

Guru talk

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Recently a Dharma friend sent me a video of one of those scruffy furry patriarchal Indian Gurus who are full of words and himself rather than anything else. Sounding very self-assured and final, he proclaimed something to this effect. (I'm reflecting on the nature of his talk rather than its substance, since there is none.)

Imagine someone saying:

“We do not know Monk A or Nun B is NOT unenlightened. Hence, we CANNOT say that he is not enlightened. What proof have we got that s/he is not enlightened?”

Buddhism may be a very tolerant religion. But being “tolerant” of what? Some of us may be highly tolerant of certain drugs, which means we can take in more of it.

In the case of Buddhism, it means that we are allowing views, even fancies and untruths, to flood our minds, drown us senseless. In the end, is this good at all?

To be mindful is not to blindly accept things as “they are.” What “are” they really? We notice the pattern of impermanence and suffering (unsatisfactoriness) in what our mind sees, experiences. This is CRITICAL observation: we see what really lies below and beyond mere appearances.

We can say impressive things like; “Let’s make Buddhism great!” or “We will convert India back to Buddhism!” What does such statements mean? We won’t be wrong when we think that they reflect our greed, hate and delusion.

We can say great things, but being able to actually do them, or even if they are actually true or real is another matter altogether. This is the greatest trap in religion, in Buddhism: we allow those whom we admire to get away with all kinds of “hot air” they blow. So we blow each other up until we both blow up! Now that’s Guru talk for us.

What does the Buddha teach us? We only experience what we see, hear, smell, taste, touch and think. In important ways, we see what we ARE, hear what we are, smell what we are, taste what we are, touch what we are, think what we are. We also see what we WERE ... And we see what we WILL BE ... and so on.

Then, the Buddha asks: Why do you think? That’s the learning part, we begin to detach ourselves from others, from the Guru. This means that we must also detach ourselves from self. No self, no other. There is just sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, thought. The IS here refers to a passing state, an impermanent event that is ME or US.

We have moved quite far from the usual Guru talk. We are on our own now. We have to start walking on our own, as it were. We fall, we cry, we rise again. Then, we are walking on our own. It starts there, usually.

At best, this writing may have given you some momentum: you decide which direction you go.

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[an occasional re-look at the Buddha's Example and Teachings]

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