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Guru-Chela Relationship As Described In Laxmi Narayan Tripathi *Me Hijra Me Lakshmi*

Abstract

Laxminarayan Tripathi a transgender activist and a well-known classical dancer was born in Thane, India. “Me Hijra Me Laxmi” an autobiographical novel demonstrates the relationship among the members of the hijra community, especially the bond between Laxmi as Chela to Lata(Guru) and Laxmi(Guru) as her Gurus. This article brings the exact relationship between a Guru and a Chela in the hijra community to limelight.

Keywords: Hijra Community, Guru-Chela Relationship, Customs, Earlier Days Vs Recent Days, Free To Follow, Path To Glory.

Introduction

Laxminarayan Tripathi was born on 1979 in Thane, India. She is a famous transgender activist. In 2002, she became president of an NGO, DWS (DAI Welfare Society), the first registered organization for eunuchs in South Asia. In 2007, she started her own organization, Astitiva. This organization works to promote the welfare of the LGBT community, and provide them the moral support for their development. She is the first transgender person to represent Asia Pacific in the UN in 2008. She was a Hindi actress and a contestant in the reality show Big Boss.

The Guru-Chela Relationship

"Me Laxmi Me Hijra" is an autobiographical novel. Laxmi was born as a boy with an elder sister and younger brother. When Laxmi got attracted to boys, he confirmed himself as a Gay. He was running his own dance academy right from his school days. He passed his SSLC exam and joined Mithibai college. During his college days, he engaged himself and earned by being a bar dancer.

He was introduced to Shabina (a transgender). He became very close to her especially because he himself had his own desires of being a woman. He learned the history, traditions and lifestyle of the hijras through Shabina. His desire to become a woman reached its peak during his friendship with Shabina. He accompanied Shabina to her Guru's house. It is here he feels more comfortable and becomes the Chela for Lata Nayak and was named as Laxmi Narayan. Though her parents opposed it in the beginning, they soon accepted the truth and provided Lakshmi with all the necessary supports. Laxmi succeeded in becoming a versatile actress and a sincere activist.

In hijra community, the relationship shared between a Guru and a Chela is very important, Guru is more like a teacher and Chela is more like a disciple. When an individual

decides to join the hijra community, he will be taken to Bombay to meet the seven Head Gurus of seven naiks/parivars/houses. Hijra community is divided into seven clans and each clan has its own origin, history and rules. The heads of these clans will assemble in the 'jamaat' to make the important decisions for the community. At the initiation ceremony, the individual is taken under the care of Guru and from then the Chela is expected to live with the Guru leaving her family to take a new name and identity.

The Guru is the mother, father, teacher and everything to the Chelas, and the Chela must respect their Guru. All the formal rituals will take place when the Guru gives saris to the Chelas and the Chelas are crowned with the community dupatta for the hijra christening ceremony.

In the earlier days, Guru treats their Chela as a slave and force them to do sex work and pay them, if not the Gurus punished the Chelas with severe punishments. In certain cases if the Chela is too young or suffering, the Guru has to take care of the material needs of her Chela. Generally, the Guru passes her wealth and possessions to her senior or favorite Chela. There are even elections to select the Guru. The Chelas can have as many Gurus as they wish. The Guru's permission is required and without it the Chela was not permitted to do any deeds.

The traditional programs and the hijra performances were usually arranged by the Guru of each clan. If the Chela is thrown out of the community by her Guru, for ill behavior, then they are not allowed to perform in these programs. For lesser offence, they are warned, fined and sometimes punished with a hair-cut by the jamaat. When a hijra dies, the members of her house arrange for the final rituals.

In "Me Hijra Me Laxmi" Laxminarayan wishes to become an hijra. With the help of Shabina, she goes to the Lucky compound at Byculla, where the head of all the seven hijra clans lived. Lata Nayak the Guru for Shabina readily accepted Lakshmi as her

Chela. Lata (Guru) didn't regulate many rules for Laxmi and also permitted Laxmi to stay with her biological family. Lata Nayak was the founder of DWS (DAI Welfare Society), but she was not educated. That society was maintained by Shabina and Priya (transgenders and Chelas to Lata). This organization was especially for the welfare of the hijra community.

When Shabina and Priya left the organization, Laxmi took charge of it and simultaneously concentrated in her Dance Academy too. This popularized Laxmi who was offered chances in reality shows and to act in featured films. Such immediate popularity of her chela, Laxmi irritated Lata (Guru). But Laxmi was so happy to be part of all these fame-gaining activities. In DAI Welfare Society's conferences Lata didn't permit Laxmi to participate because that will add to her already-rising fame. This was because Lata(Guru) believed that hijras should avoid spotlight and flame of publicity for their own well-being.

Laxmi was invited to the sixteenth World AIDS conference held in Toronto, Canada on August 2006. As attending this conference would definitely be a turningpoint in her life, Laxmi decided to attend this conference against the will and wish of her Guru. On knowing this Lata verbally abused Laxmi and asked her to leave the house. In the meanwhile Laxmi met another hijra named Laxmi(Guru), a medical student living in Delhi. Laxmi and Laxmi(Guru) become closer to each other. Once Laxmi(Guru) voluntarily asked Laxmi to be her Chela. Though Laxmi didn't accept the offer immediately, she later chose for herself to become the Chela to Laxmi(Guru).

Conclusion

The Guru-Chela relationship that was like dictator-follower in the earlier days is now changed to a teacher-disciple bond. When dictated, the Chelas found it very difficult to succeed and follow their self-opinions, but these days Chelas are permitted to give a thought to their self-ideas and are free to proceed in the path of success. This change paved way for

all the ones' who are rejected just because of their identity to excel in their chosen field on their own.

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