Everyone Has a Guru,Knowingly or Not
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Everyone Has a Guru,Knowingly or Not

Introducing Sri Sri Sri Vishvaguru Maha-Maharajji,the great world teacher of hard knocks

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Sri Sri Sri Vishvaguru Maha-Maharajji is seen in the picture to the right with me in Rio de Janiero (please see hard copy- large blue purple world with tongue protruding). What were we doing there? Well, it was the 1992 Earth Summit, when hundreds of political and religious leaders met to discuss the fate of mankind. It was only fitting that this worldly-wise one be there at that time, being a world teacher, a very strict one at that. Vishvaguruji, as I call him, teaches so patiently, yet accepts no excuses and remains unforgivingly exacting in his lessons. Everyone living on this planet has a guru, whether they know it or not. There are three kinds of gurus that are traditionally available to guide the soul. The first, of course, are the parents. Next is the family guru, or a guru chosen by the children. The third guru, often the most attractive and always the most demanding, is Vishvaguruji. He does live up to his name in all ways, for vishva means "everything and everyone in the world," and guru, of course, means "teacher." Maharaj is "great ruler."

When the world becomes the teacher, the lessons can be rough, enticing, unloving, endearing, unpleasant or full of temporary happiness. The world is relentless in its challenges, in the rewards it offers, the scars it leaves and the healing it neglects. The unrelenting Vishvaguruji works surreptitiously through the people you meet, as past life karmas unfold into this life. He never gives direct advice or guidance but leaves the lessons from each experience to be discovered or never discovered. His favorite sloka is --"Learn by your own mistakes." His way of teaching is through unexpected happenings and untimely events, which are timely from his point of view. Unnecessary karmas are created while the old ones that were supposed to be eliminated smolder, waiting patiently for still another birth. Pleasure and pain are among his effective methods of instruction. He is the teacher of all who turn their backs on parents, elders, teachers, laws and traditions of all kinds.

Those on the anava marga, the path of the external ego, often claim to be their own guru. Some untraditional teachers even encourage this attitude. However, being one's own guru is a false concept. Traditionally, one would be his "own guru" only if he were initiated as such and his guru left the physical body. But even then he would be bound by the lineage within the sect of Sanatana Dharma he dedicated his life to, and would still maintain contact with his guruji within the inner world. Therefore, he would not really ever be his own guru at all. Being one's own guru is a definite part of the anava marga, a very important part. It is raw, eccentric egoism. A teenager doesn't become his own teacher in school. A medical doctor doesn't become his own professor and then get a license to practice, signed by himself. Nor does a lawyer, an engineer or even an airline stewardess. So, logic would tell us that those

pursuing something as sensitive, as personal and final as the path to perfection cannot on their own gain the necessary skills and knowledge to be successful in this endeavor.

Well, we are having fun here, aren't we? But it is also a serious subject. Think about it. In the realm of training and responsiveness, we can say that there are two basic margas, or stages: the anava marga and the jnana marga, the path of wisdom. Those on the jnana marga know they need someone in their life who has already attained what they are seeking to attain, who can see ahead of their seeing and consciously guide them. This is the traditional path of Hindu dharma leading to Self Realization.

Those on the way of external ego have met many teachers, tested them very carefully and have found them all not meeting up to their standards. They are the devotees of Sri Sri Sri Vishvaguru Maha-Maharajji, members of his Bhogabhumi Ashram, place of pleasure. The regular daily sadhana, discipline, is stimulating the desire for sex, for money, for food and for clothing.

Unlike other ashrams, here there are no apparent boundaries or clear-cut guidelines. Followers are free to do as they please. All classes are open to everyone, from the most refined studies to the most devious and low-minded. Advanced low-level classes feature how to "do in" your enemies and remain undetected; how to access pornography on the Internet, one of the great tools of the ashram, and then participate in the pleasures it recommends. There are courses on effective ways to beat the children, the wife, the husband to maximize

domestic chaos. Executive education includes how to climb a corporate ladder, the pros and cons of saving face when rightly accused and downing your accuser as misinformed or as a perpetual liar. One whole department is dedicated to self-indulgence. Advancements in technology provide never-ending novelty. There's experiential training in crime and punishment, in terrorism and being terrorized, revenge, retribution and the quest for forgiveness. The ashram's brochure was mailed to me to publish in Hinduism Today, but it was too extensive and provocative for our journal. (I'm sure it's available on the Internet.) Vishvaguruji has teachers all over the globe, in every city and small community in every country. In fact, every facet of our lovely planet participates in his training programs at every moment in time.

Mid-range subjects include politics, how to lose and still gain in the process. Love and relationships is very popular, with intensives in promiscuity, marriage, infidelity and divorce. How to find your little self and make it big--name and fame--is among the top ten pursuits. There are numerous variations on the acquisition and loss of property. Suicide and threatening suicide to get your own way have many students. Certain subjects are compulsory, including the quest for health and longevity, and the reality of decline, death and dying. The emotional wing is always full, especially the sessions on joy and sorrow. Anger is overcrowded, and jealousy, too. The list goes on and on. How to be totally committed to being noncommitted keeps many from advancing into higher grades. Keeping your children from becoming interested in religion, lest it hamper their education and job possibilities, has lots of apparently intelligent advocates. Making a living is one of the largest branches, with a recent addition of remaining sane while holding three jobs. Understanding your rebellious

teenager and other parenting challenges are very big. How to have a family and neglect it at the same time (subtitled Latch Key Kids) is the latest rage.

Most ashramites, or bhogis, are swamped with so many subjects. They struggle twenty-four hours a day and still never catch up. This is one tough school, and the odd thing is, enrollment is automatic; even without applying for a course, you wind up studying it. It's the default when the guidance of other gurus is rejected. Vishvaguruji has many doors for entering his ashram and only one for exiting. Gradually, eventually, and it may take many lifetimes, everyone comes to see that he is leading them to an understanding that every freedom has its price, every action its reaction, that the path to perfection is up and up and up. Recently I called Sri Sri Sri Vishvaguru Maha-Maharajji and suggested that students nearly ready to graduate might be recommended the solid principles of Sanatana Dharma, the less strenuous path of daily sadhana, right speech, right thought and right action, noninjury--ahimsa--physically, mentally and emotionally. He complied. He understood. In fact, he said he's always dropping hints for his nearly five billion enrollees, that his every course points in that direction, though most students are very slow to catch on. He is infinitely patient.

So, you can tell your friends, "I have a guru and you have one, too. Everyone has a guru, whether they know it or not." All three gurus--parents, family guru and Vishvaguruji--unanimously say, "It's a dirty job, but somebody has to do it." Vishvaguru's school of hard knocks eventually, in this life or a future one, delivers all errant seekers back to a satguru, minister, rabbi, shaman or priest. To not repeat his

training, you either learn through the tough reactions of his courses or gentler lessons under the guidance of the two other traditional gurus. All gurus are conspirators in the evolution of the soul, and Sri Sri Sri Vishvaguru Maha-Maharajji is no exception.

Well, Sri Sri Sri Vishvaguru Maha-Maharajji and I have become friends, partners, in the grueling guruing business. We understand each other and work together along with elders, swamis, gurus of all denominations of all religions. Oh! I almost forgot to mention: visit his home page: www.hindu.org/bhoga/