

# The Generosity of the Guru's Grace

by David Katz

in Honor of Gurupurnima

The Guru's grace. The Guru's guidance. The Guru's presence. The Guru's wisdom. The Guru's compassion. The Guru's *darshan*. The Guru's light. The Guru's love. The generosity of the Guru's grace is unparalleled.

The grace of the Guru is essential for transformation to take place in the life of a disciple. *Transformation.*

Understand that this is no ordinary transformation. It is a transformation that takes the disciple from darkness to light, from untruth to Truth, from the mortal to the immortal. Anyone who has understood what this transformation is about—anyone who has experienced this transformation—will spend the rest of their lives paying homage to Shri Guru. And, in this way, the Guru-disciple relationship continues.

Through this process of transformation, we receive the wisdom that makes it possible for us to experience the world as more vivid and more beautiful than anything that human imagination alone could design. We come to know, directly, the divine radiance that fills our being and all of creation. It gives us a new way of being in the world.

As this wondrous light permeates our lives, we marvel at its luminance and how it transforms our understanding of ourselves and the world. And then... and then... and then we become—*free*.

Think: "I am free."

Imagine: "I am free."

Feel it: "I am free."

Remember, your very nature is freedom. Freedom is your anchor. And the discovery of this freedom is your very *raison d'être*—the purpose of this lifetime, your *reason for being*.

Think about that. *Freedom*.

This newfound freedom that we come to recognize as inherently ours arises from the Guru's compassion. The Guru rends the veils of ignorance—veils that have accumulated through a multitude of lifetimes. This rending of illusion is a mystical journey. And it is the crux of the inner workings of the Guru-disciple relationship. How a disciple prepares for, and understands, this profound process depends on good karma, willingness, and *mumukshutva*—fierce learning, fierce yearning for knowledge of the Truth. And all the while, all the while, the Guru's grace is constantly present.

As this journey continues, the disciple's being matures. Their field of consciousness becomes more fertile. New and even more profound growth takes place.

This maturation of the disciple's understanding of the inner and outer worlds is the fruit of the Guru's gift of *divya-chakshu*, divine vision.

The Guru's gift of divine sight gives us a way to see the world anew and to perceive its innate value.

As we dedicate ourselves to *sadhana* and seek the knowledge of the supreme Self, the Guru nurtures and guides us in making this vision our own.

*Transformation. Freedom.* We pay homage to Shri Guru.

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On the Siddha Yoga path, as transformation takes place we rediscover our own freedom—something extraordinary happens in our hearts. It is called *bhakti*. *Bhakti* the fountain of love springs forth.

It's the kind of love that makes us strive to change those of our ways that may not be beneficial.

It's the kind of love that inspires us to do better, to become better at what we do.

It's the kind of love that propels us to be true to who we really are.

It's the kind of love that leads us on the path of humility, where we accept others and respect their beliefs.

It's the kind of love that makes us want to give... and give... and *give*, to support people in receiving the Guru's teachings, so that those teachings may take root in their lives—and these people in turn experience spiritual prosperity. This is the Guru's vision.

*Guru-bhakti* is what the relationship between Guru and disciple is built on. *Guru-bhakti*.

We pay homage to our Shri Guru.

The great sage Adi Shankaracharya, who lived in eighth-century India, taught about devotion to the Guru. Shankaracharya was an enlightened being, a spiritual Master, who distilled the knowledge of the Vedas in his teachings and his commentaries. He sent his disciples in the four directions—to the north, to the south, to the east, to the west, throughout India—to impart this knowledge to others. And to this day, seekers revere, study, and benefit from Shri Shankaracharya's teachings.

In his *Guror Ashtakam*, the “Eight Verses in Honor of Shri Guru,” Shankaracharya says:

The Vedas with their six supports  
and knowledge of the scriptures  
may be on one’s lips;  
one may have literary gifts,  
compose excellent prose and poetry—  
but if one’s mind is not fixed upon the lotus feet of the Guru,  
what then, what then, what then?

In this verse, Shankaracharya exalts *guru-bhakti* as indispensable—indispensable to true fulfillment in this life. This is represented as keeping the mind focused on “the lotus feet of the Guru.” In the Indian scriptures, the Guru’s feet are referred to as *charana-kamala*, the “lotus feet.” The lotus is also a symbol of the highest spiritual knowledge. The scriptures also say that the Guru’s feet are the reservoirs of all spiritual knowledge and the source of all blessings. *Charana-kamala*.

*Transformation. Freedom. Guru-bhakti. We pay homage to our Shri Guru.*

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Now I want to bring your attention to yet another beautiful Sanskrit word.  
When your heart is experiencing profound devotion, what is its natural propensity?

*Arpana.*

*Arpana* means “offering.” It also refers to the act of making an offering. In the Sanskrit language, this word relates to the concept of giving back—and doing so with intention. We can therefore understand *arpana* to be an offering that is made with clear intention and steady commitment.

*Arpana* is integral to every form of worship in India. It is a fundamental aspect of *pujas* and a vital element of fire ceremonies—*havans* and *yajnas*. During this worship, the Brahmin priests make the *arpana*, the offerings, in various forms. *Pushpa-arpanam*, the offering of flowers. *Phala-arpanam*, the offering of fruits. *Dipa-arpanam*, the offering of light. *Naivedya-arpanam*, the offering of food. *Namaskara-arpanam*, the offering of salutations. *Mantra-arpanam*, the offering of sacred mantras. The list goes on and on. So many ways to offer.

At the heart of these sacred offerings—impelling them, giving them force—is the inner state or posture, the *bhava*, that truly defines *arpana*. *Arpana* is an offering of our best—to God, to our Guru, to the one in whom we have placed our love and our trust. It is an expression of our highest potential for giving, in which we assume our place in the natural cycles of giving and receiving.

The *Rig Veda* teaches that the universe is sustained by offering, and that it is through offering that divine order—*rita*—manifests and is maintained in the world. *Rita*. We can see this at every level of existence, from the planet itself to the microscopic and subatomic realms.

For example, a seed pod gives rise to new life only... only what? Only if it offers, back to the earth from which it came, its seeds. The heavens open, and the oceans and the rivers, the lakes and the streams receive their water. And they in turn give back to the sky as the water evaporates into rain clouds.

Inevitably, inexorably, the natural cycles of giving and receiving continue. We—as human beings, as both beneficiaries of the earth's abundance and guardians of its well-being, as part of nature ourselves—can choose to live in harmony with the natural cycles of giving and receiving.

With this awareness, with this understanding, with joyful acceptance of and commitment to our place in this world, we pay homage to our Shri Guru.

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We remember:

*anugraha*—the Guru’s grace

*kaya-kalpa*—the transformation of our entire being

*svatantrata*—the freedom we rediscover through this transformation

*guru-bhakti*—the devotion to the Guru that arises from the wellspring of our hearts, and

*arpana*—offering.

We pay homage to our Shri Guru.

Each time I say the phrase *Sadgurunath Maharaj ki Jay*, I feel that I am paying homage to my Shri Guru, offering her my salutations and my gratitude as I visualize her seated in my heart.

These Hindi words, which are so cherished on the Siddha Yoga path, mean “Hail to the true Guru.”

Right now, let us all—in great freedom and joy—pay homage to our beloved Shri Guru by singing: *Sadgurunath Maharaj ki Jay!*

