

Guru Purnima

Gurur Brahma
Guru Vishnur
Gurur Devo
Maheswara Guru
Sakshaat
Parabrahma
Tasmai Shri
Guruve Namah

I prostrate to that
Sri Guru, who is
himself Brahma,
Vishnu, and God

Maheshvara,
and who is verily
the Supreme
Absolute itself.



THE DAY

Guru Purnima is the day where the Hindu Community celebrates its revered spiritual, educational and inspirational leaders. We aim to learn, understand and appreciate the value the day of Guru Purnima brings.

THE ETHOS

The day traditionally falls within the month of Ashadh (July-August). Hindus refer to this day as Guru Purnima, (Sometimes also called

Vyasa Purnima). On this day, devotees offer puja (worship) to their Guru. Guru Purnima acknowledges the might of one's teacher or Guru through respect and reverence. The occasion is celebrated in memory of the great sage Vyasa, who it is believed, was born on this day.

Hindus are reverent to this great sage who: edited the four Vedas (Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samveda, Atharvaveda), wrote the Brahma Sutras (a summary of the Upanishads) and the 18 Puranas. Vyasa also witnessed

and narrated various scenes of the Mahabharata. Every year on the day of Ashadh Purnima it is said that he was greatly worshipped and disciples sought his blessings. This belief and practice of seeking the blessings of one's teacher to bring wisdom is one that has resided, and evolved into the tradition known as Guru Purnima.

It is a day with spiritual significance as it is believed that God is the ultimate Guru and typical practice is to worship, make offerings and

seek blessings from one's spiritual teachers, as a manifestation of God. The period 'Chaturmas' (four months) begins from this day. Historically, wandering spiritual leaders used to take homage at a place to study the scriptures and engage themselves in Vedantic discussions for these four months.

THE MEANING AND IMPORTANCE

The word 'Guru' means 'dispeller of darkness', the concept being that the Guru removes ignorance and gives one the light of knowledge.

A dialogue from the Shrimad Bhagwatam highlights the importance of the Guru in one's aspirations of gaining spirituality:

"O Rahugan! One cannot attain knowledge of Atma and Paramatma by performing penance, sacrifices, renunciation, Vedic study or worshipping deities of water, fire or

the sun. But when the dust from the feet of a satpurush (God-realized Guru) sprinkles on our heads, then we can surely attain this knowledge."

Students may also refer to School teachers or Lecturers as Guru, as in this case the Guru imparts temporal knowledge and thus is accordingly offered respect. Today, the tremendous work that teachers endeavour themselves in is often undervalued. But the tradition of Guru Purnima engages a different mindset altogether. Students today can give thanks, honour and reflect on the positive impact teachers have on their lives.

On this day the National Hindu Students' Forum (UK) reveres and honours the role of a Guru in one's life. As students we take this opportunity to thank those teachers across the length and breadth of the country.

Deity

Guru: the dispeller of ignorance (so teachers too!)

Significance

We pay homage to those who help us progress from ignorance to knowledge. We respect them for their guidance

