

Guru Purnima

Every human needs a guru, a teacher or a mentor at some point of life. We all need their guidance to be successful in life. We all have capabilities in ourselves but if there is someone to guide us, those capabilities get polished. The gurus or teachers are like a catalyst in our life. They help us to move closer towards our goal in life. It is good to learn new things on our own but things get better when we have a guru or a teacher or a mentor. Anyone can be a guru for the other person. The parents, a friend, a sibling or any elder can be a guru. It is not necessary that only a teacher in a school or college or any other institution can become a guru for you. Teacher's Day and Guru Purnima are the days which are celebrated to show respect and appreciation to the guru or teacher.

What is Guru Purnima?

Guru Purnima is a festival celebrated by the Hindus, Jains and Buddhists. On this day the people remember their spiritual and academic teachers. They show their respect to them and thank them for their importance in the life. Guru Purnima falls on the full moon day in the month of Ashadha. This year Guru Purnima was celebrated on 9th July.

History of Guru Purnima

Guru Purnima is celebrated to thank the Gurus for their dedication and sacrifice. But how and why did people start to celebrate Guru Purnima? The history of Guru Purnima is of long years. It is said that on this day Krishna Dwaipayana Vyasa was born. He is the one who has written Mahabharata. He has a major contribution to Vedic studies. Vyasa separated the Vedas into four parts- the Rig Veda, the Yajur Veda, the Sama Veda and the Atharva Veda. The division of Vedas that he made helped the people to understand the Vedas easily and properly. He collected the Vedic hymns and taught them to his disciples. He is considered as the earliest gurus of the Hindus. This is the reason why the day he was born is celebrated as Guru Purnima.

The Buddhists celebrate Guru Purnima to remember Lord Buddha on this day. He gave his first sermon in Sarnath this day. On this day, the followers who worship Lord Buddha observe Uposatha. They remember the eight precepts this day. The rainy season for the Buddhists starts on this day. This is called Varsha Vassa. On this day, the Buddhists stay inside the temple and meditate.

Another legend of this festival is Adi Guru. This day marks the birth of Adi Guru. He is also known as the first Guru. It is said that a sage came in the Himalayas around fifteen thousand years ago. He sat only in one place. He never moved from the place where he sat. The sage closed his eyes always showing that he is in some deep thought. Sometimes tears would come out from his eyes. One day seven men came and surrounded him. After a few days, they requested him to tell them the things he is going through. He just said about meditation and was back in his deep thoughts. These seven men closed their eyes like the sage and sat with him for eighty years. The sage opened his eyes on Dakshinayana. He was delighted to see the enlightened faces of those seven men. So, he decided to give his wisdom to them so that they could teach the people about this wisdom.

Celebration of Guru Purnima

The Hindus and Buddhists celebrate Guru Purnima according to their own traditions. On the day of Guru Purnima, people wake up at four early in the morning. They take bath, remember the Guru and pray to him.

Then, later the ceremony of worshipping of the feet of Guru is done. People consider the sayings of the Guru as sacred. People visit and worship their gurus and teachers who have led them in the right path. They give them respect and thank them. It is said that a person should fast on this day to receive the guru's blessings. People also worship the Sadhus and feed them. The day of Guru Purnima is spent on meditating and praying. People gather together and sing devotional songs and have spiritual and religious talks. The Buddhists stay in the temple and read about Buddha's life and what he taught to his disciples. Guru Purnima is celebrated even in the schools. Students organize programmes for their teachers.

Importance of Guru Purnima

This day is for all the teachers and gurus in our life. We get a chance to show our gurus how important they are for us. Apart from our parents, it is the gurus who help us move head in our life. Gurus help us to gain knowledge and learn new lessons in our life. Without a Guru this is not possible. Yes, we have our parents but we need a Guru as well. A Guru can teach us what our parents cannot.

The day of Guru Purnima gives us an opportunity to appreciate our gurus for what they have done for us. Guru Purnima is not just for spiritual purpose but also for any Guru who has helped someone. Just like how the students go to their Gurus to thank them, similarly the devotees thank their Gurus and perform puja for them. As it rains on Guru Purnima, this day is important for the farmers as well. This rain is a benefit for their harvest.

We have two days dedicated for teachers, gurus and mentors- Teacher's day and Guru Purnima. This day we worship and thank for their work. But does it mean that the good behaviour towards them is only for these specific days? The answer is no. If we do not respect them the other days, there is no use of the worship and devotion done on these particular days. The respect, appreciation and good behaviour should be present on every single day of our life.

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