

My Master - He Knows What He Is Doing

"After three days, the rainy season will come on...will you be my guest for four months?" asked Amrapali, the most beautiful woman from Vailshali, in Bihar (where Buddha lived), of a Buddhist monk. As per the local tradition, Amrapali then was a "nagaravadhu" – a royal prostitute who had fallen in love with the young, well built, Buddhist monk who was radiating with divinity. Buddhist monks stay put at one place for four months during the rainy season. Amrapali knew this and hence the invitation.

"Well, if my Master allows me, I will certainly come", responded the young monk.

The young monk came, touched Buddha's feet and told the whole story, "She has asked me to stay with her for four months. I told her that I will ask my Master, so I am here... and shall do as you say."

Buddha looked into the eyes of the monk and said, "You can stay."

This was a rude shock to the assembled monks... There was a deadly silence, underneath which was anger and jealousy. After the young monk left to stay with Amrapali, the monks started gossiping, after all how come Master allowed him to stay with a woman? The whole town was agog with this episode in that a Buddhist monk is to stay with Amrapali.

Some monks dared to question Buddha: how could the Master do this? In response, Buddha said, "you should keep silence. I trust my monk. I have looked into his eyes and there was no desire. Had I said no, he would not have felt anything! I said yes... he simply went. And I trust in his awareness, in his meditation. Why are you all getting so agitated?"

After four months, the young monk came, touched Buddha's feet--and following him was Amrapali, dressed as a Buddhist nun. She touched Buddha's feet and she said, "I tried my best to seduce your monk, but he convinced me by his presence and awareness that the real life as such is at your feet."

And Buddha said to the assembly, "Now, are you not satisfied?" If meditation is deep, if awareness is clear, nothing can disturb it. And Amrapali became one of the most enlightened women amongst Buddha's disciples.

One telling lesson the disciples learnt that day was that they should not question the Master. He knows what he does. It may appear be untrue, unreal or wrong but there is a purpose in what he is doing and why. In order to understand the depth of the ocean, one needs to dive. In order to experience a mountain top, one must climb. In order to see a distant object, one must mount; so also, in order to understand a Master, the seeker needs to become one.

Why do I need a Master?

First of all, we need to understand what we mean by a Master. There are three types of Masters, namely, (i) Guru (ii) *Sad* Guru and (iii) *Siddha* Guru. A guru simplisitor is one who imparts knowledge but does not keep track of his disciple as to whether the knowledge is useful to him or whether he has put that

knowledge to use etc. e.g. our teachers in school or college. A *Sad Guru* is one who not only imparts knowledge but also ensures that we may use it for the betterment of life or spiritual development – e.g. Religious (*Dharmic*) Gurus. A *Siddha Guru* is one who gives you without your asking. He senses your need, make you experience the Divine e.g. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa enlightened Swami Vivekananda or Sri Yukteshwar Giri blessed Sri Paramahansa Yogananda. Sri Yukteshwar Giri told his disciple Yogananda: "I will be your friend from now on to eternity, no matter whether you are at the lowest mental plane or on the highest plane of wisdom. I will be your friend, even if you should err, for, then you will need my friendship more than at any other time." Thus, a *Siddha Guru* takes total responsibility for his disciple, no matter come what may.

To illustrate: Having a Master is like taking a flight to reach your destination in preference of other modes of transportation. The Master would make your journey comfortable, faster and certain. He would not only guide you, but would carry you in times of difficulties. In short, he is like the Sun, you can opt to go without

it, but when present, it will light up your face and fill your heart with warmth.

Does that mean I trust my Master blindly?

You may question a thousand times before you accept a person as your Master. You must be intellectually convinced about the appropriateness of that person to be your Master and only then you should accept him/her. Having accepted that person as your Master, it will be your right to ask him questions and not, repeat not to question him. Questioning the Master means, showing distrust in his abilities, knowledge and integrity in which situation, that person is not fit to be your Master.

Master never imposes his ideas on you... Instead he leads you to what is right...

A true Master is one who never imposes his views on his disciple. He would have patience for his disciple to realise the Truth by himself. He will encourage his disciple to debate, discuss and contemplate on an idea/proposition before accepting it. He gives

enough space and liberty to his disciple to form his own views and also to disagree with him. As Swami Chinmayananda used to say, "Don't accept whatever I say unless it appeals to your intellectual conviction".

Why do I put questions to my Master?

The more questions you asked your Master, the more enlightened you become. Talks with Ramana Maharishi and "I am That" by Nisargadatta Maharaj are all nothing but conversations with the Master. When asked, Master out of his abundant love and compassion for his disciple goes out of his way to make him understand.

Have Faith in the Master – He knows what he is doing

Questioning the Master means judging him. It is said, "Judge not, lest be judged". Sri Gyanamata¹, said that "The guru cannot be judged, if he is to be judged at all, then it should be judged by the rules that apply to a friendship between equals." The

¹ "God Alone: The Life and Letters of a Saint"

relationship between a guru and a disciple is that of friends. The friendship that exists between guru and disciple is eternal. There is complete surrender; there is no compulsion, when a disciple accepts training from the guru.

Thus, a disciple needs to put total and absolute faith in his Master. Faith is that trust that the Master will either walk with you or carry you through. Faith resides in your heart. Faith is beyond sensory perception. It is a sudden flash of awareness. Faith is the intelligence of the heart, whereas belief is the intelligence of mind. Heart needs no proof but mind is never satisfied without any proof. One of the weaknesses of the mind is that it keeps on doubting. A weak mind doubts every person, every situation. While doubt is a sub-human trait, Faith is divine in nature.

It reminds me of an anecdote: Once upon a time, there was famine in a village. Everybody was worried. All villagers decided to pray together. They congregated in a field. One girl carried an umbrella. Everybody mocked at her, as there was no indication of

any rain. Upon asked by a villager, her reply stunned everybody. She said "I am sure our prayers will be answered by God and soon it will start pouring." That's Faith.

A Master and his disciple were on different sides of the banks of a river. The river was overflowing. The Master called the disciple on his side of the bank. With full faith in his Master, the disciple just walked through the overflowing river. Even the Master was aghast. He asked his disciple how he could do this. The disciple humbly answered: "I was just chanting your name, my Master!" That's Faith.

Master is a means not an end....

A true Master is one who shows path to his disciples. The journey of "unification with the source" is individualistic. Each one of us has to travel on his own. No one else can walk on our behalf. We need to earn that privilege by ourselves. Reaching to the Master is not reaching to God. A true Master will say this is how I reached my goal; you may try this path as this is safe and tested.

One needs to be careful with the so called Masters who proclaim themselves as God. They say your journey is over once you become their disciples. This is nothing but emotional manipulation. You should question such Masters not once, but a thousand times. All those Masters who promise you "heaven" on earth for serving them cannot be worthy Masters. "Heaven" and "Hell" are the concepts created by religious *heads* to con weak minds, to make them permanent slaves and servants. Fear is instilled in the minds of people so that they remain insecure. "*Papa*" (*sin*) and "*Punya*" are coined to make people guilty conscious oblivious of their inherent divine nature and power. Swami Chinmayananda defines "sin" as "an act which does not match your intellectual conviction". Thus, sin is subjective. So let us develop an intellectual conviction and understanding in choosing and following a correct Master.

My encounter with my Master

In my over 40 years of existence on this planet, I have met several guides and gurus who have showed me the right path.

But a person who stands out distinct is, Mr. M. S. Natarajan who has been a great contributor in my life. About twenty years back when we first met, we instantly struck a bond. Since then he has been my friend, guide, philosopher and a Master in the true sense. He had been a solid support in every endeavour of my life. Once in a weak moment of my life, I thought of committing suicide. It was he who pulled me out of that depression. He has never imposed his ideas on me; instead, he always encouraged debates and discussions on points of differences. He not only inspires me, but is a source of inspiration for many as well. A relationship between a disciple and a Master should be very transparent. A Master is one with whom you can pour your heart out. I am lucky to have such a person in my life who possesses qualities of a great Master.

Is Master essential?

What if I don't have a Master in life? Can I not progress? Can I not attain enlightenment? In the Bible it is said, "God made man out of His own image". As Aporesh puts it: "God sends us fully

loaded”, meaning that we all possess knowledge and wisdom within. What the Master does is to help us unfold. If we ourselves learn the art of unfolding the knowledge embedded within, we do not need a Master. Buddha was not known to have had any Master. Beware of those so called “Masters” who proclaim that without them you cannot attain spiritual success. As stated earlier, a Master is a means and not an end. He is a guide, not God. At a subtle level you can make your soul as your Master and get inspired and be guided. Since all knowledge is within you, you can draw the strength, courage and wisdom from within, as and when the need arises.

So be it.

Paper Title:

My Master- He Knows What He Is Doing

Paper Topic:

Ask Questions to the Master, Don't Question the Master

Author:

Mayur Nayak

Chapter:

Mumbai

Number of words:

1947

Reading time in minutes:

14