



वैदिक इंडिया

This series takes a close look at facets of Vedic India that are alive even today.



गुरु पूर्णिमा

This article is a researched article and borrows heavily from printed and electronic encyclopedias as well as material provided by our panel of research scholars, astrologers, academics and pundits.

Guru Brahma, Guru Vishnu, Guru Devo Maheshwara,

Guru SakshathParambrahma, TasmaiShriGuraveNamaha.

(Guru is the creator Brahma, Guru is the preserver Vishnu, Guru is the destroyer Shiva. Guru is directly the supreme spirit - I offer my salutations to this Guru.)

- Adi Shankara at the beginning of his Gurustotram or Verses to the Guru

Guru Purnima festival will be celebrated on 15 July .The Hindu spiritual Gurus are revered on this day by remembering their life and teachings. On this day, disciples offer puja (worship) or pay respect to their Guru (Spiritual Guide). The guru or a teacher guides us in all conditions and gives us inspiration to walk on the right path in our life. Guru Purnima festival celebration is homage to the teacher or guru. It is the day when the disciple expresses gratitude to his Guru.

The purpose of the Guru Purnima (or Purnima) celebration is to review the preceding year to see how much one has progressed in life, to renew one's determination, and to focus on one's progress on the spiritual path. As a day of remembrance towards all gurus, through whom God grants the grace of knowledge (Gyan) to the disciples, special recitations of

गुरु गुरुबिन्दे वंदे कदाचि, काकचि लक्षण पापु
बालीहारी गुरु आपनै गुरुबिन्दे वीरुत बतयु.

(Guru And God Both Are Here, To Whom Should I First Bow All Glory Be Unto The Guru, Who The Path To God Who Did Bestow)

- Santkabir

the Hindu scriptures especially, the Guru Gita, a 216 verse ode to Guru, authored by the sage, Ved Vyasa himself, are held all day; apart from singing of bhajans, religious hymns and organising of special kirtan session and havan at many places, where devotees from all over gather at the ashrams, matha or place where the seat of Guru, (Guru Gaddi)exists. GuruPoornima day also sees the ritual of padapuja, the worship of Guru's sandals, which represent his holy feet and is seen as a way of rededicating to all that a Guru stands for. Disciples also recommit themselves on this day, towards following their teacher's guidance and teachings, for the coming year.

In Indian culture, a person without a guru or a teacher (acharya) was once looked down on as an orphan or unfortunate one. The word anatha in Sanskrit means "the one without a teacher."

VyasPurnima

The Guru Purnima day is also known as "VyasPurnima". Hindus celebrate Guru Purnima in honour of the great sage Ved Vyasa, who is seen as one of the greatest gurus in ancient Hindu traditions, and a symbol of Guru-Shishya Parampara (the teacher-disciple tradition). This was the day

when Krishna-Dwaipayana Vyasa – author of the Mahabharata – was born to sage Parashara and a fisherman's daughter Satyavati, thus this day is also celebrated as Vyasa Purnima. Veda Vyasa did yeoman service to the cause of Vedic studies by gathering all the Vedic hymns, dividing them into four parts based on their use in the sacrificial rites, and teaching them to his four chief disciples – Paila, Vaisampayana, Jaimini and Sumantu. It was this dividing and editing that earned him the honorific "Vyasa" (vyas = to edit, to divide)."He divided the Veda into four, namely Rig, Yajur, Sama and Atharva. The histories and the Puranas are said to be the fifth Veda."

Vyasa Puja is held at various temples, where floral offerings and symbolic gifts are given away in his honour and that of the cosmic satguru. The festivities are usually followed by a feast for the disciples, shishya, where the prasada and charnamrita, literally nectar of the feet, the symbolic wash of Guru's feet, which represents his grace and kripa are distributed.

Gurus

The guru-shishya tradition is the transmission of teachings from a guru. In this relationship, subtle and advanced knowledge is conveyed and received



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On the occasion of the Guru Poornima celebrations Vaastuyogam showcases

"The moment a child is born, the mother is also born. She never existed before. The woman existed, but the mother, never. A mother is something absolutely new."



Rajneesh

"One has to reach to the absolute state of awareness: that is Zen. You cannot do it every morning for a few minutes or for half an hour and then forget all about it. It has to become like your heartbeat. You have to sit in it, you have to walk in it. Yes, you have even to sleep in it."

"Just a few days ago a man came to see me and he said, "I am a humble man. I am just like the dust on your feet. I have been trying for almost twenty years to achieve higher consciousness, but I have been a failure. Why can't I attain?" And on and on he went. Every sentence started with I. If the grammar allowed, every sentence would have ended with I. And if everything was allowed, every sentence would have consisted only of I's. "I etcetera, I etcetera, I etcetera," it went on and on. You are filled too much. There is no room, no space for God to enter in you. You are too crowded. A thousand I's milling inside – they don't leave any space for anything to enter in you."

"The longer a person has been dead the greater is the tradition ... If Buddha is alive you can barely tolerate him. ... You cannot believe this man has known the ultimate because he looks just like you ... Hungry he needs food, sleepy he wants a bed, ill, he has to rest – just like you ... That is why Jesus is worshiped now and yet he was crucified when he was alive. Alive, you crucify him; dead, you worship him."



Baba Ramdev

"Always keep your face happy and smiling. Give happiness to others, and you will get happiness."

"Never forget your past; remembering our past saves us from going wrong."

"You might be managing big businesses and enterprises. Yoga is important because it teaches you to manage your own self. It brings about a complete balance in your body making it healthy."

"A country can only be healthy if its people are healthy."



Sri Sri Ravishankar

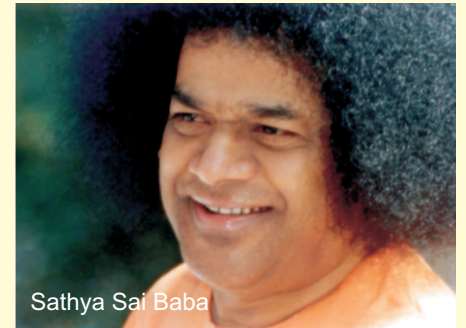
"Life is sacred. Celebrate life. Care for others and share whatever you have with those less fortunate than you. Broaden your vision for the whole world belongs to you."

"No use in all these talks. Don't go on wasting your energy and time in talking. Be in silence. A thousand words cannot convey a glance, what a look from your eyes can. And even many thousand looks cannot convey one minute of silence. Just stay, silent."

"Enlightenment is the journey from head back to the heart, from words back to silence, to innocence in spite of your intelligence."

"The whole evolution of man is from being somebody to being nobody, and from being nobody to being everybody."

"Old age is the fourth stage. By the time one reaches this stage of his journey, he must have discovered that the joys available in this world are trivial and fleeting. He must be equipped with the higher knowledge of spiritual joy, available through delving into the inner spring of Bliss. Through his experiences, his heart must have softened and be filled with compassion. He has to be engrossed in promoting the progress of all beings without distinction. And he must be eager to share with others the knowledge he has accumulated and the benefit of his experiences."



Sathya Sai Baba

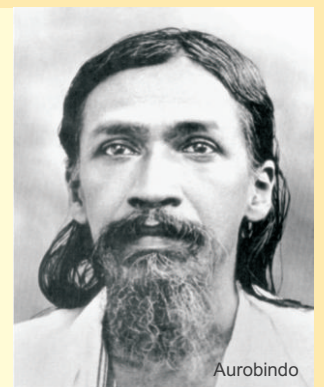
"Before you speak, think - Is it necessary? Is it true? Is it kind? Will it hurt anyone? Will it improve on the silence?"

"Follow the Master, face the devil, fight to the end, finish the game."

"You cannot see ME, but I am the light you see by. You cannot hear ME, but I am the sound you hear by. You cannot know ME, but I am the truth by which you live."

"Life is life - whether in a cat, or dog or man. There is no difference there between a cat or a man. The idea of difference is a human conception for man's own advantage."

"Our actual enemy is not any force exterior to ourselves, but our own crying weaknesses, our cowardice, our selfishness, our hypocrisy, our purblind sentimentalism."



Aurobindo



defining quotes of some of the prominent Gurus of modern India.

vedic india

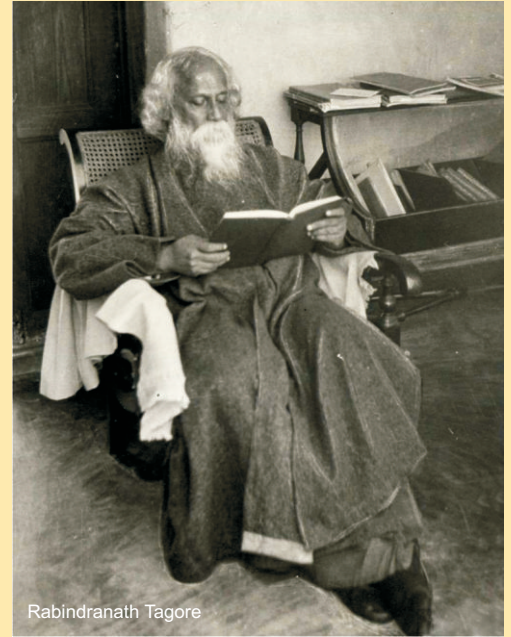
The Hindu spiritual leader Mata Amritanandamayi, lovingly called 'Amma', and known globally as India's "hugging saint mother", Amma began hugging devotees at an early age, and is said to have hugged at least 21 million people over the past three decades. In the 1980s, Amma founded her ashram to receive followers and offer them her healing hugs. There have been times when she has hugged over 20,000 devotees in a row over 20 hours at a stretch. Devotees find it blissful and soul-soothing, and Amma says her hug is her character and "karma to console those who are sad."



Guru Amma :
The Hugging Saint Mother!

"Everything is in you. Like the colossal tree waiting to emerge from the seed, divine power pervades the whole universe. If one awakens that divine power through prayer, meditation and good deeds, one can attain Fullness. One can merge in God, and then transcend birth and death...In that state of being, one will behold God in all creatures...Seeing God in all, one will gain the purity to love and serve."

"Guru and God are there within everyone. But in the beginning stages of sadhana, an external Guru is necessary. After a certain point, one can grasp the essential principles from each and every object, and thus move forward on one's own."

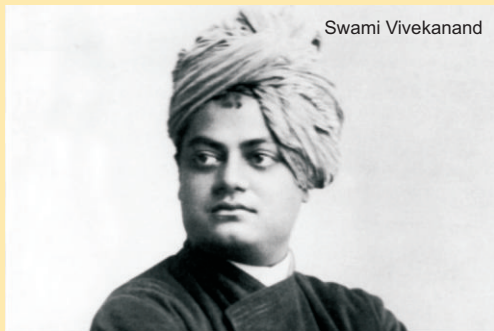


Rabindranath Tagore

"Death is not extinguishing the light; it is only putting out the lamp because the dawn has come."

"Do not say, 'It is morning,' and dismiss it with a name of yesterday. See it for the first time as a newborn child that has no name."

"Don't limit a child to your own learning, for she was born in another time."



Swami Vivekanand

"The important thing is this: to be able, at any moment, to sacrifice what we are for what we could become."

"The most effective teachers embody the teaching they give out."

"A good teacher will appreciate the good qualities of his students. If one good quality is allowed to emerge, a world of good qualities will emerge from that one."

"The factor of time is very vital in life. Those who have accomplished great things in the world have been those who valued time in their life. The time of life is limited and a great amount of evolution has to be accomplished for fulfilment of life. Therefore, the factor of time must be valued above everything."

"Take up one idea. Make that one idea your life - think of it, dream of it, live on that idea. Let the brain, muscles, nerves, every part of your body, be full of that idea, and just leave every other idea alone. This is the way to success, that is the way great spiritual giants are produced."

"We are what our thoughts have made us; so take care about what you think. Words are secondary. Thoughts live; they travel far."

"Condemn none: if you can stretch out a helping hand, do so. If you cannot, fold your hands, bless your brothers, and let them go their own way."

"The Vedanta recognizes no sin it only recognizes error. And the greatest error, says the Vedanta is to say that you are weak, that you are a sinner, a miserable creature, and that you have no power and you cannot do this and that."

"To love and to be loved is the greatest happiness."
"Brood less, smile more and serve all."

"The tragedy of human history is decreasing happiness in the midst of increasing comforts."

"What you have is all His Gift to you. What you do with what you have is your Gift to Him ..."

"Not to do what you feel like doing is freedom."



Maharishi Mahesh Yogi



Swami Chinmayananda



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through the student's respect, commitment, devotion and obedience. The student eventually masters the knowledge that the guru embodies.

The dialogue between guru and disciple is a fundamental component of Hinduism, established in the oral traditions of the Upanishads (c. 2000 BC). The term Upanishad derives from the Sanskrit words upa (near), ni (down) and sad (to sit) — "sitting down near" a spiritual teacher to receive instruction. Examples include the relationship between Krishna and Arjuna in the Mahabharata (Bhagavad Gita), and between Rama and Hanuman in the Ramayana.

In Hinduism, the guru is considered a respected person with saintly qualities who enlightens the mind of his or her disciple, an educator from whom one receives the initiatory mantra, and one who instructs in rituals and religious ceremonies. The Vishnu Smriti and Manu Smriti regard the teacher and the mother and father as the

most venerable influences on an individual. Some influential gurus in the Hindu tradition were Adi Shankaracharya, Shri Ramakrishna, Shri Ramana Maharshi and Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Other gurus who continued the yogic tradition into the 20th century include: Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev, Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, Shri Aurobindo Ghosh, Sri Chandrashekarendra Saraswati (The Sage of Kanchi), Swami Sivananda, Paramahansa Yogananda, Swami Chinmayananda, Sathya Sai Baba Swami Vivekananda and A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.

Sikhism

The title Guru is fundamental to the Sikh religion. Sikhism is derived from the Sanskrit word shishya, or disciple. The core beliefs of Sikhism are of belief in one God and in the teachings of the Ten Gurus, enshrined in Guru Granth Sahib, the Sikh holy book.

Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji, the first guru of Sikhism, was opposed to the caste system prevalent in India in his time, and he accepted Hindus, Muslims and people from other religions as disciples. His followers



referred to him as the Guru (teacher). Before he left the world he designated a new Guru to be his successor and to lead the Sikh community. This procedure was continued, and the tenth and last Guru, Guru Gobind Singh (AD 1666–1708) initiated the Sikh ceremony in AD 1699.

In addition to the Ten Gurus of Sikhism, the Guru Granth Sahib, their holy book, was made the eleventh perpetual guru of the Sikhs. Together they make up the Eleven Gurus of Sikhism. ■