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GURU: God in teaching mode

“Guru gaaroo! Mee daggara match box unte o saarilaa parestaaraandee?” (“Guruji! If you have match box, will you please throw it this way?”)...to light the cigarette, he held in between his lips, that dances amusingly as he speaks.

“Guru gaaroo! O peggestaar-enti?” (Guruji! Would u like to put a peg?)...the host asks a guest, as he pours whisky into the glass.

I have translated the familiar Telugu questions in the same lighter spirit as they are shot... just to let the readers be aware of the devaluation of the most respected term “Guru”. In “Sanatana (old) Dharma”, Guru’s place is higher than God.

In one of his “Dohas” (couplets), Saint Kabeer says, “If Guru and God, both manifest before me at time, i would salute my Guru first and later to God. Because, it is Guru, who showed me path to The

God”.

Dronacharya refuses to impart the knowledge of archery to Ekalavya. Ekalavya instals an idol of Dronacharya and practices archery. His excellence in archery becomes a threat to Arjuna, the dearest disciple of Dronacharya. Dronacharya asks for the thumb of Ekalavya as “Gurudakshina” (The fees a disciple pays with gratitude to the Guru for learning any branch of knowledge). Dharma is very subtle to judge superficially sometimes. Dronacharya’s asking for a thumb had a deeper vision. But I quoted the story to remind the intensity of gratitude one had for Gurutwam (the Guruhood... master hood).

Guru is not just a person. It’s an Energy...Almighty which sets itself to a teaching mode when there is an earnestness in a student. It may take a support of a human form or an animal or an insect...

Robert the Bruce, the king of Scotland fought six wars with the king of England, who wanted to drive him away and make Scotland a part of England. Bruce’s army was driven away by the army of England.

Bruce was hiding in a cave. He was much disappointed and of the thought that there is no use in fighting the war for the seventh time.

Just then he happened to see a spider trying to weave her web. It was trying to throw her thread from one corner to another of the cave. Six times it was a failure as her thread fell short. Bruce observed with curiosity. The spider didn’t loose spirits. It got ready the seventh time also and tried. It was successful! This inspired Bruce. Drawing inspiration from the spider, he gathered his army and fought the war for the seventh time with the kind of England. This time the King of England went back to

his country unable to face the strength of Bruce. Thus Scotland became an independent country. Bruce was recognized as the greatest king in the history of Scotland.

The source of strength and inspiration for Bruce is said to be the spirit and the persistence of the spider. So his Guru that time was The Spider! The Almighty takes the support of anything to guide an earnest and deserving student.

Shiridi Baba used to say that a brick is his Guru. He used to place it under his head as a pillow while sleeping. One day it gets broken. He laments that he lost a companion in whose company He attained the self-absorption. He says it's the most valuable which was touched by the holy feet of His Guru and that is the reason he lays his head on it every night. He says that it was "Prasadam" granted by His Guru.

Even a brick, which we treat as a trivial thing attained such a great importance because it was given to Baba graciously by His Guru. And this secret was revealed by none other than Baba Himself, a Guru of great Dattatreya order.

I wish to share one of my own experiences friends!

In 1998 we celebrated "Guru Purnima" in a temple located in Vayupuri, Hyderabad. For the first time we celebrated in a public place and made the event open to public. All of us were in high spirits because just a few days before, we received an order from the united Andhra Pradesh Govt, allotting an extent of land to Annamacharya Bhavana Vahini. Entire event was planned with high spiritual fervor.

I gave a concert in that connection. In between my concert, I saw

a special person in maroon color Jubba (upper garment) and white color Dhoti (a long cloth worn as lower garment) with curly hair, oval shaped auspicious mark of Kumkum on his forehead. He was leaning to a pillar of the temple and listening to my singing with his eyes closed. His effulgent and special presence captured my attention for a while. Later I diverted my attention again to my singing. At



the end of the concert, he came and put his hand on my head for a while and stood for a while, his eyes closed. Later he said, "The project you are thinking of, will be completed in 5 years". While doing Namaskaram (salute according to Indian tradition) thankfully, I asked him, "May I know who you are sir?". He said, "Nena? Poyi Chandra Babu nadugupo. Cheptaadu" (Me? Go and ask Chandra Babu Naidu. He will tell"). Translation of his words into English sound a bit polished. In Telugu they are a bit rude.

I was astonished at his response. Later my attention was diverted by the audience coming close and talking to me.

I went back to home. As I retired to sleep, I remembered his

words. Before beginning my concert I told audience, "I am extremely happy to announce that The Govt of A.P. has allotted an extent of land to Annamacharya Bhavana Vahini. I express my deep gratitude to our honorable Chief Minister, Sri Chandra Babu Naidu through this auspicious gathering".

A revelation dawned upon me. His words meant to be asking me like, "Do you think that it was Chandra Babu Naidu who allotted the land to Annamacharya Bhavana Vahini? Go and ask him as to who inspired him to do so. Don't you know who worked through his mind?". His rudeness made a meaning to me.

I couldn't wait for the day to dawn. I asked Ramana to go and ask all my students in and friends in Vayupuri, if they had seen a man with such physical characteristics.

The guy who went in the morning returned in the evening with the answer that no one had seen a person like that.

Guru comes in many forms to guide and bless. The ones who entertain people with money-mindedness are not real Gurus. Guru is an Energy, Who drives one to a higher pursuit in life guiding us every moment, taking support of animate and inanimate. It assumes many diversified forms.

There is no difference to Guru and God. It's hard for the seekers to imagine their journeys of life without the guide whom we call Guru!

May the Guru shower His Grace on all of us!

(Author is a well-known musician, Devotional singer, writer and composer.) 