The Actual Guru-Dakshina – Inspiring Incidents
(Vaastvik Guru-Dakshina Ke Prerak Prasang)[1]

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Jagatguru (the Guru of the world) is only the all virtuous formless Supreme Almighty (*sagun nirakar*). Saints and great persons born in the form of *Satguru* (true spiritual guru) are diverse forms of Him. Param Guru, the Almighty, through their medium imparts '*naam daan'* (the *'daan'* of the Name of the Almighty) to disciples, imparts *diksha* of Guru Mantra to them, imparts a higher position to them that even His own. In His own words, He instructs: 'Know that the saints are greater than Me' (*Ramcharit Manas*, 3/35/2). That is - saints should be considered higher than Me. Why? Not imparting 'Naam daan' Himself, but imparting it through Guru's in human form and disciples take *diksha* and give offering in gratitude which is known as *Guru-dakshina*. These materials are in the form of wealth, clothes, eatables and other items of daily use. What kind of *dakshina* (offering) is desired by the *Satguru* and the Supreme Guru, the Almighty from disciples is presented here through some illustrations –

(I)

At the completion of his spiritual learning (*vidyadhyana*), Shri Krishna prayed at the divine feet of Guru Sandipani (sage of Gurus) – 'Gurudev! Please instruct me, what *Guru-dakshina* (offering in gratitude to the Guru) may I present at your holy feet? How may I serve you?' Gurudev said – 'I do not want anything, there are no needs.' 'Gurudev! You may have no needs, but I need to give some *Guru-dakshina* and do some *seva* (service).'

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'Ok, then ask your Guru Ma what she wants.' Shri Krishna enquired from the Guru's wife – 'In what way may I serve you?' "Krishna, you are our most capable student. My son has departed to the abode of Yama, bring him back for me.' Shri Krishna brought the son of the Guru back from the abode of Yama and placed him in the lap of the Mother. What significance *Guru-dakshina* has; the relations between Guru and disciple have! For the completeness of this pure relationship, upon receiving *'naam-daan'* (the gift of the "Name'), *Guru-mantra* or knowledge, it is essential that the disciple give the Guru, in some form or another, *Guru-dakshina*.

(2)

Mahatma Shukdev grew *atma-gyani* (knowledgeable one who has received the stage of self realization) while in the womb itself. Refusing to emerge from there he started to say – 'I want to remain unattached from worldly illusion (*maya)*. The Almighty stopped the momentum of *maya* for five split seconds, then Shuk emerged from the womb. Detachment *(vairagya*) was so powerful that on birth itself he left for the forests. His father Maharishi Vyas Devji wanted to send his detached son to King Janak but Shukdevji had many doubtful questions in his mind - for instance- he is a king, I am a *rishi* (sage); he is a householder; I am a renunciate; he is *kshtariya*, I am Brahmin; he is a materialist (*bhogi*), I am a yogi, a *sanyasi*. How can I make such a king Janak my guru? He went to him many times, but returned. In the criticism of a saint mahatma, in seeking their faults, one's virtuous earnings are lost. Devrishi Narad, in order to teach him, took the form of an old person and was pouring mud into a drain of water. In so much water, mud would not stand. On seeing this Shuk asked – 'What are you doing?' The elderly person replied- 'I am making a dam.' 'Foolish person – does a dam get built just by throwing mud like this?' The old person promptly turned his face and said – 'I am not

foolish. Foolish is that Shukdev, see his foolishness; prideful he has abandoned his feelings for Guru and wasted his accumulated knowledge (*gyan rashi*).' Shuk fainted on hearing this; on gaining consciousness he got up and went straight to Raja Janak

Respectfully, devotionally, lovingly, came close to Janak,
Who was in the cosmic world, the island of dharma.
Message was sent through the gate-keeper-
King! Shuk has come here, with the thirst of love,
Grant darshan, be merciful, enable crossing of the worldly oceans.
Seeing his young age, King of Mithila gave the command,
Stay at the hallway, for three nights remain.
Hearing the commandment, Shukdev obeyed immediately,
Stood for three days, without a wrinkly on his brow!
(Bhakti Prakash)

In the same way a message was sent to stay for three days and three nights more. There, fasting in winter, Shukdevji stayed on. There ladies came and went by their own will but Shukdevji remained happily engrossed in *bhakti*. Seeing this the ruler asked for the reason of his arrival?

With folded hands to Janak said
Shuk Muniraj,
Path of self-realization, devotion, grant me today!
(Bhakti Prakash)

On considering Shukdev worthy and a pure receptacle, Sadguru Maharaj Janak gave him *diksha* of the 'Name' of the Almighty. Shukdevji spent a few days at the feet of his Guru doing *sadhana*,

all doubts were dispelled. The disciple wanted to give his Guru, *Guru-dakshina*. 'Son! (*Vatsya*) I don't want anything.' On his insistence and to show the vital-ness of *Guru-dakshina*, Raja Janak said: 'Give me whatever may be of no use in your view.' After thinking and contemplating, the disciple picked up some earth. The earth immediately said – 'To rivers, oceans, mountains, palaces and houses I give the gift of myself. To every human, I give food, flowers, fruits, myself. How am I useless?' Throwing the earth, he picked up a stone which said – 'From me houses, palaces, forts are designed; I am not a waste.' Shukdevji's mind was alerted – pride in oneself is at fault; this is useless and due to this there are bondages in the world. Thus each disciple should place his duty *(kartavya)* that is the pride of his doing, his ego at the holy feet of the Guru in the form of *Guru-dakshina*. Gurudevs ask only for this from their disciples.

(3)

Saint Tukaram narrates in his own words mysteries, secret things about himself - 'Listening to religious stories, I fell in love with the Almighty. I became a disciple of Lord Vithal, started to perform incessant *jaap* of his 'Name'. The Lord felt merciful and in my dreams, *Satguru* met me. I was returning from a dip in the Ganges, the meeting was on the way. He said – 'On the inspiration of God Vithalnath, I have come to give you instructions.' I said - 'I have never even done any service towards God, how merciful He is.' He gave the Divine 'Name' of Ram-Krishna-Hari and asked for a one-fourth kilo (*pav*) of *toop* (*ghee*-clarified butter) as *guru-dakshina*. Tukaram clearly says - the true meaning of *toop* is the feeling of - 'I' - mine, that is *ahenta mamta* not *ghee*. He explained – 'You are neither man nor woman, you are the soul, a part of that imperishable God. Surrender to me all your feelings of the body, that is your doer-ship (your ego), give that to me.'

(4)

On his travels, Guru Nanak reached a town. Its king came to have his *darshan* and was much influenced. Thus, expressing a great desire to present something he said- 'Baba! I want to give something.' 'King, whatever is yours, you may give.' Gold, silver, diamonds, jewels all were kept in front – 'Please accept them.' 'All this is not yours, before they were your father's, before him your grand-father's and after you, they will be your son's. On your demise, they will be left behind here, then how are they yours? Your physical body will also be left. That is also not your's. Mind is also not your's- why? You are sitting here but your mind is wandering elsewhere. One has control over one's possessions, the mind wanders day and night. You are sitting for *bhajan path*, that is your physical body is sitting in the company of Lord, the *satsang* (*satsangati)*, but the mind is with the family or somewhere else. King, even the intellect is not yours, if it were then you would not take the wrong decisions. It is full of ignorance that is why it makes truth into falsity and grief giving objects into pleasurable ones. This is *maya*.' 'Baba, then you tell me - what to give.' 'King, when the same situation was before King Janak, prayers were performed to Maharishi Yagyavalk to give instructions, by which the mind and intellect stay in control –

With folded hands, a major prayer was made, grant knowledge I am worthy of,
Rishi said, fortunate King, detached one, you are the renouncer!
Dhyaan, yagya now you perform, give dakshina and steady yourself.

While giving *Guru-dakshina*, the king prayed- 'Maharishi, take the entire kingdom.' 'This is not yours, it was your ancestors and will not remain yours. Give me such an object that is yours.' 'Please

take the wealth.' 'Even that is not yours King, much of it is your father's and the rest belongs to the people. How is it yours? Horses, elephants, vehicles – are also not yours; today, they are with you, tomorrow with someone else. King, even the body is not yours; on death it will be left here. Give your mind in *dakshina*.' Making this even more explicit, Guru Nanak says: 'This which you are saying – I give wealth, kingdom, body, mind, intellect, keep all this with yourself. Give 'I' to me. If you give 'I', all is gained and if 'I' is not given, then even on giving everything, nothing is given.' Maharishi Yajyavalka asks Raja Janak for his mind –

In auspicious bhakti, Janakji said, may my mind belong to the sage,
Rishi said, my consent is there, your offering is accepted.
Self-knowledge has been realized, consider your yagya successful Oh, King!
He said listen beloved guru, may desires fly with wings.
Equanimity has not come to my mind, there is excessive restlessness,
Muni said – 'Offering is incomplete, with this the mind cannot focus fully.'
After giving the offering of the mind, do not waver, do not work with my mind,
Consider your mind as mine now, perform the work of the kingdom.
Intentional silence, steadfastness werem achieved, peace came after losing all doubts,
Calm, quiet mind, immovable body, the maya of the mind was fully removed.

(Bhakti Prakash)

Giving his blessings, the Rishi said – 'Oh, King! I return your mind in the form of *prasad*. Do not think it your own, consider it mine and rule and also perform 'Shri Ram' bhajan.' Raja Janak was overwhelmed with joy, lost body-consciousness.

(5)

There is a true incident about Tibet; one disciple went to his Gurudev and requested for *diksha* (initiation). The Guru said – 'There are thousands of disciples here, there is no place for you.' 'Gurudev, be merciful. I can stay quietly here or there.' 'Fine, you pound the rice for everyone's meals.' The disciple made the Guru's instructions paramount, as a crown on the head *(shirodhari)* and day and night did this work. Neither did the disciple ever go to the Guru, nor did the Guru ever approach the disciple. Many years passed, the time for the Gurus' *nirvana* arrived. He wanted to bestow the Guru's position, thus asked his disciples - 'What you may have learnt here all these years, write its essence and give.' Almost everyone wrote this – 'The mind is a mirror, the Guru cleanses the dirt which accumulates on it.' The Guru was dissatisfied and unpleased. Thus, he said – 'Ask the person who pounds the rice once.' Everyone went, on being asked he replied – 'Brothers, I am uneducated, I cannot write but what did you all write?' What the majority had written, they told him. Then he said- 'Brothers, when the Guru has been found, then how is the mind with oneself? The Guru is the looter of the mind, we use his mind, thus for everything *Satguru* is responsible.' On hearing this, for the first and last time Guru Maharaj went to the disciple and bestowed the guru's position to him and himself achieved *nirvana*.

From the above narrated example, *Guru-dakshina's* essentialness, greatness and superiority become apparent. With giving *guru-dakshina*, according to the way of the *Shastras*, the Guru-disciple

relationship becomes strong. Disciples have placed at the feet of the guru as *guru-dakshina* their self-pride, their ego, that is their mind in all its principal, but what is the practical form of this? On this theme, some examples are presented –

(I)

Once Mahatma Buddha told his disciples – 'Bhikshus, four months from today I will achieve complete *nirvana*, then this body will not be in your midst; thus whatever is worthy of being done, do it soon; there is now no time for delay.' The entire *sangha* (congregation) drowned in great sorrow. Crying woefully, beating their chests, blubbering, the disciples started deep thought - 'What will happen now?' All were worried about how the set-up would run. A disciple named Tishya, on hearing the news, did not cry nor scream but entered intentional silence (*Maun*). His companions started to think, he is so deeply hurt that he has even stopped talking. They feared that he may go mad. Due to his good behaviour Tishya was extremely loved; the new of his quietude reached Gurudev, Tishya has, like a turtle, withdrawn himself internally. The disciple was called, he bowed at the holy feet. Buddha said, 'Son (*Vatsya)!* These *bhikshus* want to know about your feelings, your mental state.' Tishya replied with respectful humility - 'God! Your instructions – what is worth following – follow, do not delay. I am trying to follow those instructions, trying to make them possible. Be merciful, may my determination be fulfilled.' With tearful eyes, Trishya respectfully requested- 'My Lord! Oh, merciful Gurudev! Before *nirvana* may my 'I' die - for this grant me strength and also blessings. Now neither will I speak, nor move, nor waver. I have to use all my strength for this. Oh, merciful! Be kind so that these four months, I use for a revolution in my life – this way or that way may I be.' Listening to the disciple, the pleased Guru said – 'Oh, bhikshus! Become like Tishya. What will come of crying and blabbering?

Prayer through flower garland offerings is not my prayer; those who offer flower, garlands of *dhyaan* everyday- that is the true prayer. Make your lives *sadhnamay*, making it enlightened is my true prayer. What has happened to Tishya let that happen in you.' The Guru's permission, his command, his teachings, his tradition to the letter, obedience, to be strongly resolute for a pure life journey, earning the wealth of the Lords 'name', to earn and accumulate the capital of good *karma* and to see the Lord in all humans and to serve them in the manner of serving the Guru; behave with them lovingly, to continue self study and to broadcast and spread the Guru's teachings and to motivate them for *satsang* and to encourage them for *sadhana* – is real Guru puja. To continue to offer such prayer like flowers that is to stay committed to maintain the above vows is in a real sense *Guru-dakshina*

(2)

At a Rishi's ashram on the banks of the Ganges, many disciples gained spiritual knowledge. On completing their education, they returned to their respective homes. While leaving, they would ask the Acharya – '*Gurudev*! What may we give in *Guru-dakshina*? The guru would reply – 'What you have gained, when you are in society, implement it, bring your knowledge into your behaviour, stand on your own feet, earn truthfully and then after one year whatever your heart desires, you may give.' Upon leaving the *ashram* whatever was earned in their work, the disciples gave a portion with devotion to the Guru Maharaj. Once a simple, ordinary disciple came to the Gurukul; he was an ordinary householder, worked hard all day to maintain his family. Extremely keen to learn, his exemplary behaviour won the hearts of everyone. The Rishi taught him lovingly; whatever he learnt he would aspire to implement in his mind; whatever task was given to him, he completed by the next day. When his education was completed he too enquired – 'Gurudev! What may I give in *guru-dakshina*?'

The Rishi told him what he used to tell all his other disciples. He returned after a year, prostrated at the holy feet and said – 'Gurudev! I have come to present *guru-dakshina*.' Pleased to see him, the Guru asked – 'Son! What have you brought?' He brought forth ten people, they were from his village. He said – 'I have brought them in *Guru-dakshina*.'

'For what?' 'Lord, what learning you had imparted to me, I took to them, in just that their lives have been reformed; now make them your disciples, so that so many more people tread the correct path.' Joyfully, the Rishi said – 'You have given me whole precious, most superior *Guru-dakshina*. Son, you have gained most superior things here, distributed the most superior and also presented me with the most superior.'

Frequently people go to the holy feet of the Guru to resolve worldly problems, the reason for coming to the *satsang* is the same that the *darshan* of the Saint Guru fulfills desires. They take *diksha* of the 'Name with the same hope that their worldly problems are resolved. For a while they perform *jaap* of the 'Name', do different types of prayers, disappointed by one they appeal to another. Today Vrindavan, tomorrow Rishikesh, day after they submit attendance at the holy feet of Balaji Bhagwan. Life is spent in tarrying. For such a person Bhakt Kabir Sahib says –

See the world's intoxication and madness, no
one heeds devotionalism (Bhakti bhava)
Some come to ask for a son,
give a rupee as offering,
Some come stricken by sorrow,
be merciful on us please
Some celebrate weddings,
engagements, anxious to please Saints-priests,

Truth has no customers,
the false world that glitters is what all want
Says Kabir, 'Listen Oh, brothers (sadho)!
What can one give such blind seekers!'

True saints upon seeing such a state of worldly person's comment- 'Brother! Our situation is akin to that of a shopkeeper in the midst of blind customers selling mirrors.' Such persons do not know the worth of a spiritual guru, nor that of *Guru-dakshina*. Such disciples have similar behaviour before the Guru or the Almighty; as they trade with each other. The Saint inspires to do the *jaap* of the Almighty's name, to perform bhakti, do *sadhana* to achieve *moksha* - such is the path they show, but there is no one willing to obey or to follow. Blessings are asked for, *jaap-dhyaan, seva-simran* not performed.

The experience of the Saints shows us that becoming a disciple is very toilsome. A rare person understands the position of the Guru in spiritual life, few recognize its capabilities, and few have the self-realization of what may be gained from the Guru, what should be asked for, what should be dedicated in his service? One youthful, curious person in his wanderings reached a valley in the mountains of Nepal where here he saw an elderly saint sitting on a cliff. He was engrossed in meditation; the youth waited, prostrated himself before him, introduced himself. It was sunset, the Saint asked the youth – 'Son (*Vatsya)*! My feet do not have the strength that could enable me to climb the mountain and go to my cave; assist me, take the trouble to make me sit on your shoulders and take me there.' A difficult climb, the youth carried him, they reached at 11 at night. Alighting the elder, the youth respectfully asked - '*Mahatman*! Any more service?' The Saint was extremely pleased; he was a great Yogi, he was a Swami of many *Sidhis* (spiritual powers), with his *Yog shakti* a lot of wealth appeared and he told the youth- 'As much as you want, take.' The

youth said – 'Almighty! All this I have left behind and come. Will this teach me the essence of life? Will I understand death? Mahatma ! All this is impermanent (perishable); if even from saints one gets the impermanent, then from where may one get the everlasting?' On hearing the youth's reply the Saint was overjoyed.

'I am the body!' the death of this egoistic feeling is the real end – this is the essence of death's mystery. This could be submitted as *Guru-dakshina* at the holy feet of the Guru and killed or by any other means. Only after the death of the ego can a disciple become worthy of true *Guru-seva*, otherwise without serving the world the disciple will serve his own ego and ruin his life. Those who obliterate themselves and are oriented to the Guru, never allow their Guru to die, through following his purposes and through spreading his message they keep him alive. Such disciples continue to give Guru Maharaj- life long, real *Guru-dakshina* and themselves too become immortal. Thus is why saints-mahatma's by their experiences have uttered the truism - 'Those who have embraced Ram, obliterated their selves, have achieved Ram.' Where you will obliterate yourself, there the One responsible for becoming, will make you thus that you will always remain being; that is, you will become one who can never be obliterated. Such *Satguru* and disciples are both spiritually great (*dhanya*)!