



The Glory of **Devotion**

A collection of stories by Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar



The Glory of Devotion

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A unique flavor of love is the
Guru-disciple relationship.
If there is no love then there is neither
Guru nor disciple.

No one can come in between a Guru and a
disciple, nor is there any space
for jealousy or anger.

Knowledge is what happens when the Guru and
disciple sit together.

- Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar -



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Introduction

The greatest fortune in this world is to be a disciple, or a devotee. Those who have become a disciple or a devotee alone know the value of it.

A disciple in Sanskrit is called *Antevasi*. This is a magnificent word. *Antevasi* means *one who dwells inside the Guru*. It is not just the master who is in the heart of the devotee, the devotee also dwells in the heart of the master. ***Antevasi* means one who dwells inside the master.**

There is nothing other than the Guru. Everything around is Guru. You dwell inside the heart of the Guru all the time. The love of the master is surrounding you all the time. The one who realizes this is a disciple or a devotee.

What else would you want once you realize that you are surrounded by unconditional divine love all the time. No lack remains in life. It is all bliss. *Antevasi* - this is such a beautiful name!

This Guru Purnima, feel grateful for all the blessings that you have received. Be grateful for all the knowledge, and recognize how knowledge has transformed your life. ***Without the knowledge you will be no where*** - realizing this, feel grateful for all that has come your way and celebrate! Thank all the masters of the tradition who have preserved this knowledge from ages, and brought it to us. It is very significant.



Being A Devotee

There are three types of people who come to the Master:

1. *The Student*
2. *The Disciple*
3. *The Devotee*

A student goes to a teacher and learns something, gets some information and then he walks out of the school. There is no more information to be given or taken. **A student collects information, but information is not knowledge, it is not wisdom.** If just by having a lot of information one's life would change then that information is not just information, because information alone cannot effect a big change.

Then there is the disciple. The disciple follows the example of the Master. But **the disciple is with the Master for the sake of learning wisdom, for the sake of improving his life, for the sake of attaining enlightenment.** He has a purpose, a cause, so he is not just collecting information but he is trying to look a little deeper. He is trying to bring a transformation in his life. He wants to make sense out of his life. That is a disciple. A disciple is still centered around himself. So disciples take some time of their own. According to their capacity they grow, and one day they may get enlightened.

Then there is a devotee. **A devotee is not there even for wisdom.** He is simply rejoicing in love. He has fallen in deep love with the *Master, with the Infinity, with God.* He does not care whether he gets

enlightened or not. He doesn't care whether he learns a lot of knowledge or not. But that very moment and every moment, he is immersed in Divine love and that is enough for him or her. A devotee is very rare to find.

Students are all over, disciples are a few, but the devotees are rare. It is nothing great to become God or be God. Whether you want or not, all of you are already Gods. A stone is also God, you are also a God, and everything is God. There is nothing great in wanting to become God because God is already there. But it is great to become a devotee. Do you see this?

Everything, whether you want it or not is already God. But **where love has flowered totally, that is a devotee.** Attraction is everywhere, love is somewhere, but devotion is again rare. **Devotion is very beautiful.**

A student comes to a Master or Guru with tears in his eyes because there are so many problems. And when he leaves, then also he is carrying tears in his eyes, but the quality of the tear is different. It is of gratitude. Still tears flow, but they are tears of gratitude; of love. **It is so beautiful to cry in love.** One who has cried even once in love, knows the taste of what surrender is, and what devotion is, and the entire creation rejoices this. The entire creation is longing for only one thing, transformed tears; from salty tears to sweet tears (of love).

One of Buddha's disciples named Sariputra got enlightened. When he got enlightened, Buddha told him, "Now you go ahead, go into the world and teach. Carry on my work".

Now Sariputra left Buddha but he was crying and crying and crying. People asked him, "You are enlightened now, why are you crying?"

He said, “Who cares about this enlightenment, it could have waited. I didn’t even bother about it, neither did I ask for it. **The joy of being at the feet of Buddha was so great, being a devotee was so great that now I am missing it. I would have preferred that to this enlightenment**”.

There is no separation, there is no difference, there is no distance, yet it has a different flavor, a different joy, that is a devotee. **A devotee will never fall, he cannot fall. There is no chance for it.**



Stories of Devotion



The Slap of Joy

Once upon a time a Guru was sitting in the congregation and many people came and took his blessings. He was silent most of the time, but when people came and asked him something, he said, “Oh, you’re very lucky!”

So a student came to Gurudev and said, “I failed in my exam”. Gurudev said, “You’re very lucky!”

The next person said, “Gurudev, I lost my job”, and the Guru said, “You’re very lucky!”

The third person came and said, “None of my friends are talking to me, everybody has become my enemy”, and Gurudev said, “You’re very lucky!”

Another gentleman came and said, “My wife left me”, and the Guru said, “You’re very lucky!”

So, everyone kept saying their problems and each time Gurudev said, “You’re very lucky!”

And strangely, something would suddenly happen to them and they would all feel happy and walk away.

Then one gentleman came and said, “Gurudev, I am so lucky I have you in my life. I am so grateful”, and **Gurudev got annoyed and gave him one slap! This man, with tears in his eyes and gratitude started dancing.**

There was an onlooker who was sitting there, and he got so confused! He said, “I can’t believe what I am seeing. Someone who says “I am so grateful” gets a slap, and all those who cry to him, he tells them



that they are very lucky!”

Usually, people don't have the guts to ask the Guru, so they ask the other devotees there, “Tell me, what is happening. You have been here for a long time. I can't make out this Guru's behavior. It's completely illogical”.

As usual, devotees have their own interpretation. So, one of the senior most devotee said, “Yes, it is perfect what he has said”.

The senior devotee said, “Gurudev said to the student that he is very lucky because he is now studying more”.

I remember a very senior gentlemen narrated an incident to me at the Bangalore Ashram. He said that in 1942 there was only one surgeon in Bangalore, and this surgeon had failed his MBBS seven times! This gentleman (who failed seven times) became very well known for performing the perfect appendicitis operation. Later on he also got an international honor; but he had failed seven times!

So if someone has failed in an exam, they study more.

For the gentleman who said, “I lost my job”, the senior devotee

said, "Yes Gurudev said the right thing. When you are in a job you don't think about yourself. Now that you have lost your job, you have the time to sit back and think about who you are, and what you want. You have some time to think about your life!"

In life to get time itself is a big luck. Getting time to reflect on oneself, on the divine, on the truth, on 'Who I am', is a big luck.

The other gentleman whose wife ran away, Gurudev said, "You're very lucky!" So far he was living so insensitively. He did not bother to see what his wife needs. **When someone goes away, then you realize their value. Then you think about your mistakes. You become aware of the things you could have done better.** So he is very lucky to become sensitive to women's issues.

Why would a woman run away if you were attending to her welfare, to her emotional, mental and physical needs? There is something that you have done wrong. She made you aware that you have to be sensitive towards women. He understood this and so he was also happy.

So like this, **in every step of life, when you lose something you become so miserable, but every misery wakes you up.**

The first step is to realize that everything is misery. Life is miserable, life has sorrow. When you start realizing that life is miserable, then *viveka* (discrimination) and *vairagya* (dispassion) dawns in you. When dispassion dawns in your life, you are the luckiest!

So first you realize that it is all misery. Then, from 'It is all misery', you move to the next step which is, 'Where is the misery? Wake up! **Life is blissful**'.

This is where the Guru comes into play. **In the Guru's presence misery vanishes and life becomes blissful**. Life is bliss, life is a game, this understanding dawns.

Now why did the last person get a slap?

The senior devotee said, “Gurudev slapped him because he was centered in the I, “I am grateful”. When he gave him a slap he realized, **live as though you don’t exist.**”

Usually people exist and don’t live. **To exist without living is ignorance. Living as though you don’t exist is enlightenment.** That one slap woke him up.

What is there to be grateful about? **Even to be grateful there needs to be two.** The Master said, “Hey, wake up. You and me are not two. There’s only one! There’s no you, and there’s no I”.

There is only one (divinity) that exists, and this is all a drama, a leela (game). When you realize this, misery vanishes from life.

This was the message the last gentleman got, and when he got that slap, he was so happy!

Every challenge is an opportunity and every opportunity is a step towards the divinity. That’s the moral of the story.





*When you feel the connection to the wisdom
and to the Guru,
then there is no worry, concerns
or negative feelings.*

*Everything just disappears.
Guru Purnima is the day you feel the
oneness with the divinity.*

- Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar -



What Even God Could Not Do

When the bridge to Sri Lanka was being built (in the Ramayana), a lot of monkeys were helping in building it. The monkeys were picking up stones, writing 'Sri Ram' on the back of the stones and putting it in the water. As they put the stones in the water, they would float.

This has a spiritual significance: When the name of the Lord is with you, you will never sink, you will always float through the ocean of misery.

So all the monkeys were writing 'Sri Rama', and all their stones were floating. When Sri Rama saw this, he was so surprised. He thought, "What? These stones are floating!" He wanted to try it



himself. So he took a stone, wrote 'Sri Rama' on it and put it in the water, but the stone sank! Sri Rama was surprised.

One monkey was sitting at a distance, watching. Sri Rama went where he thought nobody was watching (whenever we think nobody is watching, there is somebody who is watching). So, one monkey who was watching, he started laughing. Sri Rama was a little embarrassed. The laughing monkey said to Sri Rama, "**Those who you throw away from your hands, how they will float? They will only sink!**"

The moral of the story is:

Devotees are so much more powerful than the Lord himself.

Devotees can do so much more than the Lord himself. When your heart is filled with love and compassion, you are so powerful. Never underestimate yourself.





A devotee is filled!
Every particle of the devotee is filled with the
Divine.

His heart, his mind, his breath, his body,
everywhere it is only the
Divine that is present.

A devotee's glory is so much more
than God himself.

- Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar -



Devotion Made God Turn Around

Kanakadasa was a great devotee of Lord Krishna. He has written many beautiful devotional songs in Kannada, and everyone in Karnataka knows about them.

The story goes, Kanakadasa was not allowed into a temple of Lord Krishna because he was poor and from a lower caste. So he would come and go to the back of the temple, on the outside and pray from there, because the temple was mainly for the rich and upper class people.

So one day what happened is, while Kanakadasa was praying, the wall at the back of the temple broke and the statue of Lord Krishna turned around and faced Kanakasada, giving him Darshan (an instance of seeing or beholding the image of a deity).



The people who were doing pooja on the other side were all startled.

This is a very well known fact here. Even today, in the Udupi Krishna Temple, you will find that when you enter the temple, the deity is facing the other way around. There is a broken wall, and it is from the broken wall only that you can see the deity, which is called '**The Window of Kanakadasa**'. This is from where he stood and prayed.

It is said that from then on, caste and class discrimination was done away with. There are many people who have fought against class and caste discrimination. He was one of them, and he was adored by everybody.

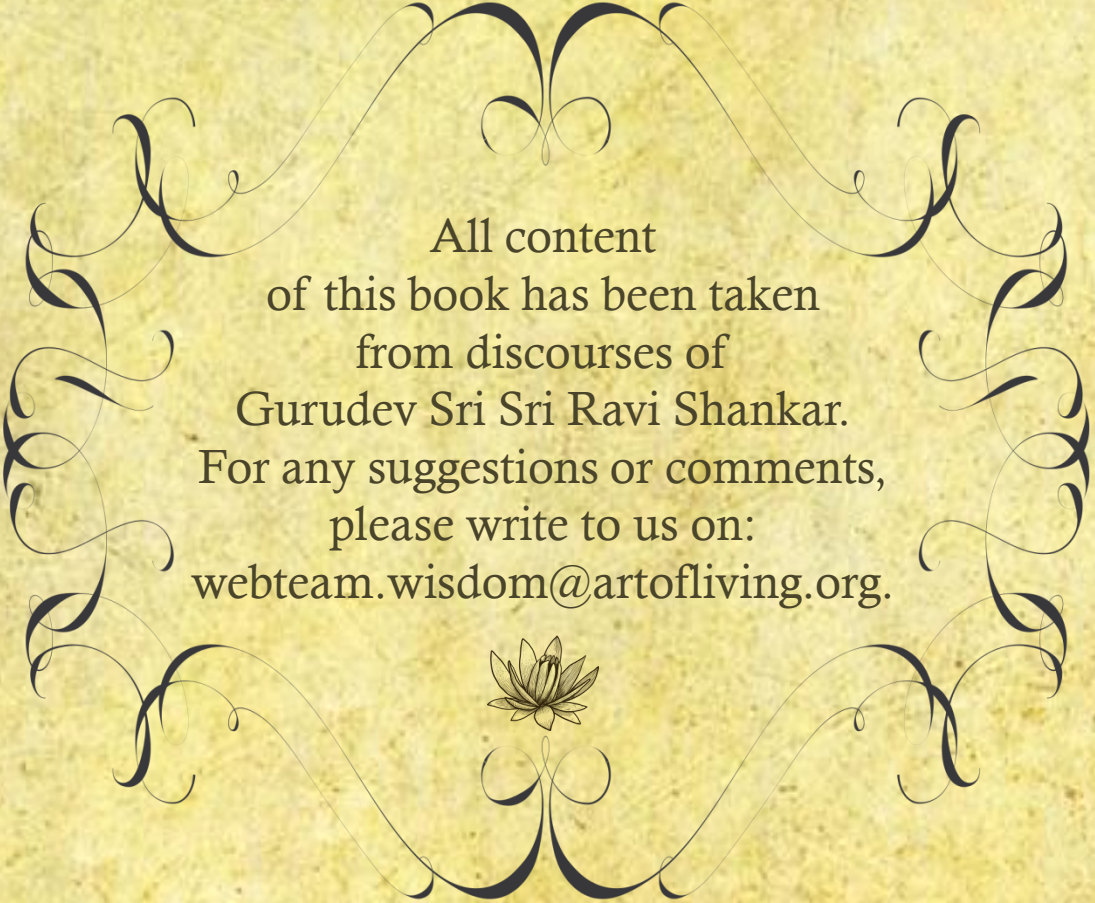




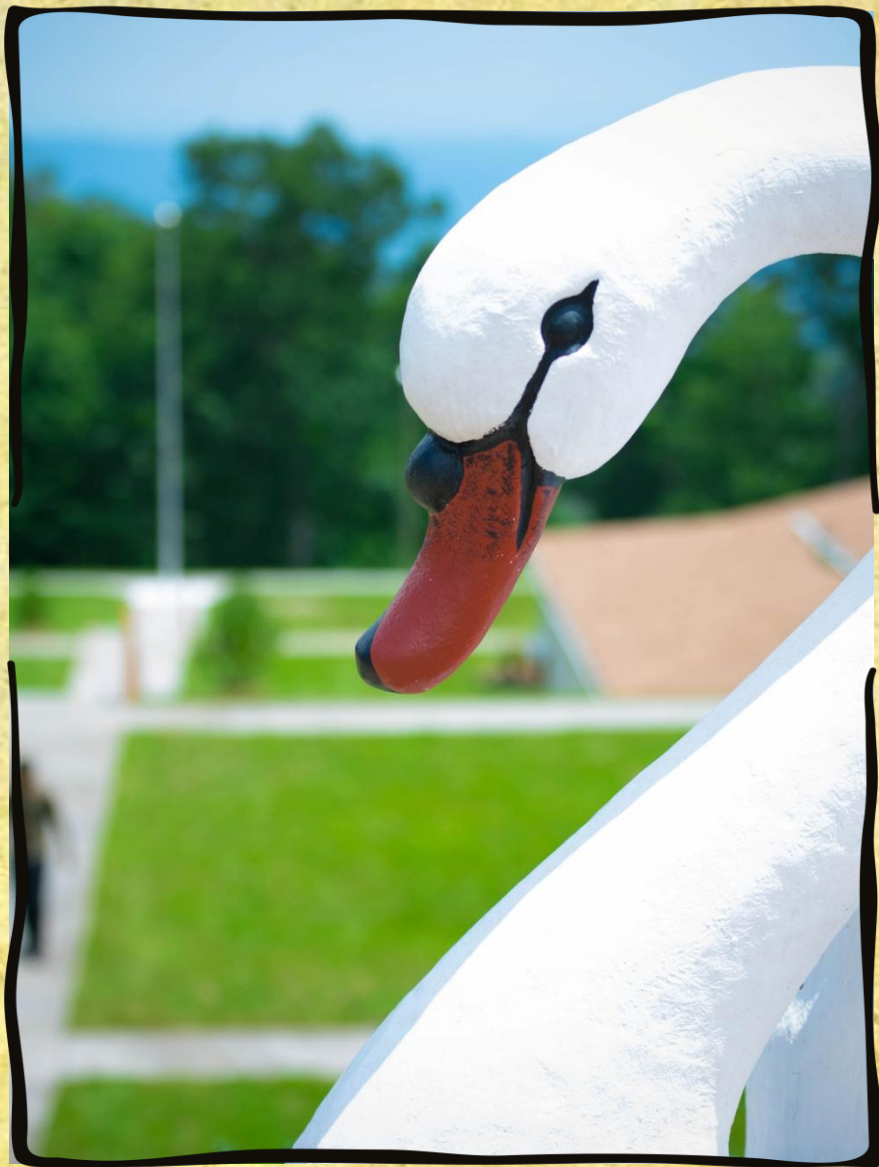
A holy place is where devotees walk,
devotees sit and devotees think —
that is a holy place.
If a holy place is devoid of devotees
who cry for the
— Divinity,
it is no more holy.

- Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar -



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All content
of this book has been taken
from discourses of
Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar.
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