

One must read this article if you are looking for a guru. Discusses four types of gurus in details: the real guru (SadGuru), the fake guru, the universal guru (ParamGuru), and a guru (subject matter expert, teacher).

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IS MUKTI POSSIBLE WITHOUT A GURU?

By Swami Ramsukh Das ji Maharaj of Gita Press, Gorakhpur

(Abbreviated by IGS)

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People generally don't understand me (Ramsukh Das); therefore, they misunderstand my views on Guru. I am not against a real guru. Without a guru (teacher) no knowledge is ever possible, then how can anybody be against guru? I am against false gurus or the so called Guruvaad, the guru cult. Nobody can describe the importance of a guru, but these days real gurus are hard to find and there is an abundant of false gurus. Lord Krishna, the Jagad-guru, Himself said:

तद् विद्धि प्रणिपातेन परिप्रश्नेन सेवया ।
उपदेक्ष्यन्ति ते ज्ञानं ज्ञानिनस् तत्त्वदर्शिनः ॥३४॥

Acquire the transcendental knowledge from a Self-realized master by humble reverence, by sincere inquiry, and by service. The empowered

ones, who have realized the Truth, will teach you. (4.34)

The one who gives the knowledge of a subject matter, he becomes our guru for that subject. The duty of a guru is to bring a disciple (chela) close to god and help one establish a relationship with god, not establish a permanent relationship with the guru. We have so many ties of family relationships such as mother, father, brother etc. and there is no need to have one more tie of relationship.

A person is not called father, unless he has produced a son, similarly, one has no right to be called a guru unless guru's disciple has acquired Self-knowledge. To give Self-knowledge is the only job of a guru. It is said that if god and guru both are standing, whom should a person bow first. One should naturally bow first to guru who brought the disciple close to god. But if a guru did not bring god, then guru has no right to be called guru. The real guru is the one whose only aim is the spiritual welfare of his chela and a real chela is the one who has bhakti (love) for his guru. How can a chela develop love for his guru before chela getting anything substantial from a guru other than just a mantra? There has to be a real guru and obedient disciple for the success of guru-disciple relationship. A chela comes to a guru for a purpose of getting something, and if he does not get anything other than what is written in the books, the chela cannot develop love for the guru.

It may be very difficult to find a real guru or a real chela in this age. A guru should never desire to have many chelas just to run and support guru's Ashram. A guru who has desire to obtain money from chelas to run his organization becomes a slave to money or a slave to his rich chela. One who has desires --- desire to make money, have chelas, build Ashram, to get fame -- cannot save himself let alone to save the chela.

A person who expects anything from you --- including money, respect, obedience ---

cannot be your guru, but your chela only! A real saint does not need anything from anybody and does not want to become a guru. His only desire is the welfare of all, LokaSangrah. He works for the welfare of all. A real guru does not want his chela to worship him, but worship Him only. A real guru does not want one to obey him, but obey the scriptures. A guru, who gives you his pictures to worship daily, is a false guru. One should worship nobody, but the Supreme Being. A real saint or guru does not give his picture even in his books. What good a picture in any book does to anybody? How many chelas do you know who have a guru and have realized the Self? One cannot see any difference among the people who have a guru and those who don't.

Until one has the capability to save the chela, one should never be a guru, because if a guru cannot save his chela, guru incurs sin for sure. The guru who lets chela wash his feet, eat the leftover from the guru's dinner plate, worship his/her picture is certainly leading towards his own as well as chela's downfall. Such gurus neither help the chela nor let the chela go elsewhere to another guru. It's like going to a shop, paying the money, but not getting the goods. If one becomes a guru, then he must help chela realize the Self, otherwise one has no right to be a guru.

गुरवो बहवः सन्ति शिष्यवित्तापहारकः ।
तमेकं दुर्लभं मन्ये शिष्यहत्तापहारकम् ॥

This verse from Guru-Gita says that there are many gurus who take away the money from the chela, but very few who removes the darkness of ignorance from the chela. Even the most quoted verse from guru gita (gurur brahmaa, gurur Vishnu.....) is misinterpreted to let chela worship the guru like gods. This verse actually means that a real guru does the job of Brahmaa, Vishnu and Shiva by shaping up, nurturing and destroying the ignorance of the chela.

A true saint's only intention is the spiritual welfare of people and not to attract

people towards himself. They pray to god for the welfare of all:

सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः सर्वे सन्तु निरामयाः।
सर्वे भद्राणि पश्यन्तु मा कश्चिद् दुःखभाग्भवेत् ॥

In ancient time there were not too many true saints, at the present there are very few. Thus our chance of finding a true guru, a real saint is very slim. At present it has become a profession to become a guru. These days guru and chela both are greedy and both get drowned like they are sitting in a boat made of stone. A chela goes to a guru who is famous so that he can boast when someone asks who your guru is. Most chelas go to a guru to get some spiritual guidance. To expect something from a guru is not a fault. Actually, mukti, Self-knowledge and Self-realization is not under the control of a human guru. From where the first guru (Brahmaa ji) got his knowledge is the real guru. He is the Supreme Being, Krishnam vande Jagad-gurum. Gita verses 10.10-11 say this very beautifully:

तेषां सततयुक्तानां भजतां प्रीतिपूर्वकम् । ददामि
बुद्धियोगं तं येन माम् उपयान्ति ते ॥१०.१०॥

तेषाम् एवानुकम्पार्थम् अहम् अज्ञानजं तमः ।
नाशयाम्य् आत्मभावस्थो ज्ञानदीपेन भास्वता
॥१०.११॥

I give knowledge and understanding of metaphysical science (Vivek) --- to those who are ever united with Me and lovingly adore Me -- - by which they come to Me. (10.10) I, who dwell within their inner psyche as consciousness, destroy the darkness born of ignorance by the shining lamp of transcendental knowledge as an act of compassion for them. (10.11)

Guru is not the physical body or a just a person, but it is the guru tattva. What a beautiful verse to understand Guru-tattva. Thus self effort and love of god, Bhakti, are mostly needed to attain god, and not a human guru.

THE ROLE OF VIVEK AND SATSANG

In Vedantic philosophy Vivek is power of the intellect that distinguishes between the visible world and the invisible reality. I always advise people to go to a satsang and use the power of intellect and discrimination, vivek, instead of getting trapped by a human guru. Collect the nectar of knowledge from wherever you get like a bee as mentioned in the Guru Gita:

मधुलुब्धो यथा भृङ्गः पुष्पात् पुष्पान्तरं व्रजेत् ।
ज्ञानलुब्धस्तथा शिष्यो गुरोर्गुर्वन्तरं व्रजेत् ॥

A disciple desiring the nectar of knowledge should be like a bee going from one guru to another. He should stay with one guru as long he gets the nectar and leave as soon as he does not get any nectar from that guru. Most modern gurus would not like, from the bottom of their heart, to loose a chela. Some seekers do go from flower to flower to collect the nectar and distribute to others.

I advise not to establish one more relationship of guru-chela. There are already too many human relationships, establish relationship with God only. God has given us the tool or the guru in the form of Vivek by which one can understand the real and unreal, what to do and what not to do. If one is unable to use vivek or has a dilemma like Arjun had, one should regularly go to satsang and have the doubts cleared. Tulasidas said: one cannot have vivek without Satsang. Real saints do not take chelas, but people are benefited by Satsang with such saints.

THE ROLE OF CHELA

Just as no expert farmer can grow anything if land is not fertile, no guru can help if one is not very sincere in Sadhana and ready to receive Self-knowledge. If chela is very sincere and serious, he can achieve what he wants without any help from a human guru. The story of Ekalavya in Mahabharata can be cited as an example. A Self-realized guru and a very serious

and sincere chela both are needed. Both are very hard to find these days. Most people are looking for a guru from whom one can buy a ticket to heaven or Self-realization. It does not work that way. Dattatreya had twenty four gurus, and none of them were personal. One who depends on others for Mukti can never be liberated. In reality, we are neither liberated by a guru or God, but by one's own sincere effort. Mother does not feed if child is not hungry and cries for it. One must have hunger for knowledge and liberation.

GOD IS THE GURU OF ALL

It is very difficult to find a real guru these days, but if one takes God and Gita as their guru, there is no difficulty. There is no greater well wisher than God. God give anything if one sincerely asks for it. Whatever you find in a saint or a guru also comes from God. For example, sweetness in the sweet-meat comes from sugar and light in the moon comes from the sun.

There is no sure way to taste a guru, therefore my advice is not to have one. Scriptures say that a fallen guru must be abandoned. A woman should not take initiation, her husband is her guru. If you have lost faith in a guru, leave him, but do not talk bad about him. I urge women not to establish any connection with a samnyasi or a guru. I have heard many horror stories of gurus who have wrong relationship with a guru. A man (guru or saint) should never allow a woman to touch his feet or he should never touch a woman. Manu says:

मात्रा स्वस्त्रा दुहित्रा वा न विविक्तासनो भवेत् ।
बलवानिन्द्रियग्रामो विद्वांसमपि कर्षति ॥

A man should never be alone even with his mother, sister, or daughter, because senses are very strong and attract even a wise man towards sense objects.

As regards Dr. Prasad's question, Gurudev (Swami Ramsukh Das ji) said that using verses from the Koran or Bible is not wrong. The object (bhaav)

of the Gita is universal. The Gita can be learnt and studied by persons of all religions. Our goal is to get the Gita to as many people as possible. Using quotes from other scriptures gives them an open mind approach and they will also be attracted to the Gita. There is nothing wrong in this.

The importance is of the Gita: lectures of Swami Ramsukh Das ji FOLLOWING ARE THE PRAVACHAN/lecture SUMMARIES FROM HIS HOLINESS: Give what belongs to the world back to the world. It will stay here. It is for the world. While for us, there is repose.

Shree Hari: Bhadrapad Shukla Shashti, Vikram Samvat 2061, Somvar 20th September, 2004, Monday This body is not mine and I am God's I am not the body, it is not mine and it is not for me. The body is a part of nature. The body is not for you, it is not you and it is not yours. Accept that 'I' am not the body. There is never any change in 'I'. What binds us is accepting the NOT as IS. God IS and the world is NOT. The Self IS and the body is NOT. No education or religion is needed for this. You have to surrender yourself to God. There is nothing else but God - only Vasudev. There never was, is or can never be anything other than God. Thus you should have dependence on God only. There is nothing else like this. It is the best and the easiest means of salvation. When you surrender to Him, you do not become the surrendered - He makes you a part of Him. It could not be better.

The body has never stayed with any one, it is not staying, it will not stay and it can never stay. I am not the body - I am the Self, which is God. The Self and God are one. All His qualities are our qualities. As Goswami Tulsidasji has said - The soul is a particle of the Divinity, immortal, conscious, untainted and blissful by nature. But if you accept yourself as the body then the qualities of nature would be yours - the exact opposite of the above. God has given you this

human form to realise Him. It is very fortunate to be born as a human as this is the only birth in which you can attain God. The human form has been eulogised not because of the body but because of the intellect. The intellect makes you different from others. Even the Devtas are bereft of this opportunity because they are indulged in heavenly pleasures. The animals too, lack intellect and are engaged in pleasures for their body. Thus we must use our intelligence to gain God. The body is for the world. The body along with other worldly things like money etc. should be used for selfless service to the society. There are three parts to our body. We do meditation through the 'kaaran sharir', chintan through 'sukshma sharir' and work with 'sthool sharir'. We must depend only on God. By doing so we are using our intellect to its best. In Bhakti Yog there is Parmatma - ashray (dependence on God) In Gyan Yog there is Sva - ashray (dependence on self) In Karma Yog there is Dharm - ashray (dependence on duty) In Gyan yog, as soon as you realize that you must give up something, you are giving importance to the existence of that. But in Bhakti, It is very simple because you consider everything as God. In Gyan and Karma Yog the mind is important whereas in Bhakti Yog, the Self is important. You have to do nothing to attain God - you must stay in rest. But to get to that stage, you have to do the worldly actions of chants, meditation, fasts etc. A sadhak will realize that he is above these worldly attachments and dependence. He is dependent only on God as dependence on family, money, society will lead you nowhere. Make your body agile and hard working to serve others. Accept God with a truthful heart. Pray to Him. If you will not be able to stay without Him, He too cannot stay without you. Ram Ram Summary of the morning pravachan of Swami Ramsukhdasji on Bhadrapad Shukla 6, 2061, (20th September, 2004) at 5.20 a.m. at Gita Bhawan, Rishikesh, India, where Swamiji is now residing. Ram Ram For the full pravachan in Hindi please visit www.swamiramshukhdasji.org P.S: Please pass on this message to whomever you think would benefit from the same. Email your comments/questions to:

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NOTES BY THE IGS:

Various techniques used by gurus to collect money:

(Note: These are worthwhile charities, but has little to do with leading one to Mukti)

1. Use of a building project as an instrument
2. Dollar a day program
3. life/family membership
4. donate a room in the ashram
5. bhoomidaan yajna
6. yearly visit and house call
7. piggy bank in your house

हरइ सिष्य धन सोक न हरई, सो गुर घोर नरक महुँ परइ

This verse from Ramayana says that a guru who takes money from his/her chela without leading chela to self-knowledge goes to hell for sure.

ALL ABOUT GURUS

by

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The contact of great souls who have realized the truth is very helpful. Reading scriptures, giving charity, and doing Saadhanaa alone may not give God-realization. A God-realized soul can awaken and kindle another soul. But, no guru can give a secret formula for Self-realization without His grace. It is said that human birth, faith in God, and the help of a sadguru come only by His grace. The Vedas say: The one who knows the land, gives direction to the one who does not know, and asks for it (Rigved 9.70.09). One has to complete the journey with his or her own efforts. One has to row his or her

boat through the turbulent waters of this world. People discover the truth by their own efforts. Krishnamurti said: "The precepts of Truth are essentially an individual process." Just as the complete spectrum of sunlight is not visible to human eye without a prism, similarly, we cannot see the light of Brahm without the grace of Guru, God, and Gita.

Personally, we feel that anybody who does not share the knowledge fully is not helping either his own spiritual progress, the progress of the society, or the followers. The Eastern gurus should learn the art of sharing from the West. The material progress of the world is mostly due to the sharing of scientific and technological knowledge of the West. Any body who meets the minimum requirements can learn anything in the universities in the USA. The fees are affordable and the requirements not very difficult to meet. This is not the case with the so called spiritual masters writers have come across. Most, if not all, Indian spiritual masters (that this writer has met in USA or in India) are very miserly. They are really not serving the people, or their disciples. I hope this article promotes the concept of true sharing of spiritual wealth by the possessors of the wealth for the upliftment of the humanity. Lord Krishna has condemned all those who do not help others with a selfless motive in the true spirit of selfless service, or Nishkaam Karm Yog.

The Vedas prohibit the sale of God in any form. It says: O mighty Lord of countless wealth, I will not sell thee for any price (Rigved 8.01.05). The role of a guru is that of a guide and a giver, and not of a taker. Before accepting a human guru, one must first have — or develop — full faith in the guru, and leave the human frailties of gurus out of consideration; take the pearls of wisdom and throw away the oyster shells. If this is not possible to do, it should be remembered that the word guru also means the light of Jnaan, the true metaphysical knowledge, that dispels ignorance and delusion, and the light comes — automatically — from Par-Brahm, the

internal Param guru, when one's mind is purified by sincere Saadhanaa, Sevaa, and Surrender (Gita 4.38). One must follow the scripture with faith, especially in this age when it is very difficult to find a sadguru.

There are four categories of gurus: a false guru, guru, Sadguru, and Param guru. In this age too many false gurus are coming to teach (or give a mantra) for a price. These false gurus are the merchants of mantra. They take money from disciples to fulfill their personal material needs without giving the Taartamyavidyaa, or Brahm-jnaan, the true knowledge of Brahm. Saint Tulasidaas said that a guru who takes money (or any form of Sevaa from the disciples and does not remove their ignorance of metaphysics goes to hell (Tulasi Raamaayan 7.98.04)). Jesus also said: Watch out for false prophets; they come to you looking like sheep on the outside, but they are really like wild wolves on the inside (Matthew 7.15).

A guru is the one who should impart true knowledge and complete understanding of Sat and Asat. The most common meaning of the word guru is the subject matter expert, a teacher or the guide. Thus any human being who imparts you any knowledge, spiritual or material, becomes your guru for that knowledge. Rishi Dattaatreya had twenty-four gurus, both human as well as non-humans, such as: Earth, water, fire, sky, air, sun, moon, as well as some birds, beasts, and insects, because, he learned lessons from their lives.

A Sadguru is a Self-realized master mentioned in Gita 4.34. A Sadguru helps the devotee maintain God-consciousness all the time by his or her own spiritual power. When Antah-karan, the subtle senses such as the mind and intellect, is purified; Supreme Lord Krishna, the Param guru, reflects Himself in the Chitt of a devotee, and sends a guru, or a Sadguru to him or her.

A real guru is the giver. He never asks any money or a fee from a disciple, because he depends on God only. A real guru would not ask anything from a disciple for personal or even for organizational gain. However, a disciple is obliged to do the best he or she can to help the cause of the guru if one has really benefited from the services and wants to promote it for the benefits of others. The aim of the American Gita Society (AGS) is to guide and serve people without a fee. All our services are absolutely free. Sage Yaajnavalkya and his father also believed that one should not accept any fee from a people without giving him or her full instruction and understanding (Brihadaraanyaka Upanishad 4.01.02) of Aksharaateet or Par-Brahm, Akshar or Brahm, and Kshar or Naaraayan, and His various expansions such as: Param-Shiva, Paramaatmaa, Avyakt, Gaayatri, Durgaa, Kaali, Brahmaa, Vishnu, Mahesh, Purush, Maayaa, Prakriti, and Jeev together with their functional relationships with the one and the only One Supreme Person, God. This was the beautiful Vedic tradition that has been completely lost in Kaliyug due to the conflict of personal and organizational interests of modern gurus.

Our own Atmaa inside all of us is the Param guru. Outside teachers only help us in the beginning of the spiritual journey. Our own mind, when purified by Nishkaama Karm, prayer, meditation, Jap, Kirtan (the congregational chanting of holy names), and scriptural study, becomes the best channel and guide for the flow of divine knowledge (See also Gita 4.38, and 13.22). The Divine Person within all of us is the Param guru, and one must learn how to tune in with Him. It is said that there is no greater guru than one's own mind. A pure mind becomes a spiritual guide and the inner divine guru leading to a Sadguru, and Self-realization. This is expressed by the common saying that the guru comes to a person when one is ready. The word guru also means vast, and is used to describe Brahm or Paramaatmaa, the Param guru and the internal guide.

The wise spiritual teacher disapproves the idea of blind personal service, or the guru cult, which is so common in India, and is being imported abroad. A Self-realized master says that God only is the only guru, and all are His disciples. A disciple should be like a bee seeking honey from flowers. If the bee does not get honey from one flower, it immediately goes to another flower and stays at that flower as long as it gets the nectar. Idolization and blind worship of a human guru become stumbling block in the spiritual progress of both the disciple and the guru and bring downfall of Hinduism.

One must follow a scripture of his or her choice with firm faith, especially in this age when it is difficult to find a true guru. Adherence to the high teachings of the scriptures will ward off all evil and bring about goodness. If a bridge is built, even an ant can easily cross the river, no matter how big a river is. Similarly, the scripture is the bridge to cross over the river of Samsaar.

The ignorance of true metaphysical knowledge (Ajnaan) is humanity's greatest predicament and root cause of all evils in the world today. There is only one God, and all creatures are His children, then it is childish to fight in the name of Father! In some religions, however, only the members of one's own sect are considered favorites of God, and others are considered infidels. The Vedas say: Let noble thoughts come to us from everywhere (Rigved 1.89.01). Different religious teachings are but different expressions of the Supreme. They are to be respected, not regarded as instruments of division. The dignity and welfare of humanity lie in the unity of races and religion. True knowledge of religion breaks down all barriers, including the barriers between faiths. Any religion, prophet, preacher, sant, mulla, or prachaarak that creates the walls of conflict and hatred among people in the name of God is not a religion, but selfish politics in disguise.

We read in the media, both in India and the US, about holy-men, swamis, and gurus getting involved in immoral and criminal activities. This suggests that all saffron clad may not be holy. In fact, in India many smugglers, thieves and robbers disguise themselves in a saffron robe. In USA there are many phony gurus and sants who work for money, name, and fame to satisfy their worldly material desires. Many of these false gurus do not understand the Vedic scriptures, and start their own brand of Hinduism to the extent that they declare themselves as Bhagavaan (God) or some other name. They distort the meaning of the scriptures and quote scripture written by some unknown false guru that says: (human) guru is Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, all in one. Surrender everything to me. These gurus do not know that we can evoke the potential energy of cosmic forces by contemplating on deities. Such gurus will neither fight when Hinduism is attacked nor preach among the poor, sick, tribal, and Dalits in India or abroad.

In historical times there were many gurus such as Vishwamitra, Vashishtha, Adi Shankaracharya, Ramkrishna, Dayanand Sarasavati, Vivekanand, Yoganand, Nanak Dev, Buddha, Mahatma Mahavir, Christ, Muhammad, etc. Even today there are many great souls who are spreading the true Vedic knowledge. This article is NOT againt Gurus, but only a warning to beware of.

Do not think that anybody who wears a saffron or any other type of sectarian robe is naturally a Jnaani and a guru. Be very careful before you accept a guru and touch his or her feet. And remember the Indian saying: *paani piyo chhaan kar Guru chuno jaan kar* (Drink water after filtering, and accept a guru only after completely knowing him or her). If you have not yet found a true guru yet, wait and remember what Guru Nanak said: The best of all efforts is to always remember and repeat the name of God within the temple of your heart.

"Blind surrender to an authority (Guru) is an emotional indulgence and illusory security upon which the guru thrives."

**Remember the Sanskrit verse:
Shri Krishnam Vande Jagad-
Gurum --- Bow down to the
Universal Guru, Lord
Krishna.**

OM TAT SAT

The Aims and Objectives of AGS include the following:

1. To publish the Bhagavad-Gita in English and other languages and distribute it at a nominal subsidized cost, and put the Gita in libraries, hospitals, hotels, motels, and other public places throughout the world, starting from India and the USA, similar to what the American Bible Society has done for the Bible all over the world.

2. To Spread the basic Non-sectarian Universal Teachings of Shrimad Bhagavad-Gita and other Vedic scriptures in an easy to understand language by establishing branches of the Society in other countries to be named as: International Gita Society (IGS).

3. To provide inspiration, help, and guidance in establishing Gita Study and Discussion (Satsang) Groups, and provide free Gita correspondence course to the youth, students, busy executives and other interested persons.

4. To provide cooperation and financial support to persons and non-profit organizations engaged in the study and propagation of the Vedic knowledge by arranging lectures, seminars, and short courses on meditation, yoga, and metaphysical sciences.

5. To break the barriers between faiths, and establish unity of races, religions, castes, and creeds through the immortal non-sectarian teachings of the Vedas, Upanishads, Gita, Ramayana, as well as other major world scriptures such as the Dhammapada, the Bible, the Koran, etc.; and to promote the Universal Brotherhood of Mankind.