

IS GURU REQUIRED FOR SELF KNOWLEDGE

Guru Purnima Lecture by Swami Paramarthananda

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NOTE: Swami Paramarthananda has not verified the transcription of talks. The transcriptions have been done with Swamiji's blessings by his disciple.



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Is Guru Required for Self-Knowledge?

*sadāsiva samārambhām sankarāchārya madhyamām
asmad āchārya paryantām vande guru paramparām*

One doubt a person can have in the Spiritual field is whether we require a Guru for Self Knowledge at all. For gaining the knowledge of truth, do we require a Guru or can we attain Self Knowledge by our own independent effort with the help of God's grace and with the help of our own intuitive power. *Is it possible for us to gain Self Knowledge?*

This is one doubt that people have. If we enquire, we can easily understand that our intellect is too limited to gain the knowledge of higher thing. Even to gain the knowledge of the world (the external world), and the knowledge of our own human body, still we are struggling and we not able to understand our own system completely.

That is the limitation of human intellect. *Then how is it possible to gain the knowledge of a truth which is beyond the world of time and space?* Therefore, being endowed with a limited intellect, we cannot gain self knowledge by our own effort. The scriptures talk about six fold limitations of human intellect - *purusha buddhi dōshāha shat*.

What are the limitations of human intellect? The first limitation is *Agnyānam*. The intellect is an ignorant intellect. With an ignorant intellect when I study or look at something, I will never be able to understand that completely because I have got limitation. That is why you find that suppose a scientist discovers a particular theory, like the theory of relativity.

You never understand the full impact of that theory initially. But as the science advances and more and more knowledge come, with advanced knowledge, when you look at the same theory, you begin to understand more about the theory and sometimes the limitation of the theory also.

Thus, you look at any phenomenon in the creation initially, your understanding is of one type, but when you get more and more knowledge and you look at the same phenomenon, your capacity to grasp that phenomenon more.

Therefore, what you understand depends upon how much information, knowledge you have got. It is a peculiar thing. When you look at your body, you understand something. When a doctor looks at the body, your own body, he understands more than what you understand. *Why?*

Doctor has got the doctoral knowledge and therefore, when he looks at something that is happening in your system, his capacity to diagnose and understanding is more. Therefore, as long as we have got ignorance or limited knowledge, our way of looking at the universe will be lopsided only.

Therefore it can never be the perception of truth or fact. Therefore, the first limitation of human intellect is *Agnyānam*. The second limitation of human intellect is *Samshayaha*. Samshaya means doubt. However much you study, you are certainly not sure whether this is right or not.

Especially, the more science advances, you find one theory comes and that scientist gets the PhD. Next scientist comes and dethrones the theory and gets another PhD. That theory is again dismissed by another scientist. Now you are never sure whether this theory is right or not.

Maximum a scientist can say this is what my observation is. He can never be definite about anything. They said the speed of the light is absolute, it can never change. Now, there is a doubt regarding that fact. They say that speed of the light may not be absolute.

If that gets proved, so many especially, the theory of relativity still will be in doubt because it is based on the assumption that speed of the light is constant. So, many constants of science are not constant. Our understanding of the universe is based on so many constants.

The students of science will know as they talk of so many constants. Therefore, we can never be sure about any knowledge we acquire. Therefore, human discoveries will be always assailed by *Samshayaha*. The third limitation of human intellect is *Viparyayaha* which means error - Erroneous perception or wrong perception like the parallax error.

You look at something and because of mistaken perception, you get a wrong conclusion. Thus, error is a natural to human intellect, human eyes. The eyes perceive stars as very small. But you know that stars are much bigger than even our sun or earth. So, the third defect is error. *Agnyāna, Samshaya, Viparyayaha*;

The fourth limitation of human intellect is *Pramādaha*. *Pramādaha* means negligence or oversight. When you study a particular phenomenon, for example, the meteorologists always study and predict the rain for the rainy season. To predict rain they take so many factors. More than hundred factors or so they take into account.

And they say that this year rain will be a failure. There afterwards, they say no, the observation was wrong the rain will be normal. I don't know whether you followed. One month before, they said this year it will be failure. After a few weeks they said no, it will be right only. Bhagawān knows whether it will be true or not.

It is because we will see many factors but however intelligent we are, there will be hidden variables, hidden factors which a human intellect, all the scientists will fail to see. Physical example is prediction. So *Pramādaha* means oversight and incapacity. Not only Meteorology, even in the medical field, doctor will say this person survive for a week.

In fact, all the family members are happy because such a terrible disease and so much expenditure and so many people have to go to hospital. It is a problem and they add to that by prayer also. But that person goes on

and on and on and the doctor himself does not know how he is surviving.

Then, for another person, they say this person is perfectly all right and next moment that person collapses. Recently it happened. The doctor was seeing pulse and all those things and he was telling that you are perfectly all right. He wanted to go somewhere and he said you can happily go, everything is fine.

As even the doctor was saying that, that person collapses right in front of the doctor with a massive heart attack and instantaneous death. Under the nose of the doctor who has said that he was perfectly alright. This is called *Pramādaha*. Always we miss factors which are very much there.

Agnyāna, Samshaya, Viparyayaha, Pramāda; Then, the next one is *Vipralabdhihi* which means being deceived by other people's discoveries or teachings. Often our visions, our ideas are prejudiced by some other person who says something to me and either deliberately misleads or unknowingly misleads.

Human intellect is subject to be misled by so many other factors. Thus, prejudiced perception is always possible. Especially, it happens in newspaper. Always our vision can be prejudiced by things. This susceptibility of human intellect in being prejudiced by other factors is called *Vipralabdhihi*.

This is the fifth limitation - being deceived. Even in perception they do that. I don't know whether you have seen. They draw two lines and two arrow marks will be there one arrow mark going inwards another arrow mark going outwards. They will ask you which one is longer.

Invariably, you say that the one with outward arrow mark is longer. And when you measure, you will find that both will be the same. You

are deceived by the arrow mark. This weakness of your instruments is called *Vipralabdhihi*.

Finally, *Apatukaranatvam* is the sixth limitation. *Apatukaranatvam* means even the best instruments that you have, have got their own limitation. Even the best ears can hear only within a particular frequency range. Dogs can hear certain things which we cannot hear. Cat can see certain things which you cannot see.

There are certain animals which can smell which you don't feel at all. *What does this indicate?* It indicates that all our sense organs and consequently, the intellect backed by them have got their own ranges, their own limitations which are called *Apatukaranatvam*.

Patutvam means its skill. *Apatutvam* means limitation with regard to their skill. *Apatukaranatvam* means being limited by the sense organs. In fact, if your sense organs are replaced by dogs or cats or other animal's sense organs, then the world that you experience will be totally different.

Now you think that what you are seeing is the fact. Really speaking, what you are seeing is never a fact. The world that you are seeing is as presented by your sense organs. *Then, how will you know what is there exactly?* This is a new problem the scientists are facing. Therefore, they are almost coming to the conclusion that we will never know what the world is.

It is because if you have got another set of sense organs, the world will be colored by those sense organs. Suppose you don't want to have coloration at all. *Then what should you do?* You should study the world without any instrument. *If you don't have any instrument at all, how will you study the world?*

Therefore, if you use the instrument you are never seeing the fact. The fact is colored by the instrument. If you don't have the instrument, you

can never study the world. Therefore, with instrument you cannot know the truth of the world and without instrument you cannot know the truth of the world.

That means you can never know the truth of the world by yourself. That is why your *Buddhi* is called *Pourushēya Pramānam*. It is called *Dushta Pramānam*. *Dushta Pramāna* means defective sense organs, defective intellect, and defective instruments of knowledge. Therefore, we say that you can never know the truth by yourself.

Therefore, you require a Guru to know the truth. Even for learning simple things, whether it is music or dance. I am saying because simple from the stand point of truth, music is simple. Even to learn music or dance or art or sports you require a coach.

If worldly knowledge requires a coach, what to talk of the highest spiritual knowledge! Therefore, we say independent approach to Self Knowledge will miserably fail. Therefore, all the scriptures uniformly say – *tad vinyānārtham sa gurumēva abhigachhēt, samirprānihi srōtriyam brahma nishtam*.

To gain Self Knowledge, one should necessarily go to a Guru. *Āchāryavān purushaha vēda*. Only a person with a Guru will gain Self Knowledge. *āchāryā dēva vidyā veditā sādhishtam prāpat*. Only when the knowledge is gained from a Guru, it will be fruitful knowledge.

*tad viddhi pranipātēna pariprasnēna sēvaya
upadēkshyanti tē gnyānam gnyāninas tatva darshinaha*

Bhagawān Krishna tells in the Gīta also and Sankarāchārya in his commentary says – *shāstragnyōpi swātanryēna brahmānvēshanam na kuryāt*. Even the most brilliant person should never try Self Knowledge independently. *Why can't I study the scriptures by myself and know?*

I will not try by myself but I will make use of the Scriptures. *Why should I require a Guru?* One Achārya beautifully says, if you study the

Scriptures by yourself, before the study, you will only have ordinary confusion. If you study the Scriptures by yourself, you will have technical confusions also.

As we are seeing in the Brahma Sutra class – *tadananyatvam ārambhana shabdhādivyaha*; somebody said, Swāmiji after hearing the *pūrva paksha* so elaborately, I have changed my party. This is our intellect.

*vēdāntānām anēkatvāt samshayānām bahutvataha
vēdyasya ati sūkshmatvāt najānāti gurum vinā*

Vidyāranya says in his *Anubhūti Prakāshaha*, *vēdāntānām anēkatvāt* – Scriptures are many and they contain so many statements which are seemingly contradictory. In one place *Advaitam* is talked about and in another place *Dvaitam* is talked about and in another place, *Visishtādvaitam* is talked about.

All of them have got supports in the very same Veda. How am I to know which one is correct or all of them are correct or none of them is correct? How do I know? *vēdāntānām vākyaṅām anēkatvāt samshayānām bahutvataha* – Therefore, doubts are innumerable. The more you study, the more the number of doubts.

vēdyasya ati sūkshmatvāt – The thing to be known the Reality, the Truth, the Paramātma being extremely *Sūkshmam* – *anōho anīyān*, subtler than the subtlest, you can never succeeded independently by thinking or independently by reading the Scriptures. Therefore, *gurum vinā najānāti* – therefore, Guru is required.

Then, one may wonder how come there are some people, some Mahatmas who have attained Knowledge without the help of the Guru. They have practiced meditation independently, they developed intuition and they got the Knowledge. *If Guru is required, how do you explain some people gaining the Knowledge without Guru?*

For that, our answer is every rule has got exception. We are talking about the rule and when we are talking about the rule, never talk about the exception. First of all, you do not know whether that person had a Guru or not.

The biography of various people especially, in India comes through hearsay only. So, we never know whether the person had Guru or not. Assuming that he or she did not have a Guru, it is only an exception and exception should never be quoted.

Guru is required and that is why I say that we don't believe in intuition but we believe in tuition. I met one lady (in Salem or Coimbatore) and she tells that she gets the teaching in dreams. When she talks about the teaching that she gets in dream, it is something fantastic because all of them are Shāstra.

I find that everything is exactly as said in the Shāstra. She says that I hear and sometimes I feel that somebody is telling me. She calls me and says Swāmiji, I am getting all these things but I am worried whether all these things are true or whether they are my imaginations. *What do you understand from this?*

Even if you get the Shāstric ideas through intuition, the problem is that you are never sure whether they are your own projections, or imaginations or speculations or facts. Intuition may give Knowledge but it is *Sandigdha Pramānam*. And Sandigdha Pramānam is Apramānam. A doubtful source of information is never the real source.

Therefore, we never go by intuition, we always say we are in tuition. So, Guru is required. *Then, the next question is, who is a Guru?* There are some people who just say, ok Swāmiji for your sake we accept that Guru is required (*tushyatu durjana nyāyena*). *Who is Guru?*

They say *Ātma* is Guru. They don't want to go to anyone. That is their idea and they say *Ātma* is Guru and therefore, *Ātma* will teach me. This

is the biggest misconception because of lack of Guru. Remember that Ātma does not have mouth, Buddhi, mind.

Therefore, Ātma does not do anything including teaching or revealing. If Ātma is your Guru, you should have gained Self Knowledge. *From when onwards is Ātma with you?* Yesterday Ātma came inside. Some people think that Ātma enters the body in the third month of pregnancy. That is why we are praying and all.

Ātma does not enter the body in the third month, fourth month or the fifth month. Ātma has been with you not only in this Janma but from *anādi kāla pravuttaha*. Therefore, if Ātma is your Guru, you would have got wisdom long before. Therefore, Ātma can never be a Guru.

Another person said world is my Guru. Somebody said (Aristotle or Plato) that the whole life is a University. The whole world is a University and every experience is a Guru. They give the example of the Bhāgavatam story in which a person had 24 Gurus and he learnt each lesson he learnt from Nature.

But the problem is that what you learn from the world depends upon your state of mind. You can learn anything from the same experience. Different people can learn different things. I will give you an example – two Sanyāsis were friends and one Sanyāsi used to tell that the times have changed.

Even though you are a Sanyāsi, you should always keep some money with you. The other person said that a Sanyāsi should never possess money. They had this opposite opinions but they were friends. One day both of them were walking and evening came and they had to go to the next village. They reached a river.

They have to cross the river to reach the village. They cannot stay on this side of the shore as it was a forest area. Therefore, they have to cross the river and stay in the village. They cannot cross the river by

walking or swimming as there was plenty of water. There was a boat there but they require money.

The modern definition is that a rich Sanyāsi is a successful Sanyāsi. The Sanyāsi with money looked at the other Sanyāsi, paid the money for both of them to cross the river. After crossing the river, the second Sanyāsi asked the first Sanyāsi (the one who carried money), *what is the lesson that you learnt from this incident?*

The first Sanyāsi said that now, I am very sure that Sanyāsi should carry money otherwise we will be stranded in these emergency situations. So we should carry money. This is the lesson that we learn. This was said by the first Sanyāsi who carried money with him. *The second Sanyāsi was asked, what is the lesson you learnt?*

He said, you need not carry money. If you surrender to Lord, in emergency Lord will give you a Sanyāsi who will be carrying money. *Who is correct?* I tell you, you can interpret any event depending upon your conclusion. Therefore, learning from the world and all is *artha vāda vākyam*.

Remember that when we learn the ordinary thing with prejudice, what to talk about the Truth! It is impossible to learn from the world and all. Therefore, world cannot be a Guru. Ātma cannot be a Guru. *Then, who is a Guru?* As the very word shows, *grunāti ātma tatvam upadishati iti guruhu;*

Guru is a live person who exists in flesh and blood and who communicates the teaching of the Truth contained in the Scriptures to the disciple (the *śishya*), that person is a Guru. That is why you find that in all our Scriptures, we have got the teaching given in the form of *Guru-Sishya samvādaha*.

Self Knowledge is always a result of a Samvādaha. Samvādaha means a dialogue. Vādaha means an argument. Self Knowledge is always the

result of a dialogue. It is a dialogue between a Guru and Sishya (*Guru-Sishya Samvādaha*). You take any Upanishad it is in the form of Guru-Sishya samvāda.

In some Upanishads, the names will be given and in some Upanishads the names will not be given as in *Kēnōpanishad*. But whether the names are there are not, it is in the form of Guru-Sishya samvāda. And Bhagavad Gita itself is *Sri Krishnārjuna Samvādaha*. Samvādaha implies a live student and also a live teacher.

Ādi Sankarāchārya cannot be my Guru because he is not alive as a person now. Samvāda does not require dead people, it requires a live person and he has to systematically teach. That is why the student is called *Sishyaha*. Sishyaha means *Siksha Yōgyaha* – the one who is fit to receive the teaching, the one who is fit to listen to the teaching.

It is a live dialogue between a live Guru and a live Sishya. *Why do you call it a dialogue?* It is because first the student asks a question to the teacher that I want to know the reality. He has to ask because many people go to a Guru for many purposes. You go to any Matha and you can see people standing.

They will do Namaskāra and say Swāmiji my daughter is 29 years old and is still unmarried. Please shower your Anugraha. Another person will say we have litigation, please give your Anugraha. They will ask everything except Knowledge.

Imagine when they are asking for sons or daughter's wedding and the Guru starts *sādhana chatushtaya sampannādhikārinām mōksha sādhana bhūtam tatva vivēka prakāram vakshyāmaha*. He will quietly walk out. Therefore, the Sishya should ask – *adhīhi bhagavō brahma vidyām varishtā*. This is called *Prashnaha*.

Then, the Guru has to systematically teach with the help of Scriptures. Guru cannot use his intellect because Guru's intellect is also human

intellect. Therefore, it is endowed with *shad dōsha yuktam antahkaranam gurōho api*.

Therefore, Guru cannot give his philosophy. Guru gives the teaching coming from the Scriptures which have come from the Lord who is free from the six fold *Dōsha*. When the Guru teaches with the help of the Shāstram, which has come from the Lord that Shāstram will serve as a mirror for the Sishya.

With the help of *Shāstra Darpanaha*, the Sishya will be able to gain the Knowledge of the Self. So, *Prashnaha* and then *Upadēshaha*; And invariably, if a student sincerely listens to the teaching, there will be doubts. If doubts don't come, it means the student is not listening. Doubts are definite.

If doubts come, the student is not supposed to blindly swallow. The student is supposed to raise doubts. They are called *Anuprashna*. *Prashnaha* will be followed by *Upadēshaha*, *Upadēshaha* will be followed by *Anuprahshnaha*, *Anuprahshnaha* will be followed by *Anu Upadēshaha*. *Anupadēshaha* will be followed by *Anunuprashnaha*.

As we see in the Bhagavad Gīta, Krishna teaches, Arjuna raises doubts, Krishna answers and again Arjuna raises doubts. This is called a dialogue, a Samvāda. As a result of this, one person gains this Knowledge.

Therefore, *Guru* is important, *Shāstram* is very important, *Teaching* is very very important and *Learning* is very very very important. And if these come together, a person will get Self Knowledge and Liberation. In the Scriptures, the Gurus are divided into three types. They are *Uttama Guru*, *Madhyama Guru* and *Adhama Guru*.

Uttama Guru is one who has studied the Scriptures systematically from his own Guru and received the teaching. The one who has got Scriptural Knowledge is called a *Shrōtriya*. Uttama Guru must be a *Shrōtriya*.

Not only a Shrōtriya but he must have assimilated the teaching, he must have transformed his life and he must be enjoying the benefit of teaching.

If this teaching is supposed to give Ānanda, Guru must be *Ānanda Swarūpam*. Only then he will be *Sadguruhu* otherwise, he will be Sad Guruhu. I myself am miserable. Therefore, thinking that my Prārabdha, these Sishyas have to be taught etc. Complaining against the Sishyas and feeling that I have taken Sanyāsa by mistake;

If you are going to be miserable and you say that this teaching will give Ānanda, who is going to believe it? Guru must be the model, the example for the benefit of Self Knowledge. Therefore, he should have assimilated the teaching. In short, his life and the teaching must be one and the same.

Such a Guru is called *Brahma Nishta Shrōtriya Guruhu* - The one who has studied the Scriptures and also the one who has transformed himself. He is *Uttama Guruhu*. *Madhyama Guru* is one who has studied the Scriptures very well but the problem is that due to some obstacle he was not able to assimilate the teaching.

Therefore, he has the Knowledge as scholarship but he doesn't enjoy the benefit totally. He is like a lecturer of Upanishads in the Philosophy Department of a University. He knows the Upanishad because in the Philosophy Department, *Kathōpanishad* is one of the lessons. *Brahma Sutra* is another lesson.

In fact, one professor came and told. When he visited the Āshrama, in fact, we used to envy his Knowledge. His Knowledge was so thorough and so beautiful. But he was telling, what is the use! I have got all this scholarship but I am a *Samsāri*.

Therefore, a person can be a scholar but he might not have assimilated the teaching due to various obstacles. Such a person is called *Kēvala*

Shrōtriya. He is not a *Brahma Nishtaha*. But he is *Madhyama* because even though he has not assimilated and transformed, his teaching will be proper because he doesn't give his philosophy.

He is only communicating what the Shāstra says. So the teaching will not be wrong. Therefore, he is called a Madhyama Guru – one who has learned the Scriptures but has not assimilated. *Adhama Guru* is the most surprising person. It will be very difficult for you to assimilate.

Adhama Guru is a person, who has gained (as an exceptional case) *Ātma Gnyānam* without Guru and Shāstram. In the beginning of the talk I said that the general rule is that one can gain Knowledge only with the help of Guru and Shāstram. And I said that there are exceptions in which a person gains Knowledge without Guru and Shāstram.

That person is a Spiritual Genius alright, and he becomes a Brahma Nishta alright, but since he has not studied the Scriptures under a Guru, he is not a Shrōtriya. Since he is a *Kēvala Brahma Nishta* and since he is not a *Shrōtriya*, he doesn't have the methodology of teaching.

Because he never studied under a Guru using a methodology, and he himself never faced any problems or doubts therefore, he can never understand the mind of an ordinary person. Because his mind was an extraordinary mind therefore, he cannot understand an ordinary mind.

Atleast, if he has the help of the Shāstram, with the help of the Shāstram he cannot guide. Neither Shāstram is there nor has he gone through the problems of an ordinary person therefore, he doesn't have the tools of communication. They are called *Kēvala Brahma Nishtas*. They alone become mystic people.

All the mystic people are *Kēvala Brahma Nishtas*. They have the Knowledge of the Truth but they don't have the mode of communication. Even if they talk, you will find that there will be so

many problems. It is like a person who goes to another place by flight. Therefore, he doesn't know what the problems on the road are.

I don't have the money for the flight and I am going through the road. How can that person help me? If I want help, I should go to a person who has travelled by road. *Kēvala Brahma Nishta* is a mystic person. He is a Spiritual Genius. He has never travelled by the ordinary road.

Therefore, as a person he is great but as a Guru, he will be the worst Guru. Therefore, the tradition says never go to a mystic who has gained Self Knowledge without Guru and Shāstra. If at all you go, you go to him, do Namaskāra and get the blessings all right but you never follow him or his teaching.

If you want the benefit of teaching, go to either Shrōtriya Brahma Nishta or atleast you go to Shrōtriya. Such a *Shrōtriya Brahma Nishta Guru* is an *Uttama Guru*. *And then the last question is how to find an Uttama Guru? Can I give an advertisement in the News Paper for a Shrōtriya Brahma Nishta Guru?*

You can never know who is a Shrōtriya Brahma Nishta Guru because to know a Shrōtriya Brahma Nishta Guru, you should be Shrōtriya Brahma Nishta. To appreciate a scientist, you must be a scientist. *A fellow who doesn't know 8th standard science, how can he admire Einstein?* Even if he admires, it will not be of any value at all.

Therefore, you can never search and find a Guru. You get a Guru purely by the grace of the Lord alone. You should know the necessity of a Guru. With that thirst for guidance, when we pray to the Lord, it is Lord's duty to provide you with a Sadguru. Therefore, we say –

*durlabham triyamēvai tad dēvānugraha hētukam
manushyatvam mumukshutvam māhapurusha samshrayaha*

Manushya Janma is rare, desire for Self Knowledge is rarer and getting a guide for Self Knowledge is the rarest thing. Such rarest Gurus are

worshipped on the *Guru Pūrnima* day. I will just like to add one point and conclude. When we worship the Guru on Guru Pūrnima day, we don't worship our Guru alone, but we worship the entire Guru Parampara.

Because my Guru is a Guru because of his Guru and his Guru is a Guru because of his Guru. And Ādi Guru being the Lord himself, therefore, we worship the entire Guru Parampara. When we worship the entire Guru Parampara, we should remember that a Guru is great only because of the Shāstram.

Guru doesn't have a greatness of his own or her own because before he studied the Shāstram, Guru was an ordinary person. Guru has got Gurutvam only because of the Shāstram. Whereas, Shāstram is great not because of the Guru, Shāstram has got its own original greatness.

Guru's greatness is conditional greatness and Shāstra's greatness is unconditional greatness. Therefore, if we ask who is greater between a Guru and Shāstram, we say that the Shāstram is greater than a Guru. The Guru also knows this. *Therefore, what does the Guru do?*

Sishya comes to the Guru attracted by the Guru, his character, his life and his Ānanda. Sishya initially comes to the Guru alone and the Guru's job is to educate the Sishya saying that my greatness is not because of myself, the Shāstram is really great. Guru has to bring the Shāstram and show it to the Sishya.

When the Guru keeps the Shāstra mirror, Sishya will not see the mirror. He is attracted by the Guru. Then, he gradually brings the mirror closer and closer. Initially, Sishya will get the glimpse of his beauty in the mirror. And gradually, the mirror is brought; gradually Guru covers his face and places the mirror.

Sishya is no more attracted by the Guru but he is attracted by his own glory seen in the mirror. And the Guru shakes the mirror a little bit and

the Sishya feels the mirror is shaking therefore, let me also hold the mirror. And Sishya will begin to hold the mirror and Guru disappears. He has to go another Sishya who is waiting.

Guru says, hold on to the mirror not me. Therefore, Guru has to present the mirror and disappear. Remember that Shāstra is greater than Guru. If you hold on to Guru and admire the Guru more than the Shāstra, then it becomes a cult. *What is the difference between a cult and tradition?*

In cult the person becomes superior to the teaching whereas, in tradition the teaching becomes superior to the person. If you praise the teacher (called sycophancy) and ignore the Shāstram - A Guru who creates a cult has failed. He should never allow that to happen. It is like an advertisement for soap in the News Paper.

They want to attract the readers and therefore, they call a model and the model holds the soap. *What is the purpose of bringing a model?* When the model is attractive, people will look at the soap. Suppose the model so attractive that you look at the model and forget to look at the soap.

After a few days, the company calls you and asks which part of our advertisement did you like? Suppose you say that you liked the model then the advertiser has failed. The model was meant to attract the person to the soap. If the model himself or herself distracts your mind from the soap, then the very purpose of the advertisement is gone.

Therefore, the model must be sufficiently attractive but the model should not distract. Gurus are like models. Therefore, the people must be attracted to the models but gradually, from Guru they should come to the soap. *What is the soap?* Brahma Vidya soap which will wash off your ignorance in Shāstram soap.

Therefore, remember that in Guru Pūrṇima day, we are worshiping the Guru alright, but the emphasis is not on the Guru but the wonderful soap called the Shāstric tradition. Therefore, we want the grace of the entire

Guru Parampara so that we can come to the Shāstra and learn to look at ourselves and enjoy our beauty.

Therefore, never admire the Guru more than the teaching. Teaching should become superior. Therefore, our prostrations to *Brahma Vidya* through the Guru;

*Poornamadah Poornamidam Poornaath Poornam Udachyathe
Poornasya Poornamaadaaya Poornameva Vasishyathe*

Om shanti shanti shantihi



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