

Selected verses on the Guru from *Guru Vachaka Kovai*

Who is the Guru?

The Guru, the benefactor of true *jnana*, who truly shines as the Self that possesses unlimited splendour, is the primal silence that puts to flight the perverse arguments that arise through the persistent stain of infatuation with the world.

Our Guru's form is the reality that sleeps without sleeping in the Heart. He is the self-luminous effulgence that shines in the Heart like a beautiful lamp that needs no kindling. To those who have experienced merging in the Heart he is a luscious fruit full of the sweet clarity of the supreme bliss that, without a trace of aversion, causes an ever-increasing desire [for itself]. His grace indeed is the true wealth.

Only he who unifies the *jiva*, making it remain facing directly towards the Self, bestowing in this way the direct experience of supreme Self-knowledge, is extolled by the great ones as *Iswara swarupa* [the real form of God] and *Atma swarupa* [the true nature of the Self]. Accept him alone as the Guru, the Supreme.

The demeaning good and evil karma [of devotees] originates from activities prompted by the desire and aversion that arise through *vasanas*. He alone is the true Guru who dispels their suffering and bestows the bliss of liberation upon those who, dragged along by the power of their karma, seek refuge in him.

The Guru who abides as *swarupa*, the radiant light that illumines even the physical light that exists in this world, will reveal the deceptively real to be unreal to those who suffer by taking the unreal to be real.

The Guru is the power of the Self within

The Guru is the *sat-bodham* [being-consciousness] that shines abiding as all in all.

As the inner and the outer, as 'I' and 'this', as this world and the next, pervading all as the boundless radiance of consciousness, the Guru is the unmoving support, the jewel-like lamp that shines effortlessly in the Hearts of true devotees.

Following the destruction of the 'I am the body' idea, whatever body it may be, the radiance of being endures free of limitation, without any bondage, shining as the pure expanse. Dwelling in the hearts of all individuated *jivas* as attribute-free *jnana*, as wholly the Self, and as non-distinct from them, this radiance of being abides as the all-encompassing supreme power [*akila-para-sakti*].

Regard only him who possesses the rare attribute of radiating that supreme power [*akila-para-sakti*] as the *Sadguru* who has the enormous power to merge, through his causeless sweet grace, any *jiva* that comes to him with genuine love into the non-dual *paramatma-swarupa*, whose nature is attribute-free consciousness.

It is the very nature of the *Atma-swarupa* consciousness to shine as 'I-I'. This form of natural awareness that remains forever as the soul of the soul in the Heart is the inner meaning of the statement that God, the Self which itself becomes the Guru, unceasingly and directly transmits *jnana upadesa* to the true disciples, the mature *jivas*.

The manner in which the Guru sits majestically in state on the Heart-throne of his devotees whom he has taken up, destroying their egos, is lofty like a mountain, splendid and glorious. Those who have experienced this do not talk about it. Those who talk about it have not experienced it. The abundant utterances of devotees [*jnanis*], which are sacred like the *Vedas*, bear witness to this.

The necessity of the physical Guru

An external Guru is needed because the desire-filled, infatuated mind rushes out without listening with love to the truth unceasingly proclaimed in the Heart by the Self, being-consciousness.

One may have acquired all the virtues and renounced all the vices; one may have renounced totally all one's relationships and have no attachment; one may have completely performed all the many penances enjoined upon the virtuous by the scriptures; but however great one may be by virtue of one's intellect and accomplishments, will one attain the experience, the state of *kaivalyam* [oneness] that is wholly bliss, until one obtains, as a result of meritorious karma, the good fortune of seeing the *jnana-Guru*?

For those who are suffering from *samsara* – to which they are yoked by the twin karmas [good and bad] that arise through ignorance, the powerful dense delusion – the devotion and longing they feel for the grace of the Guru, who has taken responsibility for them, is alone the medicine for dispelling their mental anguish.

It is impossible to experience the marvellous dance of true *jnana* in the Heart unless the antics of the unbridled monkey-mind cease through the grace-power of the valiant one who wields the divinely granted sword of true *jnana*, he who has already cut off and brought down [his own] mind demon.

Those who have realised the truth are alone the possessors of faultless virtues. Apart from these, everyone else is only base of nature. Hence, he who longs for the fortune of liberation must redeem himself only by resorting to those aforementioned meritorious ones who shine as reality through the knowledge of reality that is devoid of the world-delusion.

The grace of the Guru

Peace of mind, *shanti*, which is desired by everyone, is not attained by anyone, anywhere, though any means, except through the grace of the Guru. Therefore, those who want peace should continuously enquire and seek alone that grace in the Heart, with their whole mind.

The blessed grace of God, who has the eightfold form, will be impossible to secure except through the grace of the Guru. It will not come through learning or through any other means, but it will spontaneously arise through devotion.

Those of perfect and mature wisdom will declare: Reality, the consummation of *jnana* that shines in the perfectly pure state of *mauna*, the hard-to-attain vedantic experience, will, through the Guru's grace, spontaneously flare up and shine as 'I-I' within the Heart.

Unless we first obtain the divine grace of a Guru, a *jivanmukta* in whose perspective the *triputi*-differences have ended and who shines as the undivided and single essence, it will be impossible to obtain the life of liberation and live illustriously under the shade of God's twin feet, [a life] that is all bliss and the ultimate of all benefits.

Being a good disciple

If you want to attain liberation and redeem yourself by cutting asunder with the sword of *jnana* the false ignorance that has strongly bound you in the form of a *jiva*, let your mind spring up immediately with surging love and, without wasting a moment of your life, meditate constantly upon the golden lotus-like feet of the Lord who, in the form of the Guru, has taken you into his fold.

By taking the *Sadguru* as one's sole refuge, one should know, through his grace, that the cause of the continuous and distressing confusion that nurtures births is the fragmented mind which regards itself as different from God, *Atma-swarupa*. One should also learn from him the means for ending it [the fragmented mind] and, adopting that means, one should steadfastly unite with the Self, the ego-free *swarupa*, and abide in *mauna*. This alone bestows eminence.

This state of being the best among the noble disciples is this: a constancy of mind whence gushes forth the feeling of supreme devotion [*parabhakti*] that manifests when the 'I' is lost in the radiance of the state of silence, the Supreme. Know and keep in your mind that this is itself the state of being the Guru.

Meditating in the way that one ought to meditate on the sweet and ineffable grace of the Supreme Guru, and remaining still without getting caught in illusion, the unreal and deceptive panorama that appears in front of us – this alone is bliss.

True Gurus and false gurus

The guru who instructs the disciple, who has taken complete refuge in him, by giving one more prescription for action, instead of directing him towards *jnana*, and who leads him into activities, saying ‘These should be done,’ is for the disciple [equivalent to] the coming of cruel Yama and Brahma [the gods of death and birth]. Only he who consummates disciples, transforming them into those who have done all that needs to be done, enabling them to attain the true benefit of this birth, is the grace-bestowing, divine Guru.

Know that the Heart-directed conduct in which one steadfastly holds onto *jnana* in the way one has been taught, and abiding there firmly as being-consciousness, without letting the mind stray towards the ignoble sense objects, is alone the true teaching [of the Guru].

The Guru’s look

Since his glance transforms the rusty iron that is the *jiva* into the gold that is the taint-free *jnana-swarupa*, the grace-bestowing eyes of the Guru-Lord are the potent alchemical substance that transforms by a mere glance. Therefore, search thoroughly to eradicate your impurity, and worship him to attain his glance.

With his twin eyes the Guru will instantaneously kill without killing the one who came into existence without actually existing in such a way that ‘that which is not’ vanishes as ‘that which is not’, leaving that which exists as the transcendental light shining as ‘that which is’.

The Guru abides as the silent benefactor and reveals the light that shines, remaining as the one and only enduring residue. If his eyes and the eyes of the disciple meet in total harmony, spoken words are redundant.

Beyond the reach of both mind and speech is the glory of those who have the good fortune, earned through past *tapas*, of becoming the target of the grace-bestowing glance of the Guru, he who has ripened into the *para-swarupa* through the excellence of the matchless experience of *jnana*, the Self.

Those who, through rare, intense and surging devotion exist by trusting solely in the Guru’s piercing glance of grace will live in this world like Indra [the king of the gods]. There will be no suffering for them.

The *jnana*-Guru actually abides as both the *Atma-swarupa* and the *Siva-swarupa* within the Hearts of devotees, although in their externalised view he appears and moves around as if he is different [from them]. True *jnana* will not dawn for anyone who has not known experientially, through investigation in the Heart, the essence of the *upadesa* ‘You are That’ which [the Guru] silently and unceasingly conveys to his devotees through the language of his gaze.

Like a deer caught in the jaws of a tiger, those who are trapped by the *Sadguru's jnana*-bestowing glance of grace will never be abandoned. Rather, they are destined to lose their individuality, their restricted nature, and attain liberation.

Worshipping the feet of the Guru

For those who possess the quality of habitually meditating upon the feet of the Guru, the blazing flame of flawless true *jnana*, their devotion, dispelling their suffering, will elicit the grace of that Supreme One. Through that grace their minds will become clear and they will attain true *jnana*.

For those who have the good fortune of living a life in which they take the feet of the Guru, the Supreme, as the sole target of their attention, a longing to merge with *Sivam* will flourish. That true devotion will itself become the fire of *jnana* that will scorch to destruction the desires for the false, the non-Self.

As worship of the feet of the Guru simultaneously destroys the twin *vasanas* accumulated over endless aeons, and as it brings forth in the Heart the dawn of *jnana* that is the cause for our being unafraid of indescribable ignorance, that worship, performed with devotion and reverence, alone is the befitting true mantra for noble disciples in whom dispassion is strong.

One may, through body speech and mind, perform, without leaving any out, all the possible varieties of worship to the *jnana* Guru, he who is the walking Supreme Siva who has accepted with delight the disciple. However, [for the disciple,] losing the idea that he exists as a distinct entity, separate from that Guru who shines as the soul of his soul, completely dissolving, like ice in water, his individuality in his [the Guru's] supreme *swarupa*, and becoming one with him as love alone – this is the perfect and complete worship that he should perform.

The mind that has settled in the radiance of the feet of the Guru, who is limitless *jnana*, effulgent like the sun, does not merge in the triple differences that are an imaginary appearance in *swarupa*, consciousness.

Guru puja

Bear in mind that the true *puja* to the *jnana* Guru is only the Self-abidance in which the *vasana*-free *mauna* surges once the disciple-consciousness that proclaimed itself as 'I' is destroyed by the raging fire of the consciousness of the *jnana* Guru, he who is God Himself.

The true *puja* performed to the Guru by worthy disciples is the complete destruction of the false 'disciple-consciousness' brought about by firm abidance in the state of 'Guru-consciousness', the experience of perfection that arises through the Heartward enquiry, 'Who is the "I" who has been accepted as a disciple?'

Know clearly that the excellent conduct wherein the *jiva*-mind does not rise in the all-pervading supreme firmament, the sun of true *jnana* that shines as the real nature of the Guru, constitutes the only *puja* worthy of being performed to the Guru-Lord.

When the ice of the ego-consciousness that is limited to the form of the body melts into the ocean of Guru-consciousness, the expanse of the Self that exists and shines as the one savour of love, know that this is *Guru-puja*.

The polluting ego-view causes the fullness of the Guru, which knows no lack, to be limited. Only the behaviour in which this does not appear is the shining *puja* to the Guru who stands out like a mountain in a plain.

After surrendering one's body and possessions to the *jnana*-Guru, to regard the body as 'I' and the possessions as 'mine' is to commit the sin of stealing back what has been given away as a gift. You should know that avoiding this fault is the authentic worship of the *Sadguru*.

To destroy the form of the mind, enquire into the ego, the delusion, and enter the Heart. This indeed is the *puja* to the lotus feet of the Guru's holy form who abides in the *mauna* that is beyond the mind.

Like a cataract upon the eye, the ego-view plays tricks on us, masquerading as being-consciousness even as it moves about in the insentient body. To prevent its formation and growth is *puja* to the graceful twin lotus feet of the Guru who exists and shines as the transcendental firmament.

Abandoning the protection of the feet of the Guru-Lord, who has extinguished the burning fires of the triple miseries [*tapatraya*], the ego suffers, seeking water in the scorching mirage of the perceived sense objects. When this mischief of the ego is stilled and one becomes established [at those feet], that indeed is the *puja* to be performed to the twin lotus feet of the Pure One.