



S.K.S. SWAMINARAYAN TEMPLE (LONDON) – BAL YUVAK MANDAL

Westfield Lane, Kenton, Harrow, Middlesex, HA3 9EA Est. 1966 Charity Reg. No. 271034

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LORD DATTATREY'S 24 GURUS

(Cont'd)

13. Pingala: The thirteenth guru that has awakened my spirit is a prostitute named Pingala. One day, she eagerly awaited a particular client in the hope that he would pay her amply. She waited and waited till late in the night. When he did not turn up, she was at last disillusioned and reflected thus: "Alas! How stupid I am! Neglecting the divine spirit within, who is of the nature of bliss eternal, I foolishly awaited a debauchee (sensualist) who inspires my lust and greed. Henceforth, I shall expend myself on the Self, unite with Him and win eternal joy. Through such repentance, she attained blessedness. Besides, reflecting on its obvious purport, I also realised that a spiritual aspirant should likewise reject the lure of lesser spiritual powers, which are mere by-products of *sadhana* (spiritual practice). I learned that the temptation to secure things from other's hands are the seeds of misery; that renunciation of these is the sole means of realising infinite joy.

14. Arrow-maker: Once I observed an arrow-maker who was totally absorbed in moulding a sharp arrow. He grew so oblivious of all else that he did not even notice a royal pageant that passed by. This sight awakened me to the truth that such single-minded, all-absorbing contemplation of the Self spontaneously eliminates all temptation for the trivial interests of the world. It is the sole secret of success in spiritual discipline. Thus the arrow-maker is my fourteenth guru.

15. Playful Boy: Little boys and girls know neither honour nor dishonour. They do not nurse a grudge or a prejudice against anyone. They do not know what is their own, or what belongs to others. Their happiness springs from their own selves, their innate creativity and they do not need any external objects or conditions to be happy. I realised that the sage of perfect enlightenment is also such. A playful boy thus happened to be my fifteenth guru.

16. Moon: Of all things in nature, the moon is unique. It appears to wax and wane during the bright and dark fortnights. In fact, the lunar globe ever remains the same. In this, it is like the self of the man. While a man appears to pass through the stages of infancy, boyhood, youth, maturity and old age, his real self remains unchanged. All changes pertain only to body and not to the self. Again, the moon only reflects the light of the sun, but has no such of its own. So too, the soul or mind of man is only a reflection of the light of awareness of the real self. Having taught this truth, the moon became my sixteenth guru.

17. Honeybee: Honeybee wanders from flower to flower and, without hurting them in the least, draws honey. So too, a spiritual seeker should study all the Holy Scriptures but retain in his heart, only that is essential for his spiritual practice. Such is the teaching I imbibed from my seventeenth guru, the honeybee.

18. Deer: It is said that deers are very fond of music and that poachers employ it to lure them before hunting them. From this, I learned that passions and sensual desires will soon bog down a spiritual aspirant who has a weakness for merely secular music, till he ultimately loses whatever spiritual progress he has achieved earlier. The deer that taught me this truth is my eighteenth guru.

19. Bird of prey: A bird of prey is my nineteenth guru. One day, I saw one such carrying away a dead rat. Many other birds like crows and eagles attacked it, now kicking on its head and again pecking on its sides in their endeavour to knock off the prey. The poor bird was thus very much pestered. At last, it wisely let its prey fall and all the other birds rushed after it. Thus freeing itself from so much botheration, it sighed in relief. From this, I learned that a man who runs after worldly pleasures will soon come into clash with his fellow-beings who too run for the same, and has to face much strife and antagonism. If he learns to conquer his craving for worldly things, he can spare himself much unhappiness. I realized that this is the only way to the peace in the world.

20. Maiden: Once, I observed a family visit to a maiden's house, seeking her hand in marriage for their son. At that time, her mother was away from home. So the maiden herself had to entertain the guests with refreshments.



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She at once started pounding food-grains with a pestle. The bangles on her hand started knocking against each other, pounding sound. She was afraid that the guests might hear the sound and be unhappy for having caused her so much of trouble. As a Hindu maiden, she is not expected to remove all the bangles on her hand at any time. So she kept two on each hand and removed all the rest. Even then, they were knocking against each other and were making noise. So she kept only one bangle on each hand this time and she could finish her task in quiet. Reflecting on this, I realized that when a number of spiritual seekers live together, a lot of unwanted gossip ensues and no spiritual practice can be pursued with a single-minded effort. Only in solitude, a spiritual aspirant can carry his task. Knowing this truth, I henceforth resorted to solitude. Thus, a maiden happened to be my twentieth guru.

21. Serpent: I observed that a serpent never builds a dwelling for itself. When white ants have raised an anthill for themselves, the serpent eventually come to inhabit it. Similarly, worldly people have to endure many hardships in raising houses for themselves, while a recluse monk does no such thing. Worldly men raise the monasteries and the monk lives in them; or, he lives in old dilapidated temples, or underneath shady trees. The serpent moults, leaving off its old skin. So too at the end of his life a Yogi leaves his body deliberately and in full awareness of his own true self and is not frightened by the phenomenon of death. On the other hand, he casts off his old body as happily as he does his worn out clothes and dons new ones. Thus has my twenty first guru taught me.

22. Spider: The spider is my twenty second guru. It weaves its web from the thread in the form of a fluid. After sometime, it gathers up the web into itself. The supreme projects the whole creation out of itself and after sometime, withdraws it into itself at the time of dissolution. The individual soul too, bears the senses and the mind within itself and, at its birth as a human being or any other living creature, it projects them out as the sense organs, organs of action and the whole body. In accordance with its latent tendencies, the creature thus born, gathers up all the means and objects needed for its living. At the end of its life's duration, the soul again withdraws the senses, mind and acquired tendencies at the hour of death. Thus have I learned from the spider.

23. Caterpillar: The caterpillar is also one of my teachers of wisdom. The wasp carries its caterpillar to a safe corner and closes it up in its nest and goes on buzzing about it. The young caterpillar is so frightened by the incessant buzzing, that it cannot think of anything else than the buzzing wasp. Through such unintermittent contemplation of its mother, the caterpillar too, soon grows up into a wasp! In a like fashion, a true disciple is so charmed and over-awed by the spiritual eminence of his own guru that he cannot think any one other than him. Through such contemplation, he soon blossoms into a great spiritual master himself. The caterpillar is thus my twenty third Guru.

24. Water: Water is my twenty fourth Guru. It quenches the thirst of every creature, sustains innumerable trees and all creatures. While it thus serves all living beings, it is never proud of itself. On the other hand, it humbly seeks the lowliest of places. The sage too should likewise bestow health, peace and joy to every creature that resorts to him. Yet he should ever live as the humblest of God's creation.

With such humility and devotion, I looked upon the whole of God's creation as my teacher and gathered up wisdom. Through patient effort I realised my goal of spiritual enlightenment.