

SWAMINARAYAN BLISS

July 2008

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The **Glory** of God

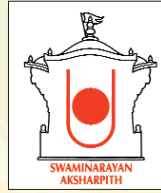


1. Aksharbrahman Gunatitanand Swami, Bhagwan Swaminarayan, Aksharmukta Gopalanand Swami, adorned in *chandan* garments, BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir, Sarangpur, 2-6-2008.
2. Sadhus, *parshads* and *sadhaks* happily play *kartals* in Swamishri's presence, Yagnapurush Smruti Mandir, Sarangpur, 20-5-2008.
3. Swamishri doing *pradakshina* of sacred *khijdo* tree, Sarangpur, 20-5-2008.

Title: Bhagwan Swaminarayan, BAPS Swaminarayan Mandir, Ahmedabad

Photos: Sadhu Yogicharandas

*For more photos: www.swaminarayan.org/rituals/chandan



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FIRST WORD

We need to think right!

The quality of our lives depends more on what we are inside than outside. But how many of us really know this? How many of us really look within and try to better our inner being?

For innumerable births we have become accustomed to believing and seeing that happiness lies outside. Thus, we are products of such repeated programming. So powerfully ingrained is this perspective that we simply cannot believe that the external world is not the source of our happiness. Each morning, the moment we open our eyes we find what we see to be so real. And thus, we passionately pursue what we see and believe.

This one-track thinking engages all our immense resources of body, mind and emotions in that direction. Our thoughts race outwards in search of happiness, fame, money and power. But true happiness is not a product of material affluence.

If we were to look at daily life experiences and care to ruminate upon them, we would realize them to be the cause of overwhelming havoc and pains. A faulty attitude always leads to problems and misery. So, that is why we need to think right! We need to know how beneficial and liberating it would be to think right! *Satsang* helps us to think right. It helps in bending, breaking and rectifying our own erroneous attitudes. And once they become right our perspective changes; our lives become liberated from the myth that governed it all these births. *Satsang* means guru. Through him we learn to think right. ◆

Himraj Shah Becomes a Devotee



Himraj Shah was a staunch Vaishnav of Sundariyana. At Shri Hari's behest Gopalanand Swami went to Sundariyana. Thereafter an interesting incident takes place which convinces and transforms Himraj Shah...

The *vaidya* came to Gopalanand Swami, who was discoursing to a congregation. He greeted Swami with joined palms and said, "Jai Shri Krishna." Gopalanand Swami reciprocated the greeting by saying, "Jai Shri Krishna." Himraj Sheth was surprised and pleased with Swami's response.

Himraj Shah enquired of Gopalanand Swami as to what was wrong with him. "I don't know. You are an expert in pulse checking. Here, check it." Himraj Shah placed his fingers over Swami's wrist. To his surprise he found no pulse. But, being a pulse expert, he saw that it was throbbing in his neck. On placing his fingers on Swami's neck, the pulse stopped. Then he tried to feel for it in his feet, thigh, forehead, ear and in other parts of the body, where it pulsates. But he failed to feel it anywhere. Himraj Shah was simply overwhelmed because Gopalanand Swami was addressing the assembly all the while. Then he noted the pulse throbbing in Swami's finger. On placing his finger on it, the pulse raced away. Thereafter he saw it in Swami's right eye. Himraj Shah was humbled by the experience. He bowed at Gopalanand Swami's feet and extolled, "Swami,

yoga of such a calibre was practised by my Lord Krishna. Thereafter, I have not heard of any yogi having accomplished such a feat. I am an expert in the practice of yoga, therefore I am convinced that you have mastered it and that you are the form of Shri Krishna." Himraj Shah's eyes welled up with tears of joy. His transformation amazed his sons, Vanasha and Pujasha, and Dosabhai Khachar.

Gopalanand Swami replied, "Shah, I am a servant of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. You are intelligent and a Vaishnav, so I ask you to take refuge in the supreme God. One's soul becomes liberated only by taking the refuge of God or his Sadhu."

For Himraj Shah the occasion turned out to be an eye-opener. He submitted, "Make me your disciple. Place a *kanthi* around my neck and explain to me the dos and don'ts of the Sampraday."

Gopalanand Swami initiated him into Sat-sang by placing a *kanthi* around his neck. "Since you are a staunch Vaishnav you must be observing moral vows. Bhagwan Swaminarayan has prescribed five vows for the householders, namely, no alcohol, no meat, no stealing, no

adultery, and observance of social purity. Have a firm allegiance to him and chant his name while telling the rosary.”

The day marked a turning point in the life of Himraj Shah. He told Gopalanand Swami, “Swami, my son, Vanasha, told me that when the right time arrives I will come to understand. By your grace my time has ripened.” Himraj Shah bowed to Gopalanand Swami and took his blessings before returning to his house as a Swaminarayan *satsangi*.

The news of Himraj Shah’s transformation spread rapidly through the Vaishnav community. His relatives were taken aback. They started streaming to his house and reproached him, “Why have you given up our forefather’s religion?”

Himraj Shah replied, “When Vitthalnathji was born our Modh community took refuge in him. At that time they gave up our ancestral faith and allegiance. I have done a similar thing. Swaminarayan is an avatar of Bhagwan Vishnu, and having taken his refuge, I am still a Vaishnav.”

The relatives and members of his community left with resignation, convinced that Himraj Shah would not give up his new faith.

A few days later the Vaishnav acharya, Gosaiji, came to Sundariyana. The Gosaiji sent eight basketfuls of *prasad* to the house of Himraj Shah.

The Sheth, however, sent them back. The Gosaiji felt hurt and returned to Dhandhuka. There, he called the leading disciples of the Modh community and declared, “Swaminarayan has taken away one of our leading devotees into his fold. If this continues then the Vaishnav dharma will collapse. Something must be done to remedy this. The Sheth should be convinced to return to the fold.” To this a mature and calm member replied, “Acharya Maharaj! Presently, Swaminarayan and his sadhus are able to attract others into their fold through their character and teachings. Similarly, why don’t you

adopt this practice? It behoves upon you to sustain the fellowship. Mahaprabhu Vitthalnathji had established our Vaishnav organization through his life and teachings. Whereas you merely give discourses but do not consolidate our morals for attaining *moksha*. So what can we do?” The Gosaiji remained silent for a while. Then he said, “You should excommunicate him because only then will he understand. But if you remain quiet and unresponsive then our Vaishnav dharma and our children shall decline spiritually.”

The Vaishnav devotees felt pity for the helpless Gosaiji. They reassured him, “Himraj Shah is an eminent businessman. By excommunicating him our whole community will be upset. We will however take action at an opportune time.”

In Gadhada, Shri Hari celebrated the festival of Sharad Punam. He then departed and went to Sundariyana. Maharaj was happy to hear that Himraj Shah had become a *satsangi*. He blessed the Sheth. At that time the sadhus and devotees with Maharaj felt that his sadness had lifted. But then, the next moment, Maharaj reverted to his former mood. The senior sadhu perceived the apparently human traits Maharaj was showing to be divine. They knew that Shri Hari’s actions were for the benefit and elevation of all. And that was why Gopalanand Swami remained silent on such occasions.

Shriji Maharaj left Sundariyana and passed through the villages of Tavi, Talsana and Devadiya. He was in a hurry to reach Adaraj. At Devadiya, Jalamsinh Darbar, his relatives and the village folk honoured Maharaj by arranging a procession. The living and seating arrangements were made in the *hari* mandir and its precincts. Soon Mukund Brahmachari cooked a meal and called Maharaj for dinner. Thereafter Shri Hari served the devotees with *kansar* and milk and declared that he wished to depart early next morning. But Jalamsinh’s mother, Keshaba insisted, “Maharaj you can leave after taking lunch.”

Shri Hari replied, "I am not going to stay longer than tomorrow morning. This time your wish shall not prevail."

Keshaba humbly beseeched, "You are Bhagwan so how can my wish prevail before yours? But I ask that you listen to a poor woman. In the case of another guest I would try with all guile to prevent him from going, but before you I am helpless."

Shri Hari smiled and added, "Your tricks will not work on me."

Keshaba submitted with folded hands and then whispered, "Only after I try will you come to see!"

The Darbar performed *pujan* of Maharaj and offered a donation at his feet. Shri Hari retired for the night to his room. The Kathi Darbars who had accompanied Maharaj were tired after their long journey, so they too went to sleep early.

At midnight Jalamsinh and Keshaba went to the room of Shri Hari. Maharaj was in deep sleep. Next Keshaba went to Manki, Maharaj's mare, gently caressed her and said, "Manki, my sister, today you will have to side with me." Manki understood her, and she did not neigh or utter a sound. Keshaba untied Manki and brought her to a room adjacent to hers. She tethered Manki and brought fresh grass for fodder. Again Keshaba caressed Manki and said, "Today, you will have to uphold my pride. I had spoken before Maharaj that he would see after I tried all means to restrain him from going. You are my sister, aren't you! Do not respond to Maharaj when he calls you." Then both Keshaba and Jalamsinh closed the room and awakened the Brahmin cook, "Start cooking because we can't send Maharaj hungry early in the morning."

At pre-dawn the Kathi Darbars and *parshads* awoke. They saddled their horses. Naja Bhagat went to ready Manki, but he was shocked at her absence. A streak of fear ran down his whole body. He thought, "Had Maharaj left alone?"

But when he looked at Maharaj's bed he saw that he was in a yogic sleep. Naja ran to the stables, but he could not find Manki. The anxious Naja awakened Jalamsinh Darbar and told him nervously, "Manki is no longer tied to her stake. She is not in the stables either. Where could Manki have gone?"

Jalamsinh Bapu feigning ignorance, got up with a start, "Where is Manki?" Jalamsinh took his sword and tied it to his waist. "Oh Naja Bhagat! Such news would shatter my prestige. Who could have taken Manki away?"

Jalamsinh rushed to the *hari* mandir where Maharaj was residing. He searched everywhere. Meanwhile, Maharaj got up and finished his daily morning rituals hurriedly and came to the house of Jalamsinh. Keshaba offered her respects and said, "Maharaj it is not yet dawn. Why are you in such a hurry?"

"I have to leave now. I have come to bid you goodbye," Maharaj replied.

"Well Maharaj, you will not stay despite our wish. You are Bhagwan and all-powerful. Therefore you may depart as you wish."

At that time Naja Bhagat arrived. He informed nervously, "Maharaj, Manki is nowhere to be found. Jalamsinh is still searching for her."

"What did you say? Manki is not there. Then tell the Darbars to search for her. Jalamsinh alone cannot search everywhere. Tell a footprint expert (*pagi*) to look for her. Who is it that has taken Manki away?"

◆
(To be continued)

Mandir Traditions



BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir, Sarangpur

Bhagwan Swaminarayan revealed his Vedic philosophy of Akshar and Purushottam in the Vachanamrut. He taught that one must become like Akshar, the ideal devotee, and worship Purushottam, supreme God. He revealed that Gunatitanand Swami was the incarnation of Akshar and that he himself was Purushottam. This was the philosophy that Brahmaswarup Shastriji Maharaj strived to promote while he was in Vartal. However, misguided administrators and sadhus opposed his efforts. Such was their stiff agitation that Shastriji Maharaj was left with no choice but to separate from the Vartal diocese and found the Bochasanwasi Shri Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha (BAPS).

In Bochasan, Shastriji Maharaj enshrined the *murtis* of Aksharbrahman Gunatitanand Swami (Akshar) and Bhagwan Swaminarayan (Purushottam) in the central shrine for the first

time. This was in 1907. In 1916, the *murti-pratishtha* of the mandir in Sarangpur was approaching and still many continued to hinder Shastriji Maharaj's efforts. But, he persevered undeterred.

In response to the misinformation that was being spread questioning the work of Shastriji Maharaj, Nirgundas Swami wrote an open letter to the devotees. The detailed letter not only reveals Nirgundas Swami's forthright, honest and bold nature, but also soundly explains the reasons why Shastriji Maharaj was building mandirs and enshrining the *murtis* of Akshar and Purushottam. The following is a translation of his letter.

In Samvat 1962 (1905 CE), some brash sadhus, instigated by some foolish people and without consulting the trustees or sadgurus, inflicted hardship upon Shastriji Maharaj, even though he was not at fault.

After the Kartik Punam festival [in Vartal, Acharya Maharaj] refused to give an official letter of permission [to Shastriji Maharaj] to tour in the villages. He also did not assign any sadhus to him. Despite this, [Shastriji Maharaj] returned to Vartal with some devotees for darshan on Magh-sar sud 15. Starting from the month of Posh, arrangements were made to deny [Shastriji Maharaj] entry [into the Vartal mandir] even on the day of Punam. As a result [Shastriji Maharaj] never went there. However, to maintain tradition, [Shastriji Maharaj] gathered devotees in different places for discourses.

On the occasion of the Chaitra Punam festival, when the satsangis learned of this, they thought about negotiating a compromise [between Shastriji Maharaj and the Vartal Sanstha]. Ignoring these efforts, the Vartal Sanstha demanded that

[Shastriji Maharaj and] his fellow sadhus be excommunicated on the night of Chaitra sud 13. [They] forced the sadhus to sign. However, only Bhimji Kothari and a few of the other trustees signed. But, the majority, including Kothari Govardhanbhai and Dolatrambhai, did not sign the 'proposal to excommunicate'. Then [the opposers] began harassing [Shastriji Maharaj] at mandirs in other villages.

[Shastriji Maharaj] tolerated all this and spent his days discoursing at the places of his beloved devotees. And on Punam days he went to where the devotees called him to celebrate grand festivals. [They] enjoyed [his] discourses. This continued for twelve months.

[In Bochasan], Shastriji Maharaj consecrated the murtis of Swaminarayan (Akshar-Purushottam) in the middle shrine, and laid the iron-strong foundation for the constant growth [of this philosophy] in the future. The devotees also, without concern for public opinion, served beyond their capacity with body, mind and wealth. [Shastriji Maharaj] had only ten to fifteen sadhus. Even though they were very few, they travelled to the villages to please the devotees with discourses and carry out mandir activities at the same time. They endured all obstacles and served in order to please God and his devotees, and spread the supreme philosophy [of Akshar-Purushottam] to thousands of people. As time passed, they even preached to and changed the lives of the wild landlords from the villages of Badalpur, Chanpol, Narshi, Kathana and others on the banks of the Mahi River.

By the grace of Shriji Maharaj, the Darbar of Limbdi donated 60 vighas (24 acres) of land in Sarangpur. [Shastriji Maharaj] began to build a mandir on that land. Because of the Hanumanji mandir thousands of devotees and other distressed people come there to become free of their troubles. The reason for building the mandir is that visitors can have darshan of the murtis of Maharaj (Akshar-Purushottam) and develop a



Nirgundas Swami

firm conviction in the supreme [Akshar-Purushottam] philosophy, and that their jivas attain liberation. In this way, [this philosophy] will become instilled in hearts of thousands and, over time, the supremacy of Shriji Maharaj will also be established.

Even Shriji Maharaj himself had to consecrate the murtis of other avatars in the central shrines for the satisfaction of thousands. However, he has

given his true knowledge in the Vachanamrut. According to those words, we believe that Shriji Maharaj is supreme God, and the avatari of all avatars. So now, wherever a new shikharbaddh mandir is built what is the problem with consecrating images of the ideal devotee, Akshar (Gunatitanand Swami) with Purushottam (Shriji Maharaj)? Yet [others] still consecrate the murtis of other avatars with the murti of Sahajanandji Maharaj. Moreover, in the mandir calendars, they write 'Patotsav (anniversary) of Shri Lakshmi-Narayan Dev and other deities', not 'Patotsav of Shri Sahajanand Swami and other deities'. How will the message of Bhagwan Swaminarayan spread in this way? How will the name of [Shriji] Maharaj spread in this way in the long run? Since, if they do this, people will think that Lakshmi-Narayan or Radha-Krishna are God and, after them, Sahajanand Swami is just an acharya or a great personality, and that is why his murti is consecrated.

According to Shriji Maharaj's own words, no one other than Shriji Maharaj himself is [supreme] God. The reason is that when such powerful people as Gunatitanand Swami and Gopalanand Swami are his servants, who else would be capable of being God? As definite proof of this, and to spread [this knowledge] for years to come, the murtis of Shri Swaminarayan Maharaj and his choicest devotee (Gunatitanand Swami) are consecrated. And the murtis of other avatars are consecrated in the side shrines. How fulfilling this task must be. In fact, with the aim of informing people of other beliefs

that Maharaj is supreme God, through great difficulties and tolerating honours and insults, the building of a huge mandir in a great place like Sarangpur, where thousands come on their own, is underway. Just as the Lord underwrote Narshinh Mehta's financial responsibilities, it is a great miracle by [Shriji] Maharaj that the mandir construction is constantly going on. (It is believed that Narshinh Mehta used to write a request and put it near the Lord's feet whenever he needed money for his social responsibilities. Lord Krishna used to fulfil all his wishes every time in some way and never left a single task undone.)

I don't know what punishment God will give to those who see faults in such a great person doing these great, noble deeds and tolerating so much to please God and his devotees with the single-minded purpose of spreading the glory of [Shriji] Maharaj throughout the world. Immorality comes and resides in the heart of whoever sees faults in the deeds of an ordinary devotee. I cannot imagine what will happen to one who is seeing faults in the deeds of such a person [like Shastriji Maharaj].

Hence, I want to announce to all of the sat-sangis that if we ourselves are unable to do some task and if someone is doing some great work then [we should] be happy about that. Even then there will be many benefits. And by taking part in that seva, one can gain so many merits. Also, God becomes extremely pleased.

Some will say that if Shriji Maharaj did not do it, and the Nand sadhus did not do it, then who are you to come up with such new ideas? In reply to that question, just think about our tradition. When Shri Krishna was alive, there were no mandirs with his murtis. After four generations, Vrajnabh consecrated the murti of Krishna under the name of Ranchhodji, a form of Vishnu with four hands. Five thousand years later, Vallabhacharya consecrated the murtis of Krishna himself as a child. For the last two to three hundred years, followers of the Radhavallabhi Sampraday have been consecrating the murtis of Radha-

Krishna. It is now a fact that Radha-Krishna is the God in Golok. He has become popular and many believe in him. In the same manner, we believe in the murtis of other avatars, but in the main middle shrine of the newly built mandirs, the murtis of Swaminarayan (Akshar-Purushottam) should be consecrated.

Even in our own mandirs, there are many things that were accepted only after many years. In Gadhada, only the murti of Gopinathji was consecrated at first. After 33 years, the murti of Sahajanand Swami was consecrated. Also, in the same year the murti [of Sahajanand Swami] was consecrated in Junagadh.

Nityanand Swami had the mandir at Lakshmi Vadi in Gadhada built. However, because there was opposition, only picture murtis were consecrated, but [the opposition] did not allow the big stone murti of [Shriji] Maharaj to be consecrated. This was despite the fact that two acharyas and many senior Nand sadhus were present. Then, with great effort, Viharilalji Maharaj suffered many hardships, and consecrated the murtis of [Shriji] Maharaj, Ichchharamji and Raghuvirji Maharaj. Now everyone joins in the jay nad (victory hail) of these murtis with enthusiasm and offers rich food dishes [to those murtis] joyously. At first, thousands had raised doubts. However, slowly, as time passes, the truth spreads.

Some also raised the issue of why we can adorn the murti of a sadhu [Gunatitanand Swami] with ornaments? In reply to that question, Nar-Narayan are also rishis and yogis, and only wear valkal clothes. However, their murtis, consecrated in Ahmedabad, are offered all types of ornaments. Hanumanji is also a great ascetic, yet he is offered thousands of rupees worth of ornaments.

Scriptures have also described the real attire of Shivji. Still, in Junagadh, where we have consecrated his murti, golden ornaments are offered. Even Shriji Maharaj has himself adorned his own sadhus, including Nityanand Swami and Gunatitanand Swami, with his own golden kanthi and rich clothes as well. We should read that descrip-

tion in the shloks regarding the sadgurus written by Achintyanand Brahmachari.

In addition, when a sadhu or householder goes to Dham (passes away), he does not take saffron or white clothes with him. Their appearance is that of the divine murti of Maharaj himself [in Akshardham]. So, the murtis are consecrated with the belief that Gunatitanand Swami is not human but is Aksharbrahman.

Gunatitanand Swami is the incarnation of Akshar. He was named Gunatitanand simply for identification. However, as stated in Vachanamrut Gadhada I- 21, Akshar is constantly in the service of Purushottam. So, to identify and establish this fact, the murtis of Akshar-Purushottam were first consecrated in Vadhwan. Then [they were] consecrated in Bochasan. Now [they will be] consecrated in Sarangpur, with the name 'Swaminarayan'. There is no need for doubts in this. Hence, understanding this in accordance with the words of Bhagwan Swaminarayan, one will experience fountains of joy, and even while in this human body one will enjoy the bliss of Akshardham.

Hence, those satsangis who served with body, mind, and wealth, even at risk to their lives, and contributed thousands of rupees to build the mandir in Bochasan have again helped beyond their means. They have donated for the Sarangpur mandir according to their pledges. That is why the mandir is being built. And now, in the month of Vaishakh the murti-pratishtha will take place. So, do not miss this great chance.

Nobody should debate about this matter. **If we were doing all of this to create divisions, make someone look inferior, satisfy our ego, win over someone, or even attempt to become superior than the Vartal-Gadhada Sanstha, then may we incur the sin of killing infinite paramhansas. This is our deepest belief, from the bottom of our hearts.**

In addition, if our allegiance is to anyone other than Bhagwan Swaminarayan himself, then may we again suf-

fer as mentioned above. I am especially announcing these words publicly, to prove the sincerity in our hearts.

I request those not familiar with the traditions and history of the Sampraday not to be misled by the words of outsiders. Some will say that because the Acharya is not going to consecrate the murtis, one should not attend the celebration. In response to that, when the murti of Gopinathji was consecrated in Gadhada, Maharaj had gone to Radha Vav, and Nityanand Swami had performed the first arti. In Bhuj and Khambhat Gopalanand Swami consecrated the murtis. And in Vadodara, since Bhagvatprasadji Maharaj was unable to go, another member of the Dharmakul, Viharilalji Maharaj, even though he was not the Acharya, along with Pavitranand Swami and other sadgurus consecrated the murtis.

In Mumbai, Bhumanand Swami and other sadgurus have done the same, and in Chanod, the sadhus of Vartal and brahmacharis together got a pious Brahmin to consecrate the murti. Then, at his convenience, Acharya [Maharaj] may go to such places and perform the arti. Similarly, we have no prejudice or enmity towards anyone. Whenever he wishes, the Acharya may come here to perform the arti.

Also, apart from our Sampraday many people participate where murtis are consecrated or mandirs are dedicated. Thousands participated in the Babulnath Mahadev mandir in Mumbai for that same purpose. Hence, if one receives merits for those ceremonies, there is nothing to lose and much to gain for the thousands of our own Sampraday who will participate and partake of the prasad at the ceremony, where the murtis of Swami and Narayan are being consecrated. People undertake pilgrimages, have the darshan of many murtis, and on returning donate meals to Brahmins. They receive the appropriate fruits of their actions. Hence, when such a Satpurush is himself performing the yagna, and where thousands of Brahmins, sadhus and devotees will take prasad, then one definitely benefits. ◆

King Porus

Porus is the Greek rendering of Paurava, Parvata or King Puru. In India, the heart of every child and youth bubbles with pride on hearing his name. Images of a valiant king light up in their minds, similar to Maharana Pratapsinh. Both defiantly fought their foreign foes; Porus on a huge elephant and the latter on his horse, Chetak (*Swaminarayan Bliss*, November 1999).

Porus was born in Punjab. His year of birth is not known, but the year of his death was 317 BCE. His physique was extraordinary, with a height of '5 cubits' – about 7.5 ft (18 inches = 1 cubit). His kingdom in Punjab was located between the rivers Jhelum and Chenab (see map). Its capital may have been near the present-day Lahore.

After conquering the Persian empire and modern Afghanistan, Alexander the Macedonian, invaded Indian soil in the spring of 326 BCE, wishing to be the master of "the land of milk and honey" (India). He crossed the river Sindhu and was warmly welcomed by Ambhi, the new king of Takshashila. An arch enemy and neighbour of Porus, Ambhi joined Alexander. Other Indian rulers such as another Paurava and the king of Abhisar also submitted to Alexander without a fight. When Alexander's envoys arrived to ask Porus to meet Alexander, he proudly replied that he would do so, with arms at his own frontiers! He was made of a different mettle, fiercely determined to defend his territory at all costs. He was not happy with his neighbouring rulers who cowardly submitted to the foreign invader. Thus, he was hemmed in the front and rear by enemies and traitors.

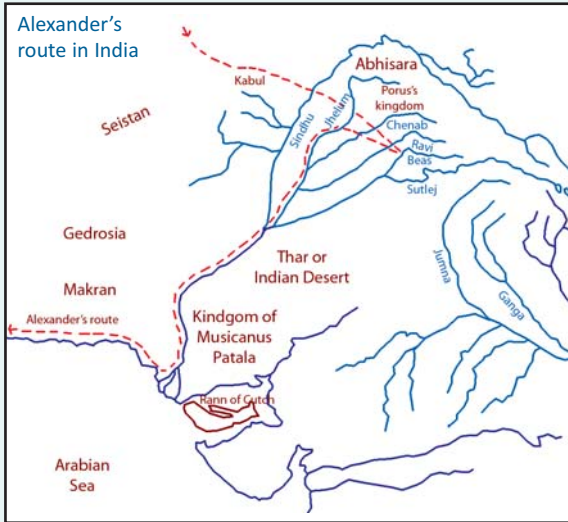
Porus and Alexander now prepared for the Battle of Hydaspes (Jhelum). With the river

Jhelum in flood, the two armies, each camped on opposite banks of the river watched each other for some time. Alexander did not wish to wait for it to abate, since this would provide Porus an opportunity to amass his strength from fresh alliances. Therefore he planned a shrewd strategy. Instead of meeting Porus head on, he moved his army to a point 17 miles upriver. After a night of torrential rain, he crossed the river in boats hidden behind a wooded island, with a small contingent of about 11,000 men and cavalry. Here he met Porus's son, who was guarding the area to prevent Alexander from outflanking the Pauravas. With only 2,000 horsemen and 120 chariots, Porus's son was no match for Alexander, who defeated Porus's army, and slayed his gallant son.

Now it was for Porus to face Alexander. Arrian, the Greek chronicler estimated Porus's army: 30,000 foot soldiers, 4,000 horsemen, 300 chariots and 200 elephants. Porus arranged his army in the following formation. At the front he placed his most dangerous unit – of elephants – like bastions in a wall; infantry at both ends of the line of tuskers; cavalry beyond the infantry to guard the flanks; and chariots in front of the cavalry. Porus positioned himself at the centre, mounted on his huge elephant.

At the sight of Porus's army, Alexander exclaimed, "I see at last a danger that matches my courage, it is at once with wild beasts and men of uncommon mettle that the contest now lies."

However the outcome of the battle was settled by ill-fated weather conditions. Rain and storm helped the Greeks cross the river unseen. Now on the main battlefield, rain rendered the ground muddy. Hence, Porus's heavy chariots became stuck in the muddy sloughs. The archers, with long



and heavy bows, could not easily adjust the arrows on the strings unless they rested their bows on the muddy ground. This hindered their speed, giving the enemy enough time to attack successfully.

The Macedonian army charged with 1,000 mounted archers and the cavalry breached the Indian cavalry and infantry. They started killing the elephants' drivers and the animals panicked, creating further chaos. Soldiers who ran back to the base were slain by fresh Greek soldiers crossing the river under Craterus. Both sides suffered heavy casualties. Porus's two sons and his great generals also died.

Porus himself fought to the end. "As long as he saw any Indians maintaining the contest in a united body, and did not, after the manner of Darius, abandon the field and showed his men the first example of fight," noted Curtius, a Greek writer. When everything was lost, Porus left the field with nine wounds. At this point, an Indian with a message from Alexander galloped after him. Porus recognized him to be the traitor-king Ambhi of Takshashila and hurled his javelin at him. However other envoys also arrived, including his friend Meroes, to whom he surrendered. He was then taken to Alexander.

Arrian described the meeting, "Alexander, informed of his approach, rode out to meet him, accompanied by a small group of his companions. When they met, he reined in his horse,

and looked at his adversary with admiration: he was a magnificent figure of a man, over seven feet high and of great personal beauty; his bearing had lost none of its pride; his air was of one brave man meeting another, of a king in the presence of a king, with whom he had fought honourably for his kingdom."

Alexander asked him how he would like to be treated. Porus proudly replied, "As a king." This so pleased Alexander, that he replied, "For my part your request shall be granted. But is there not something you wish for yourself? Ask it." Porus replied, "When I said 'as a king' everything was contained in that." Such a dignified response pleased Alexander even more, and he granted Porus his sovereignty over his people, alongwith the domains of fifteen republican people with their 5,000 cities and villages without number, between the rivers Beas and Jhelum.

After this hard-fought battle, the Macedonian soldiers became weary and home-sick. A couple of more fierce battles broke their morale and they refused to march further. Alexander appealed to them, but in vain. With little choice, he started his return journey in November 326 BCE by sailing down the Jhelum and Sindhu.

After Alexander's death three years later in Babylon, his successor Perdikkas, gave Porus the eastern border to defend. This was of great strategic importance. In 317 BCE, Eudemus, the commander of the Macedonian forces in Takshashila, assassinated Porus in order to procure his elephants. Then Porus's son, King Malayketu, ascended the throne with the help of Eudemus, but died soon after in the Battle of Gabiene in 317 BCE.

Porus's personality is remarkably similar to that of Maharana Pratapsinh of Chittor. Both possessed extraordinary physiques, remained patriotic to fiercely defend every inch of their kingdoms, earned the admiration of their foreign adversaries, and despite tactical defeat in battle, remained victors in the hearts of the Indian people for all time.

THE GLORY OF GOD



On 12 December 1995, Pramukh Swami Maharaj presided over the 12th Patotsav of Mumbai mandir. In his blessings to the assembly, he described the profound glory of God and how mandirs help one to realize God's greatness...

Mandirs have existed since Vedic times. People have been praying to God and today, in India, we have many mandirs. In pilgrim places, villages and cities, our traditions and dharma are based on our mandirs, shastras and sadhus. Our values have been preserved because of them. So, by going to the mandir and having the darshan of God our mind becomes calm. The mandir is a place which stabilizes the mind.

The mandir is not a place to chat about worldly topics. By offering prayers, singing bhajans and performing worship the mind is pacified. One may do many things in this world, but the shastras reveal that for peace of mind one needs the strength of God; and by offering bhakti the mind becomes peaceful.

Today, people do many things to attain peace of mind. Some believe money brings peace, some believe power brings peace, others believe worldly possessions bring peace, some believe a high status brings peace, some perform austerities for peace of mind, some practice yoga, but none of these brings lasting peace. All these bring worldly rewards, but lasting peace of mind is attained by offering *navdha* bhakti. That is why mandirs are necessary, because God is the only stable entity. (Whatever stability there is in the world is due to God.) Everything in this world is continually changing. Land emerges from water and water submerges lands – Mumbai was once a small island, but today we see how much it has grown. A time may come in the future when it

again goes under water.

Even people change: we are born, pass through childhood, youth, old age and then die. But God is absolutely unchanging. For him, there is no birth, no death. He is not subject to change like others. He has always existed and will continue to exist forever.

The avatars of God manifest on this earth. We read that God takes birth, is raised by parents, passes through youth and old age, and then passes away. We see and hear that God lived for this many years and did this much and so we think he is just like us. Since he, too, passes through childhood, youth and old age, we think that he is also subject to change like us. But, he is not subject to change.

We are born on earth as a result of our material desires and wish for sense pleasures. God has no desire for material or sense pleasures. He manifests to help liberate the world. In fact, he is not born and nor does he pass away; but because we live in this world we impose worldly ways on him.

If one stands before a large mirror, one sees one's reflection in it. There is nothing in the mirror, it is clean. Similarly, God is totally pure. He has no trace of *maya*, the world, prejudice or deceit. He is absolutely pure.

He has none of the (worldly) feelings we have and those that he does show are to inspire bhakti in us. That is why he behaves like us, speaks like us and works like us. If he becomes like us, we get the joy of his darshan, company and blessings and in this way we get liberation.

Arjun requested Shri Krishna to show him his *virat* form. The Lord said there is no use in seeing that. The (human) form standing before you is the one to see. But Arjun insisted, and so the Lord showed him his *virat* form. The form was so gigantic that Arjun was incapable of seeing it. He was frightened and prayed to the

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Lord to assume his human form, so that he may enjoy it.

The Lord manifested in human form and so gave much bliss to the Pandavs and Arjun. God has infinite powers. He has created this *brahmand*. Our mind is not able to understand this creation by God. Water

floats in the air and rain falls. He has not kept a water tank up there. The water evaporates from the oceans to form clouds. Thus salty water is converted to sweet water. Today, if we want to desalinate the sea water, we need so much machinery. It costs a lot and we get only a limited amount.

When it rains, crops ripen and from this much trade is generated. God's powers are such that we cannot comprehend. The oceans he has created have no boundary wall, yet remain within their borders. And even if man builds walls, the oceans can flatten them. Everything runs according to the will of God.

Humans give birth to humans. Animals and birds give birth to their own kinds. There is no change in this. This is also the work of God. From a drop of 'water' an entire human being is formed. We are not able to understand how.

Blood circulates in our bodies, yet we are unable to make even a drop of blood, and to replace it we have to get it from others.

From the food we eat, blood is produced. What type of factory is within? What processes take place within? We do not know, but they all affect us.

Cows eat grass and give milk. Man has also made many attempts to do this, but without success.

Vivekanand Swami went to America. There he was taken to a slaughterhouse. A cow was processed – its skin, flesh, bones and other body parts were separated. (The guide) said, "See how much we have progressed, that all these parts of a cow can be separated." After a little

thought, Vivekanand Swami asked, “If you put all these things back into the process, will a living cow emerge? If so, then your process is fine. Otherwise, you are being destructive. You are destroying God-created life, so that is not your progress – it is your downfall.” So the message is that nobody can match God’s creation.

God gives us all these things in a ready form. We do not know how and when he does this. He has given us this wonderful body. The shastras state that even by giving millions of rupees, the human body cannot be attained. Today, science has progressed and built machines and robots. But they are only able to do according to how we operate or programme them. However, God has created man. He works 24 hours a day for many years, but does not need to be wound with a key. God has already supplied it.

Nobody has been able to create this world like God has. Today, we live in the computer age. We are delighted by how much a computer can do. Enter everything into it and it quickly processes it. But who has made the computer? Man has made it. He has programmed it and done other things to it and so it works. However, man made the computer using the strength within given by God. And God made man. Isn’t this one of the amazing gifts of God? Further, God has made so many other things which are of use to us. He has made the trees, mountains, fruits and flowers, which even if we put in all our efforts we cannot make.

God creates; he sustains and nourishes; and he also destroys. In each universe there are many *brahmands* and in each *brahmand*, Brahma, Vishnu and Shiv carry out all the work according to God’s wish. Brahma creates everything. God has also made arrangements for

“If the Paramatma within our body departs, this body becomes a corpse. Hands, feet, organs may all be present, but they are incapable of doing anything. It is because of Paramatma within that we are able to walk, talk, speak and enjoy each other’s company.”

everyone’s food. For cows, buffaloes and other animals there are grass, fruits and flowers. He even caters for all people, so that by nightfall each person gets food to eat. Animals get their food. Insects also get theirs. Ants get their speck of food. Elephants need many kilos of food at each meal. They, too, get their food. God sustains creation through Vishnu: shelter, food, clothing are all provided by him.

Paramatma inspires us from within. We feel we have done everything. But we are not capable of doing anything – not even moving a dry leaf. We feel that nothing happens without us because of our ego. If Paramatma within our body will depart, this body becomes a corpse. Hands, feet, organs may all be present, but they are incapable of doing anything. It is because of Paramatma within that we are able to walk, talk, speak and enjoy each other’s company.

How great must God’s powers be that he owns all aspects of this *brahmand*? Yet, without us even realizing it, he operates everything. The sun rises and sets; the moon shines. We do not control this. God does. Everything happens according to the routine set by God.

In our state of ignorance we feel “I did this, so I got joy. I made this and I have gained happiness.” But, we are unable to make anything.

This is the glory of God. It is infinite and unchanging. It is never destroyed. The *brahmand* perishes, but God’s work continues forever. God’s work is for the liberation of all *jivas* and if one understands this glory of God, one’s mind becomes fixed on God. Then one experiences the highest bliss. God is the giver of bliss. For peace of mind and joy no worldly things are of any use.



No Such Thing as Instant COFFEE



Falgun: You're late again, Chintanbhai. Looks like your teaching duties are tiring you out.

Chintan: Yes, the kids in the class I teach are really active. I get really tired with their 'I want this!' and 'I want that!' Kids today just want everything, and they want it 'now!'

Falgun: Why blame just the kids – we're all like that. I want entertainment – now! I want to reach office – now! I want money – now! I want my coffee – now!

Chintan: But that doesn't make sense. Everything takes time – you don't throw a mango seed into the ground and expect a mango tree to pop up! It's unreasonable to expect things to be done immediately.

Falgun: Well, I guess we live in a fast age, and one needs things to happen quickly, even instantly. After all, nowadays everything is available in an instant – you do have instant entertainment through TV and internet, instant communication with cellphones, instant popcorn and instant coffee...

Chintan: Ah, but do you realize how much time it takes for all of these to be put together – for instance, how much time do you think it takes for 'instant' coffee to be manufactured?

Falgun: A few seconds, a couple of minutes, maybe?

Chintan: Yes, for you to make it from the powder. But to manufacture the powder takes much more time. If you take into account that

to get coffee someone has to plant the crop, tend to it, wait for the sun and rain, pluck the seeds, dry them, process them, pack them, send them... it's been a good one year's effort that's gone into that pack of 'instant' coffee.

Falgun: But I'm not bothered about all that – for me it's just my time that matters.

Chintan: Yes, I know – when you want a mango, you can just order one from the store and get it within an hour. You're bothered more about your time. But the total time that something takes still has to be considered – a mango tree takes five years to give its first fruit, and then each fruit takes a full season to mature. You get it ready in a box, but it's taken many years to get there. Nothing happens instantly. You – or someone – has to work for it.

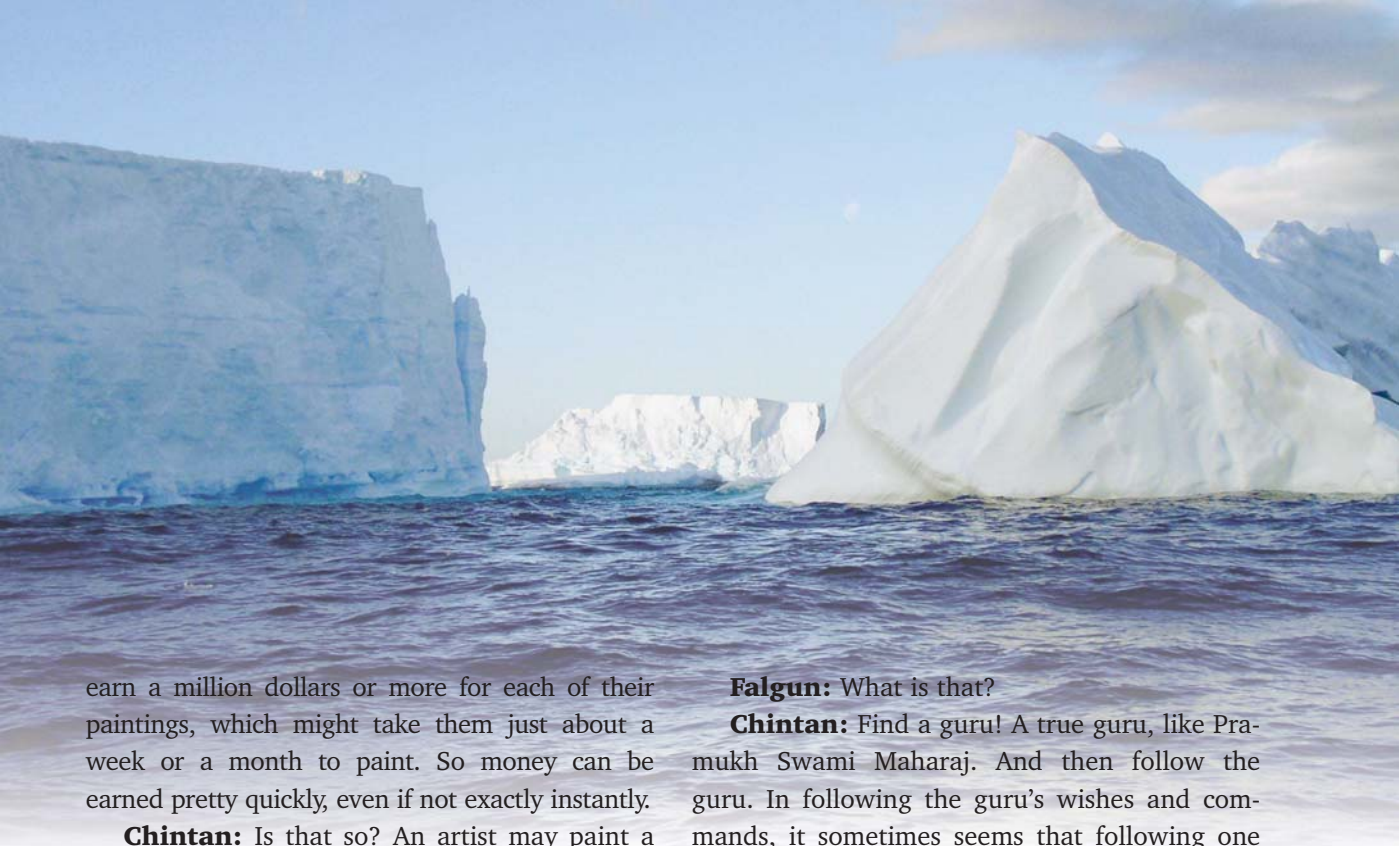
Falgun: OK, maybe fruit cannot be grown instantly. But money? That can be earned instantly!

Chintan: Ha ha! Do you think you can earn money in a short time? How?

Falgun: Look at my doctor – he gets a couple of hundred dollars an hour. How about Yo Yo Ma, the renowned cellist – he could earn half a million dollars just by performing for a couple of hours.

Chintan: I can add to your list – the captain of India's cricket team, Dhoni, recently got six crore rupees (\$1.5 million) for a one-month series – and he had fun playing!

Falgun: And there are some artists who can



earn a million dollars or more for each of their paintings, which might take them just about a week or a month to paint. So money can be earned pretty quickly, even if not exactly instantly.

Chintan: Is that so? An artist may paint a canvas in one month – but it has taken many years of learning, training and practice. So, would you say that the painting took one month, or is the result of many years of effort?

Falgun: Um, well, that depends... but Michael Jordan used to get millions for each NBA series. He earned US \$35 million in 2004.

Chintan: He earned it with his single-minded dedication and devoting his life to the game. Each game is the work of a lifetime. It is not just the couple of hours on court; it's the sum total of all the hours of hard work – the practice – that have gone before. He doesn't play the game just when you're watching – he's at it all day, throughout the year, for many years. It's like an exam, where you prepare for a year, but the exam's over in only a couple of hours.

Falgun: So it's like the instant coffee – you don't see the effort that has gone into getting those results, so you feel that it's an 'instant' earning or an instant solution?

Chintan: Right. And let me add, getting *moksha* is the same! There is no instant *moksha*, no shortcut to liberation. There's only one way for it.

Falgun: What is that?

Chintan: Find a guru! A true guru, like Pramukh Swami Maharaj. And then follow the guru. In following the guru's wishes and commands, it sometimes seems that following one wish makes him happier than following his other wishes. But it's probably the result of all your spiritual pursuits and devotion – not just a few actions.

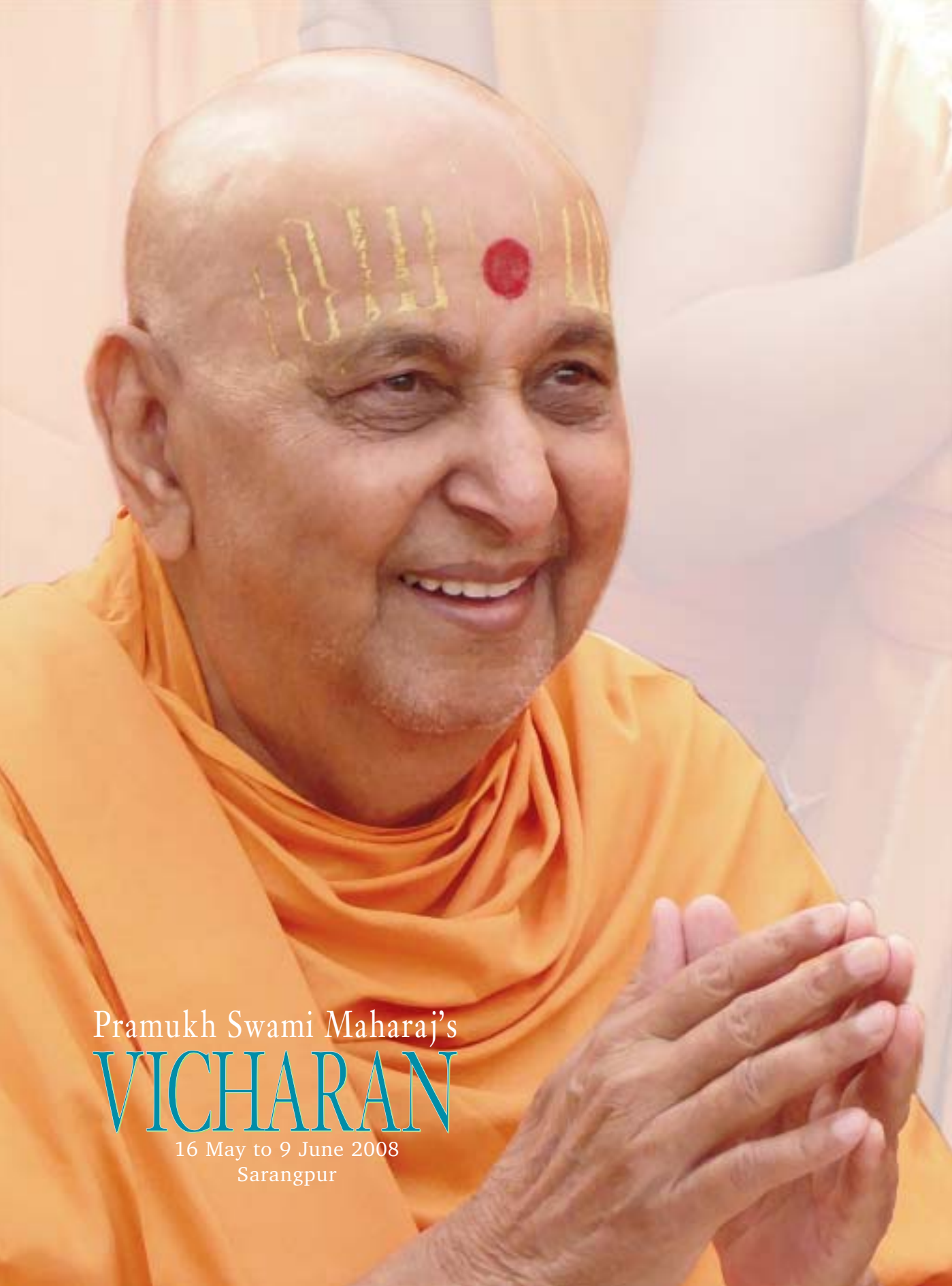
Falgun: But sometimes, Swamishri seems to become pleased with a devotee for some small act of devotion or service, and gives an instant reward. Isn't that unfair on others who might have done much more service or devotion?

Chintan: You might feel that someone gets instant *rajipo* – God's or Swamishri's blessings – for some small effort or contribution. But it's probable that we have not seen the earlier hard work that *satsangi* might have done. We're seeing just the tip, not the full iceberg, of his or her *seva*. Only God or the true Sadhu knows how much each devotee is deserving of *moksha*.

Falgun: So, the only short cut to *moksha* is pleasing God and guru?

Chintan: That's right. The short cut isn't really short, and might not be easy, but it's the only way that can take you there!



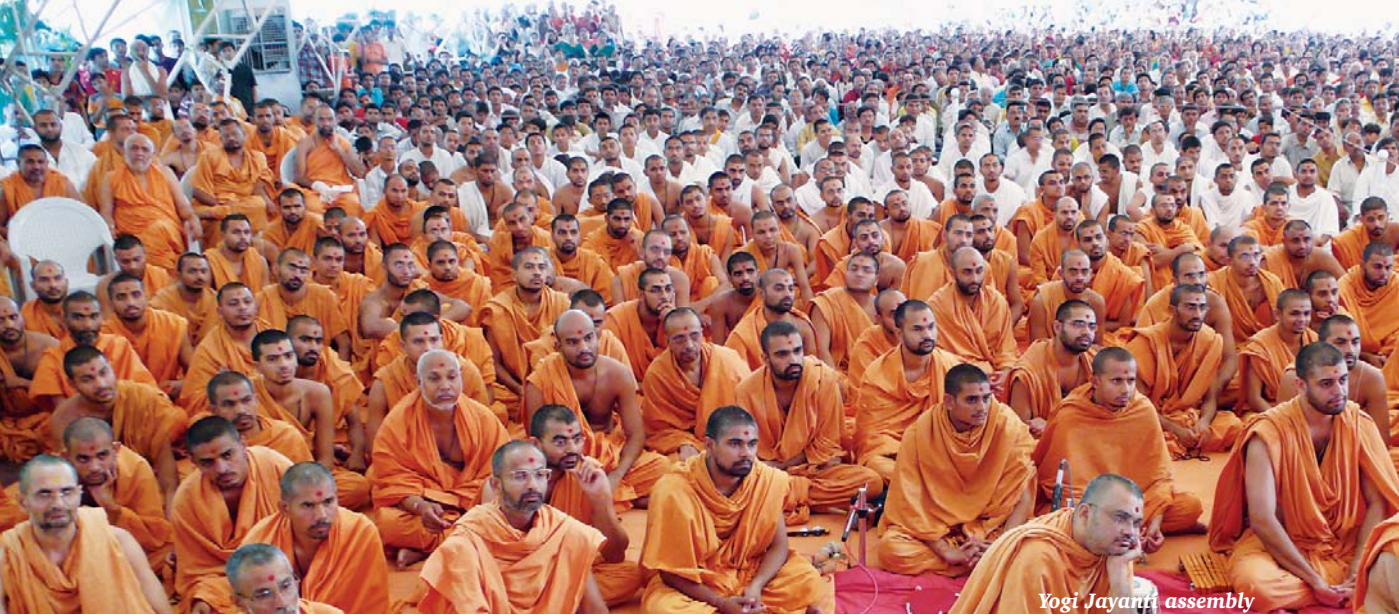


Pramukh Swami Maharaj's

VICHARAN

16 May to 9 June 2008

Sarangpur



Yogi Jayanti assembly

29 May 2008, Sarangpur

Swamishri performed the *murti-pratishtha* rituals of *pujan* and *arti* of *murtis* for the BAPS *hari* mandir in Amroli, Surat. Swamishri consecrated the *murtis* of Akshar-Purushottam Maharaj, Radha-Krishna Dev, Hanumanji, Ganapati and Guru Parampara and blessed Sunilbhai, his brothers and other devotees.

Swamishri also consecrated a Shivling that would replace the old one in the Ganapati's shrine in Sarangpur mandir.

1 June 2008, Sarangpur; Yogi Jayanti

Swamishri was in a happy, divine mood because it was Yogi Jayanti. While Swamishri was doing darshan and *pradakshina* of the Smruti Mandir, the sadhus sang “*Yogi āvo te rang mune shid lagādyo...*” and played *kartal*. After reaching the puja stage Swamishri was given the *kartal* and he devotionally played them before the *murti* of Yogiji Maharaj.

During puja sadhus sang bhajans in praise of Yogiji Maharaj. Thereafter Swamishri blessed the Yogi Jayanti assembly, “Yogiji Maharaj often sang ‘*Hāji bhalā sadhu...*’ He would sway while singing, absorbed in the *murti* of Maharaj. He possessed all divine virtues. He was the living form of God. There were no fallacies in him. Once, while he was travelling to a village he could not get any water to offer Thakorji along

the way. When he came across a river he bathed Thakorji in its cool waters, offered water and prayed for forgiveness. He was forever absorbed in Bhagwan's *murti*, service and bhakti. He never got angry at all. It was not in his dictionary. He was indifferent to honour and insult. He never thought ill of anyone. He always uttered, ‘May God do good of all.’

“We have got this human birth to become *aksharrup* and offer bhakti to Purushottam. And not to eat and enjoy worldly pleasures.”

Swamishri was garlanded by senior sadhus and in conclusion he performed the Yogi Jayanti *arti*.

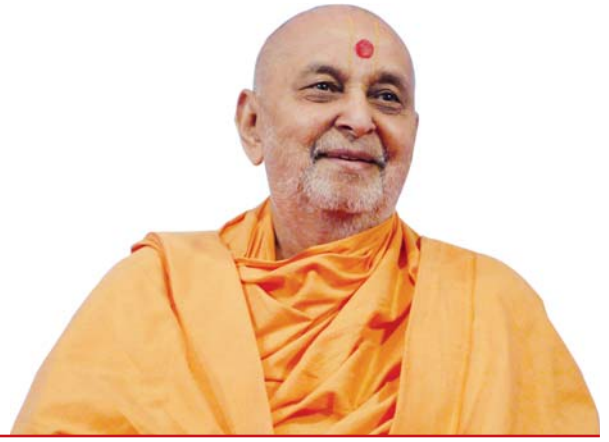
7 June 2008, Sarangpur; 58th Pramukh Varni Din Celebration

Fifty-eight years ago today, Shastriji Maharaj had appointed Narayanswarupdas as the president of the BAPS. Senior sadhus honoured Swamishri with a flower shawl and garlands.

After his morning puja Swamishri inaugurated a book on ‘Swaminarayan Sadhana’ by Sadhu Brahmadarshandas.

9 June 2008, Sarangpur.

Swamishri performed the *murti-pratishtha* rituals of *pujan* and *arti* of *murtis* for the BAPS *hari* mandir in Dhobighat, a suburb of Mahesana. ◆



Living With SWAMISHRI

WAITS FOR DARSHAN

19 May 2008, Tuesday, Sarangpur

Every night when Swamishri retires to bed sadhus come for his darshan. Tonight, Swamishri was a little early. The sadhus were singing the ritual *chesta* in the assembly hall, a little distance away. On seeing only a few sadhus outside Swamishri enquired whether everyone was late. The attendant sadhus replied that everyone was singing the *chesta* and that they would come shortly. So Swamishri sat patiently waiting on his bed. Shortly, when all the sadhus arrived Swamishri folded his palms and bid 'Jai Swaminarayan' to all.

Swamishri waited to fulfil everyone's wish for darshan and furthermore, he, too, wished to have darshan of the sadhus. Such is the glory he has for all.

BHAGWAN GOES TO OTHER UNIVERSES

6 June 2008, Friday, Sarangpur

Viratswarup Swami asked Swamishri, "The *sadhaks* were discussing that when Swamishri sleeps he goes to another universe. What does he do there?"

Swamishri replied, "I do not go. It is Bhagwan who goes and he does the work." Then Swamishri clarified further, "Because (all) have love and attachment they see the form of the Sadhu, but in reality he is Maharaj. It is Maharaj who goes (to other universes). Bhagwan is the all-doer. And he resides in the Sadhu and that same Bhagwan goes to London, Ameri-

ca and everywhere. So it is Maharaj who goes and he is the all-doer."

CARING FOR AN AILING DEVOTEE

In a telephone conversation with Kothari Satsangijivan Swami of Ahmedabad, Swamishri said, "Ravjibhai* is ill. Did you go to meet him and see how he is keeping?"

"Yes. Uptil now I have gone two to three times."

"That's fine. But ask him whether he requires anyone to look after him. If he does, then make the arrangements."

Satsangijivan Swami replied, "I have asked him but he said there was no need. He is a lot better now. He said that since the day Bapa rang me up and conveyed his blessings I'm getting better. Otherwise I was unable to walk."

Swamishri added, "Still ask him daily. And how does he manage his meals?"

Satsangijivan Swami said, "We daily send a lunch box from the mandir."

Swamishri advised, "That's fine but tell the *bhandari* (sadhu who manages the kitchen) to prepare food that he likes and is suitable for him."

Satsangijivan Swami explained, "Ravjibhai has never complained about his food."

Swamishri clarified, "He may not do so, but it is our duty to ask him what he prefers."

Swamishri cares for a dedicated devotee and for all in such detail. ◆

*Ravjibhai Patel is a dedicated devotee who has been offering honorary services to the BAPS for the past twenty years.

DOORS OPEN TORONTO EVENT**BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir, Toronto****24-25 May 2008**

Doors Open Toronto is a yearly citywide celebration where up to 150 Toronto buildings of architectural, historic, cultural and social significance open their doors to the public for one weekend. The programme allows visitors free access to properties that are either not usually open to the public, or would normally charge an entrance fee. Buildings that the broader community might not know are open to the public are also included.

Participating buildings range from heritage landmarks to modern structures and hidden gems and more. The 2008 event was the ninth year the City of Toronto has presented Doors Open. This year's theme was 'Sacred Spaces' and BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir in Toronto was selected to be one of the premier buildings for 2008.

Specially trained BAPS children and youth

tour volunteers were on hand from early in the morning to welcome the visitors and to provide tours of the mandir complex.

Visitors were greeted by the parking volunteers. At the Mandir steps, spot guides briefed them about the Mandir and provided guidelines for a comfortable visit.

In the centre foyer, visitors enjoyed traditional and classical live music. During the on-going multimedia presentation on the creation of the Mandir, visitors also learned about the spiritual heritage and traditions of India. They saw the uniquely designed prayer hall and the intricately carved haveli.

In the Mandir, visitors marvelled at the magnificent hand carved stone and marble domes and pillars. They also learned about the Hindu mode of worship by witnessing the *arti* ritual. Many guests also visited the educational and entertaining Canadian Museum of Cultural Heritage of Indo-Canadians and the Abhishek Mandapam.

After their visit many visitors also participated in a special tree-planting ceremony in honour of 'Green Spaces Day' in Toronto.

BAPS volunteers, young and old alike, worked hand in hand to provide an unforgettable experience for the visitors. More than 16,400 people of all walks of life came to visit the Mandir during the two day event. ◆

Opinions

"All I can say is that if you only have time to visit one place on Doors Open make sure it is this one. It is definitely worth a visit."

- Christopher Hume, *Toronto Star*

"I feel very welcome here...It is not only breathtaking but whether you are of this religion or not, it is really an emotional experience. It is awe-inspiring..."

- Nalini Sharma, *Breakfast Television*

"Intricate patterns and detail, stunning workmanship...both sacred and breathtaking at the same time"

- Mike Wise, *CBC News*

"Thank you for allowing us to visit your beautiful Mandir. I am very impressed with the involvement of the youngsters of your community."

- A visitor

MORALITY AWARENESS CAMPAIGN IN SCHOOLS

7 May 2008, New Delhi



BAPS children after their presentation at a school

More than 30 members from the Bal Mandals of Ahmedabad, Mumbai and Delhi visited the different schools of New Delhi and presented an integrated programme of skits, speeches and multimedia presentations giving guidance to students on the ways of life. The campaign started on 21 April and concluded on 12 May. Over 18,000 students thoroughly enjoyed and benefited from this campaign. Students were instructed in matters such as how to think positively, evils of television and the dangers of addictions. Teachers and parents appreciated the efforts of these children to inspire morality in youngsters. ♦

CHATURMAS NIYAMS

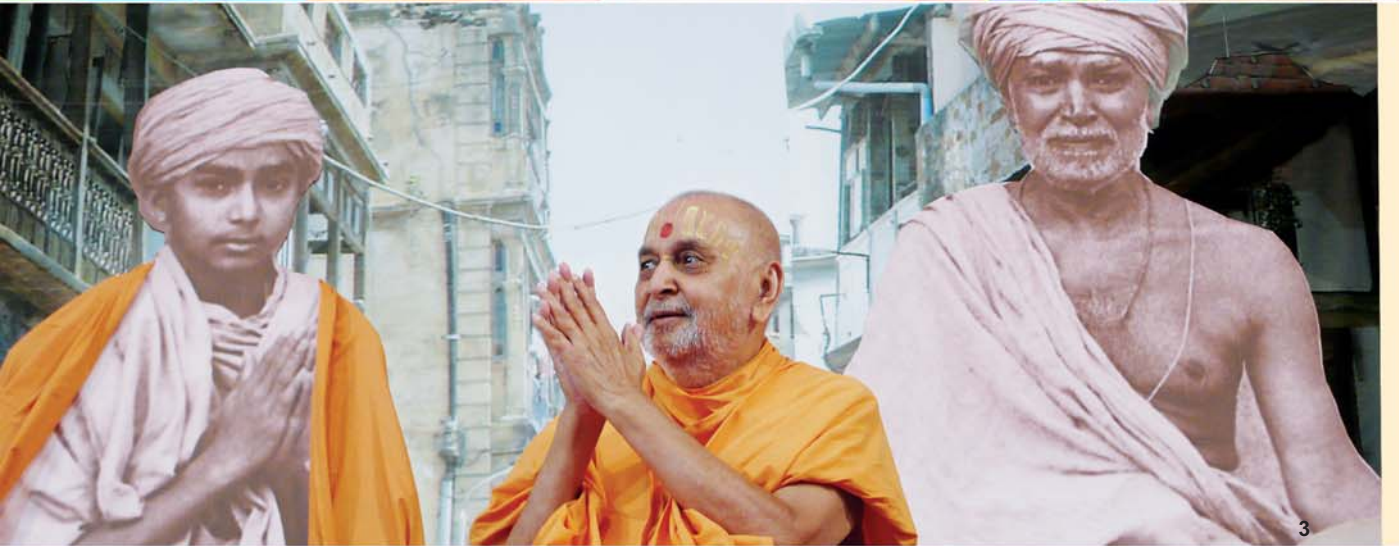
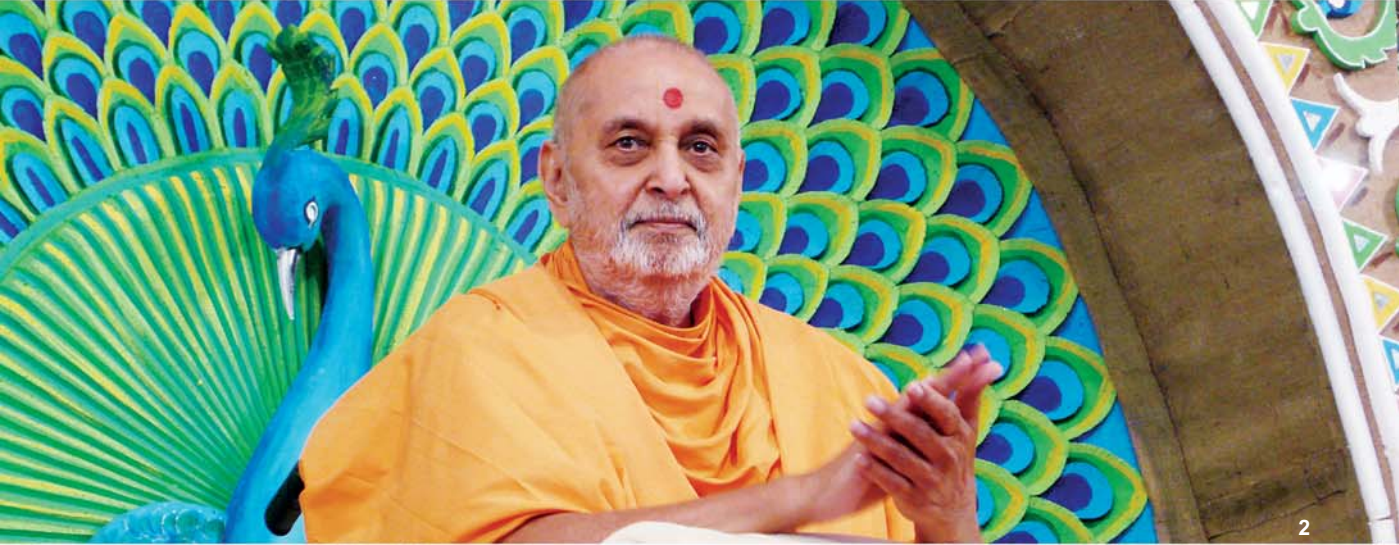
Extra Niyams for Devotees During Chaturmas

14 July to 9 November 2008

As instructed by Bhagwan Swaminarayan in the Shikshapatri and by the wish of guruhari Pramukh Swami Maharaj, devotees should undertake extra spiritual observances through the four holy months of chaturmas. This year chaturmas is from 14 July 2008 (Ashadh *sud* 11) to 9 November 2008 (Kartik *sud* 11). To please Bhagwan Swaminarayan and guruhari Pramukh Swami Maharaj, the following extra observances should be undertaken:

1. One month *dharna-parna*, *chandravan*, etc. or *ek-tana* during the month of Shravan (2 to 30 August 2008).
2. Extra *malas*, *dandvats*, *pradakshinas* as per one's faith.
3. Daily read one extra Vachanamrut and five Swamini Vato.
4. Read parts 1, 2 and 3 of Yogiji Maharaj's biography.
5. Those who do not have a copy of Yogiji Maharaj's biography should read 'Yogicharitam'.
6. In accordance with the wish of senior sadhus, read the book 'Jena Gune Rijhya Girdhari'. Also, those who have facilities should listen to 'Pramukh Swami Maharaj's Amrutvani', Samput 12.
7. Inspire five people to give up addictions, become *satsangis*, attend *satsang sabha* and conduct a daily *ghar sabha*.

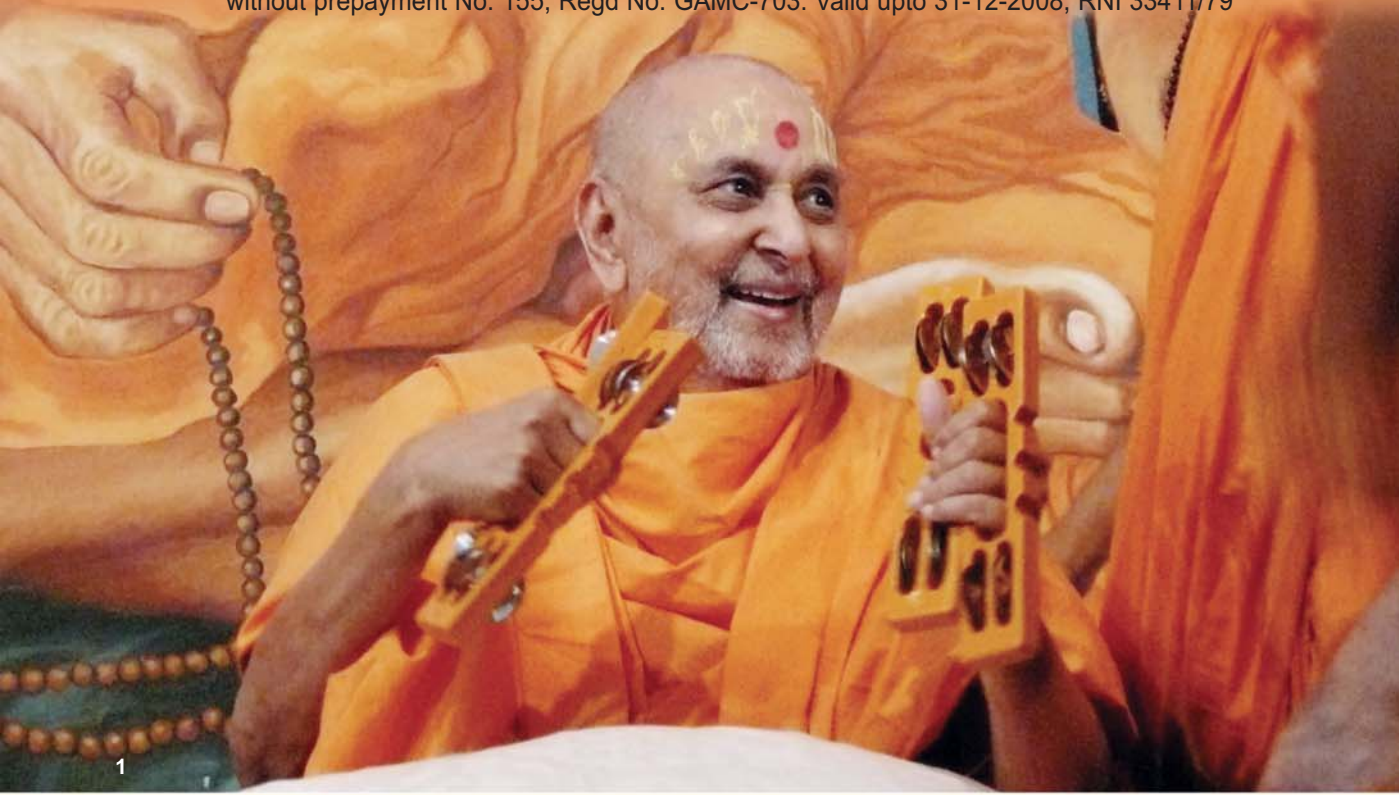
Note: During Chaturmas, devotees should not eat brinjals, white & red radish, sugarcane or *mogri*.



1. Swamishri performs arti of the murtis for BAPS Swaminarayan hari mandir, Amroli, 29-5-2008.

2. Swamishri on stage after morning puja, 16-5-2008.

3. Swamishri bows to the assembly after puja on Pramukh Varni Day. Photo of Amli Vali Pol in background, 7-6-2008.



YOGI JAYANTI, 1 June 2008, Sarangpur

1. Swamishri plays the *kartals* during a bhajan. 2. Swamishri blesses the Yogi Jayanti assembly.

