

Excerpts from a Lecture “The Path of Discipleship,” No. 7 – The Guru

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On the .mp3 file Doctor plays the chant by Paramhansa Yogananda “No Birth, No Death” on the organ.

The path of discipleship does not lie along the high ridges and peaks of intellectual accomplishment – through ego consciousness – but along the valley roads of intuitional achievement, through humbleness. As the Master often said, “God’s mercy rain does not gather on the lofty peak of egoism, but is found in abundance, beneath, in the valley of humbleness.”

The guru is the most humble. And why is this? Because he, being one with God, realizes what God is, and he has no ego. And those who follow him, receive the “mercy rain” of God’s Presence, purely.

Human relationship is based on human conditions, and is not permanent. But Divine Relationship, such as that between the devotee and the guru, is based on Unconditional Love, or Divine Love. We have an illustration of this in Jesus and in John. John was Elijah, Jesus' guru in a previous incarnation when he was Elisha. And because of this, he allowed himself, or rather he insisted, that John baptize him, saying, this is the way of all righteousness<sup>1</sup>, because the guru is he who introduces us to God.

Now, why is the true guru so important? I can't answer this with no better words than the words of the Master’s Guru, Sri Yukteswarji. He says as follows: "I shall be your friend forever, because God asked me to bring you home." And so, this is the answer. You’ll find God by first finding the guru. When you truly search for God, He sends you the channel – the channel for you to go back to Him. For without that channel, you cannot go back to God.

Now, let us go on and discuss the importance of the guru. It is this, and I have found this in my own experience; that you cannot understand the deep spiritual truths, and realize them, except through the help of the guru. I know in my own meditations, I worked hard. But only when the Master touched me could I perceive the deep spiritual truths. And so, I know this was the same between the Master and his guru. Because one time, you will remember, he was meditating, deeply, and his guru interrupted him, and he said, "Sir, I am meditating, don't interrupt me." But his guru insisted. And as they walked along, finally he touched him. And when he did touch him, he was able to see with the Eye of the Single Eye of

Intuition, because of the guru's power and God flowing through him. And when he touched him, he said, "You have been working very hard Yogananda." Showing that not only can the guru bring about the Spiritual Perception of God, but it is necessary that the humble devotee prepare the ground with regular meditation and devotion.

Now, why is this so? Why is the guru so important? It is because of this reason. A guru, a true guru, is a vehicle of God, who uses his body, his speech, his mind, and spirituality to bring the lost souls back home to Immortality – back to their home of God Consciousness. God does all things. God is the Doer of all things. He is in all the gurus. He is in each and every one of us. But the idea of separation is there, and that keeps us in delusion. But when we remember that God is the Doer of all things, the path is much easier.

I remember one time, in Boston, when the Master was leaving to spread his work throughout the United States, I, of course, was upset a bit. I remember he turned to me and said, "Never mind what happens to me. Don't forget God." In other words, it is God Consciousness, the Light, which is differentiation into the various gurus, relatives, friends; everything is made from His Light. So, if we are not sidetracked, but remember the Giver, and are not attached to His gifts, we will never be deluded.

Now one other question, which is asked me, is this one. How do you know when you are accepted by the guru? Well, I can say this, that your acceptance rests more upon you accepting the guru than he accepting you. Because a true guru is always ready – stands ready to take the devotee back home. But the important thing is this, does the devotee, truly, 100 percent, accept the guru? Does he accept him with 100 percent loyalty – unconditionally? That is what determines whether you are accepted by the guru. Unless there is that complete, unconditional understanding by the disciple, he cannot 100 percent lead the disciple back to God.

Now, I remember the first night I met the Master; Christmas Eve, 1920. As we sat there, and he showed me these many spiritual things, he quickly turned and

said to me, "Doctor, will you love me always as I love you?" And I felt that great bond, and I said, "Yes." In other words, there must be that 100 percent loyalty. And when I said "Yes," then he rubbed his hands together a little bit, and said, "That's fine. I take charge of your life." In other words, the guru cannot take charge of the life unless there is 100 percent complete surrender to his wisdom, which, of course, is guided by God's Wisdom.

And so, as far as our being accepted by the guru, I can give you the Master's own words, which I am sure will satisfy you. Here they are, "If it is your desire to follow the path of Self-Realization, 100 percent, giving unconditional devotion and loyalty to the link of the Masters, if you do this willingly, from your heart, without reservations, you will automatically become a link in the Divine Chain established between the guru, the disciple, and the great ones. And as a result of this link, you then receive their unconditional help and guidance."

And so, we should realize that the main part of the bargain rests with us. Do we, without any condition, really want to go back to God? Do we really, without any condition, feel that the guru knows the way, and that he has been appointed? It is his duty and obligation to God to take us back to Him. If we feel that, and give him a hundred percent loyalty, unconditionally, then we will surely know that we have been accepted by the guru.