

Guru Purnima

Guru Purnima is a major festival among Hindus. Guru Purnima is celebrated to give respect to teachers and mentors. In Hindu culture, the importance of a teacher is greater than God. Guru means one who removes darkness from one's life.

Guru Purnima is celebrated on the day of full moon in the month of Ashadh (June-July). It is also known as Vyaasa Purnima because it is considered that Sage Vyasa is the Adi Guru of the Hindu religion. On this day devotees worship their Gurus (mentors).

Traditionally the festival is celebrated by Buddhists in the honor of the Lord Buddha who gave His first sermon on this day at Sarnath, Uttar Pradesh, India. The festival is common to all spiritual traditions in Hinduism, where it is dedicated to the expression of gratitude towards the teacher by his/her disciple. Hindu ascetics and wandering monks (sanyasis), observe this day by offering puja to the Guru, during the Chaturmas, a four-month period during the rainy season, when they choose seclusion, and halt at one selected place; some also give discourses to the local public. Students of the Indian classical music, which also follows the *Guru shishya parampara*, celebrate this festival, around the world.

The day of Guru Purnima is considered very auspicious. The day also finds a great importance for farmers. The period 'Chaturmas' ('four months') begins from this day. The water, drawn up and stored as clouds in the hot summer, now manifests in plentiful showers that bring fresh life everywhere.

Legend

This was the day, when saint VedVyasaji – author of the Mahabharata – was born to sage Parashara and a fisherman's daughter Satyawati, thus this day is also celebrated as *Vyasa Purnima*.

It is considered that Vyasa Maharshi is the guru of all gurus. All prayers today to one's guru are directly reaching Vyasa. Vyasa Maharshi has helped everyone to know Vedas and Puranas and lead life in a righteous way.

Significance

Seekers try to get as much opportunity to do Satseva of the Guru as possible during this period. As the Guru principle is 1000 times more active during this period, when compared to any other day during this year, the satseva done on Guru Purnima fetches substantial grace of the Guru for their spiritual progress.

The relationship between the Guru and the Disciple is considered very sacred. This relationship is purely spiritual in nature and is independent of age of the two. It is based on maturity of Gyan (Spiritual Knowledge) and Shrada (Spiritual Practice). The only awareness that a Disciple should foster is, 'I should be uplifted spiritually'. The Guru too harbours only one thought, 'May this Disciple be uplifted'. Relationships other than Guru-Disciple are bound by worldly restrictions wherein the ego constantly manifests itself while Gyan and other

Shrada have no value. Since these worldly relationships presuppose ego for their sustenance, at the spiritual level they are rendered false. (Ref : Sanatan Prabhat)