

Twelve Kinds of Gurus on the Path of Salvation.

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“This quickening impulse cannot be derived from Books. The soul can only receive impulse from another soul and from nothing else.”

—Swami Vivekananda.

वेदान्तानामनेकत्वात् संशयानां बहुत्वतः ।
वेद्यस्याप्यतिसूक्ष्मत्वात् जानाति गुरुं विना ॥

“Vedānta is varied, doubts are many and the principle of Self is extremely subtle; therefore a man cannot know it without the aid of a *Guru*.”

If a teacher is necessary for acquiring the knowledge of worldly things, then how much more is the need of a *Guru* in our efforts to attain the knowledge of *Brahma*, which is very subtle and extraordinary? So far as worldly knowledge is concerned, a student may get it even if he has no devotion and respect for his teacher.

One finds that in schools and colleges the student world has little or no respect for their teachers and professors, but they are able to acquire the necessary knowledge from their professors if the latter are experts and have mastery over their subjects. Merely by reading books a student cannot pass an examination, similarly by reading spiritual books alone nobody can attain the knowledge of *Brahma*.

Brahmajñānī means one who realizes everything including himself as *Brahma* and not one who is only well-versed in book-learning.

Not the *Guru*, but faith in the *Guru* is the saviour. Not the *Prapañcha*, but attachment to it is harmful. *Prapañcha* does not mean wife, children, home and such other mundane objects. One can abandon these if he chooses. Time has created

them, and Time will destroy them. Therefore their abandonment or their destruction can hardly help the progress of a spiritual disciple nor can their possession or existence prevent his onward march on the path of spirituality. *Prapañcha* really means 'I' and 'mine'; and of these the thought of 'mine' depends on the 'I' thought. So it naturally follows that 'I' thought is the root of all *Prapañcha* and this 'I' thought or ego must leave us entirely, if we are to attain the knowledge of *Brahma*. Egoism (*laghubhāva*) disappears from the heart when Divine faith in the *Guru* (*Gurubhāva*) is installed therein. Egoism is the root cause of the manifold distractions of our mundane life, and faith in the *Guru* is the only infallible remedy against it. A mother is different from *Matṛbhāva*, a father from *Pitṛbhāva*, a son from *Putrṛbhāva*, a husband from *Patibhāva* and an enemy from *Śatrubhāva*. In short, a particular person is the cause of a particular feeling in us. So a *Guru* is the cause of *Gurubhāva*. It is not that the paternal, the maternal, the fraternal and the various other kinds of relations always produce a corresponding *Bhāva* or feeling and no other. Sometimes even contrary feelings are created in us by those very relations. Yudhiṣṭhira knew very well that Duryodhana and the other Kauravas were his enemies, but did not entertain any feeling of animosity towards them; therefore he is known as Ajātasatru. There was a Bhil boy named Ekalavya, who went to Droṇa to learn the science of archery; but

Droṇa refused to teach him because he was not a Kṣatriya and hence unworthy of receiving the knowledge. Resolving that he would not learn archery from anybody else than Droṇa, he made an earthen image of him and placing *Gurubhāva* in it, he acquired the knowledge of archery and surpassed even Arjuna, who was an actual disciple of Droṇa. This is a well-known episode in the *Mahābhārata*. That Śrī Chaitanya and Swami Ramakrishna Paramahansa entertained *Matṛbhāva* for their wives, is a well-known historical fact. A Śālagrama is a simple black stone. If we can worship it as a living impersonation of Lord Viṣṇu, conniving at the inertness, etc. of it, can we not overlook the common defects and human failings in a *Guru*, and adore him? But let us try to analyse and understand what *Gurubhāva* is.

By *Gurubhāva* we mean that the *Guru* and the *Brahma* are one and the same. We must worship the *Guru* as if we are worshipping the *Brahma*. If we continue this practice, the ego in us will be destroyed and *Brahmabhāva* installed in its place. The 'I' principle (ego) is very delicate and at the same time stern. It cannot melt like butter and wax by the application of a small amount of heat, but requires a greater degree of heat as in the case of tar. We are not ashamed of humiliating ourselves by falling at the feet of our superiors though they are undeserving, and prostrate even at the feet of our wives; but we feel shame in giving respect to a saint or an image of a deity because this

humiliation touches the very core of our ego.

The body can sustain serious injuries, but ego (I-ness) would not. In course of our spiritual discipline the imperfect ego (I-ness) has to be trampled down; we cannot attain the spiritual goal without doing so. This is a law of Nature; who can transgress it? The laws of Nature are inviolable. In short, to do away with the ego or I-ness (*laghubhāva*), we have to resort to *Gurubhāva*; for *Brahmabhāva* has its root in *Gurubhāva*. This is also according to Nature's law. This is accomplished by surrendering or offering ourselves to the *Guru*. The *Gītā* says:—

संगात्संजायते कामः कामात्क्रोधोऽभिजायते ।
क्रोधाद्भवति संमोहः संमोहात्सृष्टिविभ्रमः ॥

“From attachment proceeds desire and from desire arises anger. From anger ensues infatuation and from infatuation loss of memory. From loss of memory follows loss of reason and from loss of reason results complete ruin.”

We get curds from milk, butter-milk from curds, butter from butter-milk and ghee from butter. This is only a natural process. In a similar manner the above quotation from the *Gītā* aptly and eloquently tells us that attachment to worldly pleasures leads one to ruin by successive stages. So it follows that faith in the *Guru* creates *Brahmabhāva*. *Śruti* tells us that one who knows *Brahma* becomes *Brahma* Itself, 'ब्रह्मविद् ब्रह्मैव भवति'. The *Guru* and *Brahma* are one and the same and it is, therefore, clear that

the maintaining of *Gurubhāva* is worshipping the *Brahma*.

The knowledge of *Brahma* (*Brahmajñāna*) means awareness of *Brahma* (*Brahmabhāva*), which is realization of *Brahma* (*Brahma-Sākṣātkāra*), and that means the realization of divine ecstasy or Bliss (*Brahmānanda-Sākṣātkāra*); through this alone man gets liberation from the bondage of *Prakṛti* or the cycle of births and deaths. This is called salvation or the highest Human Goal.

Now let us see what *Śāstra* is? Some learned people with the aid of their subtle intelligence and intuitive experience discovered that there is a close and quite inter-connected mystic relation between the several stages of evolution of the self into the great *Ātmā*. The *Śāstras* are the laws regarding the evolution of soul and are unchangeable like the laws of Chemistry. It is a gross mistake to transgress them. An offender in a kingly court goes unpunished sometimes, but one who transgresses the laws laid down by the *Śāstras* would not be able to avoid the consequences; for these *Śāstras* are the statements of subtle facts regarding the soul, which is the most sensitive, the most delicate of all delicate things and at the same time an all-embracing element. These laws, like the laws in practical sciences, are infallible; ignorance of law is inexcusable and punishment for breach of law is unavoidable. The principal law upon which the whole spiritual science hinges, is that *Gurubhāva* results necessarily in *Brahmabhāva* and thereby liberation of soul comes as a matter of course. One who

has to attain salvation or supreme joy, should realize this and humble himself before the *Guru*. Thousands of quotations from the Śrutis and Purāṇas and utterances of saints echo the same opinion. They are well-known everywhere and hence I need not occupy more space by quoting them. I shall therefore, without much circumvention, turn to the twelve kinds of Gurus mentioned in the Śāstras to satisfy the curiosity of the readers of the *Kalyāna-Kalpataru*.

As soon as the Almighty Lord finds that disciples are really craving for a *Guru*, He sends Gurus of varying powers, suitable to the respective capacities and other merits of the disciples. The disciple must examine his heart first before he starts examining his *Guru*. One ought to become a true disciple (*Satsiṣya*) before he goes out in search of a true preceptor (*Sadguru*). This is the preliminary and essential condition. Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa has spoken about this to Uddhava in Chapter X of Book XI of *Śrīmad Bhāgavata*. He says: "The disciple must abide by Rules and Regulations and should strongly believe that the *Guru* and God are one and the same and worship him with all fervour and sincerity. So also he *must be humble, unprejudiced, very alert and extremely cautious and devout, should be free from selfishness, must have a feeling of great love towards his Guru, must be steady and inquisitive, must be desirous to know the Reality and must always speak the truth*. Such a disciple, according to the Divine laws of Nature, is introduced to one of

the twelve kinds of Gurus mentioned below.

NOMENCLATURE OF GURUS

1. Dhātuvādī Guru, 2. Chandana Guru, 3. Vichāra Guru, 4. Anugraha Guru, 5. Pārasa Guru, 6. Kachchhapa Guru, 7. Chandra Guru, 8. Darpaṇa Guru, 9. Chhāyānidhi Guru, 10. Nādanidhi Guru, 11. Krauñchpakṣī Guru, 12. Sūryakānta Guru.

I. *Dhātuvādī Guru*:—This kind of *Guru* ensures salvation to his disciples by making them practise various kinds of Sādhanas such as pilgrimages to holy places, observance of religious penances especially of a physical nature.

II. *Chandana Guru*:—Just as a sandal tree imparts its own fragrance to other adjoining trees (excepting bamboo trees, plantain trees and the like), even so a *Guru* of this class liberates his faithful disciple merely by his company, but is powerless to do anything in the case of those that have no faith in him.

III. *Vichāra Guru*:—This kind of *Guru*, powerful as he is, removes the sluggishness of the intellect of his disciple, clarifies his ideas about what is eternal and what is perishable, what is real and what is unreal, what is material and what is immaterial, and opens to him the realm of revelation slowly but unmistakably by constant appeal to his reason (*Buddhi*) alone.

IV. *Anugraha Guru*:—In this case, the disciple is blessed by the mere grace of the *Guru*. The oceanic love of the *Guru* purifies the disciple and the *Ātmā* is revealed to him without much trouble.

V. *Pārasa Guru*:—Just as the mere touch of a *Pārasa* (the philosopher's stone) transmutes the baser metals into gold, so the mere touch of the hand of the *Guru* reveals divinity to the disciple.

VI. *Kachchhapa Guru*:—In the above instances, physical contact in one form or other was essential, but in the present case the mere glance of the *Guru* is enough to redeem the disciple. A tortoise (*kachchhapa*) never actually feeds its young ones but is capable of giving nourishment to them by mere look; similar is the case here.

VII. *Chandra Guru*:—Whenever the moon rises the *Chandrakānta* (moon-stone) begins to ooze out. In a like manner, the disciples, though living far away, are redeemed by the power of the *Guru*.

VIII. *Darṣaṇa Guru*:—*Darṣaṇa* means a mirror. When one looks into a mirror, one is able to see his face without any difficulty; similarly, when one meets the *Guru* face to face, the whole truth behind this universe is unfolded to the disciple instantly.

IX. *Chhāyānidhi Guru*:—*Chhāyānidhi* is a kind of bird. When the shadow of this bird falls upon an individual, he becomes the king; similarly, if the shadow of this kind of *Guru* falls upon a person, he will attain Divine sovereignty.

X. *Nādanidhi Guru*:—*Nādanidhi* is a precious stone which has the peculiar power of transmuting any metal whatsoever into gold the moment

its sound happens to reach it. Even so the moment the supplicant cries of the devotee reach the *Guru* he gets divine knowledge.

XI. *Krauñchapakṣī Guru*:—*Krauñcha* is a bird that keeps its young ones on the seashore and goes away for six months in search of food. In its onward journey, the bird at times remembers them lying on the shore, with the effect that they get nourishment there and then. Similarly, a *mumukṣu* attains salvation in his own place without any effort on his part, when the *Guru* remembers him.

XII. *Sūryakānta Guru*:—When the sun's rays fall upon cotton through a sun-stone or sun-crystal, it is burnt up without any intention on the part of the sun. So in this case an unintentional glance of the *Guru* makes a person a *Jīvanmukta*.

Of these twelve kinds, the first three are ordinary types of Gurus and the remaining nine are most extraordinary. In their human concerns of life ordinary persons can get only one of the first three kinds of Gurus. The extraordinary Gurus meet only disciples of an extraordinary type. Ordinary disciples should not unnecessarily waste their time in search of extraordinary Gurus, but should march on their spiritual journey by surrendering themselves to a Personal God and by worshipping Him through *Nāma-smaraṇa*, etc. Then that Personal God will meet them in the form of a *Guru*.

PERSONAL DEITY AS GURU

It so happens that in a few rare cases of intense devotion, the Deity

that the devotees worship becomes their *Guru* and blesses them with His Grace.

Lord Dattatreya manifested Himself in a visible form and graced Śrī Janārdana Swami (the *Guru* of Ekanath), Dasopant, and Narayan Maharaj Jalawankar. Śrī Samartha Ramdas was graced by Lord Rāmachandra, who appeared personally before him. Śrī Raghavachaitanya (the grand-guru of Tukaram) had a vision of the great Vyāsa Mahārṣi in bodily form.

In modern times it is known that the world-renowned saint Swami Ramakrishna Paramahansa was blessed personally by Goddess Kālī. It is true that he met other Gurus, but those he met through Her grace and inspiration. It is also known that Sri Narayan Maharaj of Kedgaon had a personal vision of Lord Dattatreya at Gangapur and similarly

the Purohit Swami had the same on the Girnar peak. So also Sri Vasudevananda Saraswati alias Tembe Swami received direct initiation from Lord Dattatreya Himself. Besides these, the writer knows two brothers who have been personally blessed by Lord Dattatreya; but it is worth mentioning that their penance was extraordinary. In short, we find very few and rare personages who have been blessed by their Deities as their Gurus. For ordinary people it is not so easy to stand the strain of God-vision. Therefore it is but proper that they should resort to a human *Guru* for chalking out their spiritual journey. Even in the case of human Gurus we have to regard them as an impersonation of God or Divinity. If we do so, the worship or service that is rendered to a human *Guru* will be accepted by the Almighty, who will redeem us with His grace.



Innumerable are the nooses of attachment wherewith we are all bound hand and foot; and before we are able to fulfil any one of our obligations our very life collapses like a house of cards.

Living in a secluded place all by himself, seeing the One in all, speaking the Truth, behaving well, with thought and will subdued in perfect equipoise, practising non-violence in thought, word and deed, observing complete rectitude, and finally withdrawing himself from all the activities of the world—these are the most precious possessions for a Brahman.

The happiness arising from the fulfilment of highest desires on this earth is not even an infinitesimal part of the joy derived from contentment.