

### Birthday of Dalai Lama (6<sup>th</sup> July – Buddhism)

Discovery of His Holiness, the 14th Dalai Lama.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama was born in a peasant family on July 6th, 1935, in a small village called Taktser in north eastern Tibet. His Holiness was recognised at the age of two as the reincarnation of his predecessor the 13th Dalai Lama.

In 1935, the Regent of Tibet went to the sacred lake of Lhamo Lhatso at Chokhorgyal, about 90 miles south east of Lhasa, the capital of Tibet. For centuries the Tibetans had observed that visions of the future could be seen in this lake. The Regent had a vision of three Tibetan letters, Ah, Ka, and Ma, followed by a picture of a monastery with roofs of jade green and gold, and a house with turquoise tiles. In 1937 high lamas and dignitaries carrying the secrets of the vision were sent to all parts of Tibet in search of the place that the Regent had seen in the waters. The search party that headed east was under the leadership of Lama Kewtsang Rinpoche of Sera Monastery. When they arrived in Amdo, they found a place matching the description of the secret vision. The party went to the house with Kewtsang Rinpoche disguised as the servant, and junior official Lobsang Tsewang disguised as the leader. The Rinpoche was wearing a rosary that had belonged to the 13th Dalai Lama, and the little boy of the house recognised it and demanded that it be given to him. Kewtsang Rinpoche promised to give it to him if he could guess who he was, and the boy replied that he was "Sera aga", which means in the local dialect "a lama of Sera". Then the Rinpoche asked who the leader was and the boy gave his name correctly; he also knew the name of the real servant. This was followed by a series of tests that included the choosing of correct articles that had belonged to the 13th Dalai Lama.

#### Extracts from HH Dalai Lama's speech of 15<sup>th</sup> June 1993

*"Our world is becoming smaller and ever more interdependent with the rapid growth in population and increasing contact between people and governments. In this light, it is important to reassess the rights and responsibilities of individuals, peoples and nations in relation to each other and to the planet as a whole.*

*It is my belief that the lack of understanding of the true cause of happiness is the principal reason why people inflict suffering on others. Some people think that causing pain to others may lead to their own happiness or that their own happiness is of such importance that the pain of others is of no significance. But this is clearly short-sighted. No one truly benefits from causing harm to another being. Whatever immediate advantage is gained at the expense of someone else is short-lived. In the long run causing others misery and infringing upon their peace and happiness creates anxiety, fear and suspicion for oneself.*

*The key to creating a better and more peaceful world is the development of love and compassion for others. This naturally means we must develop concern for our brothers and sisters who are less fortunate than we are. In this respect, the non-governmental organizations have a key role to play. You not only create awareness for the need to respect the rights of all human beings, but also give the victims of human rights violations hope for a better future.*

*I, for one, strongly believe that individuals can make a difference in society. Every individual has a responsibility to help more our global family in the right direction and we must each assume that responsibility. As a Buddhist monk, I try to develop compassion within myself, not simply as a religious practice, but on a human level as well. To encourage myself in this altruistic attitude, I sometimes find it helpful to imagine myself standing as a single individual on one side, facing a huge gathering of all other human beings on the other side. Then I ask myself, 'Whose interests are more important?' To me it is quite clear that however important I may feel I am, I am just one individual while others are infinite in number and importance".*

### Guru Purnima (21<sup>st</sup> July – Hinduism)

#### THE GURU

What is the true meaning of *Guru*? In Sanskrit, “gu” means darkness, and “ru” means one who removes. Therefore, a *Guru* is one who removes your darkness, however it is not merely the darkness of ignorance. It is not simply that we go to our *Guru* with a question, ask him, he answers it and then our confusion is cleared. Rather, the mere presence of the *Guru* in our life removes all darkness, anger, pain and confusion.

The *Guru* resides within us in the form of our highest ideals, until we come in contact with that *Guru* within, a *Guru* in physical form symbolises the *Guru* inside. We can say that a *Guru* is the outer embodiment of the inner. The *Guru* in physical form becomes like an altar where we rest our love, attention and trust. As love, respect and trust for our *Guru* arise, we get a taste of these qualities within, and as they begin to flow, we become aware of their presence. This process brings us closer to our own true nature, the Self, the Divine.

*“One who cultivates the crop of love in the field of one's heart is a true Christian, a true Sikh, a true Hindu, and a true Muslim. In fact, he is a true human being and a true guru.”*  
(Telugu Poem)

#### THE FESTIVAL

A festival with a truly spiritual meaning and relevance, *Guru Purnima* celebrates the might of one's teacher or *Guru* through respect and reverence. *Purnima* refers to the full moon, since the full moon symbolizes the mind with delight. *Guru Purnima* signifies the elimination of all darkness and evil from the mind. It is also known as *Vyasa Purnima*. The festival is celebrated in July/August on the full moon of the fourth month (*Ashada*) of the Indian calendar.

It is believed that the great scholar Vyasa, who lived in the *Dwapara Yuga*, was born on this day. Legend has it that this is when he completed the codification of the four Vedas or the Hindu religious texts.

*Guru Purnima* is an occasion for cleansing the mind to make it absolutely pure with love.

*Guru Purnima* is a day of renewing our faith, our *Shraddh'* (faith), in He who bestows the light upon our lives. It is a day of re-opening our hearts; our souls and our lives to His divine presence and letting it penetrate and saturate every aspect of our being.

*There is a beautiful story told about a man who wanted to walk on water. He begged his Guru to give him a secret mantra or a special boon so he could complete this remarkable feat. The man was extremely pious and devoted, and he had been in his Guru's service for many years. Therefore, the guru gave him a leaf, folded many times until it was very small. He told his disciple, “Within this leaf is a secret formula which will enable you to walk on water. However, you must not open it because the formula inside is a secret.”*

*So the man agreed, and he takes the folded leaf carefully in his hands and begins his journey across the river. He is walking fine when suddenly he is overcome by curiosity. What could be this secret formula? Is there really a secret inside? Is it a powder or a stone or some holy mantra printed? Where did his Guru get it? His doubts got the best of him and he begins slowly to open the leaf as he walks, careful lest any of the secret formula should spill out into the water. As soon as he unfolds the last piece to unveil the secret, he suddenly sinks into the water and drowns. Inside the leaf was written the simple word, “faith.”*

*“Gurur Brahma, Gurur Vishnu, Gurur Devah Maheshwarah.  
Gurur Sakshat, Param Brahma, Tasmai Shri Guru Ve Namah.”*

#### Excerpts from Baba's Divine Discourses:

*Guru* is Brahma, *Guru* is Vishnu, and *Guru* is Maheshwara. Consider *Guru* as your everything. In this world, everything is a manifestation of Divinity. *Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma* (verily all this is Brahman). All are the embodiments of Divinity. In fact, all that you see is nothing but the Divine Cosmic Form (*Vishwa Virat Swarupa*).

A *Guru* is necessary to make you understand the formless and attribute less divinity. Since it is difficult to get such *Gurus*, consider God as your *Guru*. (*Divine Discourse 5<sup>th</sup> July 2001*)