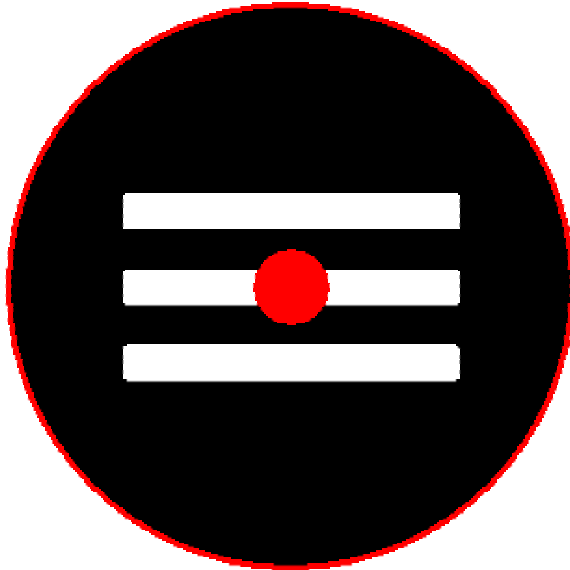


# **GURU**

## **EMBODYING AWARENESS**



**Peter Wilberg**

# ON THE MEANINGS OF 'GURU'

## SOME GIVEN MEANINGS:

A teacher of any sort.

A spiritual advisor or mentor.

A combination of spiritual educator and priest in Hindu religious culture.

A spiritual teacher with profound esoteric or transcendental awareness.

A spiritual teacher in touch with his own 'overself' or 'awareness self' (*Atman*).

A spiritual teacher (*Siddhaguru*) with highly developed yogic power (*Siddhis*).

A spiritual teacher with knowledge based on direct experience of ultimate religious truths and metaphysical truths (*Satguru*).

A spiritual teacher (*Dikshaguru*) capable of wordless transmission of inner awareness, knowing and divine grace (*Shaktipat*) and of directly awakening awareness of the divine in the student through initiation (*Diksha*).

A spiritual teacher so in touch with the divine as to be seen as the incarnation (*Avatar*) of a divinity or a source of divinely revealed knowledge.

## SOME ROOT MEANINGS:

'Dispeller' or 'remover' (*ru*) of darkness (*gu*) – the darkness of ignorance.

One who can transcend the 'qualities' (*GUnas*) and the world of form (*RUpa*).

'Weighty'– from Proto-Indo-European root *grus*, as in Latin *gravis/gravitas*.

## SOME QUESTIONS:

### How are we to know if someone is a 'true guru' or 'satguru'?

How are we to know if someone is a true or great composer or mathematician? The answer is that we *cannot* know if we ourselves do not have sufficient appreciation of music or sufficient mathematical knowledge and skills to judge. The same applies to the knowledge necessary to judge whether someone is *satguru*. The student, *not knowing what guru knows*, also cannot fully see *who guru is* or experience what *being guru* means.

### Who is 'guru'?

Since the role of *guru* is defined by the relationship of *guru* to the student or disciple (*Shishya*) 'who' the *guru* 'is' is partly defined by who and how he or she is seen to be by different students. That there are 'false' *gurus* offering limited, purely second-hand or highly *distorted* knowledge there is no doubt. Yet the long *guru* tradition is also replete with stories of students being disappointed by their meetings with a *satguru*, even appalled by their behaviour, or seeing only their human face and faults - their 'clay feet'. Only after years of nevertheless accepting and devoting themselves to this initially disappointing or even appalling 'guru' is the disciple able to finally see 'who' the *guru* 'is' - and come to experience them as exactly the type of *guru* they initially needed or wished for. Then they know the *satguru* as simply a higher disciple - the most devoted possible disciple (*shishya*) and worshipper (*pujari*) of that *guru* which is his most blissful, silent and divine inner Self (*atman*). In all these ways who constitutes *guru* - or not - is determined relationally.

## What is 'guru'?

*Guru* is first of all simply a *word* – one whose meaning derives from specific cultural contexts and traditions, and which is actually, currently and commonly applied to hundreds of thousands of people of different types, including Hindu priests and educators, and spiritual mentors and teachers of all sorts. Such spiritual teachers are all called *guru* even though they may be engaged in many different types of spiritual teaching (for example teaching music as a spiritual tradition), draw on many different Hindu religious or cultural traditions, and possess enormously varying levels and types of knowledge, awareness, ability and power.

'GURU' IS ALSO ALL OF THE FOLLOWING:

### A 'PRECEPTOR' (ACHARYA):

'Preceptor' here means a person dedicated to the *protection, preservation, impartation and practice* of the basic *precepts* of a tradition of spiritual knowledge - not only through second-hand knowledge 'about' it but through knowledge that is experientially grounded and self-realised. A supreme *Acharya* is called 'Abhi-nava-gupta' – one who is capable of protecting (*gupta*) the ancient secrets of that tradition through its total renewal (*abhi-nava*). Yet if the tradition in question is connected with a lineage of *gurus* or even uses the word 'guru' in any way, such an *Acharya* must necessarily have direct knowledge of its inner meaning and truth – and therefore must be *guru* himself. A *guru*, on the other hand, may not necessarily be a preceptor, let alone a supreme preceptor. Yet only a *guru* who is *also* a supreme

preceptor (*Adicharya*) can also be a genuine teacher of truth or *satguru*.

#### **AN ACCOMPLISHED PRACTITIONER (SADHAKA):**

Becoming *guru* is based on *lifelong* practice and/or development of different *yogas*. *Being guru* is itself a *yoga* of the highest order - being based on a lifetime's practice and refinement of those *yogas* which the *guru* teaches. Conversely, a student's dedication and patience in learning from and in learning to respect and serve their *guru* – is *their* highest *yoga*.

#### **A PURPOSEFUL PRACTICE (SADHANA):**

The practice of *being guru* has a 'tantric' purpose – that of guarding (*tra*) and expanding or spreading (*tan*) awareness, all with the intent of awakening others to the divine reality of the absolute and all-pervasive awareness that is 'God' and to the auspicious benefits it can shower on them. In order to do so *guru* must be able to identify with the divine awareness, conceptualise its nature, experience, practice and exercise the powers (*shaktis*) inherent in it, and cultivate these power as inner psychic abilities (*siddhis*). Then *guru* can also use these powers for purposes of initiation (*diksha*) and transmission of divine grace (*shaktipat*). A *satguru* is therefore also a *diksha guru* and *siddhaguru*, and someone who is religiously devoted to and worships at the feet of the supreme *guru* - The Divine - in order to receive and transmit divine-metaphysical comprehensions, awareness-bliss, grace and power.

## RELATED TERMS:

### Gurukul

A *Gurukul* is a residential school in which students and *guru* or teacher live in close proximity or within the same house. The students learn from *guru* and also help *guru* in his day-to-day life, including the carrying out of mundane chores. This is not an expression of inequality of caste, class, gender or social standing but of *Guruseva* – that ‘service’ to *guru* which allows him to continuously carry out the work that *guru* alone is capable of doing within and for the world - and must therefore engage in without cessation except for rest, renewal and reinvigoration through his own meditative worship.

### Guruseva

*Guru* can be compared to a human power amplifier and transformer. The more active interest, dedication, respect, generosity (*dana*) and service (*seva*) he receives from his students, the more they will receive back for themselves, both directly and indirectly, from *guru* and from within themselves – yet powerfully amplified and transformed.

### Guruyoga / Gurudarshan

The practice of opening one’s awareness to *guru* more fully, both inwardly and outwardly, and taking time to meditate his words more deeply. In particular it is through *Gurudarshan* - opening oneself to and meditating the presence of *guru* when the latter is absorbed in silent meditation *that guruyoga* brings its richest fruits - allowing the disciple to sense the divine-transcendental qualities of awareness that the *guru* is enjoying.

## Dikshaguru / Gurudiksha

A *guru* who simply teaches is called *shiksha guru* as opposed to a *diksha guru* who can also bestow initiation (*diksha*). *Guru's* power of initiation and 'transmission' of awareness can be exercised instantly and/or over years, both outwardly and inwardly, visibly and /or invisibly. It can take the outward form of words or *mantra*, of a single glance or sustained gaze, or the descent of divine grace (*Shaktipat*) in his presence. These can induce experiences of many different sorts - yet all triggered by *guru's* intent and initiatory transmissions to them. The most powerful form of *gurudiksha* is one-to-one, close up meditative communion with *guru* – the ultimate form of *gurudarshan*.

## Gurupuja

If the *guru* performs *puja* within the shrine of the *ashram* or *gurukul* this brings great benefits not only to the *guru*, renewing and enhancing his health, powers and wisdom. It can bring immense benefits to all members of his spiritual family or *kula* - providing a medium of transmission to all his students and allowing *guru* to act as a channel through which the clarifying light and awareness bliss (*chitananda*) of the divine can pervade the household.

## CITATIONS

For most Western students, guru-yoga is the great stumbling block in their discipleship. ... The goal is not being swallowed by the teacher's personality but merging with his or her true nature, which is the singular Reality that also is one's own true nature.

Georg Feuerstein

The attitude of the student towards his teacher is of great importance to the student, because it lays an unseen cable from him to the teacher, and along that cable pass to and fro the messages and help which the teacher has to give. The teacher can never lose contact with the student by going to another part of the world. That unseen cable is elastic and it will stretch for thousands of miles, because the World-Mind consciousness will travel almost instantly and anywhere. Contact is not broken by increasing physical distance. It is broken by the change of heart, the alteration of mental attitude by the student towards the teacher. If the attitude is wrong, then the cable is first weakened and finally snapped. Nothing can then pass through and the student is really alone.

The projected ideas and concentrated thoughts of a man who has made a permanent connection with his Overself are powerful enough to affect beneficently the inner life of other men. But even here nature requires the latter to establish their own inner connection with him in turn. And this can be done only by the right mental attitude of trust and devotion.

The Master may add his spiritual vitality or inspiration temporarily to the disciple's by merely wishing him well. If this is done during the Master's prayer or meditation, the disciple's subconscious will spontaneously pick up the telepathically projected flow and sooner or later bring it into consciousness. If, however, something more precise and more positive is required, he may consciously will and focus it to the disciple while both are in a state of meditation at the same time.

Where the teacher is a man of genuine Overself-consciousness, a further force is brought into play. There is a spontaneous reaction to the student's thought about the teacher, but this comes from the Overself direct to the student... It is enough if he retires daily from contact with the world for a half hour or hour and turns his attention towards the Divine alone and opens himself as a gate through which it shall pass for the enlightenment of others. During that same period, all those who are mentally devoted to him will then automatically receive the transmitted impulse without them even being consciously in the adept's mind at the time. But such a guide is rare and such cases are consequently exceptional.

Paul Brunton



**Acquire the transcendental knowledge from a Self-realized master by humble reverence, by sincere inquiry, and by service.**

Bhagavad Gita

**He who makes an effort to please the Guru [through dedication to self-discipline and service] receives the [secret knowledge].**

**The first sign of success is confidence that [one's efforts] will bear fruit. The second is being firm in that faith. The third is devotion to the Guru.**

Shiva-Samhita

**Gurus who know petty mantras and herbal concoctions are numerous. But difficult to find here on earth is a Guru who knows the mantras described in the Nigamas, Agamas and Tantras.**

**O Beloved, he whose vision is stable without object, whose awareness is firm without support, and whose breath is stable without effort is a Guru.**

**O Beloved, he who really knows the identity of the body and macrocosm ... is a Guru and none other.**

Kula-Anarva-Tantra

**The Guru sets in motion his own consciousness in the consciousness of the disciple ... thus initiation that bestows liberation is given.**

Abhinavagupta

**All the sages and seers look upon Guru as an embodiment of the trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshvara [Shiva] ... The Guru is Maheshvara when he destroys the world of concepts stirring in his disciple's heart. The Guru is Brahma, the creator, when he purifies his disciple's heart and sows in it the seed of highest truth. He is Vishnu when he protects this newly created wisdom of yoga within the disciple.**

**In his purest essence [Guru] is without form and quality ... It is to impart knowledge of the Self to the disciple that the Guru takes a form. The Guru does this to awaken his disciples, to bestow yogic knowledge, and uplift the world ... When a seeker is blessed by the Guru his entire body is transformed, and he begins to move through worlds previously unknown to him.**

Guru Muktananda

**I bow to Lord Shiva, Vasugupta, Somananda, Uptalacharya, Abhinavagupta and Kshemaraja. [guru homage to the lineage of Shaivist gurus]**

**Guru Shankaracharya and his four disciples:**



**'GURU'**

**All that breathes without breath,**

**All that sees without eyes, moves without limbs,**

**Hears without ears, touches without hands, is Guru.**

**All that is shared with Guru is purified and transformed by Guru.**

**All awareness that is wholly turned to Guru comes back enriched by Guru.**

**All services rendered to Guru are services rendered to one's Self and the World.**

**All that is received from Guru with awareness enables one gradually to see Guru.**

**All efforts to open oneself to the grace of Guru invite initiation from Guru.**

**All efforts to truly see and feel Guru bring effects without effort.**

**All that sees and is seen through the eyes of Guru is Guru.**

**All that is spoken through the words of Guru is Guru.**

**All that is enfilled and enfolded by Guru is Guru.**

**All that is Guru is Maheshvara.**

Peter Wilberg

**Victory to the ancient Gurus ... who are faultless pilots through the turbulence of the waves of the sea of sacred texts.**

**Hail to the primordial Guru Shambhu, Shrikantha - the great Lord [Shiva] who is full of the light of awareness, whose greatness is beyond all evaluation, and who cuts asunder the bondage ... of bound souls.**

**The Lord has set in motion the heart of the Guru with compassion for lifting up those who have taken refuge [at his feet]. That glorious Guru has set me on the path of truth.**

**Having ... seen creatures who are simply carriers of the burden of [false] Gurus and their blind followers, I have prepared a trident of wisdom in order to cut asunder their bondage.**

**O goddesses, full of streams of ardent delight rushing from you lavishly as you move about freely [Khechari] in the domain of the Heart, and acting as the sharp cutting edge of the wisdom spike that is proficient in cutting asunder the crores of my fetters; my mind, speech and body, free of the fear of transmigratory existence, are already surrendered at your feet. May You therefore confer your favour on me exceedingly and quickly, and dwell in my Heart as Grace abounding.**

**O goddesses, having your beautiful and ingenious continued existence in the Seed of the Heart, [and] assigning [me] the position of Guru, it is You who have employed me in the act of exposition etc. Therefore forgive this capriciousness of my speech and mind.**

*Abhinavagupta, in conclusion to his Paratrikishika-Vivarana*



**Abhinavagupta and his Kula**

## THE PLACE OF 'GURU' IN THE NEW YOGA

In THE NEW YOGA, being Guru has many dimensions - Guru being both a person, a practice exercised through spiritual powers, a relational principle and a *responsibility* exercised with a definite purpose. As a person, Guru is a human embodiment of the Awareness Self. Guru is not simply a person with mature awareness however, but one who by virtue of this is empowered to help others to expand, deepen, express and embody their own awareness. The practice of Guru – that of being, embodying and imparting awareness - is based on a heightened capacity for BEING AWARE and for BECOMING OTHER – for aware identification with the souls of others. Guru is one who has the necessary soul powers or Siddhis to shape-shift their soul body in resonance with anything and anyone, and to “enter the body of another without leaving their own” (Abhinavagupta). The Guru principle is that of educating people in awareness through mutual devotion and meditation – Guru devoting him- or herself to meditating each student’s experience with awareness, and the disciples in turn meditating Guru as an embodiment of their true identity - the divine Awareness Self within them. Just as it is the responsibility of the parent to cultivate the healthy development of the child’s potentialities and of the adult self latent within the child, so it is the responsibility of the Guru to cultivate the disciple’s potentialities of awareness and deepen the maturity of their awareness. To do so requires that Guru possess powers of initiation (Diksha) through which they can both destroy the disciple’s accumulation of unaware identifications (Karma) and bestow the disciple with a new and more aware experience of self – and to identification with their divine Awareness Self. The aim of Guru is not to either annihilate the student’s current self-experience or ego identity - or force them to surrender it to their own - but rather to become someone aware of their own ego identity as but one small expression and embodiment of their Awareness Self. Guru can be either man or woman, but like awareness and its powers, the inner self and body is neither male nor female – and also both.

## THE 'SIDDHA GURU' IN THE NEW YOGA

In traditional tantra various 'perfections' or 'siddhis' were said to accompany liberation through awareness or 'moksha'.

- **Parkaya Pravesh:** Parkaya Pravesh means one's soul entering into the body of some other person.
- **Anima Siddhi:** Becoming smaller than the smallest (an atom);
- **Mahimā Siddhi:** Becoming larger than the largest;
- **Laghimā Siddhi:** Becoming lighter than the lightest;
- **Vayu Gaman Siddhi:** Through this siddhi a person can become capable of flying in the skies and traveling from one place to another in just a few seconds.

In terms similar to those of Kashmir Shaivism, in The New Yoga these and other siddhis are understood in terms of distinct relationships to and experiences of Awareness. Thus **Anima Siddhi** is the power to experience the aware inwardness of even the smallest things; **Mahima** is the power to experience to enlarge one's awareness body and/or to experience a space or body of any as a body of awareness; **Laghima** is the ability to experience the weightlessly, spacious character of pure awareness; **Prapti** is the power of being or abiding in the essential Self; **Ishitva Siddhi** is the power of abiding in and experiencing pure awareness as such; **Karana Siddhi** the power of experiencing one's body as an embodiment of the Divine Awareness pervading the cosmos - of cosmic space (Kha) and the cosmic aether of awareness (Akasha); **Prakamyā Siddhi** is the power of experiencing the entire manifest world as the play of the Divine Awareness.

In The New Yoga, siddhis are seen as experienced powers of the Awareness Body or 'soul body' rather than the physical body. The comprehensive range of practices or 'yogas' of awareness that constitute The New Yoga facilitate the experience and exercise of a whole new variety of such soul body powers – siddhis of the sort practiced by the empowered guru or siddha guru. It is these that make The New Yoga into a new original form of 'siddha yoga':

- The ability to experience the sensory qualities as the expression of soul qualities: shapes, tones and textures of awareness or soul.
- The ability to surround the entire body of a thing or person in the outer field of one's spatial awareness.
- The ability to see through people's eyes into their souls.
- The ability to sense the body of another as a sensory image of their soul and to resonate with its inner qualities.
- The ability to enter the body of another with one's own awareness or soul (Parkaya Pravesh Siddhi)
- The ability to feel the soul of another in our own body and our soul in theirs.
- The ability to perceive the shape of another person's soul body.
- The ability to shift the bodily shape, tone and texture of one's soul.
- The ability to let one's awareness or soul flow into the body of another, imparting new shapes, tones and textures to it.
- The ability to sense the soul qualities pervading the inwardness of another person's body or parts of that body.
- The ability to 'meld' one's soul with that of another, dissolving the apparent physical boundaries that separate us as beings.
- The ability to modulate the tone, texture and quality of the psychological 'spaces', outer or inner that we are in.
- The ability to engage in intimate soul body intercourse with other human beings, with or without physical contact or intercourse.
- The ability to engage in soul body 'intra-course' with one's higher soul or oversoul (Mahatma), with discarnate souls and with the transcendental soul qualities that constitute particular deities.
- The ability to attune to and identify with the soul qualities of all beings, to shape-shift one's soul body in resonance with them, and reveal them through one's physical form.
- The ability to perceive the divine, trans-personal form of another person's soul body.

- The ability to feel one's awareness or soul extending beyond the boundaries of the physical body into an infinite cosmic space of awareness - to experience the entire universe as our body.
- The ability to experience one's own body and that of others as a unique portion of the divine awareness, an embodiment of the infinite space and aether of awareness.
- The ability to absorb the pure vibration ('Spanda') of potentiality or power of action that is 'Shakti' directly from space – experienced as the pure aether of awareness that is 'Shiva'.
- The ability to contract one's awareness to an infinitesimal point at the base of one's spine, and experience it as a point of infinite power coiled up at the core of all things – 'Kundalini'.
- The ability to let one's awareness rise up from the crown of one's head and expand into the great, all encompassing sky of awareness that is the all-surrounding space of the outer universe.
- The ability to let one's awareness flow down from our heads and mind space into an unbounded inner soul space of awareness that is the true womb of all outer universes.
- The ability to take the awareness of others down into the depths of their soul and to release the pure power of awareness rise from those depths as 'serpent power' in their body – 'Kundalini'.
- The ability to experience space as an infinite field of pure awareness, pervaded by infinitesimal units of awareness from which all things are created – the 'aether' ('Akasha') or 'life-breath' of soul that is 'Psyche' or 'Prana'.
- The ability to experience time as an infinite time-space of awareness within which all things, beings and events – past, present and future – are constantly and simultaneously presencing, coming to be and 'be-coming'.
- The ability to extend the temporal horizon of one's awareness 'before' one's birth and beyond one's death, recollecting and anticipating the nature of one's life before life and after death.
- The ability to identify with divine-transcendental qualities of awareness soul – to experience one's soul as a body of pure bliss, space, light, air, fire, watery fluidity or dense matter.