

Special Niyams for Chaturmaas

(17th July to 12th November 2024)



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Special niyams for Chaturmaas which begins on 17 July 2024

With the sole intention to please Guruhari Sant Bhagwant Sahebji, let us pray for the strength of God and Guruhari to put these special niyams given by Him into practice, with utmost faith and to the best of the ability.

1. According to Shreeji Maharaj's aagna, after taking a bath, one must do one's daily pooja and read five shlokas from the 'Shikshapatri' every day. Then one must pray, 'May we remain within the moral and ethical boundaries of the given codes of conduct, and thus offer our devotion and carry out all of our work in this way.'
2. After worshiping the idol of Shri Thakorji Maharaj, say Jai Shri Swaminarayan touching the feet of our elders in our family and pray for blessings. Take care of the elders of the house every day and serve them in a way that pleases them.
3. According to Brahaswaroop Yogi Bapa's aagna, one must certainly attend the weekly satsang sabha. If there is no sabha in your area, then one must start a sabha and call everyone to attend it. In addition to the weekly satsang sabha, one must do a gharsabha twice in a week.
4. From the teachings of Bhagwan Shri Swaminarayan in the "Shri Vachanamrut", one should read, listen, and contemplate following eleven Vachanamruts one by one to embed these teachings into their daily practice either individually or within their family. One should pray to God and Guruhari, requesting their strength.

Vachanamrut: Gadhadā Pratham Prakaran: 1, 16, 23; Loya Prakaran: 12; Gadhadā Madhya Prakaran: 7, 30, 45, 63; Amdavad Prakaran: 2, 3; Gadhadā Antya Prakaran: 11. Read the ‘Brahmanirzar’ magazine in each weekly satsang sabha during sacred Chaturmaas.

5. Every day, at your convenience, sing or listen to at least three bhajans from the following list, individually or with your family members. Reflect on their significance and teachings, aiming to integrate them into daily life. Pray for the strength of God to uphold these. (1) “Ugati Prabhae Karya Praarambhmaan...” (2) “Shri Ashtottarshat Hari Naam Stotra...” (3) “He Swami Evi Ashish Maagu Chu Tam Paas...” (4) “Sadhu Re Sadho...” (5) “Aakha Divasma Tari Bhakti Mani...”
6. During the sacred Chaturmaas period or at least during the month of Shravanmaas, if it aligns with one’s health and is approved by a doctor, one should fast by eating only one meal a day. Individuals should undertake special niyam on tap, svadhyay, bhajan and seva following instructions and aagna given by one’s Guru.
7. During the Chaturmaas period, all youth (male-female and young Santo) should undertake special niyam of dharna-parna for one month or at least fifteen days and maintain awareness regarding their thoughts, speech and behavior pleasing both the God and the Guruhari.
8. Throughout their lives and especially during the sacred Chaturmaas period, all devotees must adopt this niyam of spiritual austerity to please the God and the Guruhari, maintaining its observance with vigilance and reverence: **“Sadaay**

sauna goon Gava-Sambhalva-Jova, parantu, koina pan Amahima-Abhav-Bhavpher ke Nakaratmak Tika-Tippani thi door rehvu.”

9. All the Satsangis should recite Shri Swaminarayan Mahamantra for half an hour every day during the holy Chaturmas for the rest of their lives with the memory of Shree Thakorji Maharaj and Guruhari. Before reciting the Mahamantra, make the following resolution, to make it a reality, with the memory of Shree Thakorji Maharaj and Guruhari, personally or if possible, the whole family should sit together and chant Shri Swaminarayan Mahamantra for half an hour.

Sankalp: He Prabhu Shree Swaminarayan Bhagwan! He Aksharbrahma Shree Gunatitanand Swamiji! He Prabhuna Sarva Sakaar, Divya Gunatit Swaroopo! He Pragat Guruhari Sant Bhagwant Sahebji! Amara mann ni vrutti akhand Bhagwan na swaroop ma rahe. Amara Guru tatha Pragat Guruhari ni prasannata arthe Guruagna thi ame je seva ke pravrutti ma jodaiye, tema fariyad karya vina, sau sathe samp-suhardbhav ane ekta jaadvi, Prabhunu karya Prabhu ni rite Prabhu ane Guruhari raji thay tevi rite kariye. He Prabhu! He Guruhari! Amaru jivan Guruhari Shastriji Maharaj, Guruhari Yogiji Maharaj tatha apna divya karya na vahakroop ane Shree Akshar-Purushottam Upasana na acharan dwara param divya bani rahe teva aa sankalp sakaar thay te mate aap ni krupa ane bal ni prarthana sathe “Shree Swaminarayan” Mahamantra ni shraddhapurvak ane Guruhari ni smurti sathe dhun kariye chhiye.

ॐ Swaminarayan... Swaminarayan... Swaminarayan...!

II THE VACHANAMRUT II

GADHADA I-1 : Continuously Engaging One's Mind on God

Nijair-vacho'mṛutair-loke'tarpayadyo nijāshritān |
pṛīto nah sarvadā so'stu shrī-harir-dharmanandanah ||

On the night of Māgshar sudi 4, Samvat 1876 [21 November 1819], Shriji Mahārāj had come to the residential hall of the sādhus in Dādā Khāchar's darbār in Gadhadā. He was dressed entirely in white clothes. At that time, an assembly of sādhus as well as devotees from various places had gathered before Him.

Thereupon Shriji Mahārāj asked, "Which is the most difficult of all spiritual endeavors?"

The brahmachāris, sādhus and householders answered according to their own understanding, but none could give a satisfactory reply.

Shriji Mahārāj then said, "Allow Me to answer. There is no spiritual endeavor more difficult than to continuously engage one's mind on the form of God. The scriptures state that there is no greater attainment for a person whose mind's vrutti is constantly focused on the form of God, because the form of God is like a chintāmani. Just as a person who possesses a chintāmani attains whatever he desires, a person whose mind's vrutti is constantly focused on the form of God can instantly see, if he so wishes, the forms of jiva, ishwar, māyā and Brahma. He can also see Vaikunth, Golok, Brahmamahol and the other abodes of God. Therefore, there is no spiritual endeavor more difficult nor is there any greater attainment than to continuously engage one's mind on the form of God."

Thereafter, the devotee Govardhanbhāi Sheth asked Shriji Mahārāj, “What is the nature of God’s māyā?”

Shriji Mahārāj replied, “Māyā is anything that obstructs a devotee of God while meditating on God’s form.”

Then Muktānand Swāmi inquired, “What type of body does a devotee of God attain when he leaves his physical body, which is composed of the five bhuts, and goes to the abode of God?”

Shriji Mahārāj answered, “A devotee who has sought refuge in Dharmakul will attain, by the wish of God, a divine body composed of Brahma. When such devotees leave their body and go to the abode of God, some go by sitting on Garuda, some go by sitting on a chariot and some go by sitting on a celestial vehicle. This is how they reach the abode of God. Those who have mastered yogic samādhi can actually witness these events.”

Thereafter, the devotee Harji Thakkar asked Shriji Mahārāj, “Some have been practicing satsang for quite some time, yet they do not harbor the same profound love for the Satsang fellowship as they do for their own body and relatives. What is the reason for this?”

Shriji Mahārāj explained, “Such a person has not fully realized the greatness of God. Consequently, when the Sant - by whose association God’s greatness is fully realized - talks to him about his swabhāvs, the person is not able to overcome them. Instead, he bears an aversion towards the Sant. It is due to this sin that he does not develop intense love for the Satsang fellowship. After all, sins committed elsewhere are washed away through association with the Sant, but sins committed against the Sant are washed away only by the grace of the Sant himself, not by any other means. The scriptures also state:

Anya-kshetre krutam pāpam teerth-kshetre vinashyati |
Teertha-kshetre krutam pāpam, vajra-lepo bhavishyati ||

“Therefore, if one does not bear an aversion towards the Sant, one develops profound love for the Satsang fellowship.”

Vachanamrut || 1 ||

II THE VACHANAMRUT II

GADHADA I-16 : Wisdom

On Māgshar vadi 4, Samvat 1876 [5 December 1819], Shriji Mahārāj was sitting in Dādā Khāchar’s darbār in Gadhadā. He was dressed entirely in white clothes. At that time, an assembly of sādhus as well as devotees from various places had gathered before Him.

Thereupon Shriji Mahārāj said, “A wise devotee of God who can discern between sat and asat identifies the flaws within himself and thoughtfully eradicates them. He also rejects any apparent flaws he perceives in the Sant or a satsangi and imbibes only their virtues. Moreover, he never perceives any faults whatsoever in God. In addition, he accepts whatever words of advice God and the Sant offer as the highest truth but does not doubt their words in any way. Thus, when the Sant tells him, ‘You are distinct from the mind, body, indriyas and prāns; you are satya; you are the knower of the body, indriyas and prāns, which are all asatya’ - he accepts this to be the truth. He then behaves as the ātmā - distinct from them all - but never follows the instincts of his own mind.

“Furthermore, such a person identifies those objects and evil company that may cause bondage or raise deficiencies in his ekāntik

dharma and shuns them; but he does not become bound by them. Also, he imbibes positive thoughts and avoids negative thoughts. One who behaves in this manner should be known to possess wisdom.”¹

Vachanamrut || 16 ||

|| THE VACHANAMRUT ||

GADHADA I-23 : Emptying a Pot of Water; Remaining in an Elevated Spiritual State

On Posh sudi 5, Samvat 1876 [21 December 1819], Shriji Mahārāj was sitting on a large, decorated cot on the veranda outside the east-facing rooms of Dādā Khāchar’s darbār in Gadhadā. He had tied a white feto around His head and was wearing a white angarkhu and a white survāl. He had also tied a deep orange shelu around His waist. At that time, paramhansas as well as devotees from various places had gathered before Him.

Out of compassion, Shriji Mahārāj then began to speak to the paramhansas, “The Vāsudev Māhātmya scripture is extremely dear to Me because it describes all of the methods of how devotees of God should worship Him.”

Shriji Mahārāj then continued, “There are two types of devotees of God: One has a complete conviction of God, yet worships God identifying himself with the body. The other, however, believes his own self to be chaitanya, transcending the influences of the three states - waking, dream and deep sleep - and the three bodies - sthul, sukshma and kāran. This devotee worships God while beholding God’s form within his own self. As a result, he sees his own

self, which transcends the three states and the three bodies, as being extremely full of divine light. Within that light, he sees the form of God, just as it is in its incarnate form, as being extremely luminous. Such is the elevated spiritual state of the latter devotee.

“As long as one has not attained this elevated spiritual state, one is subject to obstacles, even if one is a devotee of God. Shivji, for example, did not behave in such an elevated spiritual state and was therefore enticed by the beauty of Mohini. Brahmā also did not behave in such a state and thus became infatuated on seeing Saraswati. Nāradji also did not behave in such an elevated spiritual state and consequently harbored a desire to marry. Moreover, because Indra, Chandra and others were not behaving in such a state, their reputations were also blemished due to their mistakes.

“Furthermore, if a person has not developed this elevated spiritual state, he will perceive worldly attributes even in God, even if he himself is a devotee of God. King Parikshit, for example, was not such a devotee, and so he raised doubts about the divinity of Shri Krishna Bhagwān after hearing of the rās episode. On the other hand, because Shukji was such an elevated devotee, he had no doubts whatsoever. Such a devotee firmly realizes, ‘If no flaws can affect me or bind me in any way, how can there possibly be any māyik flaws in God, by whose worship I have become like this?’ Such a devotee firmly realizes this.

“When such a devotee of God focuses his vrutti on the form of God, that vrutti is divided into two. Of these, one vrutti focuses on the form of God, while the other focuses within the worshipper himself. The vrutti that is fixed on God’s form is applied lovingly, whereas the vrutti that is fixed on the worshipper himself is full of

contemplation. This latter vrutti negates all other thoughts and desires - except those of worshipping God - that may arise in the worshipper. It also negates all of the flaws within the worshipper himself. In this manner, the vrutti of such a devotee constantly remains on God.

“A person who at times worships God with a concentrated mind and, at other times, indulges in worldly thoughts does not develop such an elevated spiritual state. Consider, for example, a pot that is filled with water and emptied somewhere. If another pot of water is subsequently emptied at the same place on the following day or the day after that, a pool of water will not collect there. Why? Because the water poured on the first day dries up on that very day, and the water poured on the second day also dries up on that same day. On the other hand, if a trickle of water were to flow continuously, a large pool of water would soon be formed. Therefore, while eating, drinking, walking, engaging in any activity whatsoever - whether it be pure or impure - in fact, at all times, one should constantly keep one’s vrutti on God. While maintaining one’s vrutti constantly on God in this manner, one attains that abiding elevated spiritual state.”

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II THE VACHANAMRUT II

LOYA-12 : The Six Levels of Faith; Savikalp and Nirvikalp Faith

On the night of Māgshar vadi 9, Samvat 1877 [29 December 1820], Swāmi Shri Sahajānandji Mahārāj was sitting in Surā Khāchar’s darbār in Loyā. He was dressed entirely in white clothes and was also wearing

a red, woolen dagli. At that time, an assembly of paramhansas as well as devotees from various places had gathered before Him.

Thereupon Shriji Mahārāj raised a question, “Faith in God is of two types: one is ‘savikalp faith’, and the other is ‘nirvikalp faith’. In each type of faith there are three sub-categories: the highest level, the intermediate level, and the lowest level. Please describe, in turn, the distinguishing characteristics of each of these six categories.”

The paramhansas were unable to answer, so Shriji Mahārāj said, “The characteristics of a person with the lowest level of ‘savikalp faith’ are as follows: As long as God exhibits lust, anger, avarice, egotism, cravings for taste, etc., to the same extent as other humans, the person’s faith in God remains. But if God were to display these swabhāvs more so than others, his faith would be shattered.

“The faith of someone with an intermediate level of ‘savikalp faith’ remains firm even if God exhibits lust, anger, etc., to a double degree than that of humans.

“Finally, one with the highest level of ‘savikalp faith’ would never doubt any action of God, even if God were to behave coarsely like a person of a low caste; or exhibit anger, violence, etc.; or indulge in drinking alcohol, eating meat or adultery. Why? Because he understands God to be the all-doer, the supreme lord, and the experiencer of everything. Such a person realizes that whatever actions take place in the world are the result of God, who is anvy within all beings as their controller. If, then, He were to indulge in some degrading deed, it would not affect Him at all since He Himself is the all-doer. In this manner, one who has realized God as the lord of all is known as a devotee of God with the highest level of ‘savikalp faith’.

“As for a devotee with the lowest level of ‘nirvikalp faith’, no matter what pious or impious deeds he witnesses being performed by God, he understands that in all actions God performs, He is still a non-doer, since He is Brahma. That Brahma is like ākāsh in that everything resides in ākāsh and all actions take place within it. The devotee realizes such qualities of Brahma in God. For example, during the narration of the Rās-panchādhyāyi, King Parikshit asked Shukji, ‘God assumes an avatār to uphold dharma. Why, then, did he associate with the gopis?’ Shukji replied, ‘Shri Krishna is radiant like fire; whatever actions he performs, pious or impious, are burnt to ashes.’ In this manner, one who understands God as Brahma, unaffected by the actions He performs, is said to have the lowest level of ‘nirvikalp faith.’

“One who becomes like the niranna-muktas of Shwetsdwip - who are free from the six physical and emotional sensations - and worships Vāsudev is said to possess an intermediate level of ‘nirvikalp faith’.

“Finally, one possessing the highest level of ‘nirvikalp faith’ realizes that countless millions of brahmānds, each encircled by the eight barriers appear like mere atoms before Akshar. Such is the greatness of Akshar, the abode of Purushottam Nārāyan. One who worships Purushottam realizing oneself to be aksharup can be said to possess the highest level of ‘nirvikalp faith’.”

Thereafter Chaitanyānand Swāmi asked, “Mahārāj, how did such distinctions in faith arise?”

Shriji Mahārāj replied, “When an aspirant initially approaches a guru, several factors cause distinctions in his faith: the auspiciousness and inauspiciousness of place, time, company, initiation, action, mantra, scriptures, etc., with regards to the guru; as well as the intensity of one’s own shraddhā. Therefore, one should always associate with

favorable places, times, etc. Moreover, one should acquire wisdom from a speaker who is serene and faultless.”

Chaitanyānand Swāmi asked further, “If under such circumstances one develops the lowest level of faith, can it later develop into the highest level of faith?”

Shriji Mahārāj replied, “If the listener possesses extreme shraddhā; and if he encounters favorable places, times, etc.; and if he encounters a guru with the highest level of gnān, then the highest level of faith will develop. Otherwise, such faith would develop after many lives.”

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II THE VACHANAMRUT II

GADHADA II-7 : A Poor Man

On the night of Shrāvan sudi 11, Samvat 1878 [9 August 1821], Swāmi Shri Sahajānandji Mahārāj was sitting in front of the mandir of Shri Vāsudev nārāyan in Dādā Khāchar’s darbār in Gadhadā. He was dressed entirely in white clothes. At that time, an assembly of paramhansas as well as devotees from various places had gathered before Him.

Thereupon Muktānand Swāmi asked Shriji Mahārāj, “A devotee of God resolves in his mind, ‘I do not want to retain a single swabhāv which may hinder me in worshipping God,’ and yet, such inappropriate swabhāvs do remain. What is the reason for this?”

Shriji Mahārāj replied, “If a person has a deficiency of vairāgya, then even if he has the shraddhā to eradicate his swabhāvs, still they will not be eradicated. For example, a poor man may wish for lots of sumptuous food and lavish clothes, but how can he acquire them? Similarly, one who lacks vairāgya may wish in his heart to acquire the virtues of a sādhu, but it is very difficult for him to do so.”

Muktānand Swāmi then asked, “If a person does not possess vairāgya, what means should he adopt to eradicate those vicious natures?”

Shriji Mahārāj replied, “If a person lacking vairāgya intensely serves a great Sant and obediently perseveres in his observance of the injunctions of God, then God will look upon him with an eye of compassion and feel, ‘This poor fellow lacks vairāgya, and lust, anger, etc., are harassing him very much. So now, may all those vicious natures be eradicated.’ As a result, they will be eradicated immediately. In comparison, if he were to endeavor in other ways, those swabhāvs may be eradicated, but after a great deal of time and effort - either in this life or in later lives. If such vicious natures are eradicated instantly, then it should be known that they have been eradicated by the grace of God.”

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II THE VACHANAMRUT II

GADHADA II-30 : Not Becoming Bound by Women and Gold

On the second Chaitra sudi 9, Samvat 1879 [19 April 1823], Swāmi Shri Sahajānandji Mahārāj was sitting on a cushion with a cylindrical

pillow on the veranda outside the mandir of Shri Vāsudevānārāyan in Dādā Khāchar’s darbār in Gadhadā. He was wearing a white khes and had covered Himself with a white cotton cloth. He had also tied a black-bordered cloth around His head. In addition to this, He was wearing a garland of white flowers, and a tassel of white flowers was dangling from His pāgh. At that time, an assembly of sādhus as well as devotees from various places had gathered before Him.

Thereupon Shriji Mahārāj said, “The Shrimad Bhāgwat and the other sacred scriptures are truthful, and so reality reflects what is stated in those scriptures. Just see, in the Shrimad Bhāgwat, Kali is said to reside in gold, and for that reason I do not like even the sight of gold. Moreover, just as gold is a source of attachment, so is beauty. After all, when a beautiful woman enters an assembly, even the most composed cannot remain without being drawn towards her beauty. Hence, gold and women are the source of extreme attachment.

“One does not become attached to these two when one realizes the pure chaitanya Brahma - which transcends Prakruti-Purush - as the only satya; and when one realizes that Brahma to be one’s own self; and when one becomes brahmarup and worships Shri Krishna Bhagwān, who is Parabrahma; and when one realizes Prakruti and all of the entities which have evolved from it - all of which are below that Brahma - as being asatya, perishable and worthless; and when one views all māyik names and forms as flawed and develops intense vairāgya towards all those names and forms. Only under these conditions do gold and women not bind a person; otherwise, they most certainly do cause bondage.”

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II THE VACHANAMRUT II

GADHADA II-45 : Expelling the Horde of the Fifty-One Bhuts¹

On Posh vadi 1, Samvat 1880 [17 January 1824], Swāmi Shri Sahajānandji Mahārāj was sitting on the veranda outside the east-facing rooms of Dādā Khāchar's darbār in Gadhadā. He was dressed entirely in white clothes. At that time, an assembly of munis as well as devotees from various places had gathered before Him.

Thereupon Shriji Mahārāj said, "All of you munis, brahmachāris, satsangi householders, pārshads and Ayodhyāwāsis are said to be Mine. So if I was not vigilant in having all of you behave accordingly, and if you were to then behave waywardly, I would not be able to bear this. In actual fact, I do not want even the slightest imperfection to remain in those who are said to be Mine. However, you should also remain very vigilant, because if you allow even a little carelessness, your footing in Satsang will not last.

"Furthermore, as you are devotees of God, I do not wish to leave any form of improper swabhāvs within your hearts. Nor do I wish to allow any trace of any of māyā's three gunas, ten indriyas, ten prāns, four antahkarans, five bhuts, panchvishays, and the deities of the 14 realms to remain. Instead, I wish to make all of you such that you offer bhakti to God realizing your true form to be the ātmā, which is characterized by eternal existence and is free from all of these māyik flaws. In fact, I wish not to allow any influence of māyā to remain within you. If all of your imperfections are not eradicated in this very lifetime, then I will take you to Badrikāshram, where, by performing austerities, all of your worldly desires will be burnt to ashes; or I will take you to Shwetdwip and burn all of your worldly desires to ashes by having you perform austerities with the niranna-muktas. But I do not wish to allow any affection for anything except God to remain. For this reason, then, all of the devotees and munis should remain vigilant."

Having delivered this discourse, Shriji Mahārāj retired to His residence.

Later, in the evening of that same day, Shriji Mahārāj presided over another assembly that He had gathered together. After the ārti was completed, He said, “By performing sātṭvik karmas, one goes to Devlok; by performing rājasik karmas, one goes to Mrutyulok; and by performing tāmasik karmas, one is consigned to the lower realms. But someone may doubt, ‘If by performing rājasik karmas one attains Mrutyulok, then that suggests that all those on Mrutyulok should experience the same joys and miseries.’ So, the answer to this is that although there is only one particular rajogun, countless types of distinctions are created within it due to the influence of differing places, times, etc. Thus, it is not the case that there is one, certain type of rājasik karma. Rather, the type of karma performed varies according to the factors of place, time, company and action.

“Having said this, though, if one performs some karma which displeases the Sant of God or an avatār of God, one will suffer miseries similar to those of Yampuri in this very body here in Mrutyulok. On the other hand, if one performs a karma by which God and His Bhakta are pleased, then, in this very body, one will enjoy bliss similar to that of attaining the highest state of enlightenment.

“Furthermore, if one were to displease God and His Sant, then despite the fact that one had performed such karmas that would have led one to swarg, all those karmas would be destroyed and one would instead be consigned to narak. Conversely, if one were to perform a karma by which God and His Sant are pleased, then even if one were destined to fall into narak, all of one’s impure karmas would be destroyed and one would instead attain the highest state of enlightenment. Therefore, those who are wise should behave only in a manner that would please God and His Bhakta. One should even advise all of one’s relatives, ‘We should behave only in a manner that

would please God and His Sant and in a manner by which they would shower their grace upon us.’

“In fact, Agni must have also pleased God and His Sant, because only then would he have attained his light. Surya, Chandra and all others who possess light, must also have pleased God and His Sant by performing pious karmas, for only then would they have attained such light. In fact, all of those who are happy in Devlok and Mrutyulok must have pleased God and His Sant, because it is by their grace that they are happy.

“Therefore, one who aspires for the good of one’s own ātmā should observe the swadharma prescribed in the sacred scriptures and do only that which pleases God and His Sant.”

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II THE VACHANAMRUT II

GADHADA II-63 : Gaining Strength

On Māgshar vadi 2, Samvat 1881 [8 December 1824], Swāmi Shri Sahajānandji Mahārāj was sitting in His place of residence in Dādā Khāchar’s darbār in Gadhadā. At that time, Bhajanānand Swāmi was reading the Shrimad Bhāgwat before Shriji Mahārāj, and other paramhansas as well as devotees from various places had also gathered before Him in an assembly.

Thereupon Muktānand Swāmi asked, “The thought which rests between the drashtā and the drashya keeps the drashtā and drashya separated. In this, what should be understood as the consciousness of the jiva and what should be understood as the consciousness of the antahkaran?”

Shriji Mahārāj replied, “It seems to Me that if one’s jiva has become extremely powerful, then the vruttis of one’s antahkaran are, in fact, the vruttis of one’s jiva. These vruttis seem to be divided into four categories, according to the four respective functions of the antahkaran. Thus, the consciousness in the indriyas and antahkaran is that of the jiva itself. Therefore, the jiva allows the indriyas and antahkaran to apply themselves wherever it is appropriate to do so and restricts them from doing as they please where it is inappropriate to do so. In fact, if one’s jiva has become very powerful, one would not even have impure dreams. On the other hand, if one’s jiva is lacking in strength, then one should follow the principle of Sāṅkhya and behave only as the ātmā - the drashtā - but one should not associate with one’s indriyas and antahkaran. By behaving as the ātmā in this way, one’s jiva gains great strength.

“There is, however, an even greater method than this to gain strength. If a person has love for God and His Sant, possesses intense shraddhā in serving them, and also engages in the nine types of bhakti, then his jiva will instantly gain strength. Thus, for making the jiva stronger, there is no method comparable to that of serving God and His Bhakta.”

Shriji Mahārāj then said, “I shall now tell you a personal principle of Mine.” So saying, He continued, “When I became ill in the year of 1869, I saw Kailās and Vaikunth, and I also saw Myself riding on Nandishwar and riding on Garud. However, I did not find any pleasure in those powers. Thereafter, I began to behave only as the ātmā, whereupon all disturbances subsided. But then I thought, ‘Much better than behaving as the ātmā is to stay within the fellowship of God and His devotees.’ I then became afraid, ‘What if by behaving as the ātmā, I cannot return to this body again?’ Thus, to stay within the

fellowship of God and His devotees and thus be able to serve them in whichever way possible is indeed the very best spiritual endeavor.”

Thereafter Shriji Mahārāj explained, “Countless types of mental and physical suffering arise during the final moments of a person’s life. But when one has the darshan of God and His Sant, all those miseries are expelled. Such is the greatness of God and His Bhakta. In actual fact, the Bhakta of God is indeed nothing but a form of Brahma. That is why one should never perceive human traits in him.

“In addition, with the devotees of God, one should behave in the same manner as family members do amongst themselves. For example, even if a person scolds his own family members out of affection, or if they happen to scold him, grudges still do not develop in their hearts. With devotees of God, one should behave in the same manner. On the other hand, if a person does develop a grudge with God or His devotees, I do not even like to look at him. In fact, My anger with such a person never subsides. Moreover, those in this world who commit the five grave sins can still be redeemed someday, whereas one who spites devotees of God can never be redeemed.

“Thus, there is no merit greater than that of serving devotees of God, and there is no sin graver than that of spiting devotees of God. Therefore, if one wishes to make one’s jiva powerful, then one should sincerely serve God and His devotees by thought, word and deed.”

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II THE VACHANAMRUT II

AMDAVAD-2 : Performing Puja after Washing and Bathing

On Fāgun sudi 11, Samvat 1882 [20 March 1826], Swāmi Shri Sahajānandji Mahārāj was sitting on a cushion with a cylindrical pillow that had been placed on a wooden cot on a square platform in front of the mandir of Shri Narnārāyan in Amdāvād. He was wearing a white khes and had covered Himself with a white cotton cloth. He had also tied a pink fetu with dangling tassels of roses around His head. Two bunches of roses had been inserted above His ears, and garlands of roses adorned His neck as well. In addition to this, strings of roses had been tied around His arms as well as His wrists. In this manner, His entire body had been decorated with roses. At that time, an assembly of munis as well as devotees from various places had gathered before Him.

Then, addressing all of the paramhansas, Shriji Mahārāj said, “I would like to ask you a question. Suppose there is a devotee of God who behaves above the influence of wakefulness, dream and deep sleep. He has shed the influence of polluted rajogun, tamogun and sattvagun, and acts within pure sattvagun. That is how he worships God. Another devotee behaves under the influence of the three gunas, but nevertheless, he does have intense love for God. Of these two devotees, who is better?”

Thereupon the sādhus replied, “The one with love for God is better.”

Shriji Mahārāj then questioned, “Now consider the following: One person performs puja of God after washing, bathing and becoming pure; and another performs puja in an impure state. Of these two, who is better?”

The munis replied, “The person who performs puja after becoming pure is better.”

Hearing this, Shriji Mahārāj said, “You claim that one who worships God after overcoming māyik influences is inferior and that one who expresses love for God with māyik influences is superior. But how is he superior?”

Since no one could answer the question, Shriji Mahārāj said, “Of the four types of devotees described in the Gitā, Shri Krishna Bhagwān has called only the one possessing gnān his own ātmā. Therefore, one who, having discarded māyik influences, becomes brahmarup and then worships God is the best devotee.

“Why? Because nitya-pralay is the jiva’s deep sleep. Nimitta-pralay is Brahmā’s deep sleep. Prākrut-pralay is that in which all of the entities that had evolved from Prakruti are assimilated back into Prakruti. In ātyantik-pralay, which is gnān-pralay, everything up to and including Prakruti is eclipsed by the light of Brahma. Furthermore, in nitya-pralay, all of the jiva’s adjuncts are absorbed; in nimitta-pralay all of ishwar’s adjuncts are absorbed; and in prākrut-pralay all of Purush’s adjuncts are absorbed. However, when the creation process is initiated, all three are again engulfed by their respective adjuncts.

“But a person who has overcome māyik influences by way of ātyantik-pralay, also called gnān-pralay, is never engulfed by those adjuncts again. If at any time he does assume a physical body, then just like God assumes a body by His own will, he also assumes a body by his own will; he does not assume a body due to kāl, karma or māyā.

“Therefore, the one who worships God after becoming brahmarup is definitely superior. Only one who is a faithful devotee of God and

possesses the characteristics of an ekāntik bhakta can understand this fact.”

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|| THE VACHANAMRUT ||

AMDAVAD-3: The Implanted Branch of a Banyan Tree; Upsham

On Fāgun vadi 2, Samvat 1882 [25 March 1826], Swāmi Shri Sahajānandji Mahārāj was sitting on a large, decorated cot that had been placed on the platform facing the mandir of Shri Narnārāyan in Amdāvād. A pink pāgh, decorated with garlands of roses and chameli flowers, adorned His head. At that time, an assembly of munis as well as devotees from various places had gathered before Him.

Thereupon Shriji Mahārāj asked the entire muni-mandal, “All jivas are dependent upon the panchvishays. Either they physically indulge in them, or if physical association is not possible, they think of them within the antahkaran - but the jiva is unable to remain for even a moment without thinking about or indulging in the panchvishays.

“Now take the example of a banyan tree. Everyone knows that the roots of a banyan tree keep the tree green. Even if all of its roots, except for a few minor roots, are uprooted, the banyan tree will still remain green. In the same way, one may have outwardly renounced the panchvishays, but if thoughts of them are entertained, then those thoughts become a cause of births and deaths. The question, then, is how can these panchvishays not become a cause of births and deaths for a devotee of God?”

Muktānand Swāmi attempted to answer the question but was unable to offer a satisfactory reply.

So Shriji Mahārāj said, “Here, I shall answer the question. When a devotee contemplates upon the form of God while behaving as the ātmā, i.e., independent of the traits of the three bodies, which are engulfed in māyā, then by the power of that contemplation of God, he behaves in a state of upsham. Then, due to the power of that upsham, the panchvishays do not become a cause of births and deaths.

“Consider the following analogy: When rivers like the Mahi or the Sābarmati are in full flow between their two banks, even elephants, horses and trees are all carried away; nothing is able to remain stationary. Similarly, for a person in the upsham state, regardless of how enticing the objects presented before the indriyas are, when he focuses his attention within, they are forgotten, just as those vishays seen in past lives are forgotten in this life. Such behavior of a devotee is known as upsham.

“Such upsham is indeed extremely important. Suppose an ignorant man and woman who are engaged in worldly life and who have intense love for each other before marriage are then married and made to stay awake and walk continuously for three days and nights. Then when they are united, due to their fatigue, they will be incapable of enjoying the pleasure of each other’s beauty or touch. Even if they embrace each other, they would sleep like logs tied together but would not experience any enjoyment from the panchvishays. So if they have no awareness of the vishays due to upsham attained by ignorance during deep sleep, then how can the panchvishays bind the enlightened person who attains the state of upsham by the meditation of God’s form? They certainly do not

bind him. Therefore, the panchvishays are not a cause of births and deaths for one who has attained upsham.”

Thereupon Nityānand Swāmi commented, “The method You have described for attaining the state of upsham, i.e., meditating upon God after ātmā-realization, is very difficult. Please tell us if there is another, easier method apart from that.”

Shriji Mahārāj said, “A devotee of God who, firstly, deeply understands the greatness of God, and secondly, does darshan of God and serves Him and His Bhakta with extremely intense shraddhā attains that upsham state.

“Yet, it appears to Me that an egotistical servant will not be liked by anyone. To have an egotistical servant serve one is like when during a famine, even the rich survive by eating kodrā; having an egotistical servant to serve one is similar to this. The master is not as pleased with an egotistical servant as much as he is with a humble servant. Therefore, he who does whatever pleases the master is a true servant.”

Shuk Muni then asked, “How can one without wisdom and understanding please his master?”

Shriji Mahārāj replied, “Even though Mulji Brahmachāri and Ratanji are not extremely intelligent, they have an intense yearning for liberation. So they do indeed know how to do whatever pleases God.

“Also, currently, even the paramhansas and the sānkhya-yogi and karma-yogi satsangis do not behave as per My liking as do all of the Ayodhyāwāsi men and women. Why? Because the Ayodhyāwāsis have totally dedicated their lives for the Satsang fellowship. Therefore, nobody knows how to please God like the Ayodhyāwāsis.

Moreover, these Ayodhyāwāsis are extremely trusting; a cunning person can cheat them. Therefore, if they wish to commence any activity, they should be allowed to do so only after consulting the senior paramhansas and senior satsangi householders. But they should not be allowed to do that activity based on the word of a single person. In this manner, the renunciants and householder satsangis should look after the Ayodhyāwāsis. This is My order.”

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|| THE VACHANAMRUT ||

GADHADA III-11 : Understanding like that of Sitāji

On Āshādh sudi 3, Samvat 1884 [27 June 1827], Swāmi Shri Sahajānandji Mahārāj was sitting on a large, decorated cot on the veranda outside the east-facing rooms of Dādā Khāchar’s darbār in Gadhadā. He was dressed entirely in white clothes. At that time, an assembly of munis as well as devotees from various places had gathered before Him.

Thereupon Shriji Mahārāj said, “I wish to ask the following question: Is there one means to overcome both the indriyas and the mind? Or is the means to overcome the indriyas different from the means to overcome the mind? That is the question.”

The senior paramhansas answered according to their understanding, but Shriji Mahārāj’s question was not answered in a satisfactory manner.

So Shriji Mahārāj said Himself, “The answer is that the indriyas are overcome by the four means of vairāgya, swadharma, austerities

and niyams. The mind is overcome by the nine types of bhakti coupled with the knowledge of God's greatness."

Muktānand Swāmi then asked, "How can the type of bliss that a devotee of God enjoys in nirvikalp samādhi be enjoyed even without samādhi?"

Shriji Mahārāj replied, "If the devotee has profound attachment and deep love for God and His Bhakta, just like the attachment and love that he has for his own body, then the type of bliss that prevails in nirvikalp samādhi will continue to remain forever, even without that samādhi. That is the only answer."

Thereafter Shriji Mahārāj asked the paramhansas, "What type of understanding must a devotee have, whereby he will in no way recede from the path of liberation regardless of the adverse circumstances he may encounter, and whereby he develops such staunchness that he will not be affected by any obstacles whatsoever?"

The senior sādhus answered according to their understanding, but Shriji Mahārāj's question was not answered satisfactorily.

So Shriji Mahārāj said, "The answer to this is as follows: If a person is profoundly attached to God and His Bhakta, just as he is attached to his body, then he will not be affected by any obstacles. In fact, regardless of the extent of adverse circumstances he may encounter, he will not turn away from God and His Bhakta."

Then Shriji Mahārāj addressed the paramhansas again. He said, "When Jānkiji was exiled to the forest by Rāmchandraji, she began to lament. Lakshmanji was very sorrowful at that time as well. But then Sitāji explained to Lakshmanji, 'I am not crying because of my own

grief; I am crying for the grief of Rāmchandraji. Because Raghunāthji is extremely compassionate, and since he has exiled me to the forest out of fear of public accusation, he must be thinking, “I have sent Sitā to the forest without any fault of her own.” Knowing this and being compassionate, he must be experiencing severe grief in his mind. So please tell Rāmchandraji, “Sitā is not distressed; she will go to Vālmiki Rishi’s hermitage and happily engage in your worship there. So do not feel any remorse on account of Sitā’s distress.” Sitaji sent this message with Lakshmanji, but in no way did she perceive faults in Rāmchandraji.

“Now, one devotee is such that he does not perceive faults in God and His Bhakta, but his vairāgya and dharma are somewhat moderate. On the other hand, another devotee has intense vairagya and dharma, but does not have an understanding like that of Sitā. Of these two types of devotees, which type should one lovingly keep the company of?”

Chaitanyānand Swāmi replied, “One should only keep the company - with intense love - of one who has an understanding like Jānkiji, even though that person’s dharma and vairāgya may be moderate. One should not keep the company of one who, despite having intense vairāgya and dharma, perceives faults in God and His Bhakta.”

Hearing this, Shriji Mahārāj said, “The answer is correct.”

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ūgatī prabhāe kārya prārambhamān...

ūgatī prabhāe kārya prārambhamān... Sahāya karo evun ichchhun chhun,
Sarva kāryamān ek j hetu, rājī thāye... Rājī thāye ek j tun...

Brahmaniantrit brahmasamājamān... Saumān tārūn darshan karun... (2)
Snehasudhābharī mūrtinān sukhanī... Mastīthī... Mastīthī hun masta rahun...
Swāminārāyaṇa... Swāminārāyaṇa... Svāminārāyaṇ vinavun hun... (2)

Ghaṭaghaṭamān prasange prasange... Ābāl vṛuddha sahu muktomān... (2)
Tun j kare chhe... Tun j prere chhe, evun mānī... Evun mānī suḥṛud banun...
Tārī divya mūratinī smṛutimān, mähātmyathī sabhar rahun...
Divyajīvanā divya ānandamān, masta banī...(2) tārā guṇ gāun...
Swāminārāyaṇa... Swāminārāyaṇa... Svāminārāyaṇ vinavun hun... (2)

Nimitta banī kārya karī... Pāchhā mūrtirūpī māḷāmān... (2)
Māna-apamāna, jasha-apajashamān sahaj hun... Sahaj sara| smit karun...
Akhaṇḍa antaramān rahī, amārī rakṣhā karaje tun...(2)
Nirdoṣhabuddhinā amṛutapānane, jīvanamān... Jīvanamān pachāvun hun...
Swāminārāyaṇa... Swāminārāyaṇa... Svāminārāyaṇ vinavun hun... (2)

Ūgatī prabhāe kārya prāranbhamān... Sahāya karo evun ichchhuan chhun
Sarva kāryamān ek j hetu, rājī thāye ek j tun...

Swāminārāyaṇa... Swāminārāyaṇa... Swāminārāyaṇ vinavun hun... (2)

Shrī aṣṭottarashat harinām stotra

Swāminārāyaṇa... Swāminārāyaṇa...

Swāminārāyaṇa... Swāminārāyaṇa...

- * he bhakto bhagavānanā sādhu-santa sujāṇa
shrī harināmarāṭaṇ kare saghaḷe sarva suvāṇa
shrī aṣṭottarashat harinām samarati guruhari sanga
ādhi vyādhi upādhi ṭaḷe sukh kare satsanga
shrī harikṛṣṇa shrī hari shrī kṛṣṇa ghanashyāma
bhaktinandan dharmakishor varṇī sundarashyāma
nīlakanṭha sahaḷānandajī swāminārāyaṇ nāma
ṣhaḍ akṣharano samarath ā mantra mahā baḷavāna
swāminārāyaṇa... Swāminārāyaṇa... (2)

- * nārāyaṇ mahārāj prabhu naṭanāgar sukhadhāma
rasiyārāj shrī mohanajī chhogalāndhārī shyāma
shrī puruṣhottam rājīvaneṇ dharmakunvar munirāya
sukhasāgar bhavabhayahārī naṭavar jādavarāya
dharmanandan vanamāḷī shrī swāmī sukharāshi
jagādhār shrī giradhārī morārī avināshi
nāth shrī laherī rangalaherī dev he shyāmasujāṇa
vhālīḍā he shrī bhagavān harivar jīvanaprāṇa
swāminārāyaṇa... Swāminārāyaṇa... (2)

* shyāmasanehī sundaravar rasiyājī gopāla
dayāsindhu he alabelā māvā dīnadayāḷa
chhogānvāḷā chhel vibhu vimalamūrti he lāla
shāmaḷā he kesariyā piyā chhelā bhaktibāḷa
rasik kṛupānidhi shrī baḷavanta govinda antaryāmī
karuṇānidhān rājendra māvajī akṣharadhāmī
bhaktavatsal sānvariya prītamajī chhogāḷā
praṇatapāḷ he samarathamūrti manavasiyā laṭakāḷā
swāminārāyaṇa... Swāminārāyaṇa... (2)

* kāmīl kābil sarvoparī prāṇādhar he pyārā
laherakhaḍān laherī koḍīlā ṭhākorajī he nyārā
shrī rājāadhirāj he vishrvapāḷ he adhamoddhāraṇa
shyāmamanohar vishrvavīhārī vḥālam patītapāvana
shrī bānvariya rangabhīnā salūṇā he sukhasāgara
sukhadāyak he pūraṇakām mohanavar māṇīgara
chaturasujāṇ he kāmaṇagār khāntīlā marmāḷā
bahunāmī mam hradaaya vaso shrījī sadā kṛupāḷā
swāminārāyaṇa... Swāminārāyaṇa... (2)

He... Swāmī ! Evī āshiṣh māgun chhun tam pāsa...

He... Swāmī ! Evī āshiṣh māgun chhun tam pāsa,

buddhi evī āpo sanbandhī, oḷakhun tuj khāsa... (2)

anna, jaḷa, vastra, faḷa, fūla, dūdh je āpe,

ā sādhu bahu sārā em guṇ je gāye... (2)

eno thashe nishrchaya akṣharadhāmamān nivāsa...

Buddhi evī āpo... He swāmī.

mastakanā mukuṭ jevo tāro sanbandhī,

hun mānun evī manamān ichchhā to men kīdhī, (2) evī...

e ichchhā pūrṇa kar evī rākhun sadā āsha...

Buddhi evī āpo... He swāmī.

ko' sāth n āntī paḍe enun dhyān rākhaje,

paṇ jāṇapaṇānī āvī āntī pāḍī deje... (2)

tyāre thāi jāshe mane haiyāmān kevī hāsha...

Buddhi evī āpo... He swāmī.

Sādhu re sādho nirbheḷ bhekha...

Sādhu re sādho nirbheḷ bhekḥ ne, bhagavā hṛudayanī sādhu sahatā... (2)

Ārat paḷa-paḷ vaheṭī zankhe, (2) sāheb kevaḷ tāri prasannatā... (2)

Sādhu re sādho...

Nirmaḷ man ne vāṇī parā ho, nayanomān karuṇānī vaheṭī nirjharā ho... (2)

Vartan saraḷ nirdanbha jīvan ho, shrvāsa-uchchhvāse hariraṭaṇā ho... (2)

Nishrchal himālaya sā nishrchaye sādhu, (2) pāvan vaheṭī gangāsam sādhu... (2)

sādhu re sādho...

Sukha-du:khamān māna-apamānamān, dhīraj dharī sādhu dhāre samatā... (2)

Āshā apekṣhā ne dvandvothī par ho, alamasta ānanda mūrtinī mauj ho... (2)

Chalatā bhalā rahe nirbandha sādhu, (2) kevaḷ prabhunā āshare sādhu... (2)

sādhu re sādho...

Akṣhararūp jāṇī svayanne, dāsavabhāve savaḷun vichāre... (2)

Gamatun prabhunun ne gamatān prabhunān, nirdoṣh jāṇe suhṛud sahanān... (2)

Sevāmān tatpar mahimāe sādhu, (2) bhaktonī bhaktimān rasabas sādhu... (2)

sādhu re sādho...

Svapna suṣhupti ne jāgrat palamān, mananī vṛutti sheje prabhumān... (2)

Guruharinī bhaktirūpī ho, pagalun tyāre to j bharāo... (2)

Yoginā jashanun gīt re sādhu, (2) sāhebajīnā anupam sādhu... (2)

sādhu re sādho...

Ākhā divasamān tārī bhakti mānī...

Ākhā divasamān tārī bhakti mānī... Je karyun vichāryun te le svīkārī...

Ākhā divasa.

Man karma vachane rājī tane, māre karavo chhe evun hatun mane... (2)

Man dhāryun toya kānī thayun (hoya)... (2) to kṣhamā karaje prabhu mane...

Ākhā divasa.

Jāṇe ajāṇe vafādārī tārī, chūkī du:khī thayā amahimāmān bhaī...(2)

Haṭha, māna, irṣhyāthī karyā... (2) hoyā oshiyāḷā to deḷo māfi...(2)

Ākhā divasa.

Jāṇapaṇāno daravāḷo chhoḍī, swāmī ! Abhāva, vikṣhepanā mārgē chaḍī...(2)

Tane bhūlī bījun chintavan thayun hoyā... (2) to kṣhamā māgun chhun pāye paḍī...(2)

Ākhā divasa.

Anuvṛutti jāṇī tane gamashe karī, je karyun temān n hoyā bhakti tārī...(2)

Karavānun hoyā te nā karyun to... (2) farī suzāḍo ā prāṇapati... (2)

Ākhā divasa.

Monghāmūlī mūrṭi ten sastī kīdhī, rūḍān prārabdha māṭe ten sevā dīdhī (2)

Jāgrata, suṣhupti, svapnamānhī....(2) tārā thaī rahīe o dayānidhi... (2)

Ākhā divasa.

Sankalp

All the Satsangis should recite Shri Swaminarayan Mahamantra for half an hour every day during the holy Chaturmas for the rest of their lives with the memory of Shree Thakorji Maharaj and Guruhari. Before reciting the Mahamantra, make the following resolution, to make it a reality, with the memory of Shree Thakorji Maharaj and Guruhari, personally or if possible, the whole family should sit together and chant Shri Swaminarayan Mahamantra for half an hour.

Sankalp: He Prabhu Shree Swaminarayan Bhagwan! He Aksharbrahma Shree Gunatitanand Swamiji! He Prabhuna Sarva Sakaar, Divya Gunatit Swaroopo! He Pragat Guruhari Sant Bhagwant Sahebji! Amara mann ni vrutti akhand Bhagwan na swaroop ma rahe. Amara Guru tatha Pragat Guruhari ni prasannata arthe Guruagna thi ame je seva ke pravrutti ma jodaiye, tema fariyad karya vina, sau sathe samp-suhardbhav ane ekta jaadvi, Prabhunu karya Prabhu ni rite Prabhu ane Guruhari raji thay tevi rite kariye. He Prabhu! He Guruhari! Amaru jivan Guruhari Shastriji Maharaj, Guruhari Yogiji Maharaj tatha apna divya karya na vahakroop ane Shree Akshar-Purushottam Upasana na acharan dwara param divya bani rahe teva aa sankalp sakaar thay te mate aap ni krupa ane bal ni prarthana sathe “Shree Swaminarayan” Mahamantra ni shraddhapurvak ane Guruhari ni smurti sathe dhun kariye chhiye.

ॐ Swaminarayan... Swaminarayan... Swaminarayan...!