



The *Guru-Śiṣya Paramparā*: Understanding the Teacher-Student Tradition

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Abstract

The *Guru-Śiṣya Paramparā*, a foundational pedagogical paradigm with profound roots in Indian philosophical and spiritual traditions, represents a unique and very successful teacher-student connection. This study explores the many facets of this age-old custom, including its philosophical foundations, historical development, and practical applications. In contrast to traditional Western educational paradigms, the *Guru-Śiṣya Paramparā* places a strong emphasis on individualised instruction, holistic growth, and the transfer of knowledge as a transformational experience rather than just information. We will look at important concepts like *sevā* (selfless service), *śraddhā* (faith and devotion), and the idea of *mokṣa* (liberation) as the ultimate aim of education. This essay contends that the *Guru-Śiṣya Paramparā* provides important insights into cultivating deeper understanding, moral character, and a profound connection between the learnt and the learner, whereas contemporary educational institutions place a higher priority on standardised curricula and measurable outputs. This study attempts to offer a perceptive grasp of this enduring legacy and its possible relevance in current educational discourse by means of a thorough examination of ancient texts, historical narratives, and modern interpretations.

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1. Introduction

The *guru-śiṣya* tradition, sometimes called *paramparā* (lit."lineage"), is a line of instructors and pupils in Indian-inspired faiths such as Buddhism (including Tibetan and Zen versions), Sikhism, Jainism, and Hinduism. The teaching *gurukulas* of each *paramparā*, which may be housed in **temples, akharas, gompas, mathas, or vihāras**, are linked to a particular *Sampradāya*. Lessons are passed down from a guru, teacher, or *lāmā* to a *śiṣya* (Sanskrit: शिष्य, disciple), *śramana* (seeker), or *chela* (follower) following the official *dikṣā* (initiation) in the tradition of spiritual partnerships and mentorship. Whether it is āgamic, spiritual, scriptural, architectural, musical, artistic, or martial arts knowledge, it is passed down through the guru-student relationship. This connection is seen to be the most effective technique to teach sensitive or complex knowledge since it is founded on the guru's sincerity and the student's respect, dedication, and obedience. The information that the guru embodies is finally mastered by the student.

According to Monier Monier-Williams (1899: p. 587), *paramparā* (Sanskrit: परम्परा, *paramparā*) literally means an uninterrupted row or series, order, succession, continuity, mediation, and tradition. The *śiṣya* receives education as a true student while living with his or her guru like a family member in the conventional residential type of schooling (A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada *Srimad Bhagavatam* 7.12.1).

Some educational traditions stand out for their distinctive methods of imparting knowledge in the fabric of human history. Mentoring has been practised for many millennia in various South Asian civilizations through an old custom known as the *Guru-Śiṣya Paramparā*. A *guru* (teacher) took on full responsibility for a *Śiṣya* (student) in a novel and distinctive educational approach, educating, guiding, and supporting them in all facets of life in accordance with the *paramparā* tradition—the passing down of knowledge from one guru to the next. Every civilization has been built on the idea of moral education and the transfer of information. The *Guru-Śiṣya Paramparā*, which translates to "the tradition of the teacher (*guru*) and the disciple (*Śiṣya*)" in Sanskrit, has been one of the most durable and esteemed models for this purpose on the Indian subcontinent. This age-old Indian custom, which has been followed for thousands of years, goes beyond simple instruction to create a strong intellectual and spiritual connection between teacher and pupil. The foundation of a teacher-student lineage is comprised of hymns

and rites that have been passed down orally from generation to generation in the Vedas, the oldest sacred books in Hinduism (Saraswati, 2013).

The *Guru-Śiṣya Paramparā* is a codified system of guru-disciple relationships that developed from this oral tradition over time. It embodies a sacred relationship, a way of life, and a profound journey of self-discovery and enlightenment (Singh, 2010). It concentrates on the *Guru-Śiṣya Paramparā*, a tradition that embodies the spirit and tenacity of Indian educational methods and serves as an example of knowledge transfer over generations.

Smṛti (memory), *medhā* (intelligence), *shlanga* (merit), *rāga* (dedication and commitment), *saṁgharṣa* (hard effort), and *utsāha* (enthusiasm) were the qualities of a good *Śiṣya*. Science, war, critical thinking, languages, agriculture, dance, music, and the arts were all covered in the student's broad education under the *guru*'s guidance. *Yoga* practice was crucial for spiritual development. Knowledge, wisdom, and skills were transmitted from one generation to the next. Both the *guru* and the *Śiṣya* were cognizant of their mutually advantageous connection as the philosophical pursuit of knowledge, its seeking, and its imparting were associated with rank and power.

This essay aims to unravel the many facets of this tradition by looking at its philosophical foundations, historical development, and practical application across a range of fields. According to scholars like Radhakrishnan (1929), the *Guru-Śiṣya Paramparā* was greatly influenced by the *Upaniṣads*, which are philosophical writings that were created between 800-200 BCE. These writings explore deep spiritual and metaphysical ideas, highlighting the role of a *guru* in helping a follower achieve emancipation and self-realisation (Saraswati, 2006).

2. Some critical questions about the *Guru-Śiṣya Paramparā*:

- Is blind obedience ethical?
- How to identify a "true" *guru*?
- What safeguards prevent exploitation?
- Does it limit critical thinking?
- Can it adapt to a modern scale?
- How does it address diversity?
- Is it financially sustainable today?
- Does it foster unhealthy dependence?

- Can traditional knowledge be modernized without losing its essence?

3. Objectives

- ❖ Define *Guru-Śiṣya Paramparā*.
- ❖ Trace its historical roots.
- ❖ Identify key characteristics.
- ❖ Analyse the *guru*'s role.
- ❖ Examine *śiṣya*'s responsibilities.
- ❖ Assess its relevance today.
- ❖ Explore challenges.

4. Methodology

- 📚 **Literature Review:** Analyze classical texts (*Vedas*, *Upaniṣads*, *Smṛtis*), scholarly articles, and historical accounts.
- 📚 **Qualitative Analysis:** Interpret philosophical concepts and the nature of the relationship.
- 📚 **Comparative Study:** Briefly compare with modern educational models.

5. Definition of *Guru*

The word "*Guru*" in Sanskrit, which comes from the words "*Gu*," which means darkness, and "*Ru*," which means remover, means more than just a teacher or master. As a result, a guru is essentially someone who illuminates pupils with knowledge and direction, removing the darkness of ignorance. Beyond traditional schooling, this position establishes the Guru as a spiritual lighthouse inside the *Guru-Śiṣya Paramparā*, illuminating the path via ethical and spiritual enlightenment in addition to knowledge.

6. Etymology of the Word '*Guru*'

The term "*Guru*" has a long history, dating back to the first Vedic writings, when it was used to refer to a master or guide with extensive knowledge. Numerous *ślokas* that clarify their heavenly position serve to further emphasise the *Guru*'s centrality in Hinduism:

From the *Upaniṣad(s)*:

“गुरुर्ब्रह्मा गुरुर्विष्णुः गुरुर्देवो महेश्वरः। गुरुः साक्षात् परब्रह्म तस्मै श्रीगुरवे नमः॥”

Translation: “The *Guru* is *Brahmā*, the *Guru* is *Viṣṇu*, the *Guru* is the Lord *Maheshwara* (*Śiva*); they are truly the Supreme Brahman itself. Salutations to such a *Guru*.” These *ślokas* demonstrate the *Guru*'s holistic position within the *Guru-Śiṣya Paramparā* in addition to establishing the *Guru*'s celestial status. This legacy makes the *Gurukul* a respected institution in the Vedic era and beyond by allowing the *Guru* to convey both spiritual insight and academic knowledge, as shown in the *Gurukul* system.

The *Guru-Śiṣya Paramparā*'s teachings are still upheld in the *Gurukul* educational system and its contemporary modifications, proving its eternal significance. We go deeper into the duties and obligations that characterize the *Guru* and their crucial role in forming the intellectual and spiritual fabric of Hindu society as we examine the historical and cultural subtleties of this institution.

7. Philosophical Foundations:

***Vedānta*, *Upaniṣads*, and *Dhārmic* Traditions:**

The Vedānta philosophy, which is founded on the teachings of *Prasthāna* Trayee and includes the *Brahma Sūtras*, *Upaniṣads*, and *Bhagavad Gītā*, is intricately entwined with the intellectual underpinnings of the *Guru-Śiṣya Paramparā*. According to Vedānta, the *guru*'s role is crucial in helping people realise the underlying unity of the individual soul (Atman) with the universal consciousness (Brahman) (Nikhilananda, 1949).

In contrast to worldly knowledge (*avidyā*), the *Upaniṣads* emphasise the value of spiritual knowledge (*vidyā*) passed down from *guru* to pupil. This distinction emphasises the *guru*'s crucial role in teaching moral counsel, spiritual insight, and intellectual wisdom (Saraswati, 2006).

8. Respect and Reverence for *Gurus* in Hinduism

Gurus are deeply respected and revered in Hindu culture, and this is a fundamental part of the society's spiritual fabric. This regard is a deeply rooted spiritual requirement rather than just a societal norm. The *Hindu guru* is frequently seen as a deity-like figure and an embodiment of heavenly wisdom. This idea is aptly expressed in a famous passage from the *Taittiriya Upaniṣad*: “*Āchārya Devo Bhava*”—Treat the teacher as God. While the *Manusmṛti* does

emphasise high respect for teachers and parents (e.g. *Manusmṛti* 2.225 states that the teacher, along with one's mother and father, is the three most reverable gurus one should honour), the specific phrasing of “*Matru devo bhava, Pitru devo bhava, Acharya devo bhava, Atithi devo bhava*” is found in the *Taittiriya Upaniṣad* (1.11.2). This principle emphasises the sacredness of the teacher-student relationship and the *Guru-Śiṣya Paramparā*.

Several tales and anecdotes from the *Purāṇas* describe how pupils honour their masters, further demonstrating the profound regard for *Gurus*. One such story concerns Lord Śiva's master, who is admired for his guidance of one of Hinduism's most deep deities as well as his intelligence. These tales emphasise the guru's crucial role in directing a morally upright and spiritual life, which serves to uphold the ethos of the *Guru-Śiṣya Tradition*.

9. The Impact of *Gurus* on Students and Society

Gurus have had a huge impact on the intellectual, cultural, and spiritual facets of Hindu civilization. Gurus have taught knowledge through the *gurukul* educational system, which has created an enlightened community that can make contributions to the world in a variety of ways.

Hindu society has been significantly impacted by notable gurus such as Swami Vivekananda and Ādi Shankaracharya. Through his works and teachings, Ādi Shankaracharya transformed the customs of his era and revived Hindu philosophy. Hindu philosophy has been influenced for a long time by his work in founding and promoting the *Advaita Vedānta* School.

By spreading *Vedānta* and *Yoga* around the world, Swami Vivekananda greatly expanded the influence of Hindu philosophy. He promoted interfaith knowledge and understanding by introducing Hinduism to a global audience in 1893 through his talks at the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago.

10. Endurance of *Guru-Śiṣya Paramparā* Through History

In addition to being a cornerstone of educational practice, the *Guru-Śiṣya Paramparā*, or teacher-student tradition, is a witness to the tenacity and timeless power of Hindu cultural and spiritual knowledge. This seemingly straightforward method has managed to navigate through the ups and downs of history and cultural shifts while effectively preserving and transmitting the wisdom of over 4,000 years.

The ability of the *Guru-Śiṣya Paramparā* to transmit knowledge orally and practically, frequently without the aid of written scriptures, is one of its most amazing features. Even in the face of terrible circumstances, this approach has proven to be remarkably resilient, guaranteeing the continuation of knowledge. The devastation of *Nālandā* University served as a moving illustration of this tenacity. In 1193, the soldiers of Bakhtiyar Khilji, an Islamic extremist monarch, destroyed the university, which was a major hub for learning in ancient India. An unfathomable amount of knowledge and legacy was lost when the enormous library of *Nālandā*, which included texts gathered over generations, was destroyed.

The fundamental principles of Hindu philosophy and religious practice, however, endured and were renewed through the uninterrupted line of *Guru-Śiṣya* ties in spite of this grave setback. Rebuilding lost knowledge was made possible by the ability to pass down literature orally from one generation to the next. The intrinsic strength of the *paramparā* is demonstrated by the fact that gurus, who were well-versed in scriptures and practices, continued to instruct their followers without the use of physical texts.

A distinctive feature of the *Guru-Śiṣya* tradition is its adaptability and dependence on oral transmission and human memory rather than just written information, which is highlighted by this technique of knowledge preservation. The contextual wisdom and ethical subtleties that printed texts alone might not adequately express are also communicated through this dynamic and interactive technology, in addition to the factual information.

Its efficacy is demonstrated by the *Guru-Śiṣya Paramparā*'s ability to preserve such a vast body of knowledge despite historical ups and downs. It is a potent testament to the ability of a committed and focused generation of educators and learners to preserve and carry on intellectual and spiritual heritage in the face of hardship. This long-standing custom is still essential to the preservation of Hindu culture because it keeps the ancient knowledge alive and available to coming generations.

11. Reflecting on *Guru-Śiṣya Paramparā*

According to the *Guru-Śiṣya Paramparā*, the Guru is a venerated being who is essential to the upbringing of both people and society as a whole, not only an educator operating within the parameters of the *gurukul* educational system. The fact that this tradition is still practised today

emphasizes how important gurus are to maintaining and advancing Hinduism's rich scientific and cultural legacy.

It is clear from considering the *Guru-Śiṣya* tradition's lasting legacy that future generations will continue to be inspired and guided by the teachings and impact of Gurus. The function of the *Guru* is essential to the ongoing development of both individuals and society at large because of this tradition, which not only upholds Hinduism's spiritual and cultural ethos but also strengthens the social fabric.

12. Historical Evolution and Philosophical Roots

During the Vedic era (c. 1500-500 BCE), when knowledge was mainly oral and passed directly from teacher to pupil, the *Guru-Śiṣya Paramparā* first appeared. The *Upaniṣads*, a collection of philosophical texts, provide early glimpses into the profound nature of this relationship, emphasizing the *guru* as a spiritual guide who leads the student from ignorance to enlightenment (Radhakrishnan, 1953). The *guru-śiṣya* relationship had been an important aspect of Hinduism in the early oral traditions of the *Upaniṣads*. The name "*Upaniṣad*" implies "sitting down near" a spiritual teacher to receive instruction because it is formed from the Sanskrit words "*upa*" (near), "*ni*" (down), and "*śad*" (to sit). The main institutional foundation for this tradition was the *gurukul* system, in which students resided with their *guru*. In this instance, education encompassed more than just textbooks; it also involved discipline, everyday life, and imitating the guru's conduct. Gurus and students can be found in a number of contexts in the *Upaniṣads*, such as a young kid learning from *Yama*, the Hindu Lord of Death, or a spouse responding to inquiries concerning immortality. Sages, who are sometimes women, may be consulted by rulers.

The ideas of *Dharma* (good behaviour), *Karma* (activity and its results), and *Mokṣa* (freedom from the cycle of life and death) are among the philosophical ideas that are closely entwined with the *Guru-Śiṣya Paramparā*. In the pursuit of these ultimate objectives, the guru is viewed as a guide. Therefore, information transmission includes moral, ethical, and spiritual elements in addition to logical ones. The guru's responsibilities also include assisting the learner in developing their morals, character, and path to self-realization (Sharma, 2011).

Ancient Vedic Period: The *gurukul* educational system was deeply incorporated into the Vedic era. Here, the *Gurukūl* was seen as more than merely a place of education, with an emphasis on the *Śiṣya*'s (student's) overall growth. Life skills, texts, philosophy, and the core of *dharma*

were taught in this sacred space. The foundation of the *Guru-Śiṣya Paramparā*, which is still venerated today, was cemented during this time.

Epic Period (*Rāmāyana* and *Mahābhārata*): The relationship between Krishna and Arjuna in the *Mahābhārata* and Rama and Hanuman in the *Rāmāyana* are two instances of *Bhakti*. The epics are full with references to legendary *gurus* like Dronacārya who taught princely students like Arjuna. By emphasizing not only the *gurukul* system of learning but also the moral dilemmas and personal sacrifices, that each of them had to make, these tales illustrate the intricacy of the relationship between Guru and *Śiṣya*.

Medieval Period: The emergence of the *Bhakti* and Sufi groups during this time, which prioritized individual devotion above ceremonial practice, changed the position of gurus. Gurus like Kabir and Ramanuja were important figures in these movements because they helped heal communal divisions and taught a more individualized kind of spiritual practice.

Modern Times: While preserving its essential spiritual teachings, the *Guru-Śiṣya* tradition has evolved to incorporate current educational methods. The *Guru-Śiṣya Paramparā* is still relevant in today's global society because of the *gurukul* system of education, which thrives by fusing traditional teachings with modern demands.

The *guru-Śiṣya paramparā* has proven resilient and adaptable throughout each era, confirming its vital role in the continuation and development of Hindu tradition and spirituality.

13. Core Responsibilities and Duties of a *Guru*

The *Guru* in the *Guru-Śiṣya Paramparā* plays roles that go well beyond those of a conventional teacher. They act as spiritual guides, mentors, and, frequently, their followers' moral compass. Hinduism's sacred writings place a strong emphasis on these many obligations.

"गुरुरेव परमं स्थानं" (*Gurur eva paramam sthanam*), which means "The *Guru* is the ultimate place of refuge," is confirmed by *Upaniṣads* and the other sacred Hindu text the *Guru Gītā* which emphasize the importance of the *Guru*-disciple relationship in achieving spiritual enlightenment.. This *śloka* emphasizes the *Guru*'s function as a shelter of wisdom and safety, offering followers a place of spiritual refuge, in addition to being an instructor. The phrase "Gurur eva paramam sthanam" is not a direct *mantra* or a *Mahāvākya* found verbatim in the principal *Upaniṣads*. Instead, numerous *Upaniṣadic* and post-*Upaniṣadic* works clarify and

promote the idea that the guru is the ultimate source of knowledge. The Upaniṣads frequently emphasize that in order to acquire self-knowledge (*Ātma Vidyā*), one must approach a qualified instructor (guru), as this knowledge cannot be acquired by oneself or via simple intellectual study. For example, the *Mundaka Upaniṣad* states that a seeker of the highest knowledge must approach a Guru “who is established in the law of the Spirit” and surrender themselves to that teacher in reverence.

Additionally, the *Bhagavad Gītā* uses Lord Krishna and Arjuna as examples to highlight the Guru's broad role. In the role of Arjuna's *Guru*, Krishna leads him through a crucial fight.

“उद्धरेत् आत्मनात्मानं नात्मानमवसादेत्” (*Uddharet atmanatmanam na atmanam avasadayet*)

is a poem from the *Gītā* that advocates self-upliftment and refrains from degrading oneself. This connection demonstrates how a guru's teachings go beyond the confines of the conventional *gurukul* system and provide timeless, widely applicable insights.

These lessons from the *Upaniṣads* and the *Bhagavad Gītā* demonstrate the essential and diverse role of *gurus* in Hinduism, emphasizing their position as guides to the very core of spirituality and life rather than just teachers.

14. Key Principles and Methodologies

The *Guru-Śiṣya Paramparā* is characterised by several distinguishing features:

Holistic Development: Unlike modern education's focus on cognitive skills, the *Guru-Śiṣya Paramparā* aims for the holistic development of the student – intellectual, emotional, spiritual, and physical. This includes training in various arts, sciences, martial arts, and spiritual practices (Das, 2008).

Sevā (Selfless Service): The idea of *sevā*, in which the student serves the guru and the *gurukul*, is an essential part of the tradition. This is not only a service act; rather, it is a profound practice that prepares the mind for greater learning by fostering discipline, humility, and ego reduction.

Śraddhā (Faith and Devotion): Effective learning is said to need *Śraddhā*, or unshakable faith and devotion towards the *guru*. It creates an atmosphere of trust and openness by signifying total submission to the guru's knowledge and direction.

Personalised Instruction: Individuality is inherent in the *Guru-Śiṣya Paramparā*. The guru adapts lessons to each student's individual strengths, weaknesses, and learning style. This stands in stark contrast to uniform, one-size-fits-all methods.

Oral Tradition and Experiential Learning: Even though written books developed over time, oral transmission and hands-on learning were still prioritised. Through practice, conversation, and firsthand experience, knowledge was assimilated rather than merely memorised.

Emphasis on Śanskara (Refinement): The tradition aims to instil śanskara, which refers to the refinement of character, manners, and values. The *guru* serves as a moral compass, pointing the pupil in the direction of moral behaviour and a good life (Pande, 2015).

15. The Role of the *Guru* and the *Śiṣya*

15.1. The *Guru*: The *guru* serves as a mentor, spiritual advisor, and frequently a surrogate father in addition to being a teacher. They live by the values they teach and exhibit the information they convey. The duties of the *guru* include:

- **Imparting Knowledge:** Transmitting wisdom, insights, and useful skills in addition to factual facts.
- **Character Building:** Forming the moral and ethical character of the pupil.
- **Spiritual Guidance:** Guiding the pupil toward self-realization via their spiritual path.
- Discipline and Nurturing:** Like a parent, offering both loving care and strict punishment.
- **Leading by Example:** Acting as a live example of the principles and values they advocate.

15.2. The *Śiṣya*: The duty of the *śiṣya* is similarly rigorous and necessitates:

- **Humility and Receptivity:** Having an open mind and a desire to learn before approaching the *guru*.
- **Discipline and Diligence:** Following the guidelines set forth by the *gurukul* and assiduously studying.
- **Service and Devotion:** Participating in *sevā* and showing the *guru śraddhā*.
- **Perseverance:** Overcoming obstacles and failures with steadfast resolve.
- **Respect and Gratitude:** Retaining a deep regard and appreciation for the guru's teachings.

16. Guru-Śiṣya relationship by Sampradāya

Different *gurus* may be given different levels of authority. While *prānāyama* styles, like the Sankara *Smaranam* movement, have the lowest degree, *bhakti yoga* has the highest. Regarding the type and extent of authority, these two are very different.

Advaita Vedānta Sampradāya

A *guru* (teacher) must be there to guide anyone who wants to study *Advaita Vedānta*. The *guru* must possess the following qualities: (*Mundaka Upaniṣad* 1.2.12)

It is necessary to *study Śrottriya—Sampradāya* and the Vedic texts (*Mundaka Upaniṣad* 1.2.12). In a metaphorical sense, *Brahmaniṣṭha* means "established in Brahman"; one must have acknowledged Brahman's unity in everything, including oneself (*Mundaka Upaniṣad* 1.2.12). To dispel any uncertainty, the seeker must serve the *guru* and humble himself when he asks him questions (*Bhagavad Gītā* 4.34). The seeker would be able to attain *mokṣa*, or freedom from the cycle of births and deaths, according to *Advaita*.

Śruti Sampradāya

The *Śruti* tradition of *Vaidika dharma* is heavily influenced by the *guru-śiṣya* tradition. Hindus consider the Vedas to have been passed down from *guru* to *śiṣya* over the years. According to the Vedas itself, a young *brahmacāri* should be sent to a *Gurukul*, where the student is taught the Vedas and *Vedāngas* by the *Guru*, also known as an *acārya*. Additionally, the *Prayoga* is taught to the student in order to do *yajnas*. According to *Manusmṛti*, the duration of stay might range from 12 to 48 years *samāvartana*. The *brahmacāri* performs a ceremony known as before leaving the *Gurukul* and going home.

The root of the word *Śrauta* is *Śruti*, meaning that which is heard. Many modern Vedic scholars use books as a teaching tool, even though the Vedas are transmitted orally in the *Śrauta* tradition.

Śaktipat Sampradāya

Through his pure consciousness entering his pupils' selves and communicating its unique characteristics, the *guru* imparts his knowledge to them. Through this procedure, the disciple becomes a member of the spiritual family (*kūla*), which is a family composed of people who share knowledge rather than blood ties (Dupuche: pp. 131)

Bhakti yoga

Bhakti is the most common type of *guru-śiṣya* interaction. Devotion, or *bhakti*, means surrendering oneself to a guru or God. *Bhakti* encompasses everything, from the most basic manifestation of devotion to the ego-destroying idea of complete surrender, or *prapatti*. Three main ideas or actions often comprise the *bhakti* version of the *guru-śiṣya* connection: devotion to the guru as a heavenly figure or *Avatar*. The conviction that the (successful) *śiṣya* has received or will get *mokṣa*, *dikṣā*, or *śaktipat* from such a teacher. the conviction that, if the *śiṣya* are strong and deserving enough, they will receive some kind of spiritual merit if they direct their *bhakti* toward the *guru*.

Prapatti Sampradāya

An attitude of resignation, self-effacement, and personal weakness can occasionally accompany the ego-destroying principle of *prapatti* (Sanskrit: "Throwing oneself down"), which can occasionally be severe in the degree of surrender of the *śiṣya*'s will to that of God or the guru. The teachings of the four Samayacārya saints, who all had a deep and mystical love for Siva, may provide the best example of this philosophy: A lover-lover connection in which the devotee is the bride and *Śiva* is the bridegroom is known as bridal mysticism. It involves complete submission to God as the only real shelter, a profound sense of humility and self-effacement, and the acknowledgement of one's own weakness and shame.

In its most extreme form, it sometimes includes:

Transferring the *guru* all or most of the *śiṣya*'s material belongings. the *śiṣya*'s rigorous and unwavering obedience to all of the guru's directives. For instance, Karna is said to have subtly endured the agony of a wasp stinging his leg in order to avoid upsetting his lord, Parashurāma. When speaking to the guru, the *śiṣya* is often obliged to use a system of terms that suggest superiority or deification adopted by the *guru*.

The necessity for the *śiṣya* to kneel, kiss the guru's hands or feet, and occasionally submit to physical punishments as instructed by the guru in order to demonstrate their devotion for him.

The guru's authority can occasionally encompass all facets of the *śiṣya*'s existence, including their social life, livelihood, sexuality, and so on. A *guru* frequently claims to be able to guide a *śiṣya* straight to *mokṣa*, the ultimate level of consciousness or spirituality in Hinduism. When *śiṣya* and a *bhakti guru* establish a relationship, the *guru* is frequently thought to possess supernatural abilities, which results in the guru being deified.

Buddhism Sampradāya

Sekhas are another name for magae the Bhikkus in the *Pāli* Buddhist tradition (SN XLVIII.53 *Sekha Sutta*).

A source of inspiration on the path to enlightenment, the teacher is a respected and esteemed mentor in the Theravada Buddhist tradition (Thurman, Robert A. F.; Huntington, John; Dina Bangdel, 2003). However, in the Tibetan tradition, the teacher is seen as the foundation of the entire path and the fundamental source of spiritual realization (Dreyfus, Georges B. J. 2003: pp 61-63). It is argued that experience and comprehension are impossible without the educator. It is said that the Buddha is the guru. In Tibetan scriptures, it is very important to praise the qualities of the guru. In tantric teachings, the guru is visualised, and sacrifices are made in the teacher's honor. The source of initiation into the tantric god is the *guru*, also referred to as the *vajra* (literally "diamond") *guru*. Since they recognize that breaking the commitment would be a major setback, the disciple must make a number of promises and commitments that guarantee the continuity of the spiritual relationship. Tantric Buddhism, or *Vajrayāna*, views the *guru* as the method itself. The *guru*'s personality reflects the person's inherent Buddha-nature rather than the *guru* introducing them. In exchange, the pupil is supposed to show unwavering devotion to his or her teacher, whom the disciple views as a *Bodhisattva*. Devotion is viewed as the appropriate attitude toward a *guru* because they are thought to have not only mastered the traditional language but also have a close personal contact with them (Gross, Rita M., 1998: p. 184).

The Dalai Lāmā, speaking of the importance of the *guru*, said: "Rely on the teachings to evaluate a *guru*: Do not have blind faith, but also no blind criticism." He also observed that the term 'living *Buddha*' is a translation of the Chinese words *huo fuo* ("The Teacher - The *Guru*").

17. Comparison between the *Guru-Śiṣya Paramparā*: Understanding the Teacher-Student Tradition and modern educational models

Modern educational paradigms and the *Guru-Śiṣya Paramparā* indicate essentially distinct ways of learning:

***Guru-Śiṣya Paramparā*:**

Holistic Development: Emphasizes the development of the intellect, morality, ethics, spirituality, and body.

Personalized Learning: Personalized instruction based on each student's aptitude and speed.

Teacher as Guru/Mentor: A respected mentor who lives with the learner and imparts knowledge and develops character. strong, enduring, and frequently familial ties.

Value-Based: A focus on character development, discipline, humility, *śraddhā* (faith), and *sevā* (selfless service).

Experiential/Oral: Learning through experience, direct communication, oral transmission, and observation—often in natural environments.

Goal: Self-awareness, freedom (*mokṣa*), and all-encompassing life abilities.

Modern Educational Models:

Academic Specialization: Pay attention to specific academics, professional preparation, and cognitive skills.

Standardized Curriculum: Standardized tests, big class sizes, and consistent teaching strategies.

Teacher as Facilitator: Information teacher, frequently in a more transactional role.

Outcome-Oriented: Emphasis on test results, grades, and measurable accomplishments.

Structured/Technology-Driven: Textbooks, traditional classrooms, and a growing dependence on digital resources and platforms.

Goal: Academic success, critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and preparedness for a career.

Fundamentally, the *Guru-Śiṣya Paramparā* places a higher priority on the personal growth of the individual via a deep, individualized relationship, whereas contemporary education frequently stresses the effective dissemination of knowledge for the benefit of society and the economy.

18. Contemporary Relevance and Challenges

Even if the original *gurukul* system may not be as common today, the fundamental ideas of the *Guru-Śiṣya Paramparā* are still very important. This concept continues to serve as an inspiration for many modern educational institutions, especially those in the arts, music, and spiritual disciplines. The focus on holistic growth, mentorship, and individualized learning aligns with contemporary educational changes that aim to go beyond memorization.

But the *Guru-Śiṣya Paramparā* also has to contend with the materialistic values of modern society, the demise of traditional institutions, and the focus on measurable results, which frequently conflict with the intangible benefits and sustained dedication that this tradition demands. Furthermore, concerns about potential exploitation or misuse of power within the *guru-disciple* relationship have also emerged, necessitating ethical considerations and safeguards (Chaudhuri, 2018).

19. Conclusion

The *Guru-Śiṣya Paramparā* is proof of the deep knowledge ingrained in the educational philosophy of ancient India. It provides a novel approach to education that goes beyond merely learning facts and emphasizes character development, the search for ultimate truth, and the holistic growth of the individual. Its core ideas of individualized instruction, selfless service, and the transformational potential of a strong teacher-student bond provide priceless lessons for modern educational systems as they adjust to the complexity of the modern world. In the twenty-first century, reassessing and incorporating aspects of this rich legacy may greatly aid in creating more profound, moral, and meaningful educational opportunities. Additionally, I would argue in this study that identifying a "true" guru entails identifying a number of attributes: Self-aware or enlightened, exhibits the knowledge they impart. Compassionate and Selfless: Behaves without ego or self-interest. Knowledgeable: Has a thorough comprehension of the Bible and spiritual precepts. Sets an Example: follows their own advice. Fosters Inner Growth: Encourages self-reliance rather than mindless obedience. possesses a valid lineage (*Sampradāya*). offers clarity and dispels ignorance. Encourages disciples to undergo constructive transformation.

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