WHEN THE STUDENT IS READY....

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No one can choose a true Guru. The right to “choose” remains the sole prerogative of the Guru. Gurus are not for the asking. They are not mangos to be plucked from trees at one’s own sweet will, nor boxes of cereal to be purchased from a supermarket. A Guru cannot be bought. He must be earned.

The vendor of placebos, “feel good”, “I’m ok, you’re ok” bundles of techniques comes with a price tag. With him/her one may haggle and bargain. He/she has something to sell. But the Guru has no merchandize on his shelves, nor does he live in the market place, where raucous voices proclaim the merits of their wares. Miracles can be bought there, magic potions drunk there. But no such thing can happen in the home of the Guru. His heart is not a “shop till you drop arena”. There is nothing to advertise in the place where the Guru dwells.

If one indeed stumbles by chance upon the cave of such a Guru, one may find this startling sign over the door.”No, you may not meet me today!” Or indeed, if by some such fortuitous chance one may wander into the place where the Guru sits silent and if one blurts out, “How I wanted to see you!” the Guru may retort “Now you have seen me. You may go!” The Guru is not a particular person, but rather a principle, a Tattwa, an element which is capable of transmitting Vidya, knowledge.

An ordinary teacher is different from the knowledge, just as science is different from the scientist. The cosmic teacher, the Guru, must be the embodiment of knowledge, not just in word but by being. The Guru is a teacher in whom the teacher and the teaching becomes one. The Guru walks his talk and talks his walk.

The Mandukya Upanishad says: Seeker of Brahman should resort to renunciation after examining the worlds acquired through Karma with the help of the maxim: “There is nothing (here) that is not the result of Karma. What is the need of (performing) Karma? For knowing that Reality, the true seeker should go only to a teacher who is the teaching”.

A Vedic description of the true teacher is Srotriyam Brahmanishtam or one so well versed in Vedas that he recites with every heart beat the truth of Brahman (Atman). The Guru lives and breathes, absorbed only in Brahman (Cosmic Consciousness) alone.

But the burden of proof lies solely on the student. When the student is ready, the Guru appears. The student must prove himself worthy. Then the Guru will suddenly manifest in most unexpected ways.

The Upanishadic verse also suggests the responsibility of the student. Renunciation of ego desires is the badge of the Brahmachariyan. Sravana, Manasa and Nidhi Dhyanasan or hearing the truth, contemplation and reflection on the truth and meditation and finally realization are the tools of the student’s trade. If one is sincere to know the Truth, knowledge will reach the seeker. A teacher will come, drawn like a magnet to such a student.