

## RESOURCE 6.3

# The qualities of a guru in Hindu worldviews

The Bhagavad Gita is one of the most important texts for Hindus. In Chapter 16, verses 1–3, there is a list of 26 virtues that describe someone whose life reflects the Divine. These are qualities any Hindu might look to develop.

## What are the qualities of the divine natured person?

Krishna said, 'Fearlessness is one, whether in the face of opposition, adversity or death. So is a pure mind, great self-control, a sense of sacrifice and the ability to practise charity in the right spirit. This person will stay on the path of goodness, following the teachings of the gurus and the scriptures. This person speaks the truth, forgives easily and is free from anger, greed, violence, malice and excessive pride. This person of courage and vigour refrains from finding fault in others. This person is gentle, modest and compassionate to every other being.'

From Roopa Pai's *Gita for Children* (Swift Press 2022), p. 208.

A guru must show all these qualities. In addition, some gurus are regarded as incarnations of the Divine. To know the guru is to know the Divine. Here are two Hindu gurus writing about the nature of the guru as the embodiment of the Divine.

**The Guru is God Himself manifesting in a personal form to guide the aspirant. Grace of God takes the form of Guru. To see the Guru is to see God. The Guru is united with God. He inspires devotion in others. His presence purifies all.**

The Guru is verily a link between the individual and the Immortal. He is a being who has raised himself from this into That, and thus has a free and unhampered access to both the realms. He stands, as it were, upon the threshold of immortality; and bending down, he raises the struggling individuals with his one hand, and with the other lifts them up into the empyrean [heavenly realm] of everlasting joy and infinite Truth-Consciousness.

Mere study of books cannot make one a Guru. One who has studied the Vedas and who has direct knowledge of Atman through *Anubhava* [experience or intuition] can only be enrolled as a Guru. A Jivanmukta or a liberated sage is the real Guru or spiritual preceptor. He is the *Satguru*. He is identical with Brahman or the Supreme Self. He is a Knower of Brahman.

The *Satguru* is Brahman Himself. He is an ocean of bliss, knowledge and mercy. He is the captain of your soul. He is the fountain of joy. He removes all your troubles, sorrows and obstacles. He shows you the right divine path. He tears your veil of ignorance. He makes you immortal and divine. He transmutes your lower, diabolical nature. He gives you the rope of knowledge and saves you when you are drowning in this ocean of *Samsara*.

Sri Swami Sivananda *Guru Tattva* (Divine Life Society 1999)

**The literal meaning of the word 'Guru' is derived from the combination of 'Gu' and 'ru' – 'Gu' means darkness and 'ru' means light.**

Guru is, unarguably, the incandescent light of the supreme consciousness that eradicates the darkness of ignorance. Just as all darkness gets dispelled immediately in the presence of light, likewise, with the rising of the Guru in the form of wisdom ... all the ignorance that was present in the mind ... gets eradicated instantaneously.

The scriptures describe the key attributes of a Guru – tranquil, pure, pious, polite, free from anger and lust, virtuous, the one who has conquered the need for sensory gratification and is no longer a slave of the sense organs. Guru doesn't want anything from the disciple. Guru is self-assured, completely autonomous, but a disciple seeks all from the Guru. Sadguru is the one who adeptly eradicates all possible doubts from their very roots, completely destroys all fear of life and death, and shares the wisdom of the presence of God within. The one who enables the disciple to experience the absolutely whole, unblemished, ever-free God, is the Sadguru. The one who has no attachments, who is always tranquil, always contented and completely self-reliant, ever free is the Guru.

Anandmurti Gurumaa *In Quest of Sadguru* translated by Urmila Pandey (Gurumaa Vani 2011)