

Śrīmad Rājacandra on the Necessity of a Direct Living Sad-guru

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Śrīmad Rājacandra (1968-1901. AD) was a very grand soul with prodigious prenatal memory, unusually spiritual poetic tendency, and direct experience of Self-realization. His master piece work, named *Ātma-siddhi-śāstra* (ASS) composed in Gujarati, is written with the sole purpose of saving the humanity from mere ritualism and pursuance of barren knowledge that leads them but to the hell, to save them from it and show them the entirely hidden secret path of Truth. Herein is emphasized the ideal of Self-pursuit, Self-realization and Self-absorption.

In about twenty-eight *dohā* verses of his ASS he has made various statement that emphasize the need of a direct living good preceptor on the spiritual path of Self-realization. At the outset he bows down to the feet of the Holy True Teacher, the Adored Jina, who explained the real nature of the Soul, without understanding which he suffered infinite misery.¹ Emphasizing that a true teacher is essential, he adds that he who gives up his individual theories, such as whims, delusion, etc., and serves the feet of the true Teacher, finds his ideal and attains Self-realization.² However low, as compared with the Arhant, a living teacher be, he is necessary to guide the seeker after truth. To this effect Śrīmad Rājacandra says that even the obligation to Jina who is invisible is not comparable to that of a visible living true teacher. Without attending to this fact, self-contemplation does not arise.³ Referring to the True Teacher, he says that these are the admirable qualities of the True Teacher, viz., knowledge of the Self, equanimous feeling at the contradictory pairs of the world, such as pleasure or pain, praise or censure, gain or loss, etc., worldly life only due to the operation of the

past *Karmas* and not due to present attachment to good or hatred towards bad surroundings or circumstances, unique speech distinguished by sweetness, truth, inner conviction, beauty and authority, and knowledge of the supreme scriptures.⁴ Without the teaching of a True Teacher, the character of the Jina is not understood. How can any good be done to a soul without such understanding? With such understanding alone, it is possible to comprehend and attain the full and true character of Jina.⁵ The scriptures which establish the existence of the soul and non-soul including matter, time, space, motion and rest, are the prop of the souls deserving liberation, when the facility of a visible living true teacher is not available.⁶ Or, if the true teacher had ordered the reading of such scriptures, then the pupil should always contemplate such ones, after giving up the disputations and distinctions of different schools of thought.⁷ After giving up whimsical self-guidance and obstinacy of holding up one's own views, the soul follows the guidance of the True Teacher. Knowing this to be the visible cause of liberation, the Jina has called it Right Belief.⁸ The mighty foes in the form of the passions of anger, pride, deceit and greed, attachment and hatred, are not destroyed by whimsical self-guidance. By surrendering unto the True Teacher, they go away with but slight effort.⁹

While discussing about a perverse bigot, Śrīmad says that even in the presence of the visible True Teacher a bigot asks a perverse view, and follows the untrue teacher with determination chiefly to gratify his own vanity.¹⁰ True sainthood is there where there is Soul-Knowledge. Saints are the True Teachers. Else it is delusion to revere the teacher's of one's own family merely as such. The persons who are soul-seekers know this.¹¹ The soul-seeker should reckon the attachment of a living visible True Teacher as a great blessing, and

act on his precept, with the united activity of the energies of mind, speech and body.¹² In the three ages of past, present and future, the path of the Highest Ideal is one and the same, and that life alone is worthy by which the Highest Ideal is attained. Keeping this in the mind one should acquire the proximity of a True Teacher, and one's mind should be rid of all other diseases, and have the desire for Self-realization only.¹³ When passions recede, and the only desire is for liberation, and there is sorrow for continuous rebirths, as also compassion for all beings, that is the abode of Self-Ideal.¹⁴ Where this condition is attained the wise teaching of the True Teacher is palatable, and from it there arises bliss-giving Right Thinking.¹⁵

A soul-seeker that gives up his bias for one's particular school of thought and religion, and follows the precept of the True Teacher, gets pure Eight Beliefs, in which there is neither distinction nor partisanship.¹⁶ If such aspirants for Self-realization get wise guidance of a True Teacher, they acquire Right Belief, and lead a life of purification.¹⁷ By the teaching of the True Teacher new light dawns in a pupil, he gains self-knowledge and his ignorance disappears. To him his own nature appears to be pure and consciousness itself, undiminshable, immortal, indestructible and of a nature entirely independent of and separatre from the body. He come to see that he is the doer and enjoyer of *Karmas*, only where there is delusion about the identification of the soul and body. As soon as his life flows in his own nature, he at once becomes non-doer and non-enjoyer.¹⁸

In conclusion, Śrīmad declares that there is no disease so bad as soul-delusion, and there is no doctor so skilled like True teacher; there is no prescription so good like the commands of the Teacher; and there is no medicine like contemplation of and concentration upon the true nature of

the soul.¹⁹ All souls are alike Siddha, i.e. perfect or liberated souls. He who understands this becomes Siddha. Of this the essential auxiliary cause is the obedience to the percepts of the True Teacher, or the contemplation of the state of Jinahood.²⁰ And, finally, he offers innumerable obeisance at the feet of the Self-realized one who, though living in a human body, nonetheless lives a life transcending all attachment for the body.²¹ Thus, in the light of his self experience, Śrīmad has composed his *Ātma-siddhi* for the benefit of a true seeker of Self-knowledge, and therein he has expressed his recommendation with regard to the importance of a True Teacher (*sadguru*) in very clear terms.

In view of the fact that Śrīmad was himself a Self-realized person, that the memories of his past lives dawned on him at the tender age of seven years, and that he had no need of a *guru* in his current life, his recommendations carry an authority and realibility. His motive in composing the work was just his help the true seekers for Self-realization.

Although those thoughts of Śrīmad have Jainism in their background, they have an added value in that similar thoughts and recommendations have been made by some other Self-realized saints in other non-Jaina traditions, too. Thus, the famous Saint Raṅga Avadhūta of Nāreśvara (in South Gujarat), who was a devotee of Dattātreya, has specifically confessed, in one of his devotional songs (*bhajan*), that it was by the holy Word of Guru that he was awakened although he was sleeping since numerous lives.²² In another devotional song he declared that only the grace of a Guru is enough for the welfare of a disciple, and that the physical strength, backing of residential property, might of wealth, power of mind or intellect, are all helpless without it.²³

Julian Johnson²⁴ has listed, and discussed in detail, four cardinal precepts of the Sikh religion of India: (1) First of

all, there is a necessity of *living Guru*, a genuine saint who has been appointed by the supreme Sat Purush to act as Guru. By *living* we mean one who is still in the physical body. After his death, or departure from his body, the Guru will still take care of all whom he has initiated; but he cannot accept new disciples. This is not because the Guru is limited, but because the disciple himself is so limited that he cannot receive instructions and initiation from a departed Guru. (2) The second fundamental of this system of the Masters, the pure Sant Mat, is the vital fact of the *audible life stream*. This stream is in fact nothing less than the Supreme One, projecting Himself on all planes of life in a constant stream of musical vibrations, through which flows the most incomprehensible power, life-giving and creative. This current is also the central factor in liberation and salvation from the endless rounds of births and deaths. This stream can be received from a *living* Guru only. (3) The third general truth emphasized by the saints is complete liberation and spiritual triumph while still living in the physical body. It is a central precept of the Sant Mat that nothing can be accomplished after death in a way of spiritual liberation unless it is at least begun during this life. In every case, when the individual has not been initiated during the lifetime, he must return to earthly life for another chance to meet and follow a *living* Guru. (4) Unless a man is able to give initiation and lead his disciple upon the inner planes, he is not a Master and should not be accepted as such. And it must be remembered that *initiation* is of first importance. All these things are taught with great clarity and force repeatedly in the *Adi Granth*.

The tradition of the Radha Soami Satsang Beas is very specific on the point of the necessity of a direct spiritual Master on the path of Self-realization. Truth itself may be

universal, but a spiritual Master can function here as a Master only so long as he lives in a physical body. The Gitā was spoken to Arjuna by the living Kṛṣṇa. The very reason that impelled God to take a human body in the first place suggests that such work as he has to do can be done only in a human body. If it were otherwise, then he never had a need of coming in human form.²⁵

Jesus Christ too said: "I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."²⁶ Every Master is the light of the world. He brings with him the light of the Eternal One. If anyone centers his attention upon the Master and walks in his light, there can be no more darkness in him. If the disciple opens the gates of light in himself, as the Masters urge him to do, he walks unobstructed into the kingdom of heaven. But he can do this only by the light of the *living* Master. It was this elementary truth which Jesus was trying to inculcate.²⁷

Usually when people accept a book as the authoritative word of God, then they assert that all revelation is closed. The last word has been said. Believe it now or be condemned. This has been the supreme tragedy of history. The Vedas, the Śāstras, the Purāṇas, the Gitā, the Mahābhārata and the Rāmāyana, the Zend-Avesta, the Bible and the Koran, and other religious scriptures - all these books are to be worshipped and obeyed. They are declared, *ex cathedra*, to be the inspired word of God. *Ergo*, it is the duty of all men to accept and believe them. And all of them are fetters to intelligence. No matter how good they may be in themselves, they become fetters because their followers insist that all revelation be closed. All spiritual instructions are finished. Instead of listening to a living Master in each age, their respective books are considered to be the infallible word. Crystallization of thought always goes before moral stagnation. Without a living Master

spirituality wanes, as a lamp goes out when the oil is exhausted. As soon as a religion becomes fixed, static, crystallized, upon that foundation a corrupt priesthood is established, and at once the whole thing begins to decline into an insipid formalism. This is history. It is no theory.²⁸

No one can possibly gain spiritual freedom except by and through the *Shabd-dhun*, and no one can possibly get that *Shabd-dhun* without first placing his life in the hands of a Satguru. On the other hand, if you get a Satguru, you cannot fail to get *jivanmukti*, redemption from all ills of this or any other life. And this is because the Satguru never fails to connect his discipline with the *Shaba-dhun*. And so, having both Satguru and *Shabd-dhun*, one cannot fail to get spiritual freedom, which is called *jivanmukti*.²⁹

In the Swaminarayan tradition, the founder of the sect, Sahajanand Swami known popularly as *Bhagavān Svāminārāyaṇa* became the object of worship and mediation as the perfect manifestation of God in human form. In its new tradition of the Akshar Purusnottam Sanstha, the distinctive belief of its members is that contact with the manifestation of *Akṣara* on earth is essential for one to reach *Puruṣottama*, God Almighty. Only after the devotee has reached Swāmi who is *Akṣara* can he reach *Nārāyaṇa* who is *Puruṣottama*. The *Akṣara*, as one of the succession of 'God-realized' saints, is the representative of God on earth; he gives the perfect example, speaks with the authority of God, and receives reverence and worship of the devotees. All spiritual aspirants accept him as perfect ideal for emulation. Members of this new school believe that *Bhagavān Svāminārāyaṇa* has been keeping Himself primarily present in the person of the successive Gurus, viz., Svāmi Guṇātītānanda, Bhagatji Mahārāja, Śāstriji Mahārāja, Yogiji Mahārāja and Pramukha-svāmi Mahārāja, as also in the images and sacred scriptures. The

Guru, i.e. the *Akṣara*, is spoken of as 'the sacred texts personified' because he lives in harmony with all the percepts of the scriptures given by *Bhagavān Svāminārāyaṇa*. Without such a Guru, it is said, there can be no *Satsaṅga*. It is only through association with the *Akṣara* who has come to earth in a personal form that one can get rid of one's vices, baser instincts, and the clutches of *Māyā* and thereby gain release.³⁰

Foot-notes

- 1.ASS.,1: *Je svarūpa samajyā vinā, pāmyo duḥkha anamita /
Samajavyum te pada namum, śrī sadguru bhagavanita /
///*; The author of this article acknowledges his gratefulness to the edition of the *Ātma-siddhi* of Śrīmad Rājacandra by Rai Bahadur J. L. Jaini, with English translation and Introduction, of which I have made full use, of course with necessary modifications. NMK.
- 2.Ibid.,9 : *Seve sadguru-caraṇ-ne, tyāgī dai nija-pakṣa /
Pāme te paramārtha-ne nija-pada-no le lakṣa //9//*
- 3.Ibid.,11: *Pratyakṣa-sadguru sama nahim, parokṣa-jina-upakāra/
Evo lakṣa thayā vinā, uge na ātma-vicāra //11//*
- 4.Ibid.,10: *Ātma-jñāna sama-darśitā, vicare udaya-prayoga /
Apūrva-vāṇī parama-śruta, sadguru-lakṣaṇa yogya //10//*
- 5.Ibid.,12: *Sadguru-nā upadeśa vaṇa, samajāya na Jina-rūpa /
Samajyā vaṇa upakāra śo ? samajye Jina-svarūpa //12//*
- 6.Ibid.,13: *Ātmādi astitva-nā, jeha nirūpaka sāstra /
Pratyakṣa sadguru-yoga nahim, tyam ādhāra supātra //13//*
- 7.Ibid.,14: *Athavā sadguru-e kahyām, je avagūhana kāja /
Te te nitya vicāravām, karī matāmtara tyāga //14 //*
- 8.Ibid.,17: *Svacchamda, matu āgraha tajī, varte sadguru-lakṣa/
Samakita tene bhākhīyum, kāraṇa gaṇī pratyakṣa //17//*
- 9.Ibid.,18: *Mānādika śatru mahā, nija-chamde na marāya /
Jātām sadguru śaraṇamām, alpa prayāse jāya //18//*
- 10.Ibid.,26: *Pratyakṣa sadguru-yoga-mām, varte dṛṣṭi vimukha /
A-sadgur-ne dṛḍha kare, nija-mānārthe mukhya //26//*
- 11.Ibid.,34: *Ātma-jñāna tyām munipañum, te saccā guru hoyā /
Bākī kula-guru kalpanā, ātmārthi nahi joyā //34//*
- 12.Ibid.,35: *Pratyakṣa sadguru prāpti-no, gaṇe parama upakāra /
Traṇe yoga ekatva-thī, varṣe ājñādhāra //35*
- 13.Ibid.,36-37: *Eka hoyā traṇa kāla-mām, pararamāratha-no pamtha/*

Prere te paramārtha-ne, te vyavahāra samamta //
Ema vicāri amtare, śodhe sadguru-yoga /
Kāja ku ātmārtha-nuñ, bījo nahim mana roga //36-37//

14. *Ibid.*, 38: *Kaṣāya-ni upaśāntatā, mātra mokṣa abhilāṣa /*
Bhave kheda, prāñi-dayā, tyām ātmārtha-nivāsa //38//
15. *Ibid.*, 40: *Āve jyām evi daśā, sadguru-bodha suhāya /*
Te bodhe su-vicāraṇā, tyām pragatē sukha-dāya //40//
16. *Ibid.*, 110: *Mata darṣana āgraha tañi, varte saduru-lakṣa/*
Lahe śuddha samakita te, jemām bheda na pakṣa //110//
17. *Ibid.*, 109: *Te jijñāsu jīva-ne, thāya sadguru-bodha /*
To pāme samakita-ne, varte amāra-śodha //109//
18. *Ibid.*, 119-121: *Sadguru-nā upadeś-thī, āvyum apūrva bhāna /*
Nija-pada nija-māñhi lahyun, dura thayun ajñāna //119//
Bhāsyum nija-svarūpa te, śuddha cetanā-rūpa /
Ajara amaru avināśi ne, dehātita svarūpa //120//
Kartā bhoktā karma-no, vibhāva varte jyāmāya /
Vṛitti vahī nija-bhāva-mam, thayo a-kartā tyāmāya//121//
19. *Ibid.*, 129: *Ātma-bhrānti-sama roga nahim, sadguru vaidya sujāna /*
Guru-ājñā-sama pathya nahim, auśadha vicāra dhyāna //129//
20. *Ibid.*, 135: *Sarva jīva che siddha-sama, je samaje te thāya /*
Sadguru-ājñā jina-daśā, nimitta kāraṇa māmya //135//
21. *Ibid.*, 142: *Deha chatām jenī daśā, varte dehātita /*
Te jñāni-nā carana-nām, ho vaṁdana agaṇita //142//
22. *Guru-carana prīta morī lāgi re /*
Soñ thī maim janamo-janama-se, guru-śadada-se jāgi re //1//
23. *Guru-kṛpā hi kevalam śiṣya-praramāmaṅgalam /*
Deha-balam geha-balam vitta-balam citta-balam /
Tad-vinā tu sarva-balam viddhy-asāra-niṣphalam //
24. Johnson, Julian, *The Path of the Masters*, Radha Soami Sarsang
 Beas, Punjab, India, (15th revised ed.), 1993, pp. 136-138.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 80.
26. Holy Bible, John 8.12.
27. Johnson, *op. cit.* p. 122.
28. *Ibid.*, pp. 132-134.
29. *Ibid.*, pp. 417-418.
30. Williams, Raymond B., *A New Face of Hinduism: The Swaminarayan religion*. Cambridge University Press Cambridge, 1984, pp. 80-81;
 Dave, Ramesh M. *Ethics of the Shikshapatri*, in Swaminarayan Magazine,
 1978, pp. 9-10, Ahmedabad, Akshar Purushottam Sanstha.