

Coming Closer to Srila Prabhupada

Welcome to this special Kartik Inspiration!

Today, our hearts are full of gratitude. Gratitude to Srila Prabhupada's amazing kindness to us. On his disappearance day, we are all asked to reflect on our relationship with Srila Prabhupada. And I would like to focus solely on his gifts.

There is a beautiful section in the Garuda Purana that mentions six things that liberate us from the cycle of birth and death. As you will hear them, you will see that these are gifts that Srila Prabhupada has given: Ekadasi, the Bhagavad-gita, the water of Goddess Ganga Devi (without him, we would not have known anything about this), the leaves of Tulasi Devi, the water from the lotus feet of Lord Vishnu (caranamrita) and the holy names of the Lord. There are, of course, innumerable other presents that go beyond this collection from the Garuda Purana.

Surdas, the great poet, speaks about another set of blessings he has received from his guru. Surdas offers this most beautiful prayer to his spiritual master, "I offer my obeisances to my spiritual master, who gave me a beautiful kanti-mala, an effulgent tilak, the beautiful form of a devotee (he has given me birth really, and in the birth he gave me the tulasi kanti-mala, tilak, and so on), and then, he offered me his shelter. In one of his hands, my exalted spiritual master holds my hand, and with the other hand, he

is holding the lamp of knowledge, which helps me to cross over the dark ocean of the material world." Surdas says, "My guru deserves the greatest respect because only he can rescue one in the blink of an eye. I bow down to him, again and yet again."

Actually, to be close in service to one's spiritual master is the guarantee that Krishna accepts us. When Krishna hears the recommendation of our spiritual master, "Oh, he is so and so," then He will accept us because He will never deny His devotees. He is actually committed to and devoted to His devotees. Therefore, the secret of spiritual life lies in the pleasure of the spiritual master. And today I am sitting down, and I am vouching or pledging again my full surrender and service to his lotus feet. I am not doing it because I will then receive blessings and so on. I do it because I love him. Because he has bound my heart with his kindness. There's so much more to say, but there will be other opportunities.

Here is a PS: I just can't stop here. I would like to request that you sit down for a moment, in the peace of your room or wherever you are, and think about how Srila Prabhupada has entered your life and blessed you. This will help you very much to form a deeply felt relationship with Srila Prabhupada.

See you for the next Kartik Inspirations!

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Surdas

Sacinandana Swami

SACINANDANA SWAMI