

Eight Verses on the Teacher (Gurv-Ashtaka)

Attributed to Shankarâcârya

Translated by Georg Feuerstein, Ph.D.

One may have a beautiful body, a [lovely] wife, far-reaching fame, or wealth like [the golden] Mount Meru; but so long as one's mind is not attached to the lotus feet of one's *guru*, what of it? What of it? What of it? What of it? (1)

One may have wife, wealth, sons, and grandsons, as well as a house and [good] relatives—all of it; but so long as one's mind is not attached to the lotus feet of one's *guru*, what of it? What of it? What of it? What of it? (2)

One may have knowledge of the [four] *Vedas* along with the six auxiliary [sciences] and the textbooks [ready] on one's lips or have poetic genius (*kavitva*) or [be able to] create good prose; but so long as one's mind is not attached to the lotus feet of one's *guru*, what of it? What of it? What of it? What of it? (3)

One may think "I am well off in my own country and honored in other countries," or "There is no one like me in matters of good behavior." But so long as one's mind is not attached to the lotus feet of one's *guru*, what of it? What of it? What of it? What of it? (4)

One's lotus feet may always be served by hosts of worldly rulers and emperors in the round of the world (*kshama-mandala*); but so long as one's mind is not attached to the lotus feet of one's *guru*, what of it? What of it? What of it? What of it? (5)

[One may think:] "Because of my generosity and austerities, my fame has spread into all corners, and through grace all things in the world are in my hands." But so long as one's mind is not attached to the lotus feet of one's *guru*, what of it? What of it? What of it? What of it? (6)

The mind [may be preoccupied] with enjoyment, Yoga, bravery, rulership, the face of a maiden, or wealth. But so long as one's mind is not attached to the lotus feet of one's *guru*, what of it? What of it? What of it? What of it? (7)

[One may think:] "My mind does not dwell on [retiring to] the forest, my own house, activities, the body, or on what is invaluable." But so long as one's mind is not attached to the lotus feet of one's *guru*, what of it? What of it? What of it? What of it? (8)

The virtuous person—be he an ascetic, ruler, student, or householder—who reads this octad on the *guru* and whose mind is fixed on the words uttered by the *guru*, will attain the desired object known as the state of *brahman*. (9)

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