

A commercial attitude may be paying elsewhere but never in the realm of the knowledge divine. Even the secular study gets sanctified if the relationship between the teacher and the taught be wholesome. But the bond between the two in spiritual enlightenment is ever sacred: The disciple prostrates before the master as a mark of making himself over to the other. He adds to his attainments by raising submissive questions pertaining to the real and the non-real, bondage and freedom. Through a reverent personal service he offers himself as oblation in the sacrificial fire of the personality of the master. The body, speech and mind of the disciple are this way dedicated to the bestower of knowledge.

The master in his turn is all mercy to the disciple. He has no motive other than propagation of spirituality. As a burning lamp lights another, an enlightened soul alone can carry light to another competent enquirer. Spiritual fulfilment takes place this wise.

Of what avail are prayer and devotion to an aspirant who views his master as a mere human being? The disciple ought not to hold the master as a man. Before getting the vision of the Deity, the novice sees the form of the *guru* as a preliminary. This form metamorphoses into the Deity. The disciple thereby understands that God and *guru* are one and the same. The master awakens the spiritual consciousness in him. More than that, he leads the initiated into Brahman Itself.

If the aspirant is earnest about spiritual enlightenment, the Lord sees to it that he comes in contact with an enlightened one. Seek and the light is sent to you.

— Sri Ramakrishna