



Guru Poornima

**Akhanda-Mandalakaram Vyaptam Yena Characharam
Tatpadam Darshitam Yena Tasmai Shri Gurave Namah**

Salutations to the Guru who revealed the power of timeless,
infinite truth to me and that transcends the Universe.

King Janaka once came to know that Supreme knowledge could be attained in the time it takes to mount a horse. He became eager to attain **spiritual knowledge** and thus called a meeting of all the **sages, saint** and **scholars** from his kingdom and had a stage built. He announced, **"Whoever can reveal to me True Knowledge in the length of time that it takes to mount a horse, please come and sit on the stage."** The assembled crowd thought that this was an impossible request and so kept quiet.

Just then, an ugly hunchback with bent limbs, entered the court. The people laughed at him in their ignorance. Once the courtiers stopped laughing, the hunchback started to laugh. Everyone was amazed and when asked as to why he was **laughing**, he said, **"I was under the impression that this was a meeting of saints and sages, and not of cobblers and dealers in prostitution."**

All of a sudden, king's general took out his sword and ran towards the hunchback. King Janak was a learned man and he could sense some divinity in the hunchback. He stopped his general and asked the hunchback why he pointed them as cobblers.

"Judging the beauty and appearance of the skin is the work of cobblers and people who deal with prostitutes," replied the hunchback. Hearing this reply, the king was assured that the hunchback was a realized soul and sought knowledge from him. The name of the hunchback was **Ashtavakra** (one whose limbs are bent in eight places). Ashtavakra asked, **"O King! Are you sure that you really want your request granted?"**

"There is no doubt whatever in my mind," replied the king. **"I am seeking for the True Knowledge with the utmost sincerity."**

The sage then turned to the assembled

holy men and asked, **"Is there anyone among you who can impart true knowledge to the king, and that too, as quickly as the king expects?"**

There was utter silence. Addressing the king, Ashtavakra said, **"Janaka, there is a price that must be paid for obtaining this. Are you prepared to pay it, no matter what it may be?"**

"Yes," said the king.

"Then I will tell you the price. The price consists of three things that you must give me - your body, your mind, and your wealth. Is this agreeable to you?"

"Yes," replied the king.

Ashtavakra then said, "You should think over this very carefully, and only after thorough consideration you should promise to hand over these three things to me."

"I have already thought over it great Lord. There is no doubt whatever in my mind. I will be glad to pay the price," said the king.

"Now that you have surrendered everything to me, leave your throne and come down and sit where all the shoes of your subjects are kept?" said Ashtavakra.

The king got a bit annoyed at this, but soon realized that he had already given everything to the sage. So, he **quietly** left his throne and sat among the shoes. When Ashtavakra made this request, he was aware that many people do not advance spiritually because of their sense of ego, honor and glory.

When the king had seated himself amongst the shoes, the sage told him, **"Now, please do not allow your mind to think of your wealth, since you now have no wealth of your own to think about. It all belongs to me."**

At that time, the king had in fact been thinking about his treasury, palace, kingdom and family. Now he realized that nothing belonged to him and he gave up the thought of those things too. Like a bird in mid-ocean that comes back to the ship, the king's mind returned to its center.

"This mind is now mine. You have no right to think with it or to desire with it," said the sage.

The king withdrew his attention from all objective existence and concentrated his mind within. Due to the gracious glance of the sage,

his mind went up to the higher planes of spiritual existence and merged into the inner bliss. He became **silent** and **still**.

After some time, the sage brought the king out of his deep meditation and said, **"Have you obtained the true knowledge that you requested?"**

"Yes, great sage, and it is far greater, glorious and blissful than I had ever dreamed it could be," said the king.

Ashtavakra said, **"O king, I have no need for your body, mind or wealth and so I return them to you. You have to act as a trustee and use them on my behalf. By giving up everything, you have received the All."**

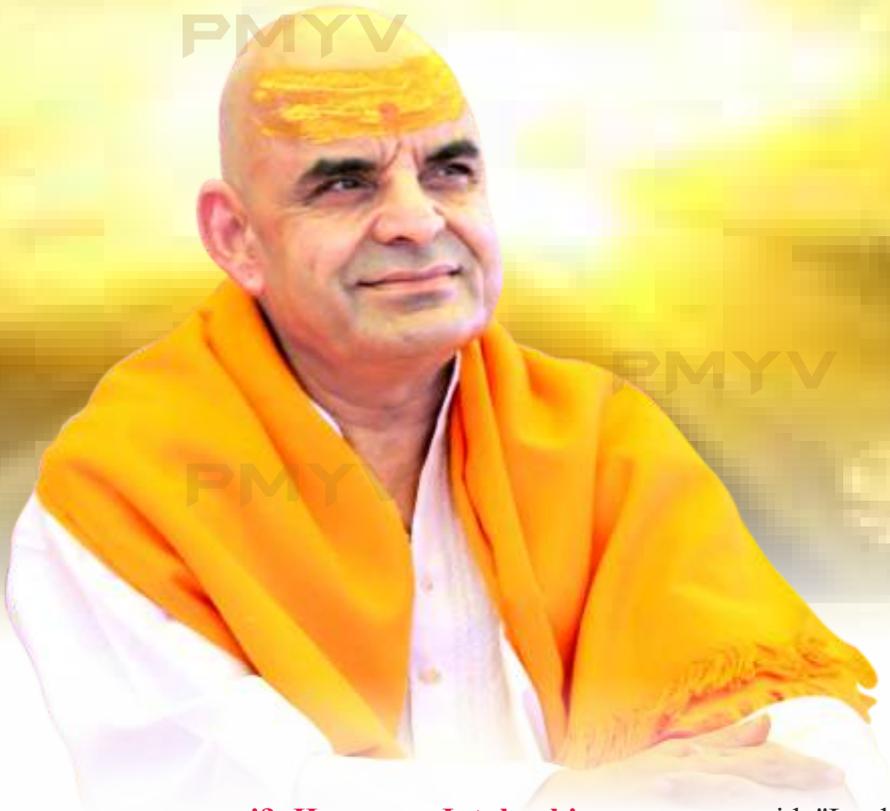
Janaka, who was just a mere was transformed into a great being by the grace of his **Guru, Ashtravakra**. Then Janaka spent 5 years in the hermitage of Ashtavakra and served his Guru with great devotion. He got so much instilled in serving his Guru that he even got over his desires and was thus named as **Videh**, one who is not attached to his body. This same King became a great Guru and later initiated **Sukhadev**.

Sukhadev was the son of the great rishi Vedavyasa, and due to his previous merits, he was endowed with true knowledge even when he was in the womb of his mother. As a child, he used to spend all of his time meditating in the forest near his father's hermitage.

One day while he was meditating, a desire arose in his mind to go to **Vaikuntha** to see Lord Vishnu. However, when he reached there, the gatekeepers informed Lord Vishnu who came and told Suka, **"I are very sorry, but you have no Guru and those without a Guru can never enter here."**

Suka returned to his father and told him what had happened. He was a bit vain and proud, thinking that he was the son of a great rishi, that he had already done so many years of tapas, and so there was no need of a Guru. However, as Lord Vishnu Himself had said that a Guru was necessary, Suka sought his father's advice as to who he should select as his Guru. His father told him, **"There is only one Guru for you and that is King Janaka"**

"Father, have you lost your mind? What is there in common between a king and



a sannyasi? How can I take him as my Guru?" asked Suka.

"There is nobody else who could be your Guru," replied the sage.

Twelve times the sage sent the boy to King Janaka and twelve times he returned even before reaching there due to his doubts. Once he even reached the palace, but on seeing the richness of the palace and the a huge number of worldly people, he thought that the king must be one who is given up to sensual pleasure, and so he was not prepared to accept him as his Master.

The more doubts and suspicions one has about a realized soul, the more one harms oneself. Suspecting or slandering a Mahatma destroys one's merits. **When Suka was being sent back to the king for the thirteenth time, the sage Narada took pity on him.** He disguised himself as an old brahmin and carried a basket of earth on his head. As he approached a small river which was flowing nearby, he would throw the earth into it and it would get washed away.

Seeing this, Suka mocked at him and

said, "Look here, old man. First put some sticks across the stream and then some large lumps of earth on them and then only throw the earth on that. Otherwise, it will be only fruitless labor if you are trying to build a dam across the river the way you are doing it."

"I am only losing my day's effort," said Narada, **"but there is a young man who is a bigger fool than I am, and he is Sukadeva, the son of Vedavyasa. For he has already lost twelve of the fourteen merits that he possessed. He now has only two merits to his name."** When Suka heard this, he fell down and fainted. When he regained consciousness, he was all alone, but he remembered the words of the old man and rushed to the king's palace.

Still having some pride that he was the son of Vedavyasa, he thought that the king would come and meet him on the way. But no one came to meet him. When the king was informed about his arrival, he gave the orders, **"Let him stand right where he is."**

Suka just happened to be standing on the spot where the palace garbage was thrown over

the wall, and as a result, it was not long before he was buried under a big pile of garbage. Four days passed in this way when the king enquired, **"What happened to Suka who had come to see me?"**

"He has been standing at the same spot, Maharaj," replied the servant.

"Let him be out from the heap of garbage, bathed, dressed and brought here," ordered the king.

King Janaka, knowing that Suka was proud of his renunciation, created an illusion. Just after Suka entered the room, a servant came running in and said that the entire town was on fire. **"It's all God's will,"** said Janaka calmly.

After a short while another report came that all of the king's courts were reduced to ashes. **"God's will,"** said the king. Then the news came that the king's own palace was on fire. "All God's will," repeated the king.

Suka was thinking that the king is a fool as he was not doing anything about the fire. Suka grabbed his bag and started to run away to save himself from the approaching fire, but the king caught hold of his arm.

"Look," said the king, "all of my wealth and possessions have been burnt to ashes, but I haven't bothered about them. Now that the fire has reached the palace, you have taken hold of this small bundle of your possessions with the intention of saving them. After all, what are your things worth? Now, who exactly is the greater **renunciate** - you or I?"

It was as if a thunderstrike fell on Suka and he realized that the king was a true **renunciate** and sought initiation from him, but the king declined saying, **"You do not deserve it."**

However, the king ordered a great festival in honor of Suka. **Festivities, dances, plays** and **various** stalls were set up. Everything was arranged just to entertain Suka. When everything was ready, the king asked Suka to go out into the city and enjoy everything, "But," said the king, **"please carry this cup of milk with you wherever you go."**

He then ordered the soldiers who were to accompany Suka, **"Take him through every part of the city. Let him see everything and miss nothing. But if even a single drop of milk**

spills out of this cup, my orders are that you should behead him on the spot."

Suka was shocked at the order but he didn't have an option. He went out with the soldiers and came back in the evening.

"I am sure that you had a nice time? How did you enjoy everything?", asked Janak.

"O king, as it turned out, I saw nothing, for at every moment all of my thoughts were concentrated on this cup. If by mistake I spilled a drop, I would have lost my **life**," said Suka.

"Suka, that is how I live in the midst of all this luxury, I see nothing. For at every moment my thoughts are centered on the Lord or I too should lose my life," said the king. "Imagine that the cup is life, the milk is your mind, and the festivities are the pleasures and comforts of the world. I pass through this world with great caution, so that the milk of the mind is not spilled and all attention is concentrated every moment on Him. For even a moment spent in not thinking of Him would be death to me."

The king could now see that Suka's mind was cleansed of pride and was ready, so he initiated him and thus even Suka was able to attain **greatness in life**. These two incidents shows us how much Guru is important in life, why it is **necessary** to become a disciple and how a Guru guides his disciples onto the path of true **knowledge**.

We are all blessed in life to have a **SadGuru** in our life who is always willing to guide us on the path of **greatness**. However, just like Suka, we remain disillusioned in life and don't understand the worth of Guru and continue to lose our merits. Without a Guru, one can't attain anything worthy in life. It is up to us what we want to make out of this life.

Guru Poornima is the day to offer our reverence towards our Gurudev, it is the day when a disciple can reach to the **greatest** feat in life in just a matter of few seconds, just like King Janak and it is the day to assimilate Guru within oneself and reach to state which is even envied by the **Gods** and **Goddesses**. SadGurudev is awaiting to meet all **His loving disciples** on this divine day.

Happy Guru Poornima!