

Gurupurnima 2020

Dear Sisters and Brothers

Saprem Namaskar

This year Gurupurnima is on 5th July. Due to COVID-19, in many places even now, there are lot of restrictions on movements. And even if there are no restrictions, we have to take all the precautions while going out of the house and while meeting the people. Thus, taking into account the situation in your areas, decide how you would celebrate Gurupurnima this year.

We can celebrate it by either coming together as we do always or with our families at homes or even both ways. Each Nagar can decide as per the situation. Our Padavali has Gurustotra in it. It can be recorded from someone who can sing melodiously in your Nagar/Vibhag/Pranta and that can be played in the home, during the celebration.

We can keep the Omkar and if the family has some tradition of Guru then the photo of Guru, Kuldevata photo if we desire. In Kendra Karyalaya as we do, Omkar is to be kept with proper decoration around. Decorate the place nicely. Fix a time when all the members of house can be present.

The sequence of the program could be

Three Omkars,

Eikyamantra or Sahanavavatu,

A small introduction about Guru Purnima,

Gurustotra – it can be played on mobile, others can either listen with closed eyes or see it in Padavali,

Gist of this letter can be shared,

Discussion on what all I learnt from others in the last year, How to feel the presence of Ishvara in Charachar (whole creation). If we feel/ can envisage the Divine everywhere, then how it reflects or should reflect in our behaviour. Our parents are our first gurus. What does it mean to respect the parents in our day to day behaviour?



Dhyan for few minutes.

Again the Gurustotra can be played and listened to with closed eyes and then with Sarve Bhavantu can conclude the celebration of Gurupurnima.

If the family members are conversant with Kendra Prarthana then conclude with Kendra Prarthana.

Introduction About Gurupurnima

Gurupurnima is our traditional festival since thousands of years. It is celebrated on Jayanti of Bhagwan Vedvyasa i.e. on Ashadh Purnima. He was the son of the sage Parashar and the fisherwoman Satyavati. He was born on an island and that is why he is also known as Davaipayana Krishna. Vedas are not the books written by any one. The rishis who did penance saw the truths of existence. They are seers of Truth. These Mantras are seen and heard by them and are passed on to their disciples. These Mantras are called "Vedas". The gravitational force was in existence even before Newton discovered it. And it would continue even after we forget about it. Thus, Vedas were always there. The Rishis saw it and then passed it on to their disciples. Vedas are Apaurusheya. i.e. they are not man-made.

Many rishis had received these Mantras. Vedavyasa collected all these Richas (Mantras) called as Samhitas and edited them in four Vedas with various branches. The four Vedas are Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samaveda, Atharvaveda. Each Veda is again classified in to four parts – Mantra or Samhita, Brahmana, Aaranyaka and Upanishad. He not only edited Vedas he also made the arrangements to protect the Vedas by allotting each branch to few families. Those families had to protect that branch of Vedas. He also allotted other various branches of knowledge like surgery, Ayurveda, architecture etc. to families belonging to various communities. Thus, each family, community became the custodian of protection of Vedas - knowledge making our country the Jnanbhoomi.

The imparting of this knowledge was done by father to the son, by Guru to the disciple thus our Bharat, in spite of so many invasions, could remain the land of knowledge for thousands of years. Committing to protect some branch of knowledge, spiritual Vidyas and learning it from Guru and passing it on to the coming generation became the sacred duty of each family. It was Vyasa who devised this Guru tradition to protect the knowledge required for living in this world and for realizing Ishvara. Therefore, his Jayanti is celebrated as Gurupurnima.



This festival is to remind us to be grateful to all the Gurus and to revere them who have taught us something or other of value in our life. This festival is to remind us that our family also should protect at least some knowledge, tradition, Vidya etc. This festival is also to see the good, divine in others and learn from them.

Points to be read for discussion

All the problems in life come because we limit our sense of 'I' to our body-mind complex. Body and mind are our instruments to know our real nature. If we see the first five shlokas of the Gurustotra, these are telling that my prostrations to that Guru who showed me my real state of being – Tat Padam Darshitam yen tasmai Shri Guruve namah. Man considers he is a body-mind complex. But gradually the Guru makes him realize that he is the expanding circle of consciousness which pervades the Charachara - everything in this universe. What are those expanding circles of consciousness?

Chaitanya - Consciousness expresses as various Samashtis. Thus, the expanding form of an individual is family. Do not think that the family is collection of few people. It is the consciousness which has manifested as family members. The expanding form of family is society, the expanding form of a society is nation, the expanding form of nation is the whole existence.

Thus, we are all interconnected interrelated and interdependent. Atman is same for all of us. We come across Gurus – some just indicate this fact. Some explain it. Some motivate us to live accordingly. Some Gurus can even guide us to realize it. Since birth our parents, grand-parents, teachers, saints, etc. are indicating this grand truth to us through simple practices in our homes, or through literature. For example, mother teaches the child to do namaskar to elders, teachers, cow, trees, etc. that is the living beings. She also teaches the child to bow down to inanimate things like books, food, equipments etc. What are such practices in our homes which indicate to the child that this charachar (animate and inanimate) is divine?

Many a times we are caught up in the darkness of depression, self-pity, ignorance, selfishness, Dehabuddhi, ego etc. At such times whosoever helps us and guides us to be out of it and opens our eyes to the reality, that Guru could be either parents, grandparents, friends, siblings, teachers, neighbours etc. They are our Gurus. If we are haughty then we do not learn even if Narayana himself comes to teach us. What are such occasions in our life that someone guided us very well and opened our eyes. Let us share those experiences and pay our homage to them.



The shloka gururbrhama, gururvishnu.... means both ways i.e. Guru is Brahma, Vishnu, Mahesh. Guru guides us to God, thus Guru is God. But it also means that God is our guru. In this Ishvariya Karya – the nation-building work that we have undertaken, God guides us. Thus, in Vivekananda Kendra, Ishvara is chosen as Guru and not any human being. Pranav is considered as the best expression for Ishvara. All the Hindus can come to Omkara. Therefore, Omkara which is considered as the best name for Ishvara by Patanjali (tasya vachak: pranav:) is Guru is Vivekananda Kendra. It means what this whole divine tradition of our Gurus, Acharyas, saints is remembered, revered and given respect all through the year and we work to take ahead their work. On the day of Gurupurnima, we remind ourselves that Ishvara who pervades the Charaachar teaches us through all those around us. We can share that what all we learn from those around us. It can be human beings, it can be animals, birds, trees and even inanimate things.

Gurupurnima is a day when we tune ourselves to receive the teachings of the Guru – Ishvara – from the whole universe. This humility to learn from others, this readiness to learn from others purifies our mind to see Ishvara everywhere. It also inspires us to work as the instrument of Ishvara for raising the humanity. The service, fulfilling of Dayitvas thus become the pooja and Aaradhana of Ishvara – Vibho Tav Aaradhanam Asmadiyam.

This charaachar which is imbued by Ishvara can teach us many things. Let us take a Sankalpa that from Charaachar, I shall everyday learn something.

With warm regards and prayers

Yours Sincerely

Nivedita

Ref Link : <https://www.vrmvk.org/celebration>

