

Loyalty to the Guru

One of Gurudev's teachings was that you shouldn't change your guru. The reason, no doubt, is that frequently some spiritual experience or some powerful attraction will attract us to a guru. Sometimes that attraction remains in all its strength, but that is not normal. Then the devotee, thinking that there is something wrong, is open to someone else from whom they will get a new emotional response.

In addition, as Pūjya Swāmī Chidānandajī once said, "The only purpose of the guru is to destroy the ego of the disciple." And if the guru stops playing nice and starts to put pressure on the ego of the disciple, a disciple can soon become disillusioned and look for someone else who won't put on the pressure. Therefore, Gurudev said, "Don't change gurus," because changing means you are escaping from the purpose of the spiritual life, which is to wear away the ego. And normally it is anything but pleasant to have the ego worn away.

However, Pūjya Swāmī Chidānandajī broke that rule on a number of occasions. There were a number of his disciples whom he actually sent to other gurus. Somehow he felt that they perhaps had a blockage that he wasn't able to break, but that another guru, or a change of scene, or a boost might do it for them. There was even a case when someone approached him and asked, "If you are not satisfied with your guru or if you see something wrong, is it all right to change your guru?" Pūjya Swāmījī happened to know the circumstances and much to everyone's surprise he said, "Yes."

But then, there can also be a different problem. We can get so used to our guru, so loyal to the guru, that we actually enter into a comfort level. Somehow no matter how hard the guru hits us on the head trying to disturb us and get us to move, we refuse to move. We can also criticize anyone else who goes to another guru or is interested in another teaching. We forget that our loyalty finally is not meant to be to the outer guru. We forget that the guru that we are seeking is the guru within all of us. It is God Himself, and that the outer guru, as Pūjya Swāmī Chidānandajī once said, is but a pale reflection of the inner splendour.

Therefore, loyalty to a guru, at a certain point, can simply be a refusal to move on, a refusal to see who the guru really is. Pūjya Swāmī

Chidānandajī also said that when the guru dies then willy-nilly, whether you want to or not, you have to realize who the guru really is.

We are meant to move on from that early attraction and loyalty to the guru. We are meant to affirm that that which attracted us to the guru in the first place is our own true Self. We are meant to know that we are the guru—not who we think we are which is just a silly imagination of our mind, but who we really are. We are That that knows the mind, that knows the ego. It is *there* that we are meant to rest. It is *there* that our loyalty is supposed to be.

We are meant to be continuously loyal, moment by moment, to that unknowable guru that we really are, that is our reality. We are not meant to be loyal to a figment of our imagination, which is what the ego is. Therefore, when Gurudev said, “Don’t change your guru,” we have to understand what he meant. Don’t change the guru, be loyal to the guru, means finally, be loyal to who we really are.