

## Gurupurnima talk of Acarya

Arsha Vidya Gurukulam Swami Sadatmanandaji on 27th July 2018

Today we are celebrating the day called Vyaasapurnima, known as Gurupurnima. It is called Vyaasa-purnima because on this full moon day Vyaasa was born. Vyaasa was an important guru in our tradition. He is called Veda Vyaasa - *viv vyaasam vedam yasmat* - One who compiled vedas. He did not author the vedas, but he compiled the vedas. Therefore he is called Veda Vyaasa. His other name is Sri Krishna Dvaipayana because he was born in a particular Island and his name was Sri Krishna. He is considered to be an avatara of Lord Vishnu. There is a sloka which expresses this idea - *VyaasAya Vishnu rupaaya*.

His contribution to our tradition is enormous. He compiled the vedas, he wrote brahma sutra which is a book of analysis on the upanishad. He also wrote Mahabharata consisting of 100,000 slokas. He wrote ashtadasha puranas- 18 puranas and he has written a commentary on yoga sutra and there is also a Vyaasa smrti. He has covered all the aspects of vedic teaching. Therefore, there is a saying - *vyaasochchhishtam jagat sarvam*- everything is touched upon by Veda Vyaasa. Idea is that all the aspects of life are dealt with by Veda Vyaasa. To express our gratitude to Veda Vyaasa, we celebrate Vyaasapurnima. Since Veda Vyaasa represents the lineage of teachers, this day is also called gurupurnima – *guroh purnima* – the full moon day dedicated to guru. On this day we express our gratitude to our own teacher and also the teachers of the entire sampradaya. Infact, there is a specific way of doing puja where you make a mandala and you invoke all the acaryas. Ofcourse on this day you express your gratitude to your own teacher.

### **What is the importance of having and showing gratitude?**

Especially in our Vedanta tradition, gratitude to our teachers is very important because if I have gratitude and reverence to my teacher from whom I am learning or I have learnt, then only there will be an impact of the teaching given by him or her. If there is no reverence or gratitude for the teacher, even though I have learnt, but his or her teaching will not have so much impact. The notes I have written during the class, I will not have the mind to see it and even if I see it I won't give so much validity to it. So my reverence and gratitude to the teacher will create an impact of the teaching given by the teacher. It is for my own benefit that I have and express my gratitude.

Another thing is – gratitude makes me humble. Otherwise there can be jnana-ahankara. “*I have understood well*,” *I can express and talk fluently* – thus there can be a lot of arrogance. To counter-act that, having gratitude to your teacher is very important. Gratitude means I remember that what I have is because of the grace of my teacher and this attitude will keep me humble.

Gratitude in general is very good for our mental health. Gratitude keeps us happy. Gratitude is the feeling born of the acknowledgement of the favours done to me. When I remember something good done to me, naturally there will be happiness. Therefore, gratitude in general is a very good attitude I have seen it in Pujya Swamiji so much. A person would have done a small thing, but he will make it a point to express his gratitude. In my own life, I have seen it has helped me very much. So gratitude keeps you happy.

Another thing is gratitude takes care of our self-esteem as well. When you have more and more gratitude expressed often, then you are remembering - *how blessed I am, how blessed I am*. Means, I remember what all I have. How I have been helped by so many people. When I think of that then the general feeling many people have that life has let him down will not happen because of my remembering that so much has been done to me by so many people. Therefore, this gratitude helps us to even have a relatively good self-esteem. That is why we express our gratitude in general and especially to our teacher on this Gurupurnima day.

Also this gratitude should not be kept within yourself. It needs to be expressed in an appropriate way and at appropriate time. When expressed, it gets strengthened like love or any feeling. Therefore, gratitude needs to be expressed. Gurupurnima and days like this give us an opportunity to express our gratitude.

This gratitude can be expressed in various ways - through speech, through chanting some stotram or expressing some feelings if they are there to the teacher or through puja or worshipping the picture, paduka or feet of the teacher and also by serving the teacher in whatever manner possible - *kayena, vacha, manasa*. All these three means we use to express our gratitude. When we express our gratitude verbally, we should make sure there is no exaggeration. So whatever feeling we have, we express appropriately without exaggeration. That will help us to strengthen our gratitude. Gurupurnima is one such day, we can express our gratitude.

One more thing, this day is marking the *caturmasya vratam* of sanyasis. In earlier days and even now some sanyasis keep walking and don't stay in one place for more than three days. That was the convention. In monsoon they cannot travel, so they will be staying in one place and the villagers or citizens of the town or city will request the sanyasi to stay there and bless them by his presence. There is a particular *vidhi* for that. The sanyasi will agree to stay in that place and everyday he will be teaching some sastra like puranas or if there are evolved students, then he may teach brahma sutra. This gurupurnima day is the beginning of *caturmasa vratam*. *Caturmasa* is a group of four months starting from this gurupurnima day to the end of the fourth month from now. But this is too much for sanyasis who are busy. So there is an abridged version- *paksho vai masah*. Four months are converted into two months. Some follow this and don't travel for two months.

This day is also important for starting some *vratam* (vow or discipline). Generally, the *vratam* is *upavaasa pradhana vratam*. You reduce your intake during these four months. This is also good health-wise because it is said during the monsoon time our digestion power is reduced and therefore it is better we eat less. One variety is - *shaaka haara* - one eats vegetables only for four months and the result of this *vratam* is one becomes wealthy. Wealth can include all wealth like wealth of vidya also. Or one can remain fasting alternate days. Some *vratams* are positive like you chant *purusha suktam* every day. This will increase buddhi shakti or you do 108 pradakshina having fruit in your hand or do some vedic chanting everyday. All this will bless you anytime, but if done during *chaturmasa*, it will bless you even more. Like shops announce special divali sale. If you cannot do it for four months, then you at least do it for Kartika masa- the last month. These four months is *devashayana*- Vishnu is taking rest. Therefore, *mangal karyas* (auspicious actions) such as marriage etc. are not generally done during this period

There are some guiding principles as to what sort of *vratam*, we should do. One thing is the *vratam* you do should not disturb the household set-up or office set-up. Means your *vratam* should not be a source of disturbance to others. Suppose you are a receptionist and you take the *vratam* of *maunam* or you take *vratam* to chant *purusha suktam* loudly very early in the morning disturbing others around. That is not proper.

Also the *vratam* should be in keeping with your physical stamina. If one has problem walking, one should not take a *vratam* of doing 108 *pradakshina*. *Samartho dharmam Acharet*.

Also it should be in keeping with your mental condition. If one's mind is generally feeling depressed nowadays, then one should not take the *vratam* of *maunam*. Talking is necessary to get over depression.

Also my *vratam* needs to be in harmony with the type of *sadhana* I am predominantly following. Suppose I have a commitment now to *nididhyasanam*, then doing 108 *pradakshina* or chanting may not be the appropriate *vratam* to take. The *vratam* should not distract me from my present *sadhana*. Like right now if I have commitment to Vedanta study and have to attend 6-7 classes in a day, then I should not take a *vratam* which will distract me from my study. Keeping all these factors in mind we do *vratam*.

### **Somebody may ask-“ Why do *vratam* Swamiji?”**

*Vratam* is meant for establishing my mastery over my own body-mind-sense complex. If you already have this mastery and you feel that your body, your mind and senses are very cooperative and do not create any problem. Then you need not do *vratam* because you have already got the result of *vratam*. But if this mastery is not there, then *vratam* can help.

But while following *vratam*, we make sure that the *vratam* does not create any guilt. If there is any violation in your *vratam*, or you start a *vratam* and you find it hard to keep it up. Then you can pray – “O Lord, give me the capacity to do this *vratam* next year.” So without any guilt we follow the *vratam*.

It really gives a lot of discipline, lot of mastery over one's body-mind-sense complex.

So we pray to lord Dakshinamurti and to Pujya Swamiji to bless us in our pursuit. If we are going to have some *vratam* we pray to Bhagavan- “Give us the strength to follow the *vratam*”.

*Om tat sat.*

### **Quotes from Pujya Swamiji's Diary – 1968**

#### **May 1968-**

\* What you face now is a fact. Is a fact ever a problem?

\* A fact is a problem when the fact is not faced.

\* Life is full of factual events-no problems.