, I went to Rajasthan. I had an adopted sister there who was a doctor. She was interested in spiritual things so I thought she might be able to tell me something. She gave me the address of her guru. I went there, and he was very happy to see me as he thought that an educated boy like me could look after the ashram for him. He saw me as a prospective successor. He was a good man. I learnt a lot from him. He was very knowledgeable on the theoretical aspects of tantra. I stayed there for six months. I had great respect for him and he, too, held me in respect. But one day, something happened in my head. I said to myself, "I do not want to become a successor. If I have to look after property, I might as well go back home." So I scaled the twelve-foot-high wall of the ashram and ran away.

I took a train in which I met a mahatma with matted hair and a long beard. He asked, "Where are you going?" I replied, "I want to become a disciple, I need a guru." He became furious and gave me a good scolding, but then he took me to Kali Kamliwala Gurudwara in Rishikesh, and said, "Search here, this is the place of gurus." The next day I went to Vishnudevanandaji at Kailash Ashram. I prostrated at his feet and said "I want to take sannyasa." He said, "Take sannyasa and come here, I will let you stay, but I will not give you sannyasa because I do not give sannyasa. I am only the acharya of an akhara." Then he told me of Swami Sivananda.

The moment I saw Swami Sivananda, all my thoughts of searching for a guru ended. I said to myself, "Stay here." The person at whose very sight the desire for love ends and *shraddha*, faith, finds its fulfilment, is your guru. He is your lover. From then on, I stayed there.

The circumstances were very difficult. Our guru was not rich, we had to beg for food and sleep on the floor. We were bitten by mosquitoes, scorpions would crawl over us, there were snakes, and the water of the Ganga was dirty, but we were not bothered. When I remember those days I feel surprised at how I stayed there. Guruji would remain closed up in his room and we would never get to meet him. He would remain in his kutir and we would be working outside. Now, you may say that if the guru and disciple do not even meet, then how will the disciple learn?

I would cook food, clean utensils, bring water from the Ganga, chop wood, climb six kilometres uphill to the District Collector's office to get a permit to buy sugar from the ration shop. I did all that a servant does at home. I worked as a servant in the ashram. But those were such happy days! Sometimes I wish that I could leave this body and again live in an ashram like that because it is very nice to live as a disciple in an ashram, it is no good living as a guru. The joy that exists in living as a disciple does not exist in living as a guru.

The guru-disciple relationship is in a way a relationship of love. The only difference is, whereas in the material world the basis of love is human life, here the basis of love is spiritual life. There you call it love, here you call it bhakti. There you call it *ishk majaji*, here you call it *ishk hakiki*. There you call it worldly love, here you call it spiritual love. Here, two souls unite and, through such spiritual union, the child of wisdom is born. After all, our Guruji made us give birth to children, did he not? But who is the child that we gave birth to? The form of that child is *jnana*, wisdom.

It is essential to have a guru. Whether you want to study till the primary or mid-level, in college or university, you need a teacher. In the same way, if you want to know how to walk the spiritual path, find a guru. Even if you just want to do mantra japa, find a guru. If you want to learn hatha yoga, raja yoga, bhakti yoga or jnana yoga, you will have to find a guru. An aspirant's spiritual life is meaningless without a guru.





## Awakening Faith



Just as fragrance is always present in a flower, devotion and belief in God are innate to the human heart. Just as coolness is the nature of the moon and heat is the nature of the sun, faith is the nature of human beings. *Shraddha* and *bhakti*, faith and devotion, are inborn qualities, they do not need to be imported from outside. Just as the body is infused with prana, faith and devotion are imbedded in the human heart right from birth. Faith is inherent in each and everyone. Just as the tree is hidden in the seed, butter in milk, fire in wood and Brahman in jiva, faith is dormant and latent within each and every human being. This is the first thing that you should accept and remember well.

Shraddha or faith is not overt or visible. Can you see the wheat plant in a grain of wheat? Even if you shred or crush the seed into powder, the wheat plant does not become visible. It will come to light only when you sow the grain. Otherwise you may dissect each grain of wheat, scrutinise it under a microscope, subject it to chemical analysis, and yet the wheat plant hidden in the wheat grain will never show up. The wheat seed has to be sown in the proper soil for it to become visible. Similarly, faith cannot be explored outside, it needs to be awakened from within. The first inspirer of faith is the mother, the second is the ishta devata and the third is the guru. A grain of wheat needs soil to germinate into a wheat plant, then it needs air and sunlight. In the same way, the shraddha that is already there within you needs to be awakened.

### **Symbols of faith**

The mother is the first symbol or basis of faith. If you have no faith in your own mother, you are robbed of faith in life. Your faith can then never deepen or develop. It does not matter what kind of a mother you have. Her appearance, beauty, nature, intelligence, qualities, education and talent are all irrelevant as far as faith is concerned. After all, a mother is a mother, however imperfect she may be. An example is seen in the life of Sri Shankaracharya. When he was barely eight years old, he left home to take sannyasa. His mother gave her consent on one condition, that he would perform her last rites when she died.

Sri Shankaracharya hoisted the flag of vedic religion in all directions. He attained the epoch-making victory of spreading the vedic religion throughout India. He was scaling the heights of this mission in north India when his mother breathed her last, thousands of miles away, but he kept his word and rushed all the way down south to fulfil the promise he had made to her. A sannyasin is not supposed to take part in the funeral of a deceased person, but he

bravely broke the tradition and performed his mother's last rites with his own hands. Such was the depth of his faith in his mother. Such unwavering faith can defy tradition, flout the dictums of the shastras, make the smritis pale into insignificance and render all the mandates of the scriptures meaningless.

The second basis of faith is the *ishta devata*, or chosen deity. Etymologically, *devata* means 'that which radiates, illumines, enlightens, sheds light on, dispels darkness'. The devata is the one who lights up the darkness and reveals the hidden essence. There are as many devatas as there are people. Some worship Vishnu, some Shiva, some Ganesha or Hanuman as their ishta devata. The indigenous aboriginals worship Mahadeva. The Bengalis worship Durga and Kali. You may not see your ishta devata or have any logical proof of its existence, but you still worship your chosen deity regularly.

The third basis of faith is the guru. If your faith in the guru is strong and unchallenged, then the guru becomes equal to God for you. Everything then follows like a dream sequence. This is what the *Shvetashvatara Upanishad* (v. 23) tells us:

*Yasya deve paraa bhaktiryathaa deve tathaa gurau.  
Tasyaite kathitaa hyarthaah prakaashante mahaatmanaha.  
Prakaashante mahaatmanaha.*

Then these supreme truths imparted to the right souls, who are greatly devoted to God as well as to guru, shine brightly. However, they shine brightly only in those souls who are most deserving.

Thus, the one who has abiding faith in the ishta devata and the guru alike attains enlightenment.

### **Guru's tests**

It is not difficult to have faith in the devatas, who are regarded as superhuman godly beings. They neither sleep nor eat, nor do they fall sick or die; they are above all human imperfections and weaknesses. But it is difficult to have faith

in the guru who is embodied as a mortal human. This is a tough test of one's faith. Your faith in the mother may be unshakeable, your faith in the devata may never shatter, but your faith in the guru is very fragile and vulnerable, because the guru lives in a human body and is subject to the laws of *prakriti* or nature.

To maintain unwavering faith in one's guru is extremely difficult. Even the faith of the best disciples falters and they leave their guru, finding him to be unsuitable. They denounce their guru because they find he does not conform to their own ideals of what a guru should be like. What a paradox! Should the guru comply with your wishes or should you come up to his expectations? The guru does not fit into any preconceived mould. After worshipping the devata, you should define your relationship with the guru. According to the vedic tradition, the connection between guru and disciple is as unbreakable as that between husband and wife. All this boils down to one single point – faith, which you have to search for within the recesses of your own mind and discover for yourself.



Shraddha, faith, is the *brahmastra*, the ultimate weapon of spirituality. It is the ultimate armour, the ultimate power of spiritual life. If one's faith remains intact in spite of the assaults and challenges, then one has real unwavering faith. A disciple of such deep faith can even have the darshan of God. The guru's place is thus considered to be the highest.

Shraddha is a very fragile and delicate thing. Some people wonder why I worship the shaligram, which is a stone. I tell them that I have wrought miracles with this stone. Even a stone can become a god if faith is placed in it. Shraddha turns the most mediocre person into a great personage. This is the power of faith.

However, it is extremely difficult for ordinary people to have unwavering faith in the guru. There are a number of examples of disciples and gurus in our shastras. The guru knows his job too well. He keeps prodding his disciple this way and that. We have a saying, "Why did the betel leaf get spoilt, why did the horse get stranded and why did the disciple get waylaid?" All this happened because they were not turned upside down and inside out. The guru must keep poking, stirring and turning the disciples around. Some disciples think they should relate to the guru on their terms and conditions, that the guru should bend to their own will. However, the guru is not there to listen to the disciple. He exists to make the disciple listen to him.



## Experiencing Faith



A human being has two things – intelligence and faith. It was through intelligence that he learnt about God, but it was through faith that he experienced God. Not knowledge, but experience comes about through faith. Just as love, enmity, jealousy, joy and sorrow are not the stuff of the intellect, but of experience, faith is also a matter of experience. The basis of the intellect is analysis. The Upanishads may have been written with the help of intelligence, but faith is such a substance that it accepts even that which is invisible. After all, has anyone seen anger? No. But anger exists. This is a matter of faith. You do



not need to see faith, you need to experience faith. Therefore, at the very beginning of *Ramacharitamanas*, it has been said:

*Bhavaaneeshankarau vande shraddhaavishvaasarupinau,  
Yaabhyaam vinaa na pashyaanti siddhaah svaantah  
sthameeshwaram.*

I bow to Bhavani and Sri Shankara, who are the symbols of faith and deep conviction, without which even the great siddhas cannot achieve spiritual attainment.

### **Divine power**

A *siddha*, an accomplished person, too cannot see the God within, the one who is so close to him, if he does not have faith and belief. To experience God, faith and belief are prime necessities, and the beginning of faith and belief is through the guru. The guru and the disciple are strangers to each other at the beginning, they may come from different places. However, the disciple finds faith in the guru. He starts learning the A, B, C, D of faith, and through continuous practice he develops faith. In this faith, he sees the shadow, the reflection and splendour of God.

Even a *siddha* has to practise faith in the guru, but prior to the guru, one has to practise faith in one's parents. You do not know who your father is. You cannot know who your father is until there is a DNA test, but you believe that this person is your father because your faith says so. To believe that your father is your father for your entire life, or to accept a stranger as your wife or husband is faith. This is the first rung of school, kindergarten. First, you practise faith and belief in your own house, then in the guru and finally in God. When, by practising it in different things, the faith becomes strong, clear and divine, when it is generated from a pure mind and heart, you see God. Then God, who was defined in different ways by different people, becomes apparent to you.

Faith and belief are essential, though intelligence has its own place. Once someone asked me, "Swamiji, why do people

worship the idols of gods and goddesses?" I said that at the level of intelligence, this may seem odd. After all, how can a piece of stone be God? How can a piece of paper be God? How can a person who eats and sleeps be guru and God? The intelligence may question all this, but when it comes to faith, then a stone is indeed God, a leaf is God, a tree is God. Faith can establish anything as God.

Faith is the biggest power. If you do not have faith, then forget about God. Don't even talk about him, because you cannot realise God by talking about him. You can talk about God for years and eons, but nothing will be achieved through that. Ramakrishna Paramahansa used to say that you can keep writing 'Water, water, water' on a piece of paper, but you cannot get water by wringing that piece of paper. You only wrote 'water' on the paper, you did not soak it in water. Experiencing God is equally simple.



### **Maintaining the relationship**

The guru-disciple relationship is a very important relationship. To begin with, it is very difficult to form and if formed, it is very hard to uphold. This is because the guru lives in a body, which means that he eats, sleeps, excretes, speaks and laughs like you do. Observing this, you may question the difference between you and the guru. At that point, the tenacity of your relationship with the guru becomes weak. You think, "Oh, he is just like us, so what is the point." People said the same thing to Lord Buddha. They said, "Lord, what is the difference between you and us? We eat and so do you,

we sleep and so do you, we laugh and so do you.” When you begin to think like this, the steadfastness of the guru-disciple relationship becomes difficult to maintain.

It is very easy to call someone your guru, but it is very difficult to maintain that relationship. The guru lives the same way as you do. You see no difference between you and him because spiritual illumination cannot be seen. How do you know what I think or do? You only look at what I wear, eat and drink, how I sleep, laugh, what I keep, and so on. No one can see what lies within. Who will look at what lies within? After all, only a Shakespeare can understand a Shakespeare. If you have the eyes to see, only then will you understand what lies within the guru, but you do not have the eyes, therefore the doubts come.

The greatest crisis between a guru and disciple takes place when the disciple is not able to stabilise his relationship with the guru. He may have established a relationship, but he cannot stabilise it. Therefore, many times gurus and disciples fall apart. So, it is not an easy relationship. It is not as if you have met a guru, now you can go to his ashram and get liberated. There are many crises. There are crises between a



husband and wife, between a brother and sister, and there are crises between a guru and disciple too. After all, they are strangers. Like bricks and stones, they come from different places to make a house.

### **Doubt**

Once you have accepted someone as your guru, he is your guru. Once you are married to a person, you are married, no matter what thoughts you get. The truth will remain the truth. It is only the imbalance within you that needs to be corrected. Inappropriate thoughts do come to the mind, but the relationship should not become any lesser due to them.

The relationship between a guru and disciple is not physical, social or of the blood. It is not a worldly relationship, such as that between a brother and sister, father and son, husband and wife. The guru-disciple relationship is spiritual. The guru becomes the base of your spiritual life. Therefore, this relationship should be maintained well. In the scriptures, twenty-four kinds of gurus have been mentioned. There are different types of gurus. There was one guru who came to India from a different country. He was a great soul, a sadhaka, someone who had the grace of God upon him. His first wife died, and he married a second time. Now, some of his disciples may have had inappropriate thoughts. Not everyone would have, some people are wise, but some would have said, "What kind of a guru is he? He married twice."

If you think about Guruji getting married twice, or the kind of clothes he is wearing and the food he is eating, that he is smoking marijuana and drinking alcohol, these thoughts are occurring in your mind due to your personal reasons. If the reasons were impersonal, wouldn't fingers have been pointed at Sri Krishna too? Inappropriate thoughts in people's minds, which they may speak out or write about in books, are creations of their own minds. They are in the head of the disciple and do not affect the actuality of the guru, and should not affect the relationship between the guru and disciple either.

A human being has sense organs in the body. Beyond the sense organs lies the mind, beyond the mind lies the intelligence and beyond intelligence lies the soul. The mind generates sattwic, rajasic and tamasic thoughts. Let the thoughts come, there is no problem, and there is no solution to this either; the clouds are rumbling now and will disappear in time. If you think inappropriately about the guru, there is no harm. It is the mind that thinks inappropriately, not the soul. The soul never thinks inappropriately.

In practical terms, to get the better of inappropriate thoughts, do three things. Send a yearly dakshina to the guru, whatever you can, with love and devotion. Second, on Guru Purnima go to him and worship him, and if that is not possible, worship at home only. Third, do japa of the guru mantra regularly. If you have a quarrel with your guru or husband, don't stop eating, bathing and sleeping, and don't leave the husband or guru. Quarrels are normal, but they should not influence your entire life.

When I was eighteen or nineteen years old, I used to go to Nainital on holidays. A Devi temple exists near the lake there, next to which is a peculiar rock. Once, I found a yogini there. She was fat, dark and would smoke all day long. I could not understand why she left home if all she wanted to do was to smoke. I was a child, and this was my way of thinking. One day I was sitting there and a few of her followers came. She started talking and I was stunned. Then I started going to her every day. From morning till evening I would remain there, and every day what I heard would surprise me. I developed such faith in her that I asked her to make me her disciple. She asked me to look for a different guru and eventually went away, but I remember her to this date. So, I feel one should not judge a guru by the external environment.

### **Protecting the jewel**

To measure the guru by your own metre is not right either. Every person has a metre, which is his way of thinking. He

uses his own yardstick to measure whether the guru is tall, short, fat, good, right, wrong, lawful, etc. This should not happen, because often the gurus who have spiritual wealth keep it hidden. The gurus receive *vibhuti*, divine blessings, or the experience of a part of God. At some time or the other, they would have felt a part of God, maybe in meditation, while bathing, sleeping or walking. It is an experience that comes suddenly, like a flash. Such great souls who have received that light are gurus. However, they keep their attainment hidden because, if they reveal it, they will be robbed.

At the Shiva temple, the devotees touch the shivalingam every day, so much so that it almost disappears. The devotees trouble God very much, so God has hidden himself, and become attributeless and formless. Similarly, many gurus keep themselves hidden. What is the way to hide? Smoke a chillum. People will say, what kind of a guru is this, why should the one who has had the perception of God smoke? The guru gets away, and you people get funny thoughts in your head. The loss is yours. So be a bit wary of gurus.





## Devotion



In reality, devotion towards guru is devotion towards God. All the scriptures, Upanishads and great men have said this. To convert the feeling of emotion into devotion, first a mould is needed, and the mould is the guru. One should have an emotional connection of *bhakti* with the guru. When there is mental affinity between guru and disciple, thereafter *bhakti* or devotion deepens.

### **Guru and perfectionism**

All the scriptures, many saints and even Kabir say that the most difficult thing is to select a guru. The guru is also a human being made from the five elements just as your body

is made from the five elements. As you live and are bound by the *gunas*, the three aspects of creation, so is the guru. In the most natural way he cannot be perfect, that is the first thing the disciple has to understand. If the disciple feels that at all times he wants to see total perfection in the guru, if he wants to see him without any blemishes, then this is not possible. Why speak of the guru?

One should always keep one point in mind when searching for a guru. Remember that every human being is a perfectionist by nature. Every human being has some ideals and wants to see those ideals. You want to see your own image. You have an ideal and you want to see the image of it in me. The complex feeling or the mental block of your image of perfection is that you don't see what you want to see in me. I can never be it one hundred percent because you have created a sense of perfection. You have created a psychological barrier in yourself. This needs to be understood.

### **Attaining purity**

I went to Swami Sivananda and said, "I have come here to live with you." He said, "Okay, live here, but first of all clean your mirror. Whatever you want to achieve is within you, it is not within me. The guru doesn't give anything. The soul, the *atma*, is the truth within us. Consciousness is within us, the light is within us. Brahma is within us. Everything is within us."

*Yaa ghat bhitar saat samandar  
Yaa ghat bhitar nau lakh moti  
Yaa ghat bhitar sarjanahara  
Avadhu andhadhundh andhiyara.*

There are seven oceans inside this body,  
There are nine lakh pearls inside this body,  
There is the Creator inside this body.  
Oh Avadhuta! There is darkness all around.

Beyond darkness is a light that is within us. You must see that you are tied to the guru, that's all. Maybe the guru drinks tea, two, three or four times a day and wears leather shoes, or sleeps and snores during the day. Why do you see all this? When the heart accepts, the brain does not play any role. When you love, the brain should not be allowed to come in between, otherwise it will spoil the whole thing. Therefore, to transform emotions into bhakti, establish your relationship with the guru.

Service to the guru is of many kinds. Sri Krishna used to collect wood at Sandipani's place. Do you know where Sri Rama used to live at Sage Vasishtha's place? Rama who was the prince of Ayodhya? In Vasishtha's cave, where Vasishtha himself used to live, outside of Rishikesh, near Brahmapuri, on the bank of the river Ganga. Shatrughna used to live next to Swami Sivananda's ashram and Bharata used to live in Rishikesh proper. Lakshmana used to live where Lakshmana's bridge is now.

The four brothers were living at four different places and Vasishtha was living further away. If you see the area now it is forests and mountains. In those times, in the Treta Yuga, God knows how many lions and leopards must have been roaming about. Life is spent like this with the guru.

Sri Rama spent his life with his guru. He worked with a spade, looked after the cows and buffaloes, picked up wood for the ashram. Maybe he also washed Arundhati's clothes. Who knows? He must have done everything as service. He must have travelled back and forth daily, and it would not have been on horseback. While living in the gurukul, he had to follow the rules of the ashram. He had to sleep on the floor, which was the rule in the ancient period. Sri Rama had to lead a hard life and he was trained in his guru's ashram. It is said: *Guru griha gaye padhan Raghurai. Alpa kaal vidya sab payee* – "Sri Rama went to his guru's place to study. In a very short time he received all knowledge."

He, from whose mouth the Vedas and shrutis emerge, also comes to this world to study for lila.

## Innocence

To turn emotion into devotion is not a joke. Mirabai's emotions channelled into devotion because she was very innocent. She did not use her intellect, only her emotions. Had she used her intellect, she would have said, "How can wood be my husband?" But from childhood, when she was given a wooden idol of Krishna, she accepted it as her husband. She changed her emotion to devotion and she was successful. When emotion is changed to devotion, it becomes very powerful. It can overcome a cup of poison sent by the king.

That wonder happened in her life. The same thing happened with Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Although he was a great intellectual, he kept his intellect aside and established a connection with God. The connection that Chaitanya Mahaprabhu established with Krishna cannot be understood by the brain, it is so simple.



Neither the emotion of Mirabai nor of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu can be understood. Even the sentiments of Ramakrishna Paramahansa towards Kali are not the subject of the intellect. Therefore, to convert sentiments into devotion, first let the intellect retire – suspend it, dismiss it. Sri Aurobindo has clearly written, “Intellect is the barrier and reason is the barrier.” In spiritual life, reasoning, arguments and intellect do not work. Why don’t they work? Because the search you are making is for something not seen by anyone.

You have not seen it, you don’t have proof. You don’t have a chart saying, “Go this way.” There is no timetable, no way is known. Is God a woman or a man? Is God a man or an animal? Is God there or not? If it is void, what is void? If it is *nirguna*, without any qualities, what does that mean? God is not the subject of argument, God is not the subject of intellect. God is the subject of emotion and that emotion which changes into devotion. Highest love is the form of devotion. Devotion, *bhakti*, is not love, it is highest love. After





drinking that and making others drink it, you are intoxicated, intoxicated, intoxicated. They are three, not one. Highly intoxicated means drunk, passed out. After drinking wine this happens. In the third stage there is no awareness of the world. It is not such an easy path.

### **Revealing knowledge**

Sometimes I was asked to clean the library and while dusting I would see the *Rig Veda*, the *Yajur Veda* and the *Sama Veda* there. This was a great temptation. The Upanishads and other texts used to tempt me. I said to Swamiji, "There are so many books. Can I take a few?" He replied, "Satyananda, you are talking of infection, you should talk of education. Infection is when knowledge comes in from outside. When inner knowledge is revealed outside, that is called education. All knowledge is within you. The knowledge of the four Vedas is within you. The human being is all-knowledgeable. *Atma*, your spirit, is omniscient." He used to say that every creature, not only mankind, but every creature basically, fundamentally is God. There is that seed within it which is called *atma* and *paramatma*.



Knowledge is within us. What will you achieve by reading the Vedas? I kept working for twelve years and after that I was told to teach yoga. I have never read a book on yoga. I have written them, but I have never read any books on yoga. I have just turned the pages of a few like the *Yajnavalkya Samhita*, *Gorakh Samhita*, *Gherand Samhita* and Swatmarama's *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*. I have seen them all, but I have not read any because I was convinced by Swami Sivananda that it is all within me.

By serving the guru and serving him endlessly, the ego of the disciple is effaced. He does not think, "I came to the guru for self-realisation and he is only getting me to do all the cleaning. He gets me to clean the toilets! In me he has an unpaid servant." The disciple should have faith in the guru.

Always remember that all gurus are good. The guru who becomes a guru so he can cheat others cannot last long because he also has a soul. Everybody has an inner conscience. A thief has a conscience, a dacoit has a conscience, a prostitute has a conscience. One who becomes a guru to cheat others changes. Gurus do not cheat for long and nature punishes those who do. Many have been punished. So, I am telling everybody that they should serve the guru.



There are many examples, like Upamanyu, Rishi Uddalaka, Aruni, Sri Rama and Sri Krishna. See the example of Swami Vivekananda who belongs to our times. Adi Shankaracharya triumphed in all directions, from the north to the south of India, and silenced Buddha dharma which had become the religion of the kings. In Badrinath, the image of Narayana, which had been thrown in the Alakananda river and replaced with a statue of Buddha, was reinstalled. What a powerful person he must have been.

### **Deeper devotion**

To understand the deeper link with guru, read about the attitude the gopis had towards Sri Krishna. Although many people consider the gopis just to be girls who played with Sri Krishna, this was not so. The gopis' relationship with Krishna was transcendental. It wasn't his physical frame that they loved, but his cosmic body.

Whenever the gopis were with Sri Krishna, they did not feel they were with a human being. They always felt that they were in the company of divinity. When you feel you are in the company of divinity, you are very much in touch with your guru.



## Sri Rama and Hanuman



Sri Rama asked Hanuman, “Who am I to you?” Hanuman replied, “Oh Lord, as long as I am bound by body-consciousness, as long as I identify with my body, I am your slave and servant.” All of us have this *dehatma buddhi* – our mind is conditioned by the body. We are tied down to the body in our consciousness, the focus of thought is the body.

As long as he was body-bound, Hanuman called himself the servant or attendant of Sri Rama. Then, he said to Sri Rama, “When my *buddhi*, my intelligence, rises above the material world and I can think spiritually, then I become a part, a fraction of you. When I am able to transcend even that stage and realise my spiritual self, when I identify with

the soul and elevate my consciousness to the spiritual plane,  
then you and I are one and the same."

*Dehabuddhyaa tu daasoaham.*

*Jeevabuddhyaa tavaanshakah.*

*Aatmabuddhyaa tvamevaahamiti me nishchitaamatih.*

From the point of physical existence, I am your slave.

From the point of view of the individual soul, I am a  
fraction of your own self.

From the point of view of spiritual existence, I am you.



## The Disciple



When you want to practise the exoteric or the preliminary forms of yoga, you need an expert teacher, a guru is not necessary, but when you want to go deep into your own consciousness, you must have a guru.

Just as a doctor or a surgeon knows about the body, the guru knows about the self. If you go to a person who is not a surgeon for an operation, you know what can happen to you. In the same way, if you go to a person who does not know about the self, you know what can happen to you.

Just as the body has its own dimensions and the mind has its dimensions, the self also has its dimensions. Guru knows about the functions, behaviour and characteristics of the mind

and, at the same time, he understands the level of his disciple. There is no general way because each disciple is different.

### **The qualities**

On the mental plane you are slightly different from one another because the mind is controlled by three forces known as the gunas. *Guna* means 'attribute' 'quality' or 'property'. These three gunas are *tamo guna*, *raja guna* and *sattwa guna* which mean inertia, activity and harmony respectively.

Many people are very lazy. They procrastinate, sleep too much, think too much and do nothing. They are called *tamo guni*. The people who are predominantly *tamo guni*, the guru has to take them from that point of evolution.

There are people who are active, hyperactive, dynamic and aggressive. They desire to achieve and work like madmen day and night. They are always dreaming of achievements. They can never sit quiet. These people will always have ups and downs in the mind, whereas the *tamo guni* has no ups and downs, he doesn't have tension, blood pressure or heartache. The *tamo guni* is lazy, but the *rajasic* man will always have stress problems. Now, the guru has to choose another form of practice for him. If the practices for a *rajo guni* are given to a person who is a *tamo guni*, there will be disaster for him. In the same way, if the practices that are good for a *tamo guni* are prescribed for a *raja guni*, there will be no result.

There are some people who are *sattwa guni*, harmonious, balanced. They maintain a balance between the negative and the positive result of their life. Their mind is always in a state of balance. Of course, these people are very few. Often a *sattwic* person and a *tamasic* person look alike, because their external performance, their external reactions, their external personality look alike. Unless the *tamasic* and *sattwic* person are exposed to a guru, they can't be known.

According to these three qualities of mind, there are five stages of one's evolution. These five stages of evolution relate to a combination of the gunas because nobody is totally

tamasic or totally rajasic or sattwic, we are a combination. Some of us are predominantly tamasic and a little bit of both of the others. Some of us are predominantly rajasic or predominantly sattwic, with elements of the other two gunas intermixed. According to this combination, there are five stages.

The lowest stage is a totally and absolutely dull state of mind. This dull state of mind has neither spiritual aspiration nor worldly ambition. He does not want enlightenment, he does not want prosperity, he does not want anything. He just lives like a vegetable. This is the primitive state of mind.

In the second rung of evolution is the scattered state of mind. In this state of mind he is dissipated, he is something like a monkey. If you give a piece of cloth to a monkey he will work on that cloth for five or ten minutes and then completely forget it. His mind is waxing and waning. Have you seen children doing this? They take one thing, fight for it, demand it, play with it for some time and then completely forget it. This is the second rung in the evolution of mind.





The third state of mind is called the oscillating mind. The oscillating mind is like a pendulum, it goes out and comes back to the same point. Higher than that is the one-pointed mind. The final state of mind is when it is under proper control.

These are the diverse stages of the human mind of the disciple. Unless you are exposed to a guru, nothing can be done in spiritual life. There are many types of gurus, all have expertise in one field. According to your nature or qualifications, you must have that type of guru.

### **Ego**

Some thinkers believe the guru is not necessary at all, and of course they are right in a way. Their main theme of argument is that you have to be your own guru, and philosophically this is correct, the real guru is within everybody. It is known as the *satguru* or the inner guide.

Ultimately, every kind of guidance that you receive in spiritual life will be from this inner guru. However, there is another side of this fact that should be kept in mind. What is the point of telling a blind man that, because the sun is shining brightly outside, he does not need to turn on the light inside the room? It is exactly like that. There is no denying the fact that the guru is within everybody, but can you hear him? Can you follow his guidance? Have you ever felt his love and benedictions? The idea of being your own guru sounds very attractive. Thereby you don't have to submit to anybody. However, if the guru is inside, there is one pragmatic problem in life. Who is there to inspire you and give spiritual guidance?

Some people are afraid to surrender their ego because they fear they will lose their individuality. They are obviously not aware that they surrender their egos in so many affairs of life. Therefore, there is no harm in surrendering the ego to the guru. If you lose your individuality before him, you are the receiver of benefits, not only in connection with meditation, but even in your day-to-day life.



A disciple is supposed to surrender his ego to guru, as it is through this act of surrender that he empties himself. The greatest obstacle between guru and disciple is the ego. The fatter the ego, the lesser the receptivity. As you make the ego subtle, the receptivity becomes greater.

You may have read the story of the great Tibetan yogi, Milarepa. Later on, during his sadhana, he sat for meditation and kept a small earthen lamp alight on his head. He sat in the lotus posture for hours together without the slightest movement. The lamp did not fall and it did not flicker. Why? It was because he had no ego. If you are childlike, innocent and pure minded, your mind can become tranquil at one instant.

### **Transformation**

There are many stories about great disciples like this, but none of them became disciples just by choosing a guru. They were all devoted people who had prepared themselves to face any process inflicted by the guru.

What does a carpenter do with timber? Is he kind to it? No, he will cut it with a saw, chisel it and drive nails into it. Thereby he produces a beautiful piece of furniture. Unless a piece of timber undergoes this cruel process at the hands of a carpenter, it will never be transformed into something useful. A disciple is a raw material, no matter how much he knows. He may be very intelligent, he may be a great diplomat, businessman or professor, he may be very worldly-wise, but it does not matter. He is a raw material and he must be processed by the guru.

One by one, the elements of his personality must undergo a process of disintegration, because he has to be totally rejuvenated and regenerated. Although the disciple maintains the same physical body throughout, the elements of his mental, emotional and spiritual body are completely changed. In other words, the personality of the disciple undergoes total metamorphosis.

## The Path of Discipleship



Discipleship is a process of preparation. One should not hunt for a guru. It is not necessary to run for a guru. Otherwise one will come across a guru of one's own quality. A disciple has to go through a long process in which the ordinary being is transformed into a real disciple. A disciple is like an object and the guru is like a mirror. One sees in the guru what one really is. If the disciple says the guru is good, it means he is good. If he says the guru is hopeless, it means the disciple is hopeless. This has been a difficult point, at least for me. However, one day a great guru told me, "In order to find a guru you must try to educate yourself into becoming a disciple."

Discipleship is an absolute preparation and one has to expose oneself to certain yogic practices. For some time one should be without a guru, just practising yoga. Then one should go to different teachers, obtain the best out of them and have a clear-cut vision within oneself. When the time comes, discipleship becomes powerful within, just as at a certain age passion and emotion become powerful. When the need for a guru is felt, one is able to recognise him.

A disciple is like an open pot – the rain showers fall and by and by this pot is filled up. To be a good vessel, however, this pot must be clean and, if there are any leaks, they must be repaired. It is not enough to think that you are going to become a disciple now, without taking care to clean the pot that you are, and without repairing the great leaks in your personality. All this does not happen in one day or in a few weeks – it takes many long years to perfect the role of disciple.

To desire to become a disciple is one thing and to become a perfect disciple is an entirely different process. It must be remembered right from the beginning, that you are not only to expect the nectarine showers to fill up the vessel, but at every moment of your life, all your effort must go into cleaning the vessel and repairing the leaks.

When time and space are transcended the mind becomes wide, and the replies can be had by any guru. Everyone can have the reply but, for that he will have to transcend the mind.



## Guru Mantra



All spiritual aspirants must keep two things in mind. First, they must practise asana regularly for at least fifteen minutes every day. The aged, too, should practise asana without fail. I am over eighty years of age, but I practise asana for fifteen minutes every day.

Second, never forget to do at least five minute's japa of your guru mantra every morning and evening with a one-pointed mind. I have not said fifteen minutes, just five minutes. The practice of japa should not be done as and when you wish. The mantra has come from the guru, not from your own mind. A guru is necessary for attainment of any knowledge, and a guru is necessary also to attain knowledge of yoga.



Before practising japa, you should resolve that during the practice you will not think of the world, but remain one-pointed. It is important to realise that mantra is not only necessary, it is the foundation, the basis for making the mind one-pointed. To be able to make the mind one-pointed means acquiring the master key of life in your hands. If you want to control the destiny of your life, the only way is to learn the art of concentration. It does not matter whether one is a thief or a crook, a saint or a sage,

young or old, pious, celibate or immoral. One whose mind enters the state of void acquires the key.

### States of void

Entering the void, *shoonya*, means a state where there is no worldly awareness. This state of void has to be attained three times, not just once. What I am telling you about is the state of the first void. *Om Namah Shivaya*, nothing else in the mind – this is the state of the first void.

Kabir says that the supreme state that you want to attain is beyond the three states of void – *shoonya*, *shoonya*, *shoonya ke par*. He said: *Jagrat, swapna, sushupti jani, turiya tar milaya* – “It was when I realised the conscious, the dream and the deep sleep states that I tuned into the super-conscious state.” *Jagrat*, wakeful or conscious, is the first state of void. Attain the first state of void in the awakened state, the second state of void in *swapna*, the dream state, and the third state of void in *sushupti*, the deep sleep state. Thereafter, the fourth state, *turiya*, will arrive.

## Opening the eyes of perception

I will try to explain this in a different way. The state which you are in at present, where the eyes are open, the mind is functioning, and there is a relationship between the mind and the sense organs, is known as the conscious or wakeful state. From the five sense organs – ears, skin, eyes, tongue and nose, develop five perceptions – sound, touch, form, taste and smell. As long as you are aware of these five perceptions, that state is known as the jagrat state. In this state it is necessary to completely cut off the relationship with the sense perceptions for a few moments. Five minutes are enough. If the bullet hits the target, then just one bullet is enough. If for one moment you enter the state of void, miracles will happen. For within rests the supreme soul. Kabir has said:

In this pitcher seven oceans exist,  
Some are sweet, some are salty.  
In this pitcher a million jewels exist,  
Some are emeralds, some are diamonds.  
In this pitcher the creator exists.

The creator cannot be seen. A doctor may cut you up, but he will not be able to see the creator or the seven seas. The marrow, bones and blood are visible. But the poet says that within this vessel, the body, exist nine million gems. There are seven seas within this vessel, some sweet and some salty. Within this vessel exists the creator. But you see nothing within. You only see blinding darkness. Now the question is, why can't you see anything?

You cannot see because you do not have the eyes. Without eyes, you cannot see an object, without the intellect you cannot see thoughts, without a microscope you cannot see bacteria. You cannot see nuclear radiation with your eyes or even with a microscope. Its sensor is different. To know any object, you need the right sensor. The sensor catches radio waves, laser rays and nuclear radiation, the things that cannot be seen. So, if an object cannot be seen, it does not mean that

it does not exist. If an object cannot be seen, but all the saints and sages have said that it exists, and you say it does not, it is because you do not have the eyes to see it. To open those eyes, one-pointedness is the key, the path. It is through the path of concentration that you can go in. There is no other way. The temple, mosque, church, Bible, *Bhagavad Gita* or *Ramayana* are not the path. There is only one way – for just one moment try to become one-pointed.

### **Five minutes**

Do not try to concentrate the mind for too long. I am giving you a warning, a danger signal. Those who try to concentrate their minds for too long, for an hour or an hour and a half, begin to get depressed. You might have noticed that the students who score the highest always appear to be self-absorbed, for the level of concentration of the student who is very bright is very high. Therefore, to become one-pointed, do your guru mantra for only five minutes. Do not try to meditate or concentrate at any time of the day. Do not assume the posture of padmasana at whim!

If you have a guru mantra, then the first thing to do is to start japa regularly and one-pointedly. Enjoy yourself the whole day long, do whatever you wish to, but resolve in your head that from today you will find five minutes at night for japa, no matter how much work you have or the troubles you are in. After all, you go to the toilet no matter what, so do this as well.

The day my guru gave me the mantra, he said, “Five malas in the morning and five malas in the evening.” I said to him, “Only five malas?” He said, “Yes.” I said, “Shouldn’t this be increased?” He replied, “Do you go on increasing the amount you eat every day? There is a rule for meals. If you do three malas today and the next month ten, then twenty-five and then forty, you will get indigestion. Believe in this.” I said, “Swamiji, how then will I evolve?” He said, “If one who knows how to hit the target shoots just one bullet, it is enough. One who does not know how to hit the target may





shoot a hundred bullets, but no one will die. What will you do by repeating ten malas?”

My guru asked me to do five malas, but later I realised how difficult that is. I would sit, and after one mala my mind would be lost. The mala would drop from my hands, I would not even know whether I had crossed the sumeru. If you have ever experienced this, if you ever experience it, then you will know what I am talking about. I do not remember if I ever completed five malas. It would fall, I would pick it up again, and then wonder where to begin. So, I would begin from the beginning. The mala would again fall. When the mind becomes one-pointed, the connection with the senses is cut off. The fingers uncurl by themselves and the mala falls down. This is true, try concentrating and see. In that moment, there is only you, nothing else.

Now I am old, but I still do only five malas. I do not want to exceed this number because Guruji used to say that if you do five malas properly, then even five malas are not necessary. If you do only one mala properly, even one mala is not necessary. If you believe that it is right to remain occupied in the objects of the world, then for one minute believe that it is



wrong. For one minute remove your mind from the world so that, instead of shooting a hundred arrows, you shoot only one, but shoot like a sharpshooter who pierces his target. One mala is enough. This is what happened in my life.

Once, I sat in padmasana and the mala fell. I did not even realise that it had fallen. I relate this experience often. It must have been eight or nine in the evening. When I came to, it was four in the morning. I felt very happy, I thought I had attained samadhi. For eight hours I was sitting in padmasana, the body did not move, the mind did not move, and the mala fell – a matter of great joy. So, I sent a note to Swamiji describing the incident. Swamiji said, “Samadhi is not child’s play. *Bar bar muni jatan karanhi, anta Rama kahin avata nahin* – “Again and again the sage tries, but at the end of his life the Lord still does not come.” After working for many lifetimes, finally the soul finds the supreme path. You say you achieved this in a night! You had fallen asleep, my son.” He said this and I believed him.

### **Effects of concentration**

The one-pointedness that I am talking about affects one at three places. The first effect is on the entire functioning of

the body. The effects of concentration have been observed on the enzymes, hormones, DNA, the heart, lungs, brain, and so on. Read our books, they clearly state what kind of changes come about in the body through the practice of concentration. Second, it influences the receptivity and response levels of a person. Your responses and receptivity become sharper. Third, your capability to perform is enhanced.

For five minutes, repeat the same mantra, that's all. When you achieve this one-pointedness, then you will find the way to go in, and when you find the way to go in, your capacity to work and your responses will improve, whether in studies or elsewhere. There have been many great musicians and artists in the world. Michelangelo, for example. What an incredible work he did at the Vatican! He would climb up in the morning with a bottle of water, lie flat on the scaffolding, and go on painting the ceiling till evening. This is not normal, it is exceptional. Not only the spiritual path, but every path requires dedication. But spirituality is such a path that if you walk it, you can become a very good musician, sportsperson, yogi, ruler, poet, writer, politician and a crook too.

Swami Vivekananda's achievements were remarkable. He lived for only thirty-two years. Until he was eighteen, he was studying. So, he had only ten or twelve years to work, but he performed a miracle. He could do this because his actions were of a very high level, his thoughts were solid and his plans were accurate. Another person born eighteen or nineteen hundred years before Swami Vivekananda also displayed exceptional calibre. This was





Adi Shankaracharya. At the age of eight, he took sannyasa. Similarly, Swami Niranjana came to me at the age of four to take sannyasa and went abroad at the age of ten. This is unusual.

After taking sannyasa, Adi Shankaracharya came to the banks of the Narmada. He took initiation from Govindapada and stayed with him for a while. Then he went to Vyas Chatti, where he wrote commentaries on the *Bhagavad Gita*, the *Brahma Sutras* and Upanishads, which are considered high literature all over the world today. Shankaracharya was able to do this because he was filled to the brim with spiritual consciousness. At eight Shankaracharya left home, at twenty-two he awakened the vedic dharma across the length and breadth of the country, and at thirty-two he died.

### **Going within**

To make the mind one-pointed, the guru mantra is the foundation. Religion, rituals, behaviour or thinking are of no consequence. Go on doing japa for a year, two years, ten years ... After all, it takes fifteen years to become an MBBS, and a similar amount of time to accomplish other sciences. If the doors open for you in fifteen or twenty years, consider

it a wonderful thing. The mantra is the key to open the door. Learn how to go within with the mantra.

It is very difficult to go in. When you go within at night in your dreams, can you control your dreams? When you cannot control your thoughts, how will you control your dreams? When you cannot control your gross mind, how will you control your subtle mind? When you do not have control over your gross body, *sthoola sharira*, how then will you control your subtle body, *sukshma sharira*? And if you do not have control over your subtle body, how will you control your causal body, *karana sharira*? The causal body wakes up in the deep sleep state, the state of *nidra*. In the dream state, you experience the subtle body. In the state of wakefulness, you experience the gross body.

There are three bodies – gross, subtle and causal. The states of jagrat, swapna and sushupti are connected with the gross, subtle and causal bodies. In the state of deep sleep, the individual goes into the causal body. However, you do not have control over sleep, or dreaming, or anger. You should not get angry, but you do. There is no control, just as a lame person knows that stairs can be climbed, but he cannot climb them. He knows that it is possible to run, but he cannot do it. We know that anger can be controlled, but we cannot do it. We do not have control over any of the modifications of the mind. So, I have placed all these things in front of you. Don't try too many different things, just hold on to a small thing and walk on.



## Shivoham



I am not a teacher, a guru or an acharya. You asked me the way to Deoghar and I showed you the road. Now, I have left the post of guru. I did the work of my guru for some years, at his command. I just acted, but now I dislike playing that role. Who is man to become guru in this world?

There is only one guru in this world and he is the Supreme Father, God. You should try to know he who resides asleep, deep within you. Instead you try to find him here and there in the external world. The guru is within you. You are keeping all your gold, silver and diamonds within you, and yet you ask me, "Where is my kripa?"



I have divorced myself from gurudom. My guru said, "A paramahansa has to live alone. He is neither guru nor disciple. He has neither mother nor father, relations nor friends. He never dies nor is he born. He is *chidanandarupa*, *shivoham*, *shivoham*. That is all. That is the only truth." Adi Shankaracharya said in his stotram, "I am consciousness and bliss incarnate. I am Shiva and Shiva alone."

### **Find your path**

You keep a baby in your lap until his legs are strong. Then, you put him down when the time is right, and he stands up by himself. In this way, he begins to walk and, after some time, he is able to run, but if you carry your children on your shoulders and keep them in your lap forever, they will become weak. In the same way, one day you must learn to live in this world without any support. This is reality. One who has never depended on anyone, who has found his own path for himself, and has been able to solve his own problems in life, is a man I can understand. Such a man can even find God. One who is always dependent on others for money, love and support, cannot achieve anything.

A guru is he who has mastered the true knowledge.

A disciple is he who can learn what is taught.

Without being able to maintain

The decorum of his status,

A man can neither become a guru nor a disciple.

My guruji is not living anymore, so what am I to do? I will have to find my own way. He has given me eyes to see and made my feet strong. He is with me as my support. He told me that I had reached the railway station forty-five years early. At that time my guru said, "Look, you will have to wait for forty-five years. Your train will not arrive before that. You still have to exhaust your karmas." I thought, "Well then, I am going home." However, he said, "No, what will you do there, farming? You can do that here. Banking? You do that

here. Accounting? You do even that here. Looking after cows? You do it here too."

In the ashram I did what I would have done at home. My karmas were exhausted, that was one benefit. Had I gone back home, I would have worked for myself, but in the ashram I worked for my guru without attachment to the fruits of my labour. These karmas did not bind me. Whatever I did, I did for him. I was neither a doer nor an enjoyer. I became clean of all karmas. Tulsidas has said, "Give others your eight siddhis and nine nidhis. I am your servant birth after birth. Make me your own by holding my hand."

Then I tried working in Munger. Before I had worked for my guru with a selfless attitude. I thought, "Now, let us see if, without my guru, the ego will appear or not." I had made up my mind to work with a selfless attitude, so I started an institution for yoga in Munger. Guruji had said, "Make yoga known throughout the world at a scientific level, not at the level of philosophy and religion." Taking this to be the commandment of my guru, I did this for twenty-five to thirty years. Then he said, "Now, full stop!"

One should have a relationship with the guru for some years and then one should find one's own path. This is my view. One should become independent. I am not questioning the fact that one should have faith, *shraddha*, and *bhakti* towards the guru, but perpetually hanging on to the guru for support is not good. We suffer from the weakness of *asakti*, or attachment. After some time, the *asakti* that you feel towards your parents and other near and dear ones is directed to the guru. This will make you stick to him and it will be difficult to separate yourself.

The guru is necessary, I am not disputing this fact, but the dependence on this relationship should not be exaggerated. After a certain point you have to become independent, while maintaining your devotion and *bhakti* for your guru. This is my definite principle. Although my guru is not alive, I still have faith, devotion and gratitude for him, but when it comes

to direction in life, I think my own way, because in the final analysis we have to walk alone.

On the spiritual path there are two important aspects. One is you and the other is God. There is no third aspect. That is what I also consider in my life, first myself – I have to struggle, I have to strive, and then God and his blessings. Rabindranath Tagore has said:

Empty handed,  
But with a heart full of hope,  
I have started my journey.  
There are dangers on the way,  
Still I am fearless.

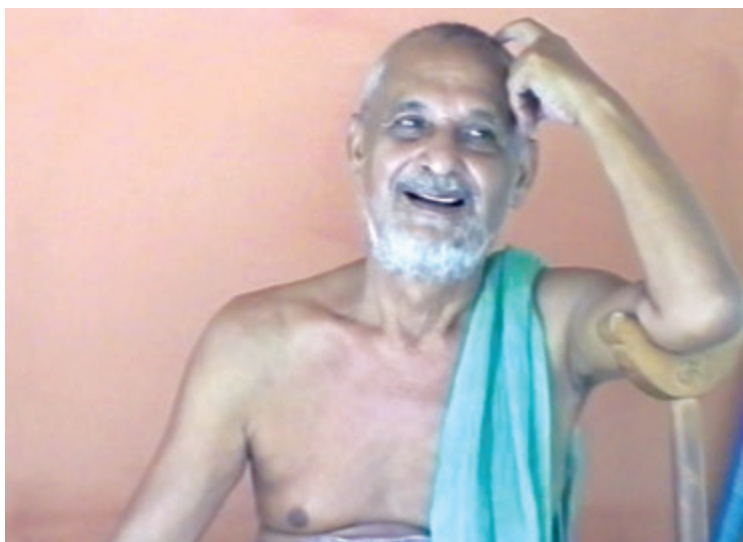
In this world, every man has to walk alone. A son who forever holds on to his parents can never find his own path. When you enter spiritual life, you have to walk absolutely alone. Here, one has no companion, no husband, not even the body, only the atma. You pick up someone who you think can guide you and get direction from him.



## Sadhana

For five years, I have practised *panchagni*, the sadhana of five external fires, and now the awareness has become constant. It is a very difficult state of mind, because I do not like to meet people. I do not like to talk or think. I am not sick, I just do not like to think or talk. Kabir explains this state very beautifully:

When the mind is intoxicated,  
Why should it speak?  
Finding the diamond, I tied it inside a knot.  
Why untie it again and again?  
When there was light, it was measured and complete.  
Why this measuring again and again?  
From remembrance the wine-seller became intoxicated,  
Drank that wine without measure,  
And found the Swan of Hamsa in Lake Mansarovar.  
Why wander around puddles and ponds now?  
My lord is within my being.  
Why look outside?  
Kabir says, I found the Lord hiding behind a sesame seed.



My wish is that every breath should be permeated by my mantra. I do japa all the time. We breathe 21,600 times in twenty-four hours. That means fifteen breaths every minute, nine hundred breaths every hour. So, in twenty-four hours it is 21,600 rounds of breath. All animals, dogs, donkeys, cows, buffalos breathe, and we too breathe. What is the sound of the breath? What does the breath sing? Breath has a mantra, a sound of its own. What is that sound? When you breathe in and out, there is a sound, *nada* or *shabda*. One needs to hear that sound within, and that is called *anahada nada*. It is a sound which is not produced by the senses. That sound is an expression of your inner experience. Some say it is *Hamso*, some say *Soham*, some say *Om*, but one has to experience it for oneself.

When you receive a mantra from your guru, whether it be *Om*, *Om Namah Shivaya* or whatever, that mantra is pronounced by one sense, the sense of speech. It is heard by another sense, that of hearing. The same mantra which you have received from your guru should also be heard within as an experience. That is possible, if you can merge your mind in the breath. When you try to merge your mind with the breath, does the mind cooperate? No, it does not. This rascal has bad habits. We have pampered and spoilt the mind. It is addicted to ambitions, fantasies and dreams.

It is very pleasant to dream, fantasise and imagine. You feel that you can reach the moon and the stars, you are the master of the universe! What nonsense! You cannot be the master of the universe if your mind does not want you to be. If you are constipated, nothing can happen without a laxative. You cannot direct your own bowels, yet you are trying to be the Lord of the Universe! So, you should attune your mind with the breath and synchronise the breath with the mantra. Practise this, with calmness and quietness of mind, 21,600 times for one day. I have come here for this purpose, because I do not think that life has any other meaning:

Your servant will repeat the mala  
Of incoming and outgoing breath  
To avoid roaming about in the eighty-four lakh wombs  
And empower himself to cut the snare of karmas.  
O Lord, do not think that love is shrieking in my heart.  
While dying, let me remember you,  
While living, allow me to remember you.

You may enjoy life. You may acquire, accomplish and accumulate a lot in life. You may see places, have a lot of experiences, but the ultimate destiny of man is to realise that which is beyond name, form and senses. That which you cannot perceive with your eyes or conceive with your mind is beyond name and form. You can only see it when the external lights are extinguished, then the inner light burns. In that inner light alone, you can perceive that which is beyond. It can be called any name you wish, but it is something else:

What is the measure of the brilliance of Parambrahma?  
It is unspoken,  
The proof is in realisation.

### **Grace**

A thorn has to be removed by a thorn. If a thorn is lodged in your body, use another thorn to remove it. In the same way, remove rubbish by rubbish. You may ask your guru or somebody else to remove your rubbish for you but in this way, you are only adding more to your waste bin. That is why your rubbish basket is always full. The municipality removes the old rubbish, but new rubbish accumulates again. When God's grace is there, then all the rubbish of life is removed instantly, just as sheets and sheets of darkness are removed by the first rays of the sun.

Samskaras from many different births will vanish or subside with the Lord's grace. However long you work at removing your rubbish you will not be able to do it. Nothing is possible without divine grace. If you think you can remove your rubbish, that is ego. You are speaking the language of

ego. How can you remove it? First of all, you do not know what is rubbish and what is not. Sometimes you may be throwing away the diamonds and keeping the stones, because you do not know the difference between them. What is rubbish? What are you going to remove? You do not even have the discrimination to know what is true and what is false.

Therefore, leave it to God. Try to attain his grace through prayer, remembrance and satsang. *Satsang* is where there is talk about God, about spiritual life or where there is singing of bhajan and kirtan.



This helps you to purify yourself and your inner environment. Satsang must be compatible with your inner environment. Everything is written in the shastras. Nothing happens without God's grace, nothing has happened to me. Whatever I have received was through God's grace, not my own. That which is eternal has been given by the Lord only.

It is very difficult to tread the spiritual path, because it is the inner path. When your mind soars high in inner life, the path is uncharted, you do not know which way to go. Therefore, *prabhu kripa*, the grace of God is required.

It is said in the *Narada Bhakti Sutras*, "Success in devotion is attained mainly by the grace of enlightened sages and saints, as well as by a trace of divine grace." Association with great souls is difficult to obtain, but at the same time it is unailing. This, too, becomes available by God's grace only.



## Song of the Soul

I am neither the mind, intelligence, ego, nor chitta,  
Neither the ears, nor the tongue, nor the senses of smell  
and sight.

Neither ether, nor air, nor fire, nor water, nor earth,  
I am Eternal Bliss and Awareness,  
I am Shiva. I am Shiva.

I am neither the prana nor the five vital breaths,  
Neither the seven elements of the body, nor its five sheaths,  
Nor hands, nor feet, nor tongue, nor other organs of action.  
I am Eternal Bliss and Awareness.  
I am Shiva. I am Shiva.

Neither greed nor delusion, loathing nor liking have I.  
Nothing of pride or ego, of dharma or liberation,  
Neither desire of the mind, nor object for its desiring.  
I am Eternal Bliss and Awareness.  
I am Shiva. I am Shiva.

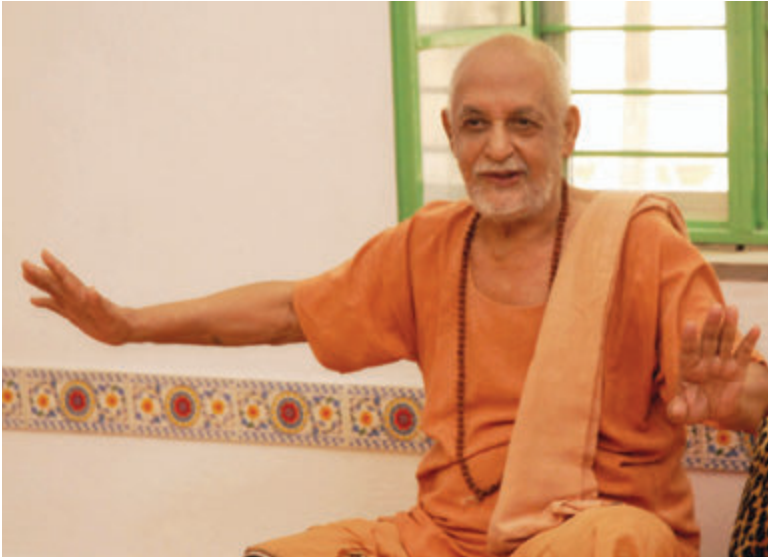
Nothing of pleasure and pain of virtue and vice do I know,  
Of mantra or sacred places, of Vedas or sacrifice.  
Neither am I the eater, the food, nor the act of eating.  
I am Eternal Bliss and Awareness.  
I am Shiva. I am Shiva.

Death or fear have I none, nor any distinction of caste.  
Neither father nor mother, nor even birth have I,  
Neither friend nor comrade, neither disciple nor Guru.  
I am Eternal Bliss and Awareness.  
I am Shiva. I am Shiva.

I have no form or fancy.  
The All-pervading am I.  
I exist everywhere, and yet am beyond the senses,  
Neither salvation am I, nor anything to be known.  
I am Eternal Bliss and Awareness.  
I am Shiva. I am Shiva.

— *Adi Shankaracharya*

## The Guru Tattwa



The guru is in you. Your consciousness, *atma* or spirit is your guru, and that you always have in you, not outside you.

The guru is within the temple of my mind.  
The guru is my wealth and affluence,  
The guru is my body, mind and all,  
The guru is my life indeed.  
He is the donor of the whole universe,  
And he is Narayana Bhagavan.

You can visualise the guru in any form you like. It can be in the physical form or in any other form, but it is better to have one form. However, to think that the guru is outside

you is wrong, the guru is in you. You have the guru element, the guru explosive, inside you:

The self of every living being,  
Especially amongst humankind,  
Is his own guru,  
Because by direct experience and intuition,  
One is competent  
To decide about one's wellbeing.

This is the base of guru tattwa. Guru may leave the body, but he never dies. Once you have chosen the guru, you must keep him forever. You neither feel sorry about him leaving the mortal body, nor dejected about not touching his feet.

Whatever sadhana you have learned, do it like a child, do not use your mind. Sadhana is a subject of the heart, not of the mind. Sadhana is not a subject of the intellect, it is a subject of feeling and emotion. The foundation of feeling is *shraddha*, faith, and *vishwas*, belief. Where the intellect is concerned, there are always questions and answers. In faith and belief, there is no questioning.

Guru is the washerman  
And disciple the cloth  
Soap is the Creator  
If washed on the stone of constant awareness  
A brilliant glow is generated.



## Guru Purnima



Guru Purnima, also known as the day of Vyasa puja, is a very auspicious time for starting any spiritual sadhana. On this day, Sri Vedavyasa and the brahmavidya gurus are worshipped. Sri Vyasa, an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, began to write his unique *Brahma Sutras* on this memorable day. Sri Vyasa served humanity by editing the four Vedas, writing the eighteen Puranas, the *Mahabharata* and the *Bhagavata*.

Begin to practise spiritual sadhana from this day. Generate fresh waves of spirituality. Let all that you have read, heard, seen and learned be transformed through sadhana into selfless service, and continuous prayer and worship of the Lord seated in all beings. It is not enough to renounce your

home and duties for the sake of God-realisation. You will have to awaken unshakeable faith and supreme love for your lord within.

Your soul is all powerful. Your lord is all powerful. He is within you and you will be able to meet him in meditation. He will come to you in flesh and blood. He will talk to you and take you by the hand. In meditation, when one rises above body consciousness, the inner lord manifests and comes to you. Then you can experience his loving and divine presence. Strengthen your faith on this occasion of Guru Purnima.

By guru's grace you are given dharma, sadhana and unshakeable faith. These three, you should constantly uphold. You are expected to be true and earnest in your sadhana, to God and guru. Nobody should be able to shatter your noble faith and spiritual convictions.

Guru alone can break the binding cords of attachment and release the aspirant from the trammels of earthly existence. Guru is God himself. He guides and inspires us from the innermost core of our being. He is the supreme spirit everywhere.

Behold the entire universe as *guru swarupa*, guru's true form. See the guiding hand, the awakening voice, the





illuminating wisdom of guru in every object of creation. The guru will reveal all the precious secrets of life and bestow all knowledge. The supreme guru manifested in visible nature will teach you the most valuable lessons of life. Worship this guru of gurus who taught Avadhuta Dattatreya. The silent, all-enduring earth with its lofty forbearance, the shady fruit bearing tree with its willing self-sacrifice, the mighty peepal reposing with patience in the tiny seed, the dripping water whose persistence wears away the rocks, the planets and the seasons with their order and regularity – all are divine gurus to one who will look, listen and receive.

Empty yourself of your petty sense of ego. Become pure and unattached as the mountain breeze, then all the treasures in the bosom of nature will be yours. Be like the river which flows continually, steadily and constantly towards the ocean. Every moment of your life, keep moving towards the ocean. Every moment of your life, keep moving towards the supreme state of existence-knowledge-bliss. Let all your thoughts, words and actions be directed only towards this goal. You will progress and attain perfection in an amazingly short time. Purify yourself through the full moon's reflection of the glorious light of the atman.







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