

## Vyas Purnima : A Festival of Disciples for Disciples

*(Excerpts from Satsang of Pujya Sant Shri Asaramji Bapu)*

Every festival is an occasion for happiness. Indian culture has further enriched its festivals with an exclusive touch of colour and fragrance of samskaras. Vyas Purnima is a pious festival overflowing with the pristine fragrance of such samskaras.

Sages were Mantra-drashtas-seers of the Vedic intonations intuiting the Vedic truths. By virtue of their dedicated penance and meditation, different Sages discovered and mastered different mantras. Maharshi Vyas compiled all these mantras together. He simplified the esoteric content of these Vedic mantras and thus made them accessible to common people so that they may improve their lives with strength and prosperity. Thus Maharshi Vyas came to be known as Veda Vyas. To commemorate this grand service to the endeavour of knowledge, the Purnima of the month of Ashadha is celebrated as Vyas Purnima.

Vyas Purnima or Guru Purnima, is a festival that reminds us of our primary duty of attaining Self-knowledge. It adorns our mind with divine virtues and inspires us over and over again to bathe in the holy Ganges of Sadguru's enlightening knowledge and divine love.

Not only the devotees, Rishis, Maharshis, yogis and Self-realized Saints, but gods and demigods viz. Yakshas, Gandharvas, etc., who are desirous of liberation, also zealously look forward to this supremely propitious festival.

Maharshi Veda Vyas had compiled and subdivided the Vedas into four parts. To acknowledge this great and noble deed, the gods had worshipped him on this auspicious day. From that day onwards, it has been a tradition to worship Maharshi Veda Vyas on the occasion of Vyas Purnima. On this day if a disciple pays a visit to his Brahmavetta Sadguru and worships Him with faith and devotion while maintaining complete restraint of the senses, he attains the virtue of celebrating all the festivals of the entire year.

It is with the grace of Maharshi Veda Vyas that we are privileged to read and imbibe the teachings of the scriptures. The Sadguru, who explains the esoteric message of the scriptures, Puranas, Upanishads, etc. to us, cuts asunder the knots of ignorance from our hearts, enlightens us (individual souls) about our inseparable unity with the Supreme Brahman, and teaches us the art of being engrossed in the bliss of our True Self, is considered to be a veritable representative of Maharshi Veda Vyas, and is therefore worshipped with heart-felt devotion on this pious day.

Guru Purnima is a supreme spiritual festival wherein the aspirant completely surrenders himself to the Sadguru. The disciple surrenders his body, mind and all material possessions at the holy feet of the Sadguru in order to please him. It is said, "The Guru asks for the disciple's head". The "head" as such is not meant in its literal sense. The "head" symbolizes the ego, and offering the head implies total and unconditional surrender to the Guru in order to instantly imbibe and assimilate the Guru's Supreme Experience as one's own; that is the reason why all the Saints, devotees, yogis and sages have extolled the glory of the Guru and urged disciples to repay the debt owed to Sadguru by making an offering of their heads.

The glory of the Guru is unfathomable. Visit all the holy places on earth, worship all the gods, give donations, perform yajnas; but until and unless you worship the Sadguru with utmost faith, all of it will fall short of the ultimate goal. On the other hand, even if you forget all those gods but worship the Sadguru with complete devotion and set your mind in pious contemplation of his holy feet, you thereby transcend all the vidhis and nishedhas.

It has rightly been said, **"All the gods and deities, including Lord Vishnu and Lord Shiva, are automatically worshipped, when you worship the Sadguru."**

Maharshi Veda Vyas is venerated as an ideal model of a Guru. That is why worshipping the Guru is also termed Vyas-Puja. It is not only the Vedic Dharma that glorifies the Guru. In fact even other religions of the world, be it Sikhism, Christianity, Jainism or Buddhism, -all attest to the Supreme significance of worshipping the Guru.

Just as the virtues like love, compassion, humanity, etc., are common to all religions, worshipping and glorifying the Guru is a common practice to all of them. The great Saint Adi Shankaracharya has even gone to the extent of saying that even if you acquire all riches and all worldly pleasures, even if you master all branches of learning, achieve perfection in all penances, even if you cultivate complete detachment from the world all these achievements are futile, if you don't immerse your heart in the devotional love for the holy feet of the Guru.

Each and every relationship in this world has a selfish motif. All the relationships, -father and son, husband and wife, brother and brother, master and servant are based on selfishness. However, the relationship between

the Guru and his disciple is completely devoid of any such selfish interest.

Bhole Baba has said,

?All relationships are born out of selfishness; the whole world is selfish.

Sadguru is purely unselfish; he is the true benefactor.

God?s grace comes only after Sadguru showers his grace.

Without Sadguru?s grace, even God is helpless; He cannot purify a man?s mind of the filth of vices and ignorance.?

None but a disciple whose heart is full of devotional love for his Guru can fathom the bliss and greatness of the relationship between the Sadguru and a true disciple. Only the chakor (Indian red-legged partridge, that is enamoured with the Moon) knows the delight it experiences at the sight of the Moon. Only the moth knows the joy experienced in the proximity of the flame. Similarly, it is only the true disciple who appreciates the significance of the holy darshan, touch, adoration and worship of the Sadguru.

If while worshipping the Guru, one experiences bristling of the hairs of his body and the heart is overwhelmed with joy, tears stream down from the eyes, the mind is devoid of all thoughts other than a devotional contemplation of the Guru?s holy image, the feeling of bliss at having an opportunity to be under the Guru?s benevolent tutelage makes one speechless, the ego itself is offered as dakshina at the Guru?s pious feet, and when emotions find expression in words like, ?Hail the Guru?, ?Victory to Guru? -then and only then does the disciple attain true blessedness and get accomplished.

Sadguru is a purna being. That is why Purnima is celebrated to worship him. He dispels the darkness of ignorance and guides one in Self-knowledge. From the day of initiation, Sadguru dwells in the disciple?s heart. Sadguru is the effulgent light that rekindles the extinguished flame within the disciple?s heart. Sadguru is the cure for the great malady of Bhav Roga from which the disciple suffers. Sadguru is the gardener who tends to the garden of the disciple?s life to make it verdant and fragrant. He reveals the secret of Abhedha to enable the disciple have realization, by reasoning of the non-dual in duality.

Meeting of the disciple's competence and the Sadguru?s grace opens the doorway to salvation. Sadguru is soothing as well as illuminating like the full Moon of the Purnima. That is another reason why he is worshipped on the day of Purnima.

Sadguru?s grace is the only means that can liberate man from the Samsara which is the store-house of miseries based on the cruel and unsparing cycle of birth and death. Blessed is the disciple, who has attained the grace of the Sadguru and is able to assimilate the same.

**?Blessed is the one who accepts the tutelage of the Sadguru.**

**Deities and accomplished yogis worship him; there is nobody as great.**

**When the Guru instructs a deserving disciple,**

**He is delivered forthwith; he does not have to take birth again.?**

To have a Guru is the foremost necessity in life. Friends, sons, brothers, spouse, wealth, arts and health nothing is as important as the Sadguru. Guru gives a new life to the disciple. He guides the disciple on the path of sadhana and enlightens him. The true Sadguru awakens the disciple?s dormant life force. He trains the disciple in yoga and enraptures him with the enlightening knowledge of the True Self. Sadguru helps the disciple sail in the river of devotion and teaches him the art of remaining unattached and selfless while performing his duties in this material world. Sadguru helps the disciple realize the formless Self, thus become free from bondage while still remaining in the embodied form.

The Guru makes you renounce, not your material wealth but your Jivatva, your hatred and your notions of ? Mine? and ?Thine?. When he is enraged it is only to repel our ignorance and our behaviour based on duality. He is malicious, but only towards our false sense of being a jiva limiting ourselves to body-consciousness.

But then, it is indeed very difficult to find such a Sadguru. It is the great lot of merits accumulated over so many births that enable us to attain the tutelage of such Sadgurus. ?It is hard to get a human birth,

That is again so very transient;

Harder still it is to have the darshan of such Saints,

Who are privileged to be the true beloveds of the Lord.?

The day for expressing our gratitude towards such a Sadguru is Guru Purnima. Maharshi Veda Vyas was the first Guru. That is yet another reason why Guru Purnima is also known as Vyas Purnima.

Vyas Purnima falls in the beginning of the rainy season. The earth, scorched by the summer heat, is then

soaked by rains, receiving thereby a much-needed respite and the fertility to grow crops. Similarly disciples receive ability from the Sadguru to enhance their knowledge, peace, devotion and yoga.

During Chaturmas, beginning on Vyas Purnima, the wandering ascetics remain stationed at one place and enlighten the people there. Those acharyas and Gurus, having ashrams and maths, call their disciples and instruct them in the knowledge of scriptures, revise their previous lessons and make them take new resolves for further spiritual practices.

Spiritual schools begin on this day. Vows for observing vratas, yajnas and anushthanas are taken on this day in the presence of the family priest. Aspirants resolve to perform japa, penance, study of scriptures, religious observances etc. and thus gird up their loins to earn as much spiritual wealth as possible during Chaturmas.

Thus, Vyas Purnima is a festival that inspires the aspirants anew towards spiritual practices, into expressing gratitude to the Guru, and gives good (auspicious) wishes for imbibing the essence of the Real Being that the compassion incarnate Guru is established in.