

**Talk by Swami Sadatmanandaji on the occasion of  
Gurupurnima Celebrations at AVG Anaikatti on July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023**

Today we are celebrating Vyaasa Purnima otherwise called Gurupurnima. Purnima means a full moon day. Vyaasa Purnima means full moon day dedicated to the worship of Veda Vyaasa. Also it happens to be his birthday.

We know the glory of Veda Vyaasa which we remember on this day every year. Veda Vyaasa is called so because along with His disciples he compiled the vedas. He did not compose the vedas, but compiled the vedas which were spread all over the country in the custody of different families. He contributed to sruti-prasthanam by compiling them and he contributed to smrti-prasthanam by composing the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna in the form of Bhagavad Gita. He has also written the Brahma sutras. He has written 18 puranas. Vyaasa smrti and yoga sutra bhashyam are also written by him. He has contributed a lot to our sampradaya. Therefore, we express our gratitude to Bhagavan Veda Vyaasa. He is considered to be an avatara of Vishnu- *vyaasaya vishnurupAya. vishnave vyaasa rUpine.*

This day is also called Gurupurnima because Veda Vyaasa represents the parampara of all gurus right upto our own guru – *Narayanam padmabhuvam vashishtam shaktim ca tat putra parasarancha, vyaasam sukham .....asmat gurum pranatosmi.* This sloka traces the entire lineage of gurus starting from Lord Narayana right upto our teacher to whom I salute. On this day we express our gratitude to our gurus by doing puja to them.

### **What is the meaning of Guru?**

There are different ways of explaining this word. One way is the word Guru has two parts - **Gu** means darkness and **ru** means remover. So guru is one who removes the darkness of ignorance. Another meaning is *grhnati upadishati* iti guru- One who is teaching is called Guru. Nowadays many people have this question. Swamiji do we really need a guru? Because books are available and we can read them. Nowadays we can go to UTube and so many mahatmas are sitting there talking, one click away. I can listen to that and depending on which mahatma or which text I like, I can listen. Do I really require to call someone my guru. *"I feel guru is required only by mediocre people. Whereas I am a gold medallist, high ranker, I don't need it."* People do think like this.

For that our answer is that even for music you require a guru. Then what to talk of this subtlest self which is not available for perception or inference. The need of guru can never be over-emphasized. Another thing we say is that our buddhi has certain limitations - *pum doshah* (human defects).

i) First one is called ajnanam. Our buddhi has got ignorance of the infrastructure topics

required for understanding sastram. Pujya Swamiji used to explain this problem of ignorance by saying that if you want to understand entire Bhagavad Gita you start with the first sloka and then 2<sup>nd</sup> and so on. But when the teaching starts in sl 11-*asocyan asocastvam* . To understand this well, you need to have the knowledge of the entire Bhagavad gita. This is called *ananya-ashraya doshah* (mutual dependence) So each sloka you can understand well only when you have the vision of total text and the total text you can understand if you know each sloka one by one. Like he gives this example. That one man was not mentally very sound. So it was suggested that he should get married to get alright. But to get married he should be mentally sound. It is a catch-22 situation.

Similarly here, you do not have the vision of total text to understand each sloka of Gita. Thus the first defect of human intellect is *ajnanam*.

ii) Second defect is that there are *samsayas* or doubts since so many interpretations possible especially when you are studying by yourself based on different english translations which also vary. *Samsayayukta-jnanam* is as good as no jnanam in terms of its effectiveness.

iii) Thirdly there can be *viparya* or wrong conclusions/prejudices. When you study sastra on your own, you already have some conclusions that truth must be like this. One swami said that Bhagavan has to be saguna only. Even if Bhagavan Sri Krishna comes and tells otherwise, I will not accept it. When such prejudices is there, then one will derive the message one wants to derive.

iv) Another problem is *pramada* ie, carelessness or /inadvertence which is a dosha. It is written as *sadavidya* and it can be wrongly read as *sada avidya* as ignorance always , when really it is *sada vidya* as knowledge always.

v) Another dosha is *karanApAtava*- your organs may sometimes see things wrongly. What is written is 'sa' and you read 'sha'. Eg: *sakrt* = once and *shakrt*= cow dung. So there is deficiency of our organs.

vi) Another dosha mentioned is *vipralipsa* ie, mind wants to deceive oneself and others. Therefore, you may end up understanding things wrongly.

Thus *ajnanam*, *samsaya*, *viparyaya*, *pramada*, *karanApAtava* are all defects which effect our understanding. Therefore, especially in the field of *atma jnanam*, one needs to go to a guru. *Vidyaranya* swami says-

*vedAnAm anekatvAt samsayanam bahutvatah vedyasya sukshmatvAt ca na jAnAti gurum vina.*

Since vedas are many and different and different prakriyas are given .

Some place it is said everything is born of rayi and prana. Somewhere else it is said 5 mahapancabhutas and someplace it is presented as - *etasmaat jayate pranah manah sarvendriyaani* ...and also the subject matter is very very subtle, since it does not have sabda, sparsha, etc., therefore, one cannot understand it without the help of a guru.

Bhashyakara when writing the commentary on Mundaka Upanishad mantra- *tad vijnaanartham gurumevabhi gacchet*. What is the significance of "gurum eva"? He says- *sAstrajnopi svAtanryeNa brahma jnana- anveshanam na kuryAt iti*. Even one who knows Sanskrit, tarka, nyaya, etc, still enquiry into knowledge of brahman should not be done by him independently. That is the message conveyed by "eva". One simple point is that with the help of guru also people are struggling. What to talk about studying without a guru. (*kaimutika nyaya*). Like someone has difficulty walking with a walker, then what to talk about walking without a walker. Therefore, in our tradition there is emphasis on going to a guru for study. Also the very resistance to go to a guru, this mind-frame itself is an indication of some psychological issue in the form of fear of authority. In our childhood we may have been over-instructed, overpowered, subdued by some authority figure like our school teacher, father, uncle, etc. Therefore, we have some resistance to go to anyone who represents authority. And guru represents authority. So there is a resistance to guru. One has to address this issue, rather than avoiding going to the guru.

In our sastra, they talk about uttama, madhyama and adhama guru. Uttama guru is one who is srottriya and brahma nishta ie, knowing sastra well and is also abiding in this understanding that I am Brahman. He is the best. Madhyama is one who is srottriya, ie, one who knows sastra well and also the methodology to teach it, but not completely assimilated the teaching. Adhama guru is brahma nishtha guru who has complete abidance in oneself being brahman due to study done in last janma, but does not have the knowledge of the methodology of teaching in this janma. Therefore, he cannot teach the sastra methodically. He presents the entire teaching from such a great height, that you cannot reach there and that may cause frustration. He will say - "there is nothing there, only brahman is there." It is true from the absolute standpoint, but initially it is too much for a student. The person needs to be guided there step by step. So to this brahma nishtha guru, we do namaskara and can get inspiration from him or her but we can't learn systematically. In terms of moksha, he is more than mere srottriya. But in terms of being a guru, he is considered to be adhama, inferior. Because he cannot guide everybody except maybe a very uttama Adhikari who needs small guidance.

### **The question is how to get the best guru?**

Everybody wants a srottriya, brahmanishta guru. Can I put an advertisement that srottriya,

brahma nishta wanted, sufficient gurudakshina will be given. No real guru will apply. Any guru who applies is for sure not srotriya, brahma nishtha guru. Infact you cannot even completely know that this person is *srotriya, brahma nishta*. It is said- *vidvAn eva jAnAti vidvajjana parishramam* - Only a wise person can truly recognize another wise person. Therefore, from our side we can have sincerity in our pursuit and pray to Bhagavan - *O Lord please send me a srotriya , brahma nishta guru.*" Of course, for that you need enough punya. We give two options to Bhagavan –“ *If not enough punya, please at-least send me a srotriya guru.*" The advantage of a srotriya guru who is well-exposed to sastra and knows how to communicate, is that such a guru will not mislead. So atleast have that wish and prayer for having a guru in your life.

When the qualified student goes to the teacher, *upadekshanti te jnanam*- the guru will definitely teach. Student has to invoke the guru in the wise person by proper attitude , seva, etc. and then the teaching is given. A wise person does not consider himself to be the guru of everybody. Pujya Swamiji was asked - *Are you an Indian guru?* Swamiji said” *No, I am a guru with reference to my disciples.*" No air or complex about being a jagadguru.

### **What is the attitude of the shishya to the guru?**

The attitude of the shishya is an attitude of gratitude for the teaching received. If shishya can look upon guru as an expression of Lord Dakshinamurti, that is the best. Otherwise, atleast look upon the guru as an expression of the blessings of Isvara. By the grace of Ishvara, guru has come in my life.

### **What is the attitude of guru towards shishya?**

Guru does not look down upon the shishya. Guru looks upon the shishya with love and respect. His expression of respect is different in the form of not taking any class for granted and not taking any student for granted. In this atmosphere of mutual love and respect alone, this vidya can be communicated. When this vidya is received by the shishya, then also the shishya continues to have this gratitude. As it is said-

*Ajeevanam trayo vandyAh vedanto gurur Ishvarah | Adau jnAnAptaye pascAt krtagnatva nivartaye ||*

For the entire life these three are to be respected- vedanta sastra, guru and Isvara. Initially to receive the knowledge, and afterwards for the purpose of avoiding ungratefulness. Thus reverence and gratitude for all three continues. That is why we are celebrating Gurupurnima to express our gratitude so that we will have the vision. If we already have the vision, then to express our gratitude to guru Parampara, we celebrate Gurupurnima.

*Om tat sat*

*- Report by Ms. Padma*