

Flowers of reverence offered at
the Lotus feet of my teachers

H.H. Swami Dayananda Saraswati
and
H.H. Swami Paramarthananda Saraswati
is this

Acharya Devobhava

-Swamini Satyavratana Saraswati

Acharya Devobhava

गुरुर्ब्रह्मा गुरुर्विष्णुः गुरुर्देवो महेश्वरः ।
गुरुरेवपरंब्रह्म तस्मै श्रीगुरवे नमः ॥

We worship Guru as God in our culture. We have many teachers in our life. Mother who gives birth to us is our first and foremost teacher. She teaches us what is good and what is bad in our life. Father moulds our character and shapes our behaviour. So he is our second guru. The Teacher who imparts education is our third guru.

That is why all these three are placed on par with God.

मातृ देवो भव । पितृ देवो भव । आचार्य देवो भव ।
(Taittiriya Upanishad 1-11-3)

In addition to these three our life is interwoven throughout directly with God Himself. For us to

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blossom fully as wonderful human beings, all these four play a major role in our life. Hence all these four wellwishers support our spiritual progress as four pillars.

Who is a Guru? (Teacher)

One who removes our ignorance in any given field and gives us all the knowledge regarding this world, occupies the position of a teacher.

Guru is addressed as “Sasta” in Sanskrit.

गुकारेस्त्वन्धकारोवै रुकारस्तन्निवर्तकः ।

अन्धकार निवर्तित्वात्गुरुरित्यभिधीयते ।।

(Guru Gita)

“Gu” means darkness, “ru” means dispeller. One who dispels the darkness like ignorance is “Guru”.

Guru is also addressed as ‘Acharya’

आचिनोतिहि शास्त्राणि आचारे स्थापयत्यपि ।

स्वयं आचरते यस्मात्तस्मादाचार्य उच्यते ॥

(Varaha puranam)

One who knows the essence of teaching proclaimed in scriptures thoroughly and whose lifestyle is governed by scriptural teaching and also teaches the scriptures to others is known as an 'Acharya'.

When a father initiates Gayatri Mantra (Brahmopadesam) to his son, he gets the status of a 'guru'. When the very same father teaches his son about self-knowledge, he becomes an acharya which brings uniqueness to his fatherhood.

There are many gurus who initiate us into deekshas like mantra, vrata, upasana.

One who is well versed in subjects of material sciences like Sanskrit Grammar, Metre, Astrology etc. and teaches these subjects to his disciples is ranked as 'guru' only.

Just as a bird requires two wings to fly, we the human beings also require both spiritual science and

Vyasacharya, AdiSankaracharya etc come under ultimate gurus.

When we are suffering from a disease, it is but natural to approach a doctor for its treatment. He alone can cure us of that illness. But he cannot cure us of the illness of samsara. In such situations, he is helpless. Only an ultimate teacher, who teaches us self-knowledge, can liberate us.

The root cause of 'samsara' is self-ignorance. Even though they have money, relations, friends, name, fame etc., still they are not happy. They have a sense of limitation. Hence, forever they keep longing for something and get disappointed with what they have. This sense of limitation is called 'samsara'. They think they are tied down by the bondage of samsara and so feel unhappy always. If an individual is really tied down to something, nobody can save him. If he is really limited, nobody can make him limitless.

material science to lead our life properly. Spiritual science ranks the highest among all sciences and hence a guru who teaches spiritual science is the ultimate guru (Paramaguru)'.
 गृणाति आत्मतत्त्वंउपदिशति इति गुरुः

गृणाति आत्मतत्त्वंउपदिशति इति गुरुः

Who ever removes self-ignorance of his disciple by imparting self-knowledge, such a guru alone can be called as 'ultimate Guru'.

Once we attain self-knowledge, our education is complete. If we attain self-knowledge it is as good as knowing everything.

एक विज्ञानेन सर्वं विज्ञानं भवति ।

Krishna proclaimed in the Gita

न हि ज्ञानेन सदृशं पवित्रमिह विद्यते ।

(BhagavadGita 4-38)

There is no purifier than self-knowledge.

If a bundle of sticks is tied down for a long time with a rope it gets tightened and we cannot untie it very easily. We have to tie it with another rope more tightly and then we can untie the first rope easily. Similarly, we are tied down for a long time by the bondage of samsara and we are brooding over it, unable to get out of it. The guru has to tie us up with mahavakyas like 'Tatvamasi' and slowly he has to untie our bondage of samsara. In due course of his teaching he dispels the ignorance which led us to a notion of limitation and bondage. He teaches us that we are ever limitless and ever free. This is the role of a guru in our life.

In any temple, we experience peace and serenity in the deity. When the very same God resides in our body of temple, why are we not happy?

The smile on God's face reveals the fact that he is anandaswaroopa, an incarnation of Ananda.

आनन्दो ब्रह्मेतिव्यजानात् ।

God's true nature is ananda.

When the very incarnation of happiness resides in our heart and when we ourselves are that Brahman, why don't we have that happiness all the time?

An ultimate Guru alone can explain the reason behind it and remove the sorrow caused by the ignorance by imparting self-knowledge.

आचार्यवान्पुरुषो वेद

(Chandogya Upanishad 6-14-2)

What is this life? How should we attain knowledge? How should we lead a life of peace and happiness? Only one who gets a guru will gain answers to these questions. This is what is proclaimed in this mantra. So the best thing in life is to have a learned guru.

The need for self-knowledge

Human life is associated with three defects, namely dukhamisritatvam (blended with sorrow), atruptikaratvam (filled with dissatisfaction), bandhakatvam (tied with bondage). The only way out is to gain self-knowledge.

Every one of us has to pass through three sorrowful phases of life – disease, old age and death. These are inevitable. Bhartruhari has explained the same idea in the following sloka.

व्याघ्रेव तिष्ठति जरा परितर्जयन्ती

रोगाश्च शत्रव इव प्रहरन्ति देहम् ।

आयुः परिस्त्रवन्ति भिन्नाद्घटादिवांभो

लोकस्तथाप्यहितमाचरतीति चित्रम् ॥

Old age is like a tiger trying to attack us anytime. This very thought disheartens us and frightens us. Old age is nothing but a natural

Tatvamsi (tat + tvam + asi) means thou art that (you are that). Thou means 'you'. Lord Krishna has analysed these three words – tat, tvam and asi – in three shatkas (six chapters – one shatka) of Bhagavad Gita.

'Tvam' padavichara in first six chapters through the qualities of Sthitaprajna (man of firm knowledge).

'Tat' padavichara in second six chapters through the qualities of Para bhakta (the one whose devotion is in the form of self-knowledge.)

'Asi' padavichara in third six chapters through the qualities of gunaateeta who transcends satvik, rajasic and tamasic nature.

By presenting the characteristics of a wise person, Lord Krishna indirectly advises the seekers to follow the wise person's traits as a means of liberation.

transition in our life. None of us can avoid this. A rat that is trapped in the mouth of a cat shakes like a tender leaf. The same way we tremble with fear of old age and death. We ignore the impending old age.

Like powerful enemies, diseases and old age attack our physical body. Death is in store for us at any moment. Just as water goes out drop by drop from a pot with a hole in it, leaving it empty. Similarly our life comes to an end one day with every passing moment of our life span.

We know we are not born to live forever. But still person is committing sinful actions like hurting, killing others. What a wonder it is?

Thus, if we analyse, three things old age, disease and death are the source of fear and sorrow to humanity. We are invariably longing for a happy life bereft of old age and death. We

wish to be happy, healthy and youthful for ever. This desire to be free from sorrow and to live happily is called desire for liberation (moksha ichcha) by sastra. Moksha can be gained only by attaining self-knowledge. Self-ignorance is the root cause of all evils. So we have to mould our mokhsa ichcha into jnana ichcha (desire for knowledge). We should strive to attain self-knowledge.

How is self-knowledge possible?

Self-knowledge can be attained only through scriptural study. This scriptural study can be done only under a teacher who has studied scriptures under another learned teacher. That ultimate guru is addressed as srotriyabrahmanishta guru. It means one who is well versed in the scriptures and one who is established in his own nature, that is Self. Only such a guru can liberate us from

परीक्ष्य लोकान्कर्मचितान्ब्राह्मणः
निर्वेदमायान्नास्त्यकृतः कृतेन ।
तद्विज्ञानार्थं स गुरुमेवाभिगच्छेत्
समित्पाणिः श्रोत्रियं ब्रह्मनिष्ठम् ॥

Mundakopanishad 1-2-12

Those who desire to be free from the three fold miseries like – old age, disease and death – understand sooner or later that any number of pujas or rituals they perform are not going to help to attain permanent peace, happiness and security. Hence they should approach a guru with folded hands, offer him twigs and humbly request him to impart them self-knowledge.

तद्विद्धि प्रणिपातेन परिप्रश्नेन सेवया ।

उपदेक्ष्यन्ति ते ज्ञानं ज्ञानिनस्तत्त्वदर्शिनः ।

(Bhagavad Gita 4-34)

‘Arjuna, May you gain the self-knowledge by approaching the wise people. If you prostrate at the

samsara. One who seeks permanent happiness requires a guru.

How can sastra give us self-knowledge?

Some people do not understand the importance of sastra and guru in attaining self-knowledge. The reasons they give are, (i) moksha is possible through self-knowledge. Self means Atma. Atma means I. I am very close to myself. To know myself, that is to attain self knowledge, how is the sastra, which is outside me, going to help me? (ii) By performing meditation or yoga samadhi regularly, it will give me the experience of atma the self. Therefore, I do not require scriptural study and the Guru.

These two notions have to be replaced by:

1. We have shruti and smritipramanas to refute their argument. The following mantra says

guru’s feet, render them service, and question them with an open mind, those wise people will teach you about the ultimate reality.’ Thus Lord Krishna has proclaimed the need for a guru.

For example, can I see my face by myself? No! I can see it only through a mirror. Do you argue that, since it is my own face, why do I require an external mirror to visualize it? Of course not! Since I cannot see my face all by myself I take an external aid – that of a mirror. Similarly, though Existence Consciousness Infinite principle is ‘I’ myself, being unaware of my true nature, I am identifying myself with my lower nature and am suffering all the time. To get over this sorrow, I need to know my real nature. For that knowledge I require scriptural study. Guru is the only one who can teach me how to understand my real nature with the help of scriptural knowledge. Therefore Guru is necessary for everyone.

Meditation, samadhi (absorption) cannot give self-knowledge. Instead of gaining self-knowledge through scriptural learning, people are working for self-knowledge in the form of mystic experience.

शास्त्रज्ञोऽपि स्वातन्त्र्येण ब्रह्मज्ञानान्वेषणं न कुर्यात्
(MundakopanishadSankaraBhashyam 1-2-12)

Hence however intelligent, knowledgeable you are, you should study scriptures only under a teacher. You should not study on your own.

आचार्यद्वैव विद्या विदिता साधिष्ठं प्रापतीति
(Chandogya Upanishad 4-9-3)

‘The knowledge that is attained only through a teacher, will benefit the student. So Acharya! Please teach me,’ Satyakaama, the disciple pleaded thus with his teacher Gouthama.

2. Our experience in our materialistic life also proves the need of ‘live teacher’ in any given field.

knowledge to others. Hence there is no point in approaching them for self-knowledge.

2. Kevalasrotriyaguru:

These gurus have studied scriptures thoroughly well and so are well versed in communicating the teaching even though they are not able to claim Brahman as their true nature. Hence we can approach them.

3. SrotriyaBrahmanishtaGuru:

These gurus have studied scriptures as per the tradition consistently for a length of time under a competent teacher. They also abide in Brahman. Such gurus can impart self-knowledge to their students and also help them abide in Brahman. They are the gurus of the highest order. Unless we have done great punya in our previous birth it is very difficult to attain such great teachers.

For instance we desire that our children excel in certain arts like music, dance, crafts and academic sciences like Physics, Chemistry etc. So, what do we do? We go in search of well qualified person in that field. We send our children to learn from them. So that they can shine in that field. This is our day to day experience.

If we require a teacher to master in any field of knowledge, don't we require a teacher to attain self-knowledge?

What type of guru is required?

Gurus are of three types. 1. Brahmanishta guru, 2. kevalasrotriya guru, 3. srotriyabrahmanishta guru

1. Brahmanishtaguru:

Though they might not have studied the scriptures in this birth, they would have studied them in the previous birth. By virtue of that merit they always abide in Brahman, and are called Brahmanishtas. But they cannot impart self-

Hence Kevalasrotriya guru and srotriyabrahmanishta gurus come under the category of ‘Ultimate teachers’.

Sankaracharya proclaims in Viveka Choodamani thus –

दुर्लभं त्रयमेवैतद्देवानुग्रहहेतुकम् ।

मनुष्यत्वं मुमुक्षुत्वं महापुरुषसंश्रयः ॥

(VivekaChoodamani – 3)

He proclaims that to attain human birth, to have a desire for liberation and to get an association with wise people is extremely difficult.

In fact we are lucky to be born in this Vedic culture, which is brought down from time immemorial through traditional teaching. Having realized such a grace of God, we should seek the lotus feet of a guru to attain self-knowledge.

गुरुचरणाम्बुजनिर्भरभक्तः संसारादचिराद्भव मुक्तः ।
सेन्द्रियमानसनियमादेवं द्रक्ष्यसि निजहृदयस्थं देवम् ॥

(BhajaGovindam)

One who has disciplined one's own mind and sense organs and one who seeks the feet of a guru will attain liberation from bondage - this is the essence of this sloka in BhajaGovindam.

However fertile a land is, it goes waste if it is not tilled by a farmer. Only when a farmer is available to cultivate the land and till it, the seed grows up to give a good yield.

Body mind complex is like 'land', Sastra is like 'seed' and Guru is like a 'farmer'!

Old age, disease and death are the three miseries that tie us down to samsara. One should have these threefold desires like desire for liberation, desire for scriptural study and desire for guru. Karma yoga, upasana yoga and jnana yoga are the three-fold disciplines one should practise. Karma yoga helps us in developing (chittasuddhi)-purity of mind, Upasana yoga helps us in

of a disciple will the teacher be pleased so as to impart self-knowledge?

Saraswati, the Goddess of knowledge, herself proclaimed the qualities expected in a student for gaining knowledge.

विद्याहवै ब्राह्मणमाजगाम

गोपाय मां सेवधिष्ठेऽहमस्मि ।

असूयकायानृजवेऽयताय

न मां ब्रूया वीर्यवती तथा स्याम् ॥

(Rigveda Samhita)

Oh teachers of wisdom! Please protect me with utmost care. To those who protect me from dishonest people, immoral ones and selfish people, I will be wealth to them i.e. I will serve them humbly. Therefore a student should lead a disciplined life bestowed with moral values. Moral values do not dawn on us overnight. What discipline we practise purposefully for a very long time turns out to be

(chittayekagrata) concentration. These two lead us to Jnanayoga. With sravana, manana, nididhyasana we can attain self-knowledge. Then jnana yoga helps us to understand we are sat-cit-ananda atma which is beyond the three fold bodies (gross, subtle and causal bodies).

One who attains self-knowledge is beyond religion.

Lord Sri Krishna says,

ज्ञानी त्वात्मैव मे मतम् । means, "jnani is my beloved". Thus Lord Krishna himself proclaims the greatness of a jnani.

Student's qualities:

What qualities and qualifications should one have, who seeks the teachings of a scriptural teacher? What qualification does a scriptural teacher expect from a spiritual seeker? With what qualities

moral value. Gradually they shape themselves into our natural character.

Scriptural student prays for qualified students to come to him in future when he becomes a teacher.

आमायन्तु ब्रह्मचारिणः स्वाहा । विमायन्तु ब्रह्मचारिणः

स्वाहा । प्रमायन्तु ब्रह्मचारिणःस्वाहा ।

दमायन्तु ब्रह्मचारिणः स्वाहा ।

(Taittiriyanopanishad 1.4.3)

A student should have the four 'd's which stands for sadhanachatushtayasampathi-(viz) – discrimination, dispassion, discipline (mind control, sense control, introvertedness, forbearance, faith in guru and scriptures and absorption) and desire for moksha.

Lord Krishna proclaims these qualifications as values in the thirteenth chapter of the Gita.

1. Sense Control:

One who controls his senses from external objects is a Sishya.

इन्द्रियार्थेषु वैराग्यमनहंकार एव च ।

(Bhagavad Gita 13-8)

Dispassion towards the objects of enjoyment of this world and also absence of ego are the qualities required. Only a mind which is free from ego can grasp the essence of the teaching given in the scriptures.

2. Seeing the defects:

जन्ममृत्युजराव्याधिदुःखदोषानुदर्शनम्

(Bhagavad Gita 13-8)

Every object in the world and every attachment we have with people or objects is mixed with pleasure and pain. They are all subject to change and decay. Hence the student ponders on the pain and evil inherent in every attachment he will

5. Faith:

One should have undaunted devotion in scriptures as well as the teacher who imparts knowledge to him. The student's devotion should be constant and pure.

गुरुवेदांतवाक्येषु विश्वासः श्रद्धा ।

(Tattvabodha)

To have intense faith in the teachings of Guru, who teaches the real nature of God, is shraddha. Guru teaches him something which he has never seen or heard. So the student should have total faith in the words of the guru.

A child has enormous faith in the mother. The same amount of sincere faith a sishya should have on his guru. That is shraddha.

श्रद्धावान् लभते ज्ञानं

One who has sraddha alone attains self-knowledge. Every Acharya had such devotion on his guru, and that has helped him to know the Truth.

develop dispassion. Lord Krishna call it as mind discipline.

3. Absence of attachment:

असक्तिरनभिष्वङ्गः पुत्रदारगृहादिषु

(Bhagavad Gita 13-9)

One should not have a sense of belonging with regard to son, wife, home etc. though one moves with them closely. The student should develop detachment towards them like a water drop on a lotus leaf.

4. Equanimity:

नित्यं च समचित्तत्वम् इष्टानिष्टोपपत्तिषु ।

(Bhagavad Gita 13-9)

One should develop an equanimous mind towards favourable and unfavourable situations. The student should not be carried away by sorrowful or joyful situations.

6. Secluded life:

विविक्तदेशसेवित्वं अरतिर्जनसंसदि

(Bhagavad Gita 13-10)

The student should have an interest to be in solitude and should not indulge in the company of materialistic people.

A student should serve his guru and study scriptures under his guidance.

शास्त्र परिज्ञानेन बहिर्मुख अनपेक्ष्य विशिष्यते इति शिष्यः

To attain scriptural knowledge one should withdraw himself from worldly matters.

7. Integrity:

One should have integrity in thoughts, words and deeds. A shishya should speak what he thinks and should act accordingly.

Only a person with integrity will rise up to the level of a noble person in course of time.

8. Cleanliness:

One should have physical, verbal and mental purity.

A sishya should have pure mind by entertaining pure thoughts. He should lead truthful life and perform noble actions.

9. Forgiveness:

One should have patience and forgiveness. One should not get irritated for simple reasons. This is the meaning conveyed in the following sloka.

सहनं सर्व दुःखानामप्रतीकारपूर्वकम् ।

चिन्ता विलाप रहितं सा तितिक्षा निगद्यते ॥

(Viveka Choodamani. 25)

To bear patiently the sorrow caused by the criticism of others and not to entertain a feeling of revenge on those who harm us is called forgiveness.

the same way, a student who has a strong desire for liberation, can get the knowledge which gushes out from the guru by listening to his teaching.

So a student should have all the above qualities enlisted by Lord Krishna.

He should study sastra in a dedicated way and should become thorough in it.

For one who seeks to attain the highest goal of moksha, these values are must there is no doubt about it. Once he understands that each value serves like a stepping stone in spiritual journey, he must try to inculcate them with great effort and sincerity.

मनुष्याणां सहस्रेषु कश्चिद्यतति सिद्धये ।

यततामपि सिद्धानां कश्चिन्मां वेत्ति तत्त्वतः ।

(Bhagavad Gita 7-3)

Hardly one among thousands of men strives to realize me; of those striving seekers, again, only some rare one (who devotes himself

10. Desire for liberation:

One should have intense desire for liberation.

अध्यात्मज्ञाननित्यत्वं तत्त्वज्ञानार्थदर्शनम् ।

एतज्ज्ञानमिति प्रोक्तमज्ञानं यदतोऽन्यथा ॥

(Bhagavad Gita 13-11)

Self-knowledge is imparted by a guru in a traditional way through mahavakyas given in the scriptures. Since scriptures alone are the source for self-knowledge, the student should have faith in scriptures. Since guru alone unfolds what is proclaimed in scriptures, he should have same faith in the guru also.

यथा खनन्खनित्रेण नरोवार्यधिगच्छति ।

तथा गुरुगतां विद्यां शुश्रूषुरधिगच्छति ॥

(ManuSmriti 2-218)

We make water hidden under the boulders gush out by removing them with the help of crow-bar. In

exclusively to Me) knows Me in reality. By saying thus in the Gita, Lord Krishna proclaims that attaining self-knowledge is very difficult.

महता पुण्य पण्येन क्रीतेयं कायनौस्त्वया ।

पारं दुःखोर्ध्विर्गन्तुं तर यावन्नभिद्यते ॥

We are blessed with this human body because of lot of merits we must have done earlier. We should use this boat of human body to cross the ocean of samsara before the fall of the body and reach the shore of liberation. This is the message given to us by this sloka.

Hence a student who is desirous of attaining self-knowledge should imbibe the necessary qualities and then should approach the feet of a guru.

अजीर्णे भोजनं विषं अनभ्यासे शास्त्रं विषम् ।

Just as food becomes poisonous to a person who is suffering with indigestion, similarly

scriptural study will become poisonous to an unprepared person.

Great disciples like Upamanyu, Aaruni, Nachiketa, Satyakaama Jaabaala, Arjuna and Uddhava have proved themselves to be the best disciples and have attained self-knowledge under the guidance of competent teachers.

अज्ञः सुखमाराध्यः सुखतरमाराध्यतेविशेषज्ञः ।

ज्ञानलवदुर्विदिग्धं ब्रह्मापि नरं न रंजयति ॥

(*NeetiShatakam – 2*)

Ignorant people limit themselves to material comforts, whereas scholars and intellects think heavenly pleasures are ultimate and they long for them. Even Lord Brahma cannot please people with such half knowledge. It is difficult for them to attain self-knowledge.

No guru ever proclaims himself to be a 'guru'. Only when a seeker comes in search of

his kindness and grace towards the disciple because it is unconditional. Hence the entire world offers its reverence to the guru with the word 'Sri gurubhyonamaha'.

This is the wonderful relationship between the teacher and the student. Through such great relationship, self-knowledge is flowing down to generation after generation from ancient time.

When the qualified student approaches the scriptural teacher who can remove self-ignorance through his teachings, the knowledge takes place and the student gets relieved from his sorrow.

ईश्वरो गुरुरात्मेति मूर्तिभेदविभागिने ।

(*DakshinamurthyStotram*)

Existence, Consciousness, Infinite principle alone is manifesting in the form of Ishwara, the guru and the disciple. That Brahman is myself (Aham Brahma Asmi). A student understands this Truth and

him and pleads him to teach self-knowledge, the guru gets elevated to the status of an 'Acharya' and the valuable treasure of knowledge is imparted to the seeker. The seeker turns out to be the 'disciple'.

शिष्यस्तेऽहं शाधि मां त्वां प्रपन्नम् ।

(*Bhagavad Gita 2-7*)

When sorrowful and deluded Arjuna uttered these words and prostrated in front of Him, out of compassion Lord Krishna became his guru and imparted the teachings of Upanishads in the form of Gita. Eventually He became universal teacher (Jagadguru).

'Scriptural teacher' is an embodiment of generosity. He removes self-ignorance which is the cause of sorrow in us. Hence we praise a guru with the word 'Om ahethukadaya sindhavenamaha' in guru ashtottaram. There is no specific reason for

finds himself to be ever happy and ever grateful to the scriptures and guru who has given him the right knowledge. Therefore he sings in praise of the guru thus.

त्वमेव माता च पिता त्वमेव

त्वमेव बन्धुश्च सखा त्वमेव ।

त्वमेव विद्या द्रविणं त्वमेव

त्वमेव सर्वं मम देवदेव ॥

(*Gurustotram*)

The student declares with immense joy, 'My guru alone is my mother, father, friend, relative, knowledge, wealth and everything'.

The role of a student:

The teacher helped him in giving liberation here and now (jeevanmukti). The student should teach many more like him to help them to attain liberation. That is the true 'gurudakshina' one can offer to one's guru. Only then this chain of guru

sishya lineage will continue. This is called 'Rishiyajna' (Brahma Yajna).

Our culture inculcates a noble tradition of offering dakshina. That is a sign of respect for the knowledge he gained and a sign of gratitude for the guru who imparted that knowledge. That is the devotion he shows upon the Lord and the sastra which unfolds his true nature. The word 'dakshina' has so much of meaning imbibed in it.

Disciple's Duty:

1. He should study the scriptures with great dedication, reverence and faith in the teacher, whose teaching is based on scriptures.
2. He should put into practice what knowledge he has attained through scriptures.
3. Once he masters the subject and attains the

God, scriptures and the teacher are to be worshipped and revered throughout one's life. Initially we should pray and serve them to attain self-knowledge. But once we attain knowledge, we should continue to be grateful to them. This is the essence of this mantra.

Guru Poornima:

Our culture has a wonderful custom. That custom teaches us to worship the teachers who help us to attain liberation, the most important goal in our life.

अनन्त शास्त्रं बहुवेदितव्यं अल्पश्च कालः बहवश्च विघ्नाः ।
यत्सारभूतं तदुपसितव्यं हंसो यथा क्षीरमिवांबु मिश्रम् ॥

The scriptures given by the Lord Himself are very vast. To study such a vast literature one human life is not sufficient. In addition, many obstacles also crop up in our life. Just as a swan extracts milk

talent to teach, he should teach scriptures to the seekers of liberation with the blessing and permission of the teacher.

4. Guru is his guide. So he should serve him throughout his life with gratitude.

Parents play an important role in moulding their children. Similarly guru also plays a significant role. God's blessings are eternal. They are required throughout our life. So we should never ignore them in our life.

We can share our joy with others but with whom can we share our sorrow? None, except the guru. He alone can drive out the sorrow from our life. Therefore a guru is to be worshipped forever.

आजन्मान्तं त्रयं सेव्यं वेदान्तो गुरुरीश्वरः ।
आदौ ज्ञानाप्तये पश्चात् कृतघ्नत्व निवृत्तये ॥

and leave the water, similarly the vedantic student has to receive and register the essence from that vast scriptural literature taught by one's own guru. Having realized this, VyasaMaharshi, an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, has classified the Vedas into four. He has handed down these four Vedas to four of his disciples, Rigveda to PailaMaharshi, Yajurveda to Vaisampayana Maharshi, Samaveda to Jaimini Maharshi and Atharvanaveda to Sumantha Maharshi. Thus he laid down the seed of 'guru – sisnya' tradition.

That's why we chant –

नारायणं पद्मभुवं वसिष्ठं शक्तिं च तत्पुत्रपराशरं च ।
व्यासं शुकं गौडपदं महान्तं गोविन्दं योगीन्द्रमथास्य शिष्यम् ॥

श्रीशङ्कराचार्यमथास्यपद्मपादं च हस्तामलकं च शिष्यम् ।
तं तोटकं वार्तिककारमन्यान् अस्मद्गुरुन्सन्ततमानतोऽस्मि ॥

Thus starting from the Adiguru Narayana, upto our present guru, we worship the entire Guru lineage. Vyasacharya is a link between Adiguru Lord Narayana the Paramatma and us. We are blessed with his writings Brahma Sutras, Mahabharata, eighteen puranas and eighteen Upa puranas.

AdiSankaracharya has blessed us with his commentaries upon Bhagavad Gita, Upanishads and Brahma Sutras and with many Prakarana granthas.

शङ्करं शङ्कराचार्यं केशवं बादरायणम् ।
सूत्रभाष्यकृतौ वंदे भगवन्तौ पुनः पुनः ॥

There is a belief that AdiSankaracharya is an incarnation of Lord Shiva, while VedaVyasa is an incarnation of Lord Vishnu. We consider them as traditional teachers of scriptures. Therefore, it is our duty to offer our gratitude to them.

Vyasacharya is the one who gave the lineage of this tradition. As a mark of remembrance, we

celebrate Gurupoornima in the name of Vyasacharya. Our first salutations unto the first guru Lord Parameshwara. Our next salutations to our country which is the land of Vedic culture.

Whatever we offer to our teachers is no match to the valuable self-knowledge imparted to us.

Thus our ancient culture inculcates the custom of showing gratitude to all traditional acharyas.

सदा शिव समारम्भांशङ्कराचार्यं मध्यमाम् ।
अस्मदाचार्यं पर्यन्तावन्दे गुरु परम्पराम् ॥

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