

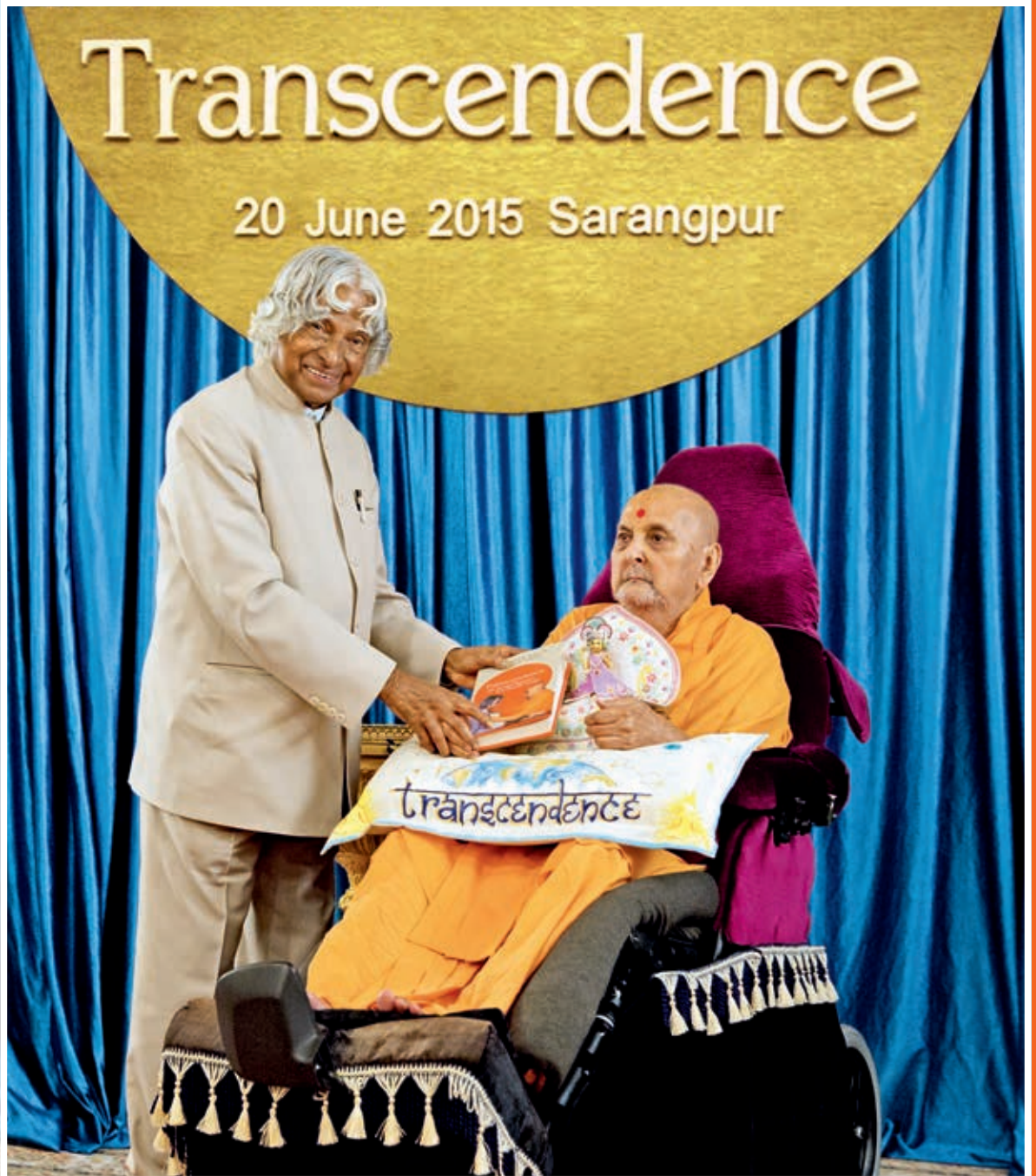
# SWAMINARAYAN BLISS

July-August 2015

Annual Subscription ₹ 80/-

## Transcendence

20 June 2015 Sarangpur



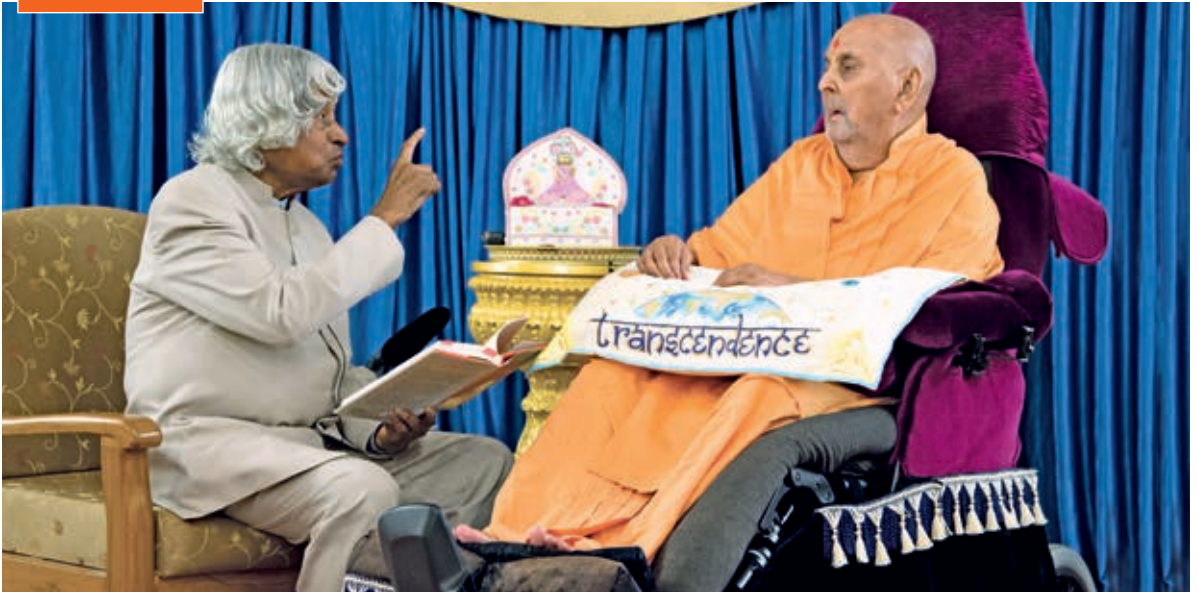
Dr Kalam Presents His Book 'Transcendence' to Pramukh Swami Maharaj  
20 June 2015, Sarangpur



**DR KALAM'S VISIT TO SARANGPUR**  
**20 June 2015**

**Top:** Dr Kalam greets Swamishri prior to presenting his book.  
**Bottom:** Dr Kalam addresses (inset) sadhus and several thousand BAPS youths from throughout Gujarat in the Yagnapurush Sabhagruh.





Dr Abdul Kalam reads an extract from his book 'Transcendence' to Pramukh Swami Maharaj in Sarangpur, 20 June 2015

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## SWAMINARAYAN BLISS

July-August 2015 Vol. 38 No. 4



Akshar-Purushottam Maharaj



In April 1978, Pramukh Swami Maharaj inspired and inaugurated the first issue of *Swaminarayan Bliss* in Ahmedabad, Gujarat. The bi-monthly magazine serves to enlighten BAPS youths, seniors and well-wishers about the glory of Bhagwan Swaminarayan, the Akshar-Purushottam philosophy and the Gunatit guru *parampara*. It also seeks to inspire the universal values and traditions of Hinduism to pursue a happy and peaceful life by serving God and humankind.

**Founder:** HDH Pramukh Swami Maharaj  
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# FIRST WORD

Johannes Gutenberg (c. 1398-1468) was a German blacksmith who invented the first printing press. His epoch-making invention ushered in the printing revolution, which is regarded as one of the most important developments in the Renaissance period. Till the advent of the printing press the dissemination of knowledge had been limited to verbal means and handwritten scrolls.

The interest in books and dailies grew rapidly as writers and publishers mushroomed, catering to the imagination, and thirst for knowledge and information among the masses. But today, there is a burgeoning inclination that reading books has little importance and appeal in life compared to other exciting and lucrative activities. Books are considered to be lifeless and reserved for desks, cupboards, school and university libraries and monasteries. Furthermore, social media and other means of communication have further diluted interest in reading.

But there is evidence, all through human history, of the impact of books on society, for better and for worse. For instance, Hitler's *Mein Kampf* (My Struggle) became the political bible for the German people, expounding that the German race was superior and the strongest in the world, and that it should rule over the the inferior races of the earth. It thus sowed hatred for and triggered war against the Jews and others.

Albert Einstein's paper on relativity in 1905 mentioned the formula  $E=mc^2$ , which led to the invention and deployment of nuclear bombs in 1945. Later, the formula also had its positive applications in harnessing nuclear power for producing energy.

Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, a story about slavery in 18th century America, led to the American Civil War and the subsequent abolishment of slavery.

Henry David Thoreau's work, *Civil Disobedience*, inspired Mohandas K. Gandhi to successfully introduce *satyagrah*, non-cooperation and ahimsa for India's independence from British rule.

The Bhagavad Gita by Veda Vyas has brought solace to millions of restless and depressed souls. Shri Krishna's message of karma yoga, *raj* yoga and bhakti yoga to Arjun forever provides a panacea to a wide range of human issues. Similarly, the Vachanamrut, the spiritual discourses of Bhagwan Swaminarayan, provides inspiration, guidance and solutions to countless spiritual aspirants. It contains the essence of the Upanishads, Gita and Purans, and other principles propagated by Bhagwan Swaminarayan.

Many other books in the fields of philosophy, religion, literature and education have also influenced and shaped the lives of people all over the world.

Dr APJ Abdul Kalam's recent book, *Transcendence*, describes his spiritual experiences with Pramukh Swami Maharaj. The book, published by HarperCollins India, also includes the social and moral contributions of BAPS to society, the co-relation of science and spirituality and creative leadership. The book also discusses higher values, hard work, progress, peace and happiness, which are the urgent needs of humanity today.

This issue of *Swaminarayan Bliss* deals with Dr Kalam's presentation of his book to Pramukh Swami Maharaj and his address to youths in Sarangpur, a brief overview of the contents of the book and the grand celebration in Ahmedabad to commemorate the book's public release on 28 June 2015. ◆





## Vaidyaraj from Vadodara

*While Shri Hari was in Gadhada a royal vaidya from Vadodara arrived. He started narrating about how he had come to the satsang-fold for his blessings...*

In Gadhada Shriji Maharaj expounded about the true understanding of his form and the glory of his ideal Sadhu. The audience of devotees had faith mainly in the non-manifest form of God or his ideal Sadhu, and so they found it difficult to grasp the glory of Maharaj as God and Aksharbrahman Gunatitanand Swami as his ideal devotee. For that, the mind (*man*) and intellect (*buddhi*) thwart one from realizing them. The mind reasons and questions in umpteen ways, whereas the intellect accepts only that which it has decided upon. That was why Bhagwan Shri Krishna exhorted Arjun, “*Sarvadharmān parityajya māmekam sharanam vraja*” – meaning “You give up the dharma of your mind and take refuge in me alone”. Thus, such unwillingness to understand and do is a longstanding hurdle for aspirants and others. Ironically, one has innate faith in the non-manifest form of God, but not so in his manifest form. The principle reason being their manifestation in human form, because when Bhagwan and his Sadhu show human traits the aspirant begins to doubt and question their divinity. But the liberation of one’s soul lies in realizing the knowledge of and association with the manifest form of God.

Shri Hari celebrated the Fuldol festival. He

showered the colours sanctified before the *murti* of Vasudev Narayan on all, and played *ras* with the devotees and sadhus. Shri Hari soaked Jiva Khachar, Mulu Khachar, Dada Khachar and other devotees with coloured water and pleased them. In conclusion, everyone proceeded to the river Ghela for a bath. Thereafter Maharaj and his disciples headed towards the *darbar* of Jiva Khachar, singing kirtans along the way. Here, Jiva Khachar and his son, Mulu Khachar, performed *pujan* of Shri Hari and offered him a garland of sugar crystals. Subsequently, Maharaj went to the *darbar* of Dada Khachar.

Dada Khachar and his relatives performed *pujan* of Shri Hari and also offered him garlands made of sugar crystals. Then they offered dates and popcorn to Maharaj. Amariba and Amulaba, the daughters of Jiva Khachar, had also accompanied Maharaj to Dada’s *darbar*. They, too, along with Jivuba, Laduba and others performed *pujan* of Maharaj. Both the sisters, Amariba and Amulaba, had renounced their husbands to dedicate themselves to performing devotion to Maharaj. They were very close to both Jivuba and Laduba.

The following day Dada Khachar sponsored lunch for all. All the female members of Dada Khachar’s family helped in cooking the meals. Everyone wished to host Maharaj in Gadhpur for an indefinite time. Hence, each day, one devotee after another sponsored lunch. Shri Hari accepted their devotion.

## ROYAL VAIDYA OF VADODARA COMES TO GADHPUR

Shriji Maharaj decided to celebrate the Hari Jayanti festival in Gadhpur. One day the royal *vaidya* of Vadodara, Ramchandra, arrived. Since he had never set foot in this region no one knew him or had heard of him before. However, he had an impressive personality. He came to Maharaj, who welcomed him warmly, “Please come. Where have you arrived from in this scorching heat?”

The *vaidyarak* became enamoured of Maharaj’s face, because he felt him to be transcendental. He instantly realized that Maharaj was not like other humans. He humbly introduced himself, “Maharaj, I come from Vadodara. I am the royal *vaidya* of King Gaekwad.” Before he could say anything more Maharaj asked, “Did Gopalanand Swami send you here?”

“No Maharaj. I am unaware of your new *sampradaya*. A few years ago a scriptural debate had taken place in Vadodara, and there had been a lot of fanfare. But since I was disinclined towards any new *sampradaya* by virtue of my faith in Bhagwan Ranchhodrai of Dakor I did not attend or acquaint myself about it. Furthermore, because of my association with the Diwan of Vadodara I had developed an aversion for your *sampradaya*.”

“Then why have you come here all the way from Vadodara in this heat?” asked Maharaj.

The royal *vaidya* could not look straight into Maharaj’s eyes. He looked down and replied abashedly, “My Lord, I regularly visit Dakor for Ranchhodrai’s darshan on every full moon day. This has been my routine for years. I also perform *seva* there according to my means. But during one visit to Dakor I witnessed an immoral act in the mandir premises. Ever since, my mind has remained distraught. I started repenting, thinking that years have flitted by in devotion and my life will soon come to an end, but if I fail to achieve *moksha* in this life then it will be futile.”

Shri Hari avidly listened to his words and pacified him, “One who is genuinely inclined

spiritually can aspire for *moksha* and make one’s birth worthwhile.”

Then Maharaj enquired, “What happened thereafter?”

## MEETING A SWAMINARAYAN SADHU

The *vaidyarak* continued, “My Lord, the possibility of not being able to achieve *moksha* in this lifetime started bugging me. I spent restless nights. But one night I heard a voice, ‘The Swaminarayan sadhus are in Ahmedabad, go to them.’ I looked around, trying to locate the source of the voice. There was no one around, but I still kept hearing the same words again and again. Then I felt it could be the voice of the Divine within me. I felt pacified by the voice and slept well that night. The next day I came to Ahmedabad. Here, I had darshan of your scholarly *paramhansa*, Nityanand Swami. On seeing him I felt inner peace. I candidly revealed everything to him. He replied, ‘Shriji Maharaj has inspired you to come here. Presently, he is in Gadhpur. You should go there.’ Thus I have come here with the resolve to take your spiritual refuge.”

Muktanand Swami and Brahmanand Swami were seated before Shri Hari. Muktanand Swami recalled, “Maharaj, I had heard the name of the *vaidyarak* when I was in Vadodara. People spoke greatly about him as a *vaidya*, but I had not met him.”

The *vaidyarak*, Ramchandrabhai, confessed humbly, “Swami, I may be an expert in matters of ayurveda but I am ignorant in spiritual knowledge. I have spent all these years in vain. You came to Vadodara yet I was not able to come for your darshan. I had also heard about the illustrious personality of Nityanand Swami and Gopalanand Swami, but I was not fortunate enough to come for their darshan either.”

Shriji Maharaj reassured him, “Don’t be dismayed. Gopalanand Swami is coming here for the Hari Jayanti festival.”



## VAIDYARAJ FINDS THE PATH OF MOKSHA

Shri Hari blessed the *vaidyaraj* by placing his hands on his head. The divine touch gave him an inner vision of divine knowledge. He perceived divinity in the form of Shriji Maharaj and realized the truth of the voice he had first heard and the words of Nityanand Swami. He felt immensely fortunate and convinced that he had found the path to *moksha*.

He requested Maharaj, "Please allow me to sponsor a meal tomorrow." Maharaj advised him, "Do so after two days when Gopalanand Swami arrives. Till then stay here and take the benefit of darshan and discourses." The *vaidyaraj* was happy with Maharaj's proposal.

When Gopalanand Swami arrived, the *vaidyaraj* sponsored the meal. Shri Hari called the *vaidyaraj* to sit besides him and have his meal. Maharaj introduced Gopalanand Swami and told the *vaidyaraj* to go to him on a regular basis in Vadodara. Thereafter, Shri Hari permitted him to leave for Vadodara the next day so that he could resume his services to his people. The next day Maharaj sent Bhajananand Swami and Jayanand Varni to accompany him to Vadodara. He also gave the *vaidyaraj* a cloth with the graphic print of Nar-Narayan Dev for daily worship. The *vaidyaraj* felt exhilarated about his association with Maharaj. He prostrated to him and beseeched for his blessings before leaving for Vadodara.

## KATHA OF MOKSHA DHARMA

The next day Maharaj told Pragji Dave to read the Moksha Dharma (a chapter from the Shrimad Bhagvat). During the *katha* Maharaj sometimes elaborated and also revealed its subtle meanings. Both Gopalanand Swami and Nityanand Swami realized that the shastras cannot be fully understood through one's scholarliness alone. For that one requires the association and grace of God or a God-realized Sadhu.

## WHICH IS YOUR UNIQUE VIRTUE

Once, Shriji Maharaj wished to inform the devotees about the uniqueness of his *paramhansas*. He asked the senior *paramhansas* during an assembly, "You are all adept in many aspects of saintliness and in external matters. Reveal your unique talents so that I can engage you in specific tasks whenever required."

The *paramhansas* looked at each other with reluctance and remained silent. In response, Shri Hari stated, "Since I have asked you I expect you to reply. Don't take it to be self-praise when you speak about your virtues."

The first to reveal was Muktanand Swami. He said, "Maharaj, no matter how angry a person may be, but if I were to go to him his anger would subside instantly."

Shri Hari smiled appreciatingly and confirmed, "Swami, your saintliness is such that anyone who has your darshan will become pacified and blissful. I have been witnessing this since the time of Ramanand Swami. That is why everyone in Satsang considers you to be compassionate like a mother. Other than that tell us about another virtue you have."

Muktanand Swami became perplexed. He felt it improper to reveal his virtues before Shri Hari, and thus remained quiet. Shri Hari prodded him, saying, "Swami, go ahead. Once you have revealed your virtues I will enjoin you in a corresponding *seva*. This will enable others to benefit from your virtues."

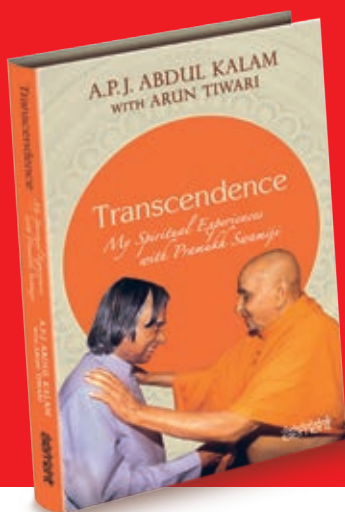
Muktanand Swami thus looked down and spoke, "Maharaj, no matter how stone-hearted a person may be, but if he listens to my discourses his heart will melt."

Shriji Maharaj endorsed Swami's words, "What you have said is true. And that was how the Jain *baniyas* of Ahmedabad understood the crux of satsang." ◆

(Contd. in next issue)

Translated from Gujarati text of  
Bhagwan Swaminarayan by Shri H.T. Dave

Dr APJ Abdul Kalam  
Presents  
'Transcendence'  
to  
Pramukh Swami Maharaj  
20 June 2015, Sarangpur



#### BACKGROUND

From their very first meeting on 30 June 2001, Dr APJ Abdul Kalam and Pramukh Swami Maharaj struck an instant bond of friendship and spiritual rapport.

On that day, after meeting Swamishri, Dr Kalam told the sadhus about Saint Thiruvalluvar's teaching that when you are burdened by some troubling worries, sitting in the presence of a great divinity will free you of those worries. Then he revealed that he had experienced such a feeling in the presence of Pramukh Swami Maharaj.

Between 2001 and 2014, Dr Kalam met Pramukh Swami Maharaj seven times in person and spoke to him on numerous occasions by

phone. All these interactions with Swamishri left a lasting impression on Dr Kalam. He was touched by Swamishri's profound spirituality and divinity. So, to record his feelings he decided to write a book about his spiritual experiences of Pramukh Swami Maharaj. Dr Kalam, with co-author Prof. Arun Tiwari, spent two years writing the book. They titled the book *Transcendence* to reflect their belief that Pramukh Swami Maharaj is beyond the three *gunas* and beyond this world.

With the book printed and ready for public sale, Dr Kalam deeply wished to present the first copy to Pramukh Swami Maharaj in Sarangpur and meet him for the eighth time. Dr Kalam is himself 84 years old and has a very busy schedule,





Dr Abdul Kalam reads a passage from 'Transcendence' to Pramukh Swami Maharaj

yet he was determined to personally hand the first copy to Pramukh Swami Maharaj.

While planning for his visit, Dr Kalam firmly insisted that he would make the journey from Ahmedabad to Sarangpur by car. He was requested many times to travel by helicopter since there were many roadworks in progress along the route which would make the journey longer and uncomfortable. However, he flatly refused to travel by helicopter explaining that, for him, this was a pilgrimage. It was with such deep feelings that Dr Kalam undertook the journey and arrived in Sarangpur at around 12.15 p.m. on 20 June 2015.

#### BOOK PRESENTATION TO PRAMUKH SWAMI MAHARAJ

Swamishri's former meeting hall was decorated and set up for the private presentation ceremony to celebrate the occasion. There, Swamishri welcomed Dr Kalam, Prof. Tiwari (co-author), Shri P.M. Sukumar (CEO, HarperCollins India) and a select group of Dr Kalam's associates. The *sad-guru* sadhus were also present: Pujya Dr Swami, Pujya Bhaktipriya (Kothari) Swami, Pujya Tyagvallabh Swami, Pujya Ishwarcharan Swami and Pujya Viveksagar Swami.

First, Swamishri garlanded Dr Kalam, softly saying, "I am pleased. Thank you for coming



Dr Kalam greets Swamishri on arriving in the meeting hall

from so far.” Then, Dr Kalam took his seat next to Swamishri and firmly holding Swamishri’s hand, he said, “Maha Pramukh Swamiji, for me it’s 15 years travel.... Beautiful spiritual journey. When Akshardham was inaugurated in New Delhi, it was a beautiful sight. All leaders were there. Everybody talked. You said this is God’s creation. That is the great day I decided that we must write a book. Your life’s a great life. And we have brought it out in the book. The great life. Purposeful life. Divine life.”

After this, Dr Kalam first offered the book to Shri Harikrishna Maharaj and then presented the first copy of *Transcendence* to Swamishri, to the chanting of Vedic verses. While presenting the book, Dr Kalam said, “I have written... Maha Pramukh Swamiji. Revered spiritual teacher. My respects. 20.6.2015. Sarangpur.” Then Dr Kalam

said, “I have written this book. You are a great teacher. You are a great teacher... I learnt to remove I, remove me. That’s a great lesson I have learnt. Remove I and mine. I learnt from you.” Swamishri said, “To rise above I and mine is only possible by God’s grace. It is the best principle by which to remain happy in life.”

After the presentation, Dr Kalam sat down and prepared to read a passage from the book to Swamishri. He began, “This is *Transcendence*...” Then, he continued, “It was a hot summer’s evening on 30th June 2001 when I met Pramukh Swamiji for the first time. In saffron robes, the gentle, fair complexion Pramukh Swamiji was radiating divinity. That was the first thought that occurred to me upon seeing you. My friend Y.S. Rajan was with me.

“We sat down and tried to adjust to Swamiji’s





Dr Kalam garlands and honours Swamishri

powerful, gracious presence. So many people are asking, ‘What should be the next vision for India? How do you transform a developing country into a developed country within next 30 years?’ I had given five ideas.

“But you gave a sixth idea. You said, the sixth idea is spiritual life of India. Apart from prosperity and wealth, be sure to transform India into a spiritual nation. I have added that. I was drawn to Pramukh Swamiji’s simplicity. I felt as if I had known him all my life; I was sitting in the presence of my father, my great teacher; in a higher presence.”

Then, Dr Kalam called Prof. Arun Tiwari to receive Swamishri’s blessings.

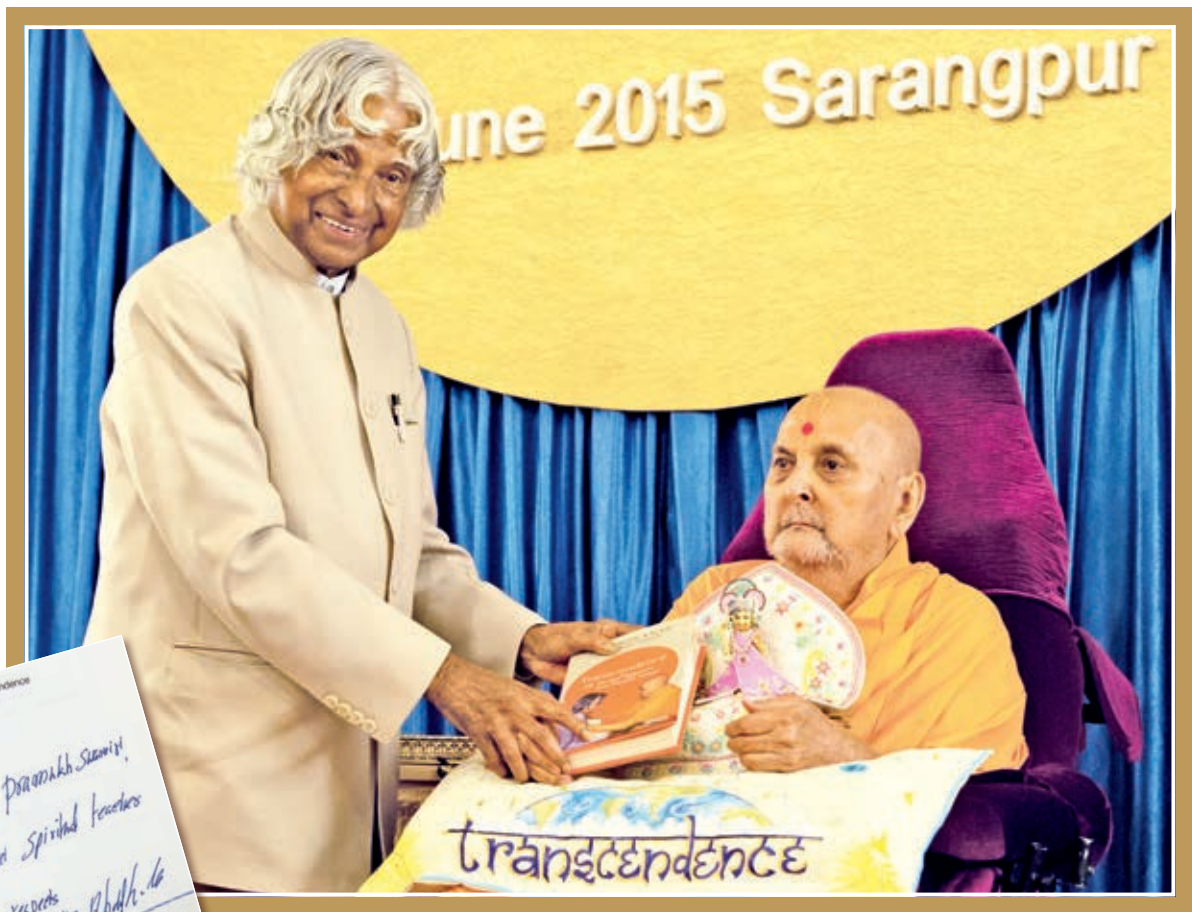
Prof. Tiwari said, “My challenge was what to write. Two oceans to fit into a small pot. I kept a photo of Pramukh Swamiji in front of me and

began typing, and this book was made.”

Next, Shri P.M. Sukumar, CEO of HarperCollins India received Swamishri’s blessings. He said to Swamishri, “We are delighted and honoured to have been given an opportunity to publish this book. Our first print run for this book is a record 95,000. That is the highest we have done. And we are publishing in Gujarati and Hindi and have licenced Malayalam rights, and we hope to do it in many other languages. And I’m very grateful also because, since I’ve been involved with this book, a sort of divine grace seems to have descended on my life as well.”

Thereafter, Shri H. Sheridan, Executive Secretary to Dr Kalam, was introduced to Swamishri and received blessings.

Then, Shri Ajay Umat, who is translating the book into Gujarati, received Swamishri’s blessings.



Dr Kalam presents a signed copy of *Transcendence* to Swamishri

Finally, Shri R.K. Prasad, Personal Secretary to Dr Kalam, and Shri D.S. Sharma, Assistant Personal Secretary, received Swamishri's blessings.

After the introductions, Dr Kalam tied a *nadachhadi* to Swamishri's right wrist and said, "This book took over 2 years of research. And every page is about your life. And also my experiences combined. So, by divine blessings we have written this book as a tribute to you. For you... for my great teacher as a tribute."

Then, Ishwarcharan Swami honoured Dr Kalam by draping a shawl over his shoulders.

Swamishri then presented a beautiful peacock made of precious stones and crystals, a tiger-stone *tasbi* (rosary) and a special plaque commemorating this historic occasion to Dr Kalam.

Swamishri also presented a special plaque to Prof. Tiwari and Shri P.M. Sukumar to acknowledge their contributions to this project.

After the 30-minute presentation ceremony, Dr Kalam accompanied Swamishri to his quarters. There, Dr Kalam saw the elegant garden behind Swamishri's room and commented, "The garden is beautiful, godly and divine." The sadhus reminded him of his wish to walk with Swamishri in the Moghul Gardens of the Rashtrapati Bhavan. So, to fulfil this wish, he guided Swamishri's wheelchair and walked a few steps. Swamishri was pleased by his love and affection, and gently thanked and blessed him for his visit.

Then, Dr Kalam returned to the meeting hall and gave a brief interview. He was asked, "What were your feelings when you were writing the book and what are your feelings now





Author, Dr Kalam, and co-author, Prof. Arun Tiwari, with Swamishri

that you have written the book and handed it to Pramukh Swamiji?”

“On the day I inaugurated Akshardham, Delhi, I found a teacher in Pramukh Swamiji. A great teacher. That day I decided I must write with my friend Arun Tiwari a book. It’s not a book. It’s a tribute. It’s a tribute to a great leader.

“In 1941, I was a 10-year-old boy in British India. My father lived 103 years. My mother, 98 years. Second World War time. Difficult times, but they were giving whatever possible [to others]. Even their food they would share – both my mother and father. In my home, I had two teachers: father and mother.

“Then in 1960s, 70s and 80s, I had again three great teachers: Prof. Vikram Sarabhai, a visionary from Gujarat. He gave the whole country the vision for satellite launch vehicles and spacecrafts.

Then, Prof. Satish Dhawan. He became the next chairman. I worked with him also. He was a great teacher. Not only was he the chairman of ISRO, he taught all of us: when a problem comes, you become the captain of the problem, defeat the problem and succeed.

“At the same time, another person, Prof. Brahma Prakash. He was our director. He worked with integrity and succeeded with integrity. Embodiment of integrity. What a great fortune I had – Shiva Subramanian Iyer, [a teacher] in elementary school, [and] before him my parents. Then, these three great teachers at ISRO.

“Then 2001, I met Maha Pramukh Swamiji. I didn’t realize he is going to be my teacher. Not only a good teacher, I found in him a great teacher. He taught me: remove I and me. Remove I and me. If you remove I and me it’s a beautiful



Swamishri presents a commemorative plaque to Dr Kalam

life. Happy life. Spiritual life. This is what I learnt from Maha Pramukh Swamiji.

“When we were writing the book, of course we studied about the system. Over a few decades how the system has grown today to such a level. A spiritual force connecting millions of people in our country and abroad. Again and again, the message came to us: remove I and me. Ego will vanish. If ego vanishes hatred will vanish. If hatred vanishes, peace will come. That’s the lesson this organization teaches all of us.

“It is a work we have completed. We feel bliss. Maha Pramukh Swamiji smiled when he saw the book. That smile gave me bliss. We have done for the society, for the people of India. This book’s message is transcendence. Transcendence means you have a beautiful happy life. That’s the message of life. The message of the book.”

Thereafter, Dr Kalam went to the Yagnapurush Assembly Hall to address the thousands of BAPS youths who had gathered from Ahmedabad, Vadodara, Anand, Nadiad, Gandhinagar, Rajkot, Bhavnagar and other places throughout Gujarat.

#### PROF. ARUN TIWARI INTERVIEW

Q: Please describe the process of writing this book.

Prof. Tiwari: Last year, Dr Kalam came here to meet Pramukh Swamiji and I came with him. And at that time, Dr Kalam told me that for many years he had wanted to write his experiences about Pramukh Swamiji. He called it a spiritual fellowship. So, he said, “I want to capture my spiritual fellowship with Pramukh Swamiji. But somehow it has not happened for various reasons.” So, he gave me the task to do it as soon as





Dr Kalam holds Swamishri's hand while narrating his experiences

possible. Because, he said, “If I do not hand over my experiences before Pramukh Swamiji then it will be the biggest disappointment of my life.”

I have been with Dr Kalam for the last 33 years and I consider myself as his student. See, the problem in writing this book is that both Dr Kalam and Pramukh Swamiji are giants and almost everything about them has been written and recorded. So, what more you can do? So, this was the challenge.

Dr Kalam is very fond of walking and the first thing we should learn about walking with Dr Kalam is that at any instant he can change his direction.

Second thing is, he's an abstract thinker. So, while explaining to you some very complex phenomena he would ask you, “Have you eaten this *jamun* here?” and then you get clean bowled. One minute he's talking about the *brahmand* and suddenly he'd be asking about *jamun*. But that is his

way of cultivating your alertness and checking whether you are receiving what he is telling you.

So, there were at least about 20 to 25 walking sessions like this with him.

A second challenge was that from these two oceans of information, what to take and what to leave. Because, after all, the book is about 250 pages.

This book is very harmonious. It has four pillars. One pillar is the meetings which Dr Kalam and Pramukh Swamiji had with each other. The second pillar is the major works of the Sanstha – that you sorted out the problem of two warring communities, de-addiction programmes, *ghar sabhas*. Very revolutionary and, in sociological terms, I do not see any parallel. And above all, when a foreigner comes to see Akshardham Temple and the architecture and this kind of majesty... the perception



L to R: Jnaneshwar Swami, Atmaswarup Swami, Anandswarup Swami, Viveksagar Swami, Ishwarcharan Swami, Dr Kalam, Pramukh Swami Maharaj, Prof. Tiwari, Dr Dwami, Bhaktipriya Swami, Tyagvallabh Swami, Brahmavihari Swami, Mr. Sukumar

of the country... from a country of snake charmers and rope trick people...changes. Now we are making our architectural monuments in those societies. So, this is a great change. This is pride for the nation.

The third chapter was very interesting, because what I found is that Pramukh Swamiji is a great spiritual person, but the way he implemented the Akshardham projects, he's better than any engineer, he's superior to any architect and, above all, he is a perfect manager. On the other hand, Dr Kalam is a scientist, and he has depth of spirituality. So, somewhere it struck me that looking at science and spirituality as two separate processes is a big mistake. I think both are the

same. Both are two faces of the same coin.

So, we did some research and we found about all these great scientists. [They were] very spiritual people. So, the third part talks about science and spirituality.

The fourth part is about leadership. Now, if you look at the leadership of Pramukh Swamiji... his management, his leadership I have not seen anywhere. Are there any examples of this kind of leadership? So, we put some great creative leaders – Vikram Sarabhai, Verghese Kurien.... These great people, great leaders.

**Q:** Your favourite section from the book?

**Prof. Tiwari:** To be truthful to you, I like the Epilogue the most. As you say, the last scene. In



# ndence

Sarangpur



the Epilogue, Dr Kalam wakes up and says... I mean I don't want to spoil the beauty of the Epilogue, but he dozed off and he saw that he is in space with Pramukh Swamiji. And at the end of the Epilogue, he says that he woke up and realized that he was sitting in his lounge. Then he says at the end, was it a dream or is this a dream into which I have woken up?

**Q:** What is the one thing that touches you most about Pramukh Swami Maharaj?

**Prof. Tiwari:** If somebody is trying to look at Pramukh Swamiji with the mirrors of some intellectual thought process or with some other kind of things, I think he will fail in that mission. He is Brahmaswarup. And, as per definition he cannot be defined. So, if I have seen anybody in my life... Dr Kalam is a great human being, but

after meeting Pramukh Swamiji I think I have a feeling of Brahman. If I say anything more, I will be diluting the essence.

**Q:** Why did you choose the name 'Transcendence' for this book?

**Prof. Tiwari:** We looked at so many names. Whatever name we thought, we were trying to match it with Pramukh Swamiji. So, we arrived at 'Transcendence', which is *gunatit*. After all, one translation of transcendence is *gunatit*. Somebody who is beyond *guna* – that is Pramukh Swamiji. So, that *gunatit* we translated to transcendence.

**Q:** What is that one-line central message of this book.

**Prof. Tiwari:** One is purity and second is integrity. Now, when I say purity, I can see there are three things operating in our consciousness.



Symbol of deep friendship between Dr Kalam and Swamishri

One is 'I think', second thing, 'I speak', and third thing, 'I do'. Now, for most people these three things are not matching. What they think, they don't speak. What they speak, they don't do. Now, if you can match these three – what you think, what you speak and what you do – it is pious. I think this is what Pramukh Swamiji is and it is very difficult to remain there.

I have never seen any greater example of purity than Dr Abdul Kalam and Pramukh Swamiji. They have so many temptations. So effortlessly they are untouched by the temptations is sometimes mind-blowing.

Many times in the last one week we were telling Dr Kalam to accede to the request of coming here in a helicopter. Dozens of helicopters were lined up. He said no. He said, "If given a chance, I will walk. I am going to somebody who is my

spiritual better."

Then, last night, at 1.15 in the morning, he wanted to write something about Pramukh Swamiji. His two secretaries and other friends suggested 'My Spiritual Friend'. Then he said, "How can I, a human being, be a friend of *brahm-swarup*?" Then somebody said 'fellow'. He said, "No – he is guru, I am *shishya*. How can guru-*shishya* be 'fellow'?" So, what do we do?

He said 'teacher'. Then, I suggested he write 'My revered teacher'. He said, "You are trying to capture Pramukh Swamiji into 'My teacher'. Who am I? I am not even a worthy student. So, write, 'Revered spiritual teacher', and 'My respects', because the respect is mine. But he cannot be my teacher alone. I am one of his millions of students." ♦





# Address to BAPS Youths

20 June 2015, Sarangpur

*Dr APJ Abdul Kalam presented his book, Transcendence, to H.H. Pramukh Swami Maharaj in Sarangpur and thereafter he addressed a gathering of sadhus and BAPS youths.*

*We present a transcription of his speech.*



Sadhus and several thousand BAPS youths attended the special Youth Assembly

**F**riends, greetings to all of you. A few minutes back I was with Maha Pramukh Swamiji. I have written a book with Professor Arun Tiwari. When I gave the book, Pramukh Swamiji smiled. What does his smile mean. Everybody smiles, but when Pramukh Swamiji smiles it means something. I was in the company of Pramukh Swamiji for 15 minutes. At the end of 15 minutes I got a great message. You will repeat the message:

Where there is righteousness in the heart  
there is beauty in the character,  
Where there is beauty in the character  
there is harmony in the home,  
When there is harmony in the home  
there is order in the nation,  
When there is order in the nation  
there is peace in the world.

By meeting Pramukh Swamiji I found righteousness in his heart; I saw peace in the world. Where there is a righteous heart there is peace in the world. And that's what I saw today. It is a situation of bliss.

Respected Swamis, sadhus, devotees and

students who are seated here. My greetings.

What do we need? The world needs prosperity without poverty, peace without fear of God and a happy place to live for all the citizens of the nation. This is what we need. And that is the message being transmitted from Pramukh Swamiji and this esteemed great place.

Friends, I have come to Sarangpur to meet Param Pujya Pramukh Swami Maharaj and present to him personally the book I have written with my friend Prof. Arun Tiwari, *Transcendence: My Spiritual Experiences with Pramukh Swamiji*. This was my very dear project of many years. I made a promise to Pramukh Swami on the inauguration day of Akshardham, New Delhi, that I will write a book on his great spiritual life. Today, I have fulfilled that promise.

Friends, yesterday, I was in the company of different people: one was a Jain Muni, a Haji who had returned from Mecca, and the third was a Swamiji. They saw the copy of *Transcendence* and all three asked me one question, what made me write this book? What incident inspired me? I said, Pramukh Swami inspired me from the day





I met him on 30 June 2001. But one incident deeply touched me. On the next day of the terrorist attack at Akshardham, Gandhinagar, on 25 September 2002, there were many bodies of devotees and terrorists who were killed in the attack. Pramukh Swamiji came with Gangajal (holy water of River Ganga) in his *kamandal* and showered it on each body without any discrimination, be it a devotee, a security personnel or the attackers. He silently displayed to the world that every human life is sacred. Life comes from one God and returns to the only God. His magnanimity gave me the urge and strength to explore the spiritual life of Pramukh Swamiji and bring out this book with my friend Arun.

Friends, today I've thought of sharing about my spiritual journey. I have one question for all of you, "How to become a unique you?" So after my talk when you go out of this beautiful auditorium you'll go with the confidence that I can become unique.

#### UNIQUE YOU

Dear friends, look up. What do you see? The

light, the electric bulbs. Immediately our thoughts go to the inventor, Thomas Alva Edison, for his unique contribution towards the invention of the electric bulb and his electrical lighting system. When he was a nine-year-old boy in New York he lived with his parents, and they used oil lamps or candle for light. He said he would electrify New York based on Faraday's Law. And he electrified the whole world. So he was a unique personality.

When you hear the sound of an aeroplane going over your house, whom do you think of? The Wright brothers proved that man could fly, though at a risk and cost. In 1885 Prof. Calvin said anything heavier than air cannot be flown. But the Wright brothers proved that it could be flown. So don't go near people who say that it's impossible. Everything is possible in science and technology.

Of whom does the telephone remind you? Of course, Alexander Graham Bell.

When everybody considered sea travel as a voyage, a unique person during his sea travel from United Kingdom to India was pondering on why the horizon where the sky and sea meet, looks



*Sadguru sadhus, Dr Kalam and other guests on stage during the assembly*

blue? His nine-year research resulted in the phenomena of scattering of light and he was awarded the Nobel Prize. He was Sir C.V. Raman.

Friends, there was a great scientific lady, who is known for discovering radium. She won not one, but two Nobel Prizes: one for physics and another for chemistry. Who was she? She was Madam Curie. Madam Curie discovered radium and the effect of radiation on the human system. The same radiation, which she had discovered, affected her and she sacrificed her life for removing the [physical] pain in human life.

All these great personalities are unique. They dedicated their lives to science. What made them do that? What made them unique?

Friends, I have, so far, met more than 21 million youths in India and abroad in the last two decades. I learnt, “Every youth wants to be unique. But the world all around you is doing its best, day and night, to make you just like everybody else.” The challenge, my young friends, is that you have to fight the hardest battle, which any human being can ever imagine to fight, and never stop fighting until you arrive at your

destined place – that is a Unique You!

#### HOW TO BECOME UNIQUE YOU?

Life is a journey that must be travelled, no matter how bad the roads are. There are four proven steps I have studied about unique people:

The first step is to decide which road you want to take by having a great aim in life. Having a small aim is a crime. You must have a great aim.

The second step is to continuously acquire knowledge through great books, great human beings and great teachers.

The third is hard work. When everybody is sleeping there are lights burning in some people’s places.

The fourth step is that when you do any work, whether spiritual, technical, scientific or political work, there will always be some problems. The problems should not become your captain; you should become the captain of the problems. Defeat the problems and succeed. This is called perseverance.

So, if you want to become unique, you have to have four qualities: great aim, continuously





acquire knowledge, hard work and perseverance.

#### WINGS TO FLY

Now I want to tell you how to fly. Do you want to fly? Now repeat with me:

I am born with potential.  
I am born with goodness and trust.  
I am born with ideas and dreams.  
I am born with greatness.  
I am born with confidence.  
I am born with courage.  
So, I am not meant for crawling.  
I have wings.  
I will fly, I will fly and fly.

#### WORKING TOGETHER

Friends, while I was talking to the senior sadhus I told them a story. When I was a 10-year-old boy in Rameshwaram I was studying in an elementary school in 1941. At that time it was British India. When I finished school everyday I used to come home at 8.00 p.m. The reason being I used to deliver newspapers from 6.00 to 8.00 p.m. I was a newspaper boy. Once, on coming

home I saw three people: Lakshmana Shastrigal, the head priest of Rameshwaram Shiv temple, Rev. Father Bodal who built the first church in Rameshwaram and my father who was an Imam of the mosque. I saw them every Friday at my house. I was astonished because they had different attires. These three people would sit and discuss. There was a war going on in 1941. There was a famine on our island. So, they discussed about how to generate work, how to help when there were troubles, and how to help the health-care and education systems. From them I learnt the beautiful lesson about how to work together.

#### GREAT LEADERSHIP

As a young engineer I worked with Dr Brahma Prakash. He taught me how tolerance of others' views and opinions is essential in building teams and accomplishing tasks that are beyond an individual's capacity. Certain works an individual can do, whereas for other works a team is required. He taught me that life is a precious gift, but it comes with responsibility. With this gift, we are expected to use our talents to make the world a

better place.

In 1978, I became a project director. I worked with Professor Satish Dhawan, who taught me that a good leader takes the responsibility for the failures of his team. When I failed in the first SLV 3 programme, Satish Dhawan, the chairman, took the failure upon himself. When I succeeded next year, Satish Dhawan



Dr Kalam addresses the youths

told me to address the press conference to celebrate the success. This is great leadership, be it in spiritual, technical, media or political matters or in science. The leader should give the credit of success to his team. If there is failure the leader should absorb the failure. This is the great message I learned when I was working in ISRO.

Later, I met Jain muni Acharya Mahapragya, who made me realize the affirmation of a divine life upon earth and an immortal sense in mortal existence. I wrote with him a book called *Family and the Nation*.

#### GREAT MEETING WITH PRAMUKH SWAMIJI

It was an important spiritual day of my life when I first met Pramukh Swamiji. More than a decade ago, as the Principal Scientific Advisor to the Government of India, I visited Bhuj to review the rehabilitation work in the aftermath of the earthquake. There I met Sadhu Brahmaviharidas. He asked me: “After the detonation of the first atomic bomb, Robert Oppenheimer remembered the Gita: ‘Time I am the shatterer of the world.’ What came to your mind after you detonated India’s first atomic bomb?” I was puzzled by his question, and I said, “The energy of God does not shatter, but unifies minds,” to which he replied, “Our spiritual leader, Pramukh Swamiji is a great unifier. He has unified all our energies to regenerate and restore life from the rubble

of damage.” I was moved and expressed my desire to meet such a Swamiji.

So friends, my best wishes to all the members assembled here and the BAPS in its mission of spreading compassion, love and understanding.

Now I would like to hear some questions from you.

#### QUESTION-ANSWER SESSION

**Question:** What was the first thing that came to your mind when you met Pramukh Swami today?

**Answer:** When I met him I remembered his life as a young boy. He’s a farmer’s son. And from a farmer’s son to the growth of BAPS for millions of people [is a great story]. Now this book, *Transcendence*, is about my experiences with Maha-Pramukh Swamiji – experiences of nearly two decades, from the birth of Akshardham till today. I have seen how he brings peace, happiness and prosperity.

**Question:** What is the reason for your tremendous energy and enthusiasm?

**Answer:** One thought I have is what can I give. The opposite of it is what can I take – that is a very harmful ‘fellow’. What you all are learning in this campus is what can I give. If you give, you get all the happiness, if you give you get all the enthusiasm, and if you give you get all the prosperity. If you follow the opposite (of that), you become Satan.

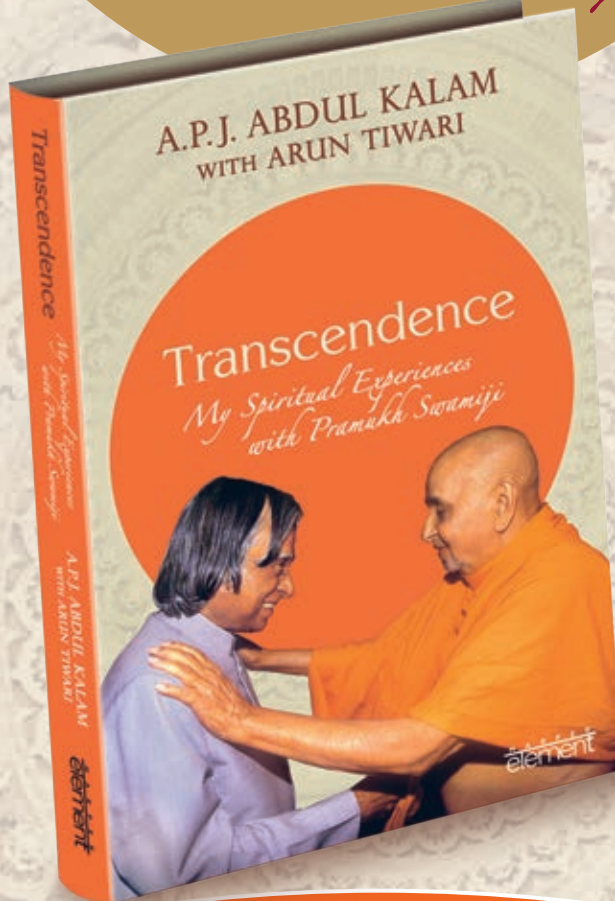
OK friends, repeat with me: “An ignited mind of youths is the most powerful resource on the earth, above the earth and under the earth.”

May God bless you all. ◆



# Transcendence

*My Spiritual Experiences  
with Pramukh Swamiji*

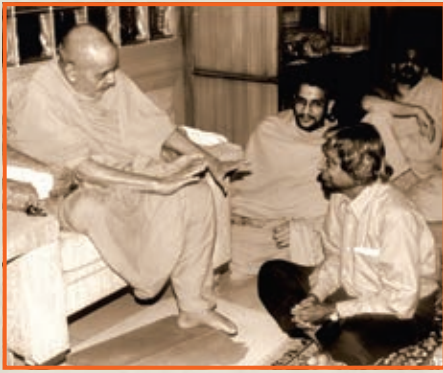


“I met Pramukh Swamiji, my ultimate teacher, unwittingly.  
Fate and my curiosity had drawn me to him...  
What began as a chance introduction became a divine destiny.”

“Pramukh Swamiji shared with me many times his wish for peace,  
development, security and prosperity in the world.

He feels that Indian people’s kindness, openness, tolerance and willingness to engage in dialogue is inbuilt in our civilizational heritage. He firmly believes in the potential of the Indian people to co-build a harmonious world where there is permanent peace, shared prosperity, cooperation and a ‘win-win’ with all other countries.”

- Dr APJ Abdul Kalam



30 June, Gujarat Vihar, New Delhi

**T***ranscendence* documents a 14-year journey, which is still on-going, between Dr APJ Abdul Kalam – former president of India and world-renowned missile scientist of India – and Pramukh Swami Maharaj – one of the most inspiring spiritual leaders of modern times, the fifth spiritual successor of Bhagwan Swaminarayan, and inheritor of a legacy of enlightened gurus that goes back to the early nineteenth century.

#### A SUMMARY OF THE BOOK

Dr Kalam, with co-author Prof. Arun Tiwari, writes that what “began as a chance introduction” in June 2001, blossomed into a deep friendship and “became a divine destiny”.

The book reveals that Dr Kalam, at heart, is a genuine seeker of truth, progress and spirituality. He narrates his visits to famous places – religious and secular – worldwide and recollects his spiritual and other experiences there. But it is in the presence of Pramukh Swamiji that his spirituality truly flourishes. Dr Kalam describes Pramukh Swami as “my ultimate teacher” and records, “How do I summarize Pramukh Swamiji’s effect on me? He has indeed transformed me. He is the ultimate stage of the spiritual ascent in my life, which started with my father, was sustained by Dr Brahma Prakash and Prof. Satish Dhawan; now, finally, Pramukh Swamiji has put me in a God-synchronous orbit.”

Dr Kalam resolved to write this book centred



13 August, BAPS Mandir, Ahmedabad

around Pramukh Swamiji despite the background differences between the two: Dr Kalam is an eminent scientist, Pramukh Swamiji is a religious leader; and Dr Kalam was India’s most popular president involved with the unpredictable world of politics, while Pramukh Swamiji has had no such exposure and is little known outside his native Gujarat. What is especially remarkable about their profound friendship is that Dr Kalam is not conversant in Gujarati – Pramukh Swamiji’s native language – and Pramukh Swamiji is not conversant in English – Dr Kalam’s main medium of communication. This testifies to the inner spiritual bond they share, which has sustained and enhanced their rapport with each other.

Dr Kalam expressed his doubts about the appropriateness of such a book to his brother, 14 years his senior. His brother encouraged him to “share with everyone details of the pious and virtuous life of Pramukh Swamiji.”

*Transcendence* is divided into four parts. The first describes Dr Kalam’s interactions with Pramukh Swamiji. For over a decade, Dr Kalam has interacted on numerous occasions with Pramukh Swamiji, in person and by phone. The second part highlights some of the outstanding work and values of BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha, as inspired by Pramukh Swamiji. The third discusses the co-relation between science and spirituality through the anecdotes and thoughts of leading scientists, and the fourth reflects on the ideals of creative leadership based on the lives of





8 February, Swaminarayan Akshardham, Gandhinagar

leading historical luminaries.

In Part One, Dr Kalam recalls some of the inspiring messages he has learnt through his interactions with Pramukh Swami Maharaj.

For example, during their first meeting in June 2001, Dr Kalam presented the plans of his vision for India 2020. Pramukh Swami then guided, “Along with your five areas to transform India add a sixth one – faith in God.” At that time, Dr Kalam describes, “I felt I was in the Divine Presence... There was a light radiating through Pramukh Swamiji which illuminated my inner self. I felt I had acquired a sixth sense.”

Dr Kalam is deeply touched by Pramukh Swami’s stability of mind in testing circumstances. He admires his ability to forgive and preserve peace in the aftermath of the tragic Akshardham terrorist attack in 2002, commenting, “His ardent prayers were that... such tragedies should never afflict any community or any nation, anywhere in the world... Swamiji encouraged his followers to pray, not punish... Pramukh Swami’s life is an example of how to love peace, have peace and possess peace.”

He further states, “Pramukh Swamiji is a great bridge in the vast archipelago of humanity. An archipelago is an island group. Humanity has divided itself into hundreds of islands. These islands are religions. Each island is a beautiful territory, full of flora, fauna and inhabitants, and yet disconnected from the others. Pramukh Swamiji is connecting these different islands by making



6 November, Swaminarayan Akshardham, New Delhi

bridges of love and compassion.”

After the opening ceremony of Swaminarayan Akshardham in New Delhi in 2005, Dr Kalam said to Pramukh Swami Maharaj, “When I see Akshardham and your work... ‘I feel anything is possible in the world. I want to work with you for a better India.’”

During one meeting, Dr Kalam asks, “How does one connect to God’s consciousness?” Pramukh Swami replied, “You are a rocket scientist... As long as there is the pull of gravity, whatever we throw up always comes down. Likewise, as long as we are attracted and attached to the material world, we are consigned to the cycle of births and deaths. But as your worldly desires decrease, you transcend and eventually connect to God.” Dr Kalam concludes, “Pramukh Swamiji uses simple terms to convey complex truths.”

In Part Two, Dr Kalam highlights some of the activities of BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha, such as the highly effective de-addiction campaigns by BAPS children in India, the family assemblies which continually inspire family harmony, the educational activities which provide both secular and spiritual training, the cultural values imparted by the Swaminarayan Akshardham complexes in New Delhi and Gandhinagar, and other social, cultural and spiritual activities. He also acknowledges the outstanding contributions of BAPS mandirs built by Pramukh Swami outside India, in the USA and UK, in nurturing and sustaining Indian heritage and spirituality among NRIs.



11 September, Swaminarayan Akshardham, New Delhi

Dr Kalam notes the profound effect Pramukh Swamiji has on common people and his concern for their well-being. He inspires youths to contribute constructively to the progress and harmony of India and the world, by spotlighting the successful approach of Pramukh Swamiji in uniting and advancing families and communities. Further, he advocates the necessity of self-discipline, sacrifice, tolerance, forgiveness and other virtues by demonstrating how Pramukh Swamiji exemplifies them in his life.

Dr Kalam has also given his vision for India 2020 to the nation's youths by listing the targets that should be met to develop India.

And, on a personal level, Dr Kalam reveals, "Pramukh Swamiji often sits in prayer throughout the night for the problems of common people. I have emulated this habit."

In Part 3, Dr Kalam selects eminent scientists and thinkers and describes their observations and thoughts on the relationship between science and spirituality: Pythagoras, Galileo Galilei, Albert Einstein, Gregor Mendel, Baruch Spinoza, Srinivas Ramanujan, Jagdish Chandra Bose, Subrahmanyan Chandrashekar and Francis Collins.

His expresses that science has advanced and provided much to humanity, but that spirituality is also an essential component of human life.

In Part 4, Dr Kalam states, "I will be sharing what I learned during my fellowship with Pramukh Swamiji on leadership. He is a great spiritual leader and while observing his actions in leading the BAPS



18 July, Swaminarayan Akshardham, New Delhi

across the world, I have developed certain insights into how a great leader evolves." He then enumerates "eight facets of creative leadership, namely – fearlessness, courage, ethical living, non-violence, forgiveness, compassion, vision and cooperation," through "the stories of Nachiketa, Abdul Qadir, Abraham Lincoln, Thiruvalluvar, Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, the Dalai Lama, Vikram Sarabhai and Verghese Kurien."

At the end of Part 4, Dr Kalam reveals, "I wrote this book to record my experiences with Pramukh Swamiji, my reflections on his work and the transformation that I experienced in his fellowship. I see in Pramukh Swamiji a true embodiment of transcendence."

*Transcendence* reveals much about the mindset of Dr Kalam – his love for science, his inner spirituality, his constant endeavour to improve and learn, his infectious optimism and enthusiasm, and his world view and vision for India.

This book's focus shifts from Pramukh Swamiji to others, as Dr Kalam substantiates the inspiring values he has learnt through his spiritual experiences with Pramukh Swamiji by invoking the examples of distinguished spiritual leaders, scientists, thinkers and others.

The book will appeal to youths and others who seek guidance on the essential life values necessary to complement their personal skills.

The book also features a 12-page section of colour photographs which complements the book content.





11 March, BAPS Mandir, Sarangpur

## INTRODUCTION OF THE AUTHORS AND H.H. PRAMUKH SWAMIJI

Dr A.P.J. Abdul Kalam was born and raised in Rameswaram, Tamil Nadu. His passion for learning led him from humble beginnings to the prestigious Madras Institute of Technology, where he became an aeronautical engineer. After a brief stint at the Defence Research and Development Organization of India (DRDO), Dr Kalam joined the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO), where he became the project director for India's first Satellite Launch Vehicle (SLV-3), which placed the Rohini satellite in orbit. Later, he rejoined the DRDO and played a pivotal role in the development of India's ballistic missile systems. He eventually rose to become the scientific advisor to the defence minister of India and was later appointed as principal scientific advisor to the Government of India, with the rank of a cabinet minister, involved in policy and strategy to transform India into a developed nation and a nuclear weapons state.

Dr Kalam is the recipient of many national and international awards, including honorary doctorates from forty-eight universities all over the world. He received India's highest civilian award, the Bharat Ratna, in 1997. Widespread recognition, coupled with his extensive national service, made Dr Kalam a popular choice for high office, and he became the eleventh president of India in 2002. His popularity has endured, and he is still affectionately called the 'people's president' for bridging the gap between high office and the



20 June, BAPS Mandir, Sarangpur

common people.

Dr Kalam has written over 30 books and is one of India's most widely read and best-selling authors.

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Arun Tiwari did his master's in mechanical engineering from G.B. Pant University and joined the Defence Research & Development Laboratory (DRDL) at Hyderabad as a missile scientist in 1982. He was airframe designer and project manager (system integration) in the first three AKASH missile developmental flights. In 1992, on becoming chief of DRDO, Dr Kalam decided to develop civilian spin-offs of defence technology and appointed Prof. Tiwari as the programme director.

As a member of Dr Kalam's team, Arun Tiwari set up the first link of Pan-Africa e-Network of Telecommunications Consultants India Ltd (TCIL). The network now connects universities and hospitals across the African continent with their Indian counterparts. In 1999, Arun Tiwari co-wrote *Wings of Fire*, the autobiography of Dr A.P.J. Abdul Kalam. The book became a modern classic, going into thirty reprints and selling more than a million copies. It has been translated into eighteen languages. He has written twelve books since then.

Arun Tiwari is currently consulting to evolve the blueprint for FDI in the defence sector and towards the creation of a strong Defence Technological Industrial Base (DTIB) in India. He is an adjunct professor in the School of

Management Sciences, University of Hyderabad.

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**Param Pujya Pramukh Swamiji** is a deeply loved and respected spiritual leader. Born as Shantilal on 7 December 1921 in Chansad, Gujarat, India, he grew up to be revered as the fifth spiritual successor of Bhagwan Swaminarayan and the present leader of Bochasanwasi Shri Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha (BAPS)—an international socio-spiritual organization affiliated to the United Nations.

At eighteen, he renounced the world, embracing the strict ascetic life of a Swaminarayan sadhu, and was renamed Narayanswarupdas Swami. In 1950, his guru Shastriji Maharaj recognized his innate spirituality and appointed him as the president (Pramukh) of BAPS; hence he is fondly known as ‘Pramukh Swamiji’. He selflessly served society under two enlightened gurus: Shastriji Maharaj and thereafter Yogiji Maharaj. And after them, since 1971, he has built upon the firm foundations laid by his gurus to spread the universal

message and activities of BAPS worldwide.

He has travelled in India and abroad to strengthen morality and spirituality, inspiring people by personal counselling, through letters or telephone. He has built over 1,100 mandirs in India, North America, the UK, Europe, Africa, Australia, New Zealand and the Middle East, which serve as perennial sources of spiritual inspiration and social harmony. Moreover, he has created the magnificent Swaminarayan Akshardham complexes in Gandhinagar and New Delhi, which enlighten millions of visitors on India’s ancient culture, traditions and values. With over 3,900 centres, 950 sadhus, 55,000 youth volunteers and millions of followers worldwide, he inspires and oversees a spectrum of humanitarian activities in fields as diverse as educational, environmental, medical, tribal, social, cultural and spiritual. However, what touches countless people, including political, social and spiritual leaders across race, religion and region, is Pramukh Swamiji’s personal humility, simplicity, integrity, spirituality and universality. ♦

Dr Kalam reads a passage from the book to Swamishri





# CELEBRATING 'TRANSCENDENCE'

Grand Event Commemorating

Dr Kalam's Book about Pramukh Swami Maharaj

28 June 2015, Ahmedabad



On Sunday, 28 June 2015, the Gujarat University Convention & Exhibition Centre in Ahmedabad was throbbing with excitement and joy because of the eager presence of over 10,000 dignitaries, devotees and well-wishers who had come from all corners of the city and other places to witness a landmark event. The Centre and its grounds are the pride of Ahmedabad because of the spectrum of grand events it hosts: national conventions, exhibitions, book fairs, celebration of International Yoga Day and others. But today the event was very special. The venue was hosting a seminal celebration – the celebration of 'Transcendence', a book by Dr APJ Abdul Kalam about his spiritual experiences with Pramukh Swami Maharaj. Over a week ago, on 20 June 2015, Dr Kalam had presented his book to Pramukh Swami Maharaj in Sarangpur. The event today marked the first of three celebrations of the book in India.

Prior to the evening's main event, the weekly Sunday satsang *sabha* commenced at







Over 2,300 invited dignitaries and guests enjoy the celebrations in the main auditorium

5.00 p.m. in the large 10,000 capacity exhibition hall. Pujya Mahant Swami and Pujya Dr Swami addressed the devotees. Thereafter, the senior sadhus felicitated Shri Hemubhai Gandhi, who manages the Convention Centre on a contract basis with the city authorities; Prof. Arun Tiwari, co-author of the book; Shri Shantanu Chaudhuri, representative of HarperCollins India; and Jagdish Sound, who deals in providing

public address systems.

From 6.00 p.m. invited guests started arriving at the Convention Centre. They were welcomed by traditional tunes played by shehnai players and youths tied the auspicious *nada-chhadi* on their wrists. Thereafter the youths escorted them to the registration centre where their invitation passes were scanned for their presence. Then each guest was given *prasad* and ushered to their seat in the auditorium. At 6.35 p.m., the main event, celebrating 'Transcendence', commenced in the auditorium. More than 2,300 guests, devotees and media persons had taken their seats and



Around 8,000 devotees enjoy the celebrations in the exhibition hall

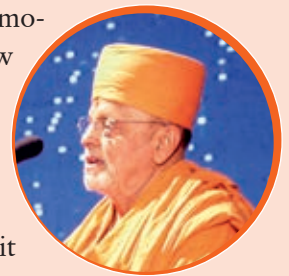






positions. The entire programme was relayed live onto a large LED screen in the nearby exhibition hall occupied by devotees. The master of ceremonies, Shri Mukeshbhai Patel, declared the occasion as historic because it was a celebration of two unique persons. Amidst Vedic chantings, Pujya Mahant inaugurated the event by lighting the auspicious lamp before the *murtis* of Shri Akshar-Purushottam Maharaj and Pramukh Swami Maharaj. Pujya Ishwarcharan Swami gave the welcome address and spoke about Dr Kalam's several meetings and experiences with Swamishri, "In his first meeting in New Delhi, 2001, Swamishri had advised him to add the sixth dimension of faith for his 2020 project. In 2005,

during the opening ceremony of Akshardham in New Delhi, Dr Kalam promised Pramukh Swami Maharaj that he would write a book on him. And during his recent visit to Sarangpur in 2015 to present "Transcendence" to Swamiji, he had experienced a deep sense of calmness and fulfillment."



Pujya Ishwarcharan Swami

A beautiful and impressive ten-minute animation video about a tale of two boys, prepared by BAPS volunteers, was shown on a 15 ft by 60 ft LED screen. It depicted the success stories of





Visual from 'A Tale of Two Boys': The boatman's boy from Rameshwaram

a boatman's boy in Rameshwaram and a farmer's boy in Chansad (Gujarat). The former had dreamed of flying and the latter of performing austerities in the Himalayas. Both were groomed by two masters, one by Vikram Sarabhai and Dr Brahma Prakash and the other by Shastriji Maharaj and Yogiji Maharaj. Later, APJ Abdul Kalam successfully launched the Rohini SLV satellite and became the 11th President of India, whereas Pramukh Swami Maharaj was appointed as the President of BAPS and became the world-renowned, fifth spiritual guru of the BAPS. Then through divine grace they came together. Thereafter, the photos of their subsequent meetings were shown on the LED screen.

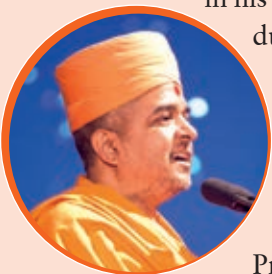
Pujya Brahmavihari Swami briefly recounted in his speech about the key incidents during the 14-year association (2011-2014) between Dr Kalam and Pramukh Swami Maharaj. In all, Dr Kalam had seven meetings and many phone call conversations with Pramukh Swami Maharaj. He added that after Dr Kalam's first meeting with Pramukh Swami Maharaj in 2001, Delhi, Dr Kalam had said he felt an inner calm pervade him, and on the other hand Swamiji had declared that Dr Kalam was a rishi. After

witnessing the inauguration of Swaminarayan Akshardham in New Delhi, Dr Kalam saw peace on Swamishri's face and he promised to write a book on Pramukh Swamiji.

Thereafter, various quotes from *Transcendence* about Pramukh Swami Maharaj were presented on the giant LED screen. The audience was mesmerized and touched by the profound words of Dr Kalam.

The master of ceremonies, Shri Mukeshbhai Patel, mentioned that the book was personally presented by BAPS sadhus on 26 June to the Hon. Prime Minister of India Shri Narendrabhai Modi in New Delhi. Honourable Modi had offered his accolades and compliments for the book. The Chief Minister of Gujarat, Smt. Anandiben Patel, had also sent a message of compliments for the publication of the unique book.

The co-author of the book, Prof. Arun Tiwari, narrated his experiences about writing the book, "I am fortunate and feel my life is blessed for standing here at the refuge of Pramukh Swami Maharaj and before the Gujarati community today. Last year, when Dr Kalam called me to Sarangpur, I had the honour of having Pramukh



Pujya Brahmavihari Swami



Prof. Arun Tiwari





Visual from 'A Tale of Two Boys': The farmer's boy from Chansad

Swami Maharaj's darshan for the first time. Thereafter, Kalam Saheb told me that it was his heartfelt wish, since long, to write a book about Pramukh Swamiji. He also told me to write the book as early as possible because if he would not be able to give the book in Pramukh Swamiji's hands, then it would be of great disappointment to him. So, I started the work. After a while Dr Kalam asked me how many pages I had written. But after a few weeks I realized I had not been able to write anything. Then I came to Ahmedabad and Pujya Brahmavihari Swami took me to Pujya Ishwarcharan Swami, who blessed me by placing his hand on my head and he gave me a *murti* of Pramukh Swami Maharaj. I took the *murti* home and sat down to type on my computer, and then words and sentences started flowing spontaneously. I used to go to Kalam Saheb's home and we'd talk for hours. Kalam Saheb would recall his memories [with Pramukh Swami]. Then I'd come home and start typing before the *murti* of Pramukh Swamiji. Then Kalam Saheb would read what I had typed. After one year the book was ready. While writing the book my feelings would well up, and great personalities like Mahatma Gandhi, Vikram Sarabhai, Nelson Mandela and others would come to mind. It was then that I realized that I was not writing the book, but there was someone writing through me. After the book

was over I went to Mahant Swami with a copy. He wrote on the book that Kalam Saheb had extracted the 'gold' in Pramukh Swami's life and included it in the book. After these blessings, not a single doubt remained in our minds about printing this book. Thereafter, we went to HarperCollins, and they printed it in a record two months.

"A few days ago I went to my mother in Meerut. I took the souvenir plate given to me by Pramukh Swami Maharaj. On seeing it, my mother said, 'Son, you have done a wonderful thing. One is an ocean of love – Pramukh Swamiji – and the other is an ocean of knowledge – Abdul Kalam. You have filled two great oceans in a small pot [book]! So, son, on seeing this work of yours, I, your mother, feel honoured. May all mothers' sons do such work' – these were her blessings."

Thereafter, there was a brief video presentation of quotes from *Transcendence* about Pramukh Swami Maharaj's and BAPS's noble messages and services to society: Akshardham attack in 2002, *appaiya* resolved and warring communities united in 1990, anti-addiction drive by BAPS children in 2007 and Pramukh Swami Maharaj's speech at the United Nations in 2000.

Then the senior sadhus of BAPS and the guests were invited onto the stage. Shri Shantanu Chaudhuri, chief copy editor of HarperCollins India, narrated his experiences about the process



Children holding *divas* sing Vedic verses prior to the book launch



Shri Shantanu Chaudhuri

of publishing the book, “It is indeed a great privilege and honour for HarperCollins to have been given the opportunity to publish the book [*Transcendence*]. This is indeed a historic book, and

I don’t use the word lightly. I have never come across an example of an ex-President of a nation, a brilliant scientist, writing about his experiences about a brilliant spiritual leader. All of us might be aware of the exceptional manner in which some of the magnificent Akshardham mandirs have come up in New Delhi, Toronto, London. Those mandirs, let me tell you, are examples of divine grace at work. And I personally feel, because I know the impossibility of bringing out a book in two months, that while editing and working on the book there was a divine grace – the grace of Swami Pramukhji working with us in making the book happen.”

The 14 stage guests were honoured with

bouquets of flowers: Shri Hemubhai Gandhi honoured Pujya Mahant Swami, Shri Parindu Bhagat honoured Pujya Dr Swami, Shri Narhari Amin honoured Pujya Ishwarcharan Swami, Shri Ajay Umat honoured the Governor of Gujarat H.E. Dr O.P Kohli, Shri Bharat Jhaveri honoured Governor of Karnataka, H.E. Vajubhai Vala, Shri Ramnikhbhai Gajera honoured the BJP President Shri Amit Shah, Shri Praveen Kotak honoured Minister of State Shri Bhupendrasinh Chudasama, Shri Sushil Agarwal honoured Minister of State Shri Saurabhbhai Dalal, Shri P. K. Lehri (IAS) honoured Prof. Arun Tiwari (co-author), Shri Devang Nanavati honoured Padmashri B.V. Doshi, Shri P.C. Thakor honoured Padmashri Dr Tejas Patel, Shri Harshad Brahmabhatt honoured Shri Sanjay Lalbhai (industrialist), Shri Satish Raval honoured Shri Pradeep Dhoot (industrialist) and Shri Sunil Talati honoured Shri Surendrabhai Patel (ex-chairman of AUDA).

Thereafter, the celebration ceremony of the book commenced with children coming from all





the ailes of the auditorium with lighted lamps in hand. While chanting Vedic mantras, some of the children came onto the stage. The ambience in the auditorium was suffused with divinity. Then balls of floating flowers appeared on the giant LED screen, climaxing with the opening of one giant flower ball to reveal the book *Transcendence*. A thunderous applause rang out from all corners of the auditorium. Immediately thereafter, all the stage guests inaugurated *Transcendence* and displayed the copies before the audience.

Shri Amit Shah, President of BJP, shared his sentiments about Pramukh Swami Maharaj, saying, “Whenever I have gone for Pramukh Swami Maharaj’s darshan, I have always had some problems in my mind. But the wonderful thing is that though I’d remain silent about them, what- ever Pramukh Swami would say resolved them



Shri Amit Shah

altogether. I believe that Pramukh Swami Maharaj has reinstated the sadhu tradition in more difficult times than Adi Shankaracharya had faced and done centuries ago. I truly believe that the Hindu tradition has all the answers to today’s problems. After 50 to 100 years from now, when the spiritual history of the world will be written, then [Pramukh Swami Maharaj’s works and] the name of BAPS will be scribed on a golden page.”

H.E. Shri Vajubhai Vala, the Governor of Karnataka, reminisced about the darshan and blessings he had received from Yogiji Maharaj and Pramukh Swami Maharaj. He said, “Abdul Kalamji has written a book about his experiences with Pramukh Swami Maharaj. A saintly figure like Kalamji writing a book on a great *sant* like Pramukh Swami Maharaj is the best work. In a country where the law of dharma (dharma-*dand*) is held to be higher



H.E. Shri Vajubhai Vala



Stage guests display the book after the launch

than the law of political power (*raj-dand*), only then can its people become cultured and happy. Due to materialism one may have money and riches, but if one is devoid of virtues like compassion, love and sympathy then that wealth is useless. Similarly, power without virtue is also worthless.

“Whenever I have met Pramukh Swamiji I have witnessed his peacefulness, love and charisma. Today, I reveal to you all that on waking up every morning and before placing my feet on the ground, I remember Pramukh Swami Maharaj when I say ‘Guru devo namaha.’”

H.E. Dr O.P. Kohli, Governor of Gujarat, addressed the occasion, “Today, we have attained a priceless book, because the protagonist of this book is a spiritual *sant*, who strives to give direction to all for living a humane life. Pujya Pramukh Swami Maharaj is the main



H.E. Dr O.P. Kohli

subject of this book. The author of this book, despite being a scientist, is a *sant*. So this book cannot be said to have been written by a scientist about a *sant*; but it is a *sant* who has written about a *sant*. That is why this book is priceless.

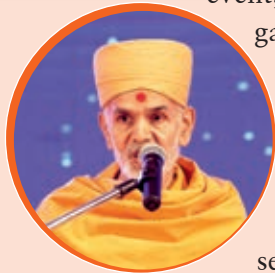
“The proximity of a spiritual person effects a transformation in one’s life. One finds peace, divinity and spirituality in the life of Pramukh Swami Maharaj. A wonderful spirit must have been born in the mind of Dr Kalam, and he has tried to include those vibrations in this book. I have as yet not had the darshan of Pramukh Swami Maharaj. He touches the hearts of all because of his virtues. He also touches others by his silence. Pramukh Swami connects the different islands of humanity through love, spirituality and service. This is his unique work.

“Dr Kalam’s book will contribute greatly in spreading the message of Pramukh Swami Maharaj in India and abroad. On this occasion, I bow to Dr Kalam and Pramukh Swami Maharaj





and wish them good health and a long life.”



Pujya Mahant Swami

Finally, Pujya Mahant Swami blessed the event, saying, “Today, we have all gathered here, so it is a divine occasion. We have all come together because of two *sants* – Dr Kalam and Swamishri. We have not only come here together physically, but all our sentiments have become one.

“On opening a page from this book, I read about Abdul Kalam meeting Nelson Mandela during his visit to South Africa in September 2004. When Dr Kalam asked him about his freedom, Mr Mandela replied that he was free from jail, but if he had harboured bitterness and hatred towards his opponents he would still feel imprisoned wherever he went. This is called transcendence. Freedom means to give up bitterness and hatred towards others. Dr Kalam has written about higher values in this book and he has seen

these higher values in Pramukh Swami Maharaj.”

In conclusion, everyone stood up to sing the national anthem. The audience dispersed with *prasad* and warm memories.

The entire event was an eloquent testimony to the spirit of volunteerism of over 1,300 BAPS volunteers. Fifteen days of rigorous effort had gone into planning, preparing and rehearsing the event. Young and middle-aged male and female volunteers had offered their untiring services in 18 different departments: stage programme, decoration, electric, audio-visual, animation, bookstore, press, public relations, transport, parking, security, crowd control, kitchen, drinking water and others.

The spectacular two-hour event left everyone amazed and inspired, and lavishing praises about the programme, discipline, management and divine ambience. Though Pramukh Swami Maharaj was not physically present, all felt his divine presence throughout the celebration. ◆

# Transcendence 'A HISTORIC BOOK'

SHANTANU CHAUDHURI

Chief Copy Editor of HarperCollins India



**S**hantanu Chaudhuri, the chief copy editor of HarperCollins India, spoke eloquently about his experiences in publishing *Transcendence* at the Convention Centre in Ahmedabad. He said, "It is indeed a great privilege and honour to be with you all this evening, and it is a great privilege and honour for HarperCollins to have been given the opportunity to publish the book. This is indeed a historic book, and I don't use the word lightly. It is historic for many reasons. For one, in all my experiences in publishing I have never come across an example of an ex-President of a nation, a brilliant scientist writing about his experiences about a brilliant spiritual leader. That alone makes it a historic book. Apart from that the numbers that we have printed of the book are record-making. I can say this with some authority that the hardback original edition of a book in India never goes beyond 5 to 10,000 copies in the first print. We have printed close to 100,000 copies of this book. And the book came out in the middle of June, and in the last fifteen days we have negotiated rights for as many as seven languages editions of the book.

Within the next few months the book will be out in Hindi, Gujarati, Malayalam, Telugu, Marathi, Kannada and Tamil. And most

importantly, our international publishers in the US and UK are keen to publish this book under their imprint Harper 360, which will make the book available in the European continent, UK and US. This is a book that deserves to be read all over the world, and it will be read all over the world.

But beyond these material elements of success of a book I think it is a book that is important for its message. All of us here have spoken about how the book brings together science and religion in a wonderful blend in today's world of materialism and consumerism. I think any book that talks about religion and spirituality is important. But more important, it talks about religion and spirituality working in the everyday life of people. A language which is not used in everyday life dies. Likewise, religion and spirituality if not applied to everyday life will make no sense. And this book actually does that through the experiences that Dr Kalam had with Pramukh Swami Maharaj. He says how BAPS and Pramukh Swami Maharaj have been working to make religion and spirituality a part and parcel of the everyday life of the nation.

I worked personally on the text, and it was for me inspiring to see the stories that have been narrated: persecution in Uganda and people getting



out from there and starting life anew. It is having faith in nothing but God, that everything will turn out well. It was a startling experience for me after all these years in publishing.

I'd like to narrate a very personal experience in the course of our work in publishing. We take about eight to ten months on average to bring out a book. There are so many books that are done at a time. Incredibly this book came out in just two months. I remember Prof. Tiwari coming to our office and giving us the manuscript on 8 April. By 15 May the book had been edited, proofread, designed, cover done, everything worked out. And by 15 June we had copies of the book. All

of us might be aware of the exceptional manner in which some of the magnificent Akshardham mandirs have come up in New Delhi, Toronto, London. Those mandirs, let me tell you, are examples of divine grace at work. And I personally feel, because I know the impossibility of bringing out a book in two months, that while editing and working on the book there was a divine grace – the grace of Swami Pramukhji working with us in making the book happen. I encourage and urge all of you to read the book and experience the divine grace I have felt when working on the book. Thank you so much for all your presence.



## 'Transcendence' Presented to Prime Minister Narendra Modi

26 June 2015, New Delhi

On 26 June 2015, at 4.30 p.m., Pujya Ishwarcharan Swami, Atmaswarup Swami and Brahmavihari Swami of BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha visited Hon. Prime Minister Narendra Modi at his residence in New Delhi to personally present him a copy of Dr APJ Abdul Kalam's new book 'Transcendence: My Spiritual Experiences with Pramukh Swamiji'. The delegation also included the co-author Prof. Arun Tiwari and the CEO of HarperCollins India, P.M. Sukumar. The Prime Minister, who has known Pramukh Swami Maharaj for many years and met him on numerous occasions,

was delighted that Dr Kalam had written such an enlightening and historic book. He also fondly reminisced the occasions on which he and Dr Kalam had collectively met Swamishri in 2002 and 2004. He added how Dr Kalam often and wholeheartedly encourages others to visit Akshardham and meet Swamishri. Himself a man of books, the Prime Minister said, "I am looking forward to reading this book which will be very useful and purposeful." He also conveyed his prayers for Swamishri's health and sought his blessings for serving the nation.

# REFLECTIONS

*Thousands of dignitaries and guests who attended the celebration of 'Transcendence' in Ahmedabad on 28 June 2015 were impressed by the content, presentation and divine ambience of the event. Reflections of a few guests are presented here.*

This was truly transcendental, an incredible event – very spiritual, very peaceful. It was beautiful, elegant and focused! People talk about smart cities and smart machines; this was a smart programme that elevated the audience into a world without ego and desires – a world of revered Pramukh Swami Maharaj and Dr. Kalam.

- Padma Shri B.V. Doshi

It felt so good to be part of such an unforgettable occasion. I had the privilege to meet Pramukh Swamiji three times but have somehow never felt what I felt today in his physical absence. For the first time I could not stop myself from slipping into a meditative state with enormous force. Now I wish so much and hope I get to be at his feet once again to put an end to my many questions. Today I felt I'm so close to my answers!

Apurva Amin (Leading Architect)

A top-most scientist and former President of India has paid rich tributes to the spiritual achievements of Pramukh Swami. The book spreads the message of peace and love. It really was a great function and I can say that all of us who attended had never seen or thought that such an atmosphere of goodwill, peace and love for mankind can be created.

- P.K. Lehri (Former Chief Secretary, Gujarat)

This a confluence of two great saints – a saint of science, Dr. Kalam, and a saint of spiritual bliss, Pramukh Swamiji. This work inspires love, respect, friendship, compassion and the righteous path of humanity in one's mind.

- P.C. Thakur  
(Director General of Police, Gujarat)

Today, a book was inaugurated – one in which two souls communicate with each other's consciousness and from that dialogue is brought forth a message for the upliftment of humanity and the whole world. And when that message is recorded by the pen of Dr. Kalam and with the blessings of Pramukh Swami Maharaj, a truly great book *Transcendence* has been placed in our hands.

- P.K. Parmar (Additional Secretary, Gujarat)

I believe Pramukh Swami Maharaj to be a divine representative of God himself. And whenever I have sat at his feet, without telling him my problems, his answers have been suitable to my problems. Pramukh Swami's spiritual guidance, which he gave to none other than our most popular president and the greatest scientist India has produced – Dr. Kalam, has been made into a book. I hope that, in the times to come, this book will serve as an inspiration and a guide to millions of us who, in our daily lives, need that inspiration.

- Devang Nanavati (Leading Advocate)

Great discipline. I've never seen a book launch function like this. I went to the launch of Abdul Kalam's book *Transcendence*. First, the parking volunteers were so humble and helpful. Inside, you are greeted with shehnai music and no chaos.

On entry, the barcode on your entry pass is scanned and an SMS is sent to the volunteers inside the auditorium to inform them of our arrival. Then you are given a bag with *prasad*, lemon water and water. You are taken to your seat. Such discipline I have never seen in any programme. This was unique. Great arrangements. I was truly impressed by the arrangements.

- Dhvanit, Radio Jockey, Radio Mirchi



# MEDIA COVERAGE

Dr APJ Abdul Kalam's visit to Sarangpur on 20 June 2015 to meet Pramukh Swami Maharaj and present to him his book, *Transcendence: My Spiritual Experiences with Pramukh Swamiji*, was widely covered by the leading print and electronic media of Gujarat.

The accounts printed by the various newspapers described the book presentation, book content, the youth assembly which Dr Kalam addressed and other relevant details. Photographs were also included in the various reports.

**Newspapers:** *Gujarat Samachar*, *Divya Bhaskar*, *Sandesh*, *Navgujarat Samay*, *Janmabhumi Pravasi*, *Naya Padkar*, *Western Times*, *Saurashtra Aspas*, *Sorathi Sur*, *Jay Hind*, *Kathiwad Post*, *Sanj Samachar* (Rajkot), *Fulchhab*, *Prabhat*, *Jansatta*, *Rajasthan Patrika* (Hindi), *Midday* (Mumbai), *Mumbai Samachar* (Mumbai), *The Times of India* (English) and *DNA* (English).

The youth assembly which Dr Kalam addressed was broadcast on ZEE TV, NDTV, ETV, TV 9, GSTV and SANDESH TV.

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The grand public celebration of *Transcendence: My Spiritual Experiences with Pramukh Swamiji* on 28 June 2015 at the Gujarat University Convention Centre in Ahmedabad was attended by many distinguished luminaries of Gujarat and received good coverage in the print, electronic and social media.

**Newspapers:** *Divya Bhaskar*, *Navgujarat Samay*, *Jansatta*, *Rajasthan Patrika*, *The Times of India* (English) and *Indian Express* (English).

**TV channels:** Door Darshan, Zee News, NDTV, India TV, TV 9, ANI, ETV, GSTV, Sandesh TV, Nirman TV (GTPL, a Gujarati news channel) and VTV. ◆





# DEPRESSION

*What is it?  
And how to manage it...*

Confucius said, “Our greatest glory is not in never falling but in rising every time we fall.”

## INTRODUCTION

A recent poll claims that most people around the world just love the colour blue, the colour of the sky.

But that’s about colour. Whether you like blue or not, the ‘blues’ engulf your life at some stage.

At a certain point of time, we feel down or have the blues. If this feeling of despair stays for quite some time, a person could be in the grip of depression, a curse of modern life.

■ Anamika was newly married into a middle class, extended Vaishnav family of 20, living in the Satellite suburb of Ahmedabad. After about six months or so, she showed signs of losing weight. Everything else was fine, but she was losing weight. Medication prescribed by the physician didn’t help. So, a psychiatrist was consulted. During one consulting session, a simple yet startling reason became known.

Since Anamika was newly married and a homemaker, all others in the family asked her

to do even the simplest chores for them. So, she was an overworked homemaker.

Housewives work many unrecorded hours a week, while depending for money on their husbands.

■ A poor, single-income couple with no kids, living in a metro city in India was happily married until the day when the wife had a craving for an *aloo-mutter* sandwich.

The couple had gone out to eat the previous week, but the wife was adamant. The husband reasoned that they couldn’t afford it so often.

But the wife would not take it. And she committed suicide for being rebuffed.

■ Sarvashreshtha Gupta, a 20-something IT professional of India went to America in search of greener pastures. But he soon realized that he could not take the rigid 100 hours-a-week work schedule. He phoned his father in India saying he wanted to come back home. His father agreed, but before he could land in India, depressive mood seized him and he ended his life.

“Suffering,” Buddha said, “is inseparable from life.” So, struggles and setbacks in life have to



be handled carefully. A depressive mood robs you of even the simple pleasures of life. Even spending a day can be challenging.

Depression is not just a sad mood. It could be more than that.

Some telltale signs of clinical depression include:

1. A person turns short-tempered, grumpy and even aggressive at times.
2. Feelings of hopelessness and helplessness.
3. Loss of sleep or sleeping too much.
4. Loss of appetite or overeating.
5. Inability to concentrate on daily tasks.
6. Thoughts that life is not worth living.
7. A negative leaning for all matters concerning you.
8. A significant loss of weight.
9. A tendency to lean towards escapist behaviour such as substance abuse, rash driving or compulsive gambling.

#### DEPRESSION LINKED TO SUICIDE

Depression, if not treated, may lead to suicide. A strong feeling of despair could make one feel that the only way out of the blues is suicide. A patient with suicidal tendencies would be preoccupied with death and dying and parts with his or her prized possessions.

#### SEEK HELP

If your problems sound overwhelming, you should not lose hope. There are people to help you out. Also, time is the best healer. One day, you will feel better to enjoy life.

#### KNOW SOMEONE WHO IS SUICIDAL?

If you find someone among

#### Emotional Skill Building

To manage stress and balance emotions, you need to strengthen your emotions. It enables you to cope with trauma and loss.

So, learn to express your emotions better and effectively.

your friends and relatives is getting suicidal, show sympathy and seek expert help. As the proverb goes, 'A stitch in time, saves nine.'

#### TYPES OF DEPRESSION

**Major:** It doesn't allow you to enjoy life and feel pleasure.

If not treated, major depression lasts for about six months or more.

**Recurrent:** It's a low grade depression when one feels moderately depressed. Though it is mild, if untreated, the symptoms could last as long as two years.

**Manic Depression:** Its symptoms include cyclical mood changes accompanied by hyperactivity, rapid speech, and little or no sleep.

#### FACTORS THAT MAY LEAD TO DEPRESSION

- Early childhood trauma or abuse.
- Stressful life experiences.
- Financial strain.
- Substance abuse.
- Unemployment or underemployment.
- Lack of social support.
- Marital or relationship problems.
- Loneliness.
- Chronic diseases or other health issues.
- Family history of depression.

#### MEN, WOMEN, TEENS AND OLDER PEOPLE

Depression affects men, women, teens and older people in different ways. They need support and treatment according to their age and gender.

**Men:** Men take depression as a sign of weakness and tend not to acknowledge feelings of hopelessness and helplessness. Therefore, they complain about sleep problems, loss of interest in work

"Driven by the cult of busyness, we work more, sleep less, and allow technology to become the prime architect of our intimacies."  
Sherry Turkle (MIT Professor)

and hobbies and irritability. Such men tend to be angry, violent and reckless in behaviour, often taking to substance abuse.

**Women:** The rates of depression in women are twice as high as they are in men which is due partly to hormonal factors relating to menstruation and menopause.

They have stronger feelings of guilt, and tend to overeat, sleep excessively and gain weight.

**Teens:** Irritability is predominant in them. They get hostile, grumpy and lose their temper.

If it is not treated, teenage depression could raise problems at home and school, result in drug abuse and even lead to homicidal violence or suicide.

**Older People:** Reasons for depression in the old include bereavement, loss of independence and health problems. Treating the old is very important since depression in them is largely associated with poor health, a high mortality rate and an increased risk of suicide.

## NOT JUST ANOTHER AILMENT

Treating depression is not as simple as having surgery if you have a tumour. It is not just the result of a chemical imbalance in the brain which can be cured with medication.

According to experts, depression is a combination of biological, psychological and social factors.

## THE CURE AND RECOVERY

Treatment for depression could vary from person to person. Antidepressants may not work. So you have to tap the many treatment options. More than the medication, it would be helpful to try social support,

1. Sometimes you just need to distance yourself from people. If they care, they'll notice. If they don't, you know where you stand.
2. People who die by way of suicide, don't want to end their lives. They want to end their pain.

lifestyle changes, emotional skills building and professional advice.

Reach out to others. Confide in them. So, your family and friends should know what ails you and in what manner they can support you.

To an extent medication or antidepressants can help. But they aren't a cure and have side effects. Some antidepressants may also cause insomnia due to their stimulating effect.

## MANAGING DEPRESSION

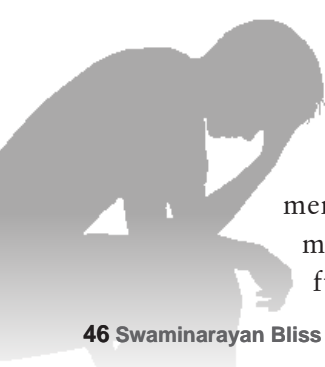
There are three most common treatments for depression. They are psychotherapy, medication and electroconvulsive therapy. The UK National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines suggest that antidepressants should not be used for mild depression as the risk-benefit ratio is poor.

Another effective way to manage depression is to practise meditation and yoga. Both means calm the mind and relax the body. Also, listening to the divine *lila* of God and his devotees (*katha*) pacifies the mind and soul. In brief, spiritual practices reduce anxiety and instil hope, confidence and inner joy.

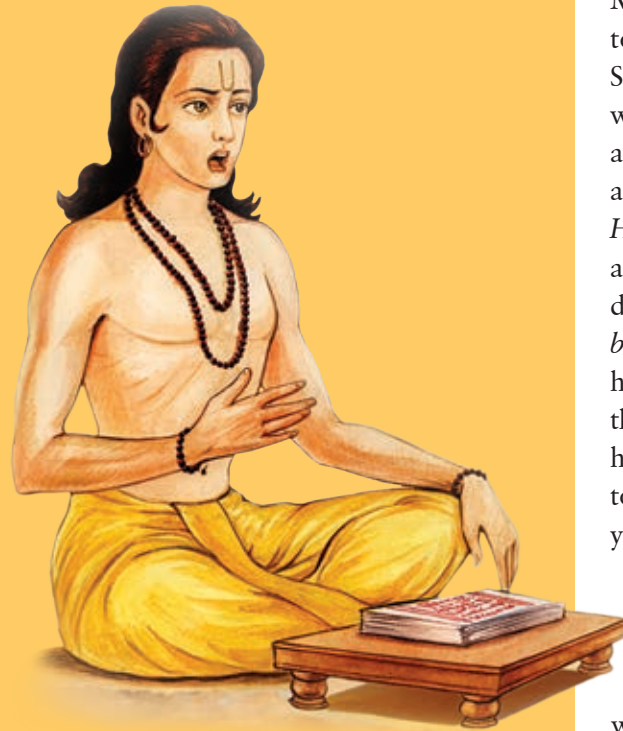
The more cluttered our lives are with work, information, entertainment, technology and other trappings of worldly success, the less we have room for authentic intimacy, sharing of life's challenges with those who really care. Until recently, the extended family and neighbours used to act as emotional buffers. Today our cities are more crowded, yet more people live alone in our cities.

– Ashish Nandy

India's Leading Social Psychologist







## Eknath

*Eknath saw God in every being and had scant regard for the caste system.*

*This often got him into conflict with the Brahmin orthodoxy.*

*Despite insurmountable obstacles he integrated the Maharashtrian society of his day*

**E**knath (1533-1606 CE), a prominent saint of Maharashtra, was responsible for integrating the Hindu society of his day. In this, he carried on the work started by his predecessors like Sant Jnaneshvar and Namdev. He lost his parents, Suryanarayan and Rukmini, at a very young age and was brought up by his grandfather, Chakrapani. Despite the personal tragedy, Eknath turned out to be a brilliant scholar from his childhood. He was invested with the sacred thread at the age of six. Even at that young age, he became acquainted with the Ramayan, the

Mahabharat and the Purans by merely listening to their recitals. He was a profound scholar in Sanskrit, Marathi and Hindi. His most famous work is *Eknathi Bhagavat*, which he began in 1570 and completed in 1580 at Kashi. His other works are *Svanthasukh*, *Chatuhsloki Bhagavat Tika*, *Hastamalak*, *Anandalahiri*, *Bhavartha Ramayan* and *Rukminisvayamvar*. As he was devoted to the divine from his childhood, he wished to acquire *brahmajnan* and began to yearn for a guru so that he could tread the true path by his grace. It is said that one night he was sitting in a Shiv mandir when he heard a voice from the sky proclaim, "Proceed to Devgarh and meet Janardan Pant, he will fulfil your desire (for a guru)."

As directed, he hastened to Devgarh and had the darshan of Janardan. The interview between the guru and his would-be disciple was out of the ordinary. Janardan asked him as to what had made him leave home and parents at such a young age. To this the young aspirant replied he had several parents in his lives and to which parents was the guru referring. The guru was amazed by the reply from one so young and decided to accept him as his disciple. In those days the guru would subject the disciple to a rigorous test, sometimes not connected with the purpose for which the intended disciple had approached him. Eknath was asked to look after the accounts. Once it so happened that the accounts did not tally. Eknath sat late into the night poring over the ledger to detect where he had gone wrong. Finally, he arrived at the right figure and felt so happy that he began to clap for joy. The clapping awakened the guru, who inquired what had made his disciple so happy. Eknath explained about the mistake in the tallying which had been troubling him. The guru retorted, "The rectification of a small sum has given you so much joy. If you detect your big mistake in this world how much more happy you would be. If you search for Bhagwan you can certainly find him, as he is not far away."

By that time the youngster had already served

him so well that Janardan wanted to help him to the maximum extent possible. The best way was to grace the youth with the darshan of his guru, Dattatreya, and that he would appear in the form of his choice. Eknath was delighted at his guru's words. On the first occasion, Dattatreya came in the guise of a Muslim fakir, but Eknath would not accept food from the fakir. The second time, Eknath was taken to the jungle. Dattatreya once again came in the dress of a fakir. This time, too, there was initial resistance on the part of Eknath, but his guru succeeded in persuading him to eat Dattatreya's leftovers. It is said that after that Dattatreya prophesied that Eknath would write *Bhavartha Ramayan*, a simplified version of the Ramayan which could be understood by common people. It is said that Shri Ram himself appeared to Eknath in his dream and commanded him to compose the *Bhavartha Ramayan*.

According to Mahipati, who wrote on the lives of great saints, Janardan felt sorry that Eknath joined him at a young age without seeking his grandparents' permission, so he asked the boy recluse to return home. This Eknath did to the delight of his aged grandparents. He married a pious girl and maintained his house to the best of his ability. Several stories are related about his hospitality. Anyone could come and have food at his house. This brought him into a head-on clash with the Brahmin orthodoxy who resented untouchables being fed at his house. This was when Eknath invoked the spirits of his ancestors at the time of *shraddha*. The Dalits were fed first to the chagrin of the Brahmin guests. As a protest they boycotted the feast. But soon they realized their mistake when the ancestral spirits were found participating in the feast.

Brahmins in those days were not allowed to mix freely with the lower caste Hindus. Those who did so faced stiff opposition. Eknath fell victim to this practice. He did not believe in such social taboos. To him everyone was equal before God. The fate of an individual is decided by what

he does and not by his social status.

An incident is often narrated to illustrate Eknath's love for living beings. Once, he was going on a pilgrimage to Rameshwaram carrying water from the Ganga, which he wanted to offer to the deity. On the way, he found a donkey dying of thirst. Without a second thought, he gave the holy water to the dying donkey to revive it. His fellow pilgrims angrily questioned, "What will you offer to Lord Rameshwara?" Eknath replied, "I have offered the holy water to Rameshwara because the same Lord resides in this donkey." He saw God everywhere and in every being. For him, saving a donkey dying of thirst was more important than reserving the water for worshipping God.

Another story speaks about his unremitting tolerance. Once, he went for a bath in the Godavari River. On returning, a Muslim spat on him. Instead of taking offence, Eknath entered the river to bathe once again. When he came out the Muslim spat on him again. Eknath bathed again without a murmur. Eknath was compelled to bathe 108 times like this. In the end, his Muslim tormentor got tired and realizing the greatness of Eknath, gave up his efforts to harass the saint and sought Eknath's forgiveness for his conduct.

Eknath knew the exact moment of his death. He prepared his disciples for it. He discarded his perfectly healthy body on the banks of the Godavari. Such was the mastery he had over his body.

#### Sources.

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# Satsang and Life as a Pilot



*Dhaval Patel recounts how he retains satsang in his career as a commercial airline pilot...*

From a young age I had nursed an ambition to become a commercial airline pilot. After completing 12<sup>th</sup> grade in Nairobi I went to Florida, USA, in 2004 for pilot training. My fees were to be sponsored by a relative, but things went awry. I was disheartened and left in a lurch. A few days later I came to know that Pramukh Swami Maharaj was presiding over a *shibir* in Orlando. I went to Swamishri and told him of my predicament. Swamishri thought for a while and blessed me, “Everything will work out.” I felt reassured and confident. Immediately thereafter my brother-in-law agreed to help me pay my fees and I started the training. I worked hard and completed the course before the stipulated period.

I returned to Nairobi and started working at the domestic airport, flying small planes. My job was to transport UN staff members to Somalia, where they provided aid and carried out infrastructure projects. The safety conditions in Somalia were quite precarious because of the local rebels. They often attacked foreign staff and planes landing for relief work. I had wanted to move on to a better job, so I applied to Kenya Airways. Many months passed by without any response. The task of landing planes in Somalia was becoming more risky and dangerous day by day. Then one morning I received a letter for the interview. On the day of the interview the plane I was going to fly to Somalia was shot down by the rebels. The captain whom I would have been with was killed. I passed my interview and got a job as a co-pilot in Kenya Airways.

The profession of an airline pilot is interesting and one also gets the benefit of perks. We get two days off after an eight-hour duty and are provided five-star accommodation. Food and drinks are on the house. Being a *satsangi* I strictly follow the satsang *niyams*. Prior to flying I always start by praying, “*Shrimad sadguna shālinam...*” and remember Maharaj and Swami. I chant the Swaminarayan mantra before putting my hands on the joystick and controls.

I was initiated into satsang during my childhood days. I regularly attended the weekly *bal sabha* at the mandir in Nairobi. Ever since, I have been doing my puja daily. I am a strict vegetarian, and abstain from drinking and eating onions and garlic. I believe you can practise the *niyams* of our *sampradaya* wherever you are and whatever profession you are in. If you have the will you can abide by the *niyams*. My associates drink when off duty and they have often invited me to join them, but I’ve never complied. I sing the *cheshta* daily. There have been occasions where I’ve had to sing the *cheshta* at 6.00 a.m., after reaching my destination. During such occasions, my puja or *cheshta* does get protracted for at least an hour because of fatigue and dozing. I’ve made it a point not to miss doing puja<sup>1</sup> and singing the *cheshta* wherever I am. I do the *tilak-chandlo* daily and observe *ekadashi*.

*(Contd. on pg. 53)*

1. Once Dhaval was flying a passenger plane from Kenya to China. On reaching there, he realized he had forgotten his puja. He sent a message home to send his puja on the next flight. Till his puja arrived, 24 hours later, Dhaval fasted as per the injunctions of the Shikshapatri. Only after performing his puja did he take food and water.

# Pujya Mahant Swami's SATSANG VICHARAN

March-June 2015, Asia-Pacific

With the blessings of Pramukh Swami Maharaj, Pujya Mahant and *sant mandal* embarked upon satsang *vicharan* in the Asia-Pacific region. The *vicharan*, from 31 March to 20 June 2015, spanned across seven countries: Singapore, Australia, New Zealand, Kampuchea (Cambodia), Thailand (Bangkok), China (Shanghai and Hong Kong) and Indonesia (Bali, Jogjakarta and Jakarta). Accompanying Pujya Mahant Swami were Rajendra Swami, Aksharkirtan Swami, Adarshswarup Swami, Shrutipriya Swami and Munichintan Swami. They were also joined by Paramchintan Swami and Adarshmuni Swami, who travel all the year round in the Asia-Pacific countries. The highlights of the satsang *vicharan* were two *murti-pratishtha* ceremonies, satsang assemblies, *shibir*s, cultural programmes, *parayans* and kirtan bhakti programmes.

The *vicharan* report in brief is as follows.

## AUSTRALIA

### 2-9 April, Perth

After a one-day halt at Singapore on 1 April, Pujya Mahant Swami and *sant mandal* arrived at Perth on 2 April. On 3 and 4 April a two-day



Kirtan bhakti in Perth

satsang *shibir*, 'Kariye Raji Ghanshyam', was held for devotees. The *shibir* programme included speeches on *niyam*-dharma, pride for satsang and loyalty, skits, videos and Swamishri's blessings. A kirtan bhakti evening was also attended by the chairmen of various Indian social organizations.

### 9-16 April, Adelaide

On 9 April, a welcome assembly and *bal-kishore din* and *mahila din* programmes were held. On 11 April, the *murti-pratishtha yagna* and *nagar-yatra* of the *murtis* for the newly built *hari* mandir were carried out. On 12 April, Pujya Mahant Swami performed the *murti-pratishtha* rituals of the new BAPS *hari* mandir, during which the premier of South Australia, Hon. Jay Weatherill, had also attended. In the evening, a grand cultural programme was performed by children and youths.

On 13 April, a one-day seminar was held for all BAPS *karyakars* of Australia and New Zealand. On 14 April, an assembly was held to felicitate the *karyakars* of Adelaide.

### 16-23 April, Sydney

From 17 to 18 April, a satsang *shibir*, 'Kariye



Murti-pratishtha in Adelaide



Raji Ghanshyam’, was attended by 620 devotees. Simultaneously, a *shibir* for *balaks* and *balikas* was held on the theme ‘My Mandir, My Home’.

On 19 April, a seminar on ‘Manage Yourself’ was held for youths, in which 300 youths participated. From 19 to 22 April, Pujya Mahant Swami held a *parayan* on ‘Purushottam Boliya Prite’.

**23-29 April, Melbourne**

On 25 April, a cultural programme was held in the presence of Pujya Mahant Swami. On 26 April, the *kalash-dhaja mahotsav* of the *hari* mandir was held. In addition, *bal-yuva shibirs* were also organized.

**NEW ZEALAND**

On 29 April, Pujya Mahant Swami and the *sant mandal* arrived in Auckland. A welcome assembly was held at the BAPS Swaminarayan *hari* mandir in Auckland.

**30 April-2 May, Rotorua**

On 1 May, a *kirtan bhakti* programme and a *sagar-yatra* (boat-procession) were held. On the next day Pujya Mahant Swami performed the *murti-pratishtha* rituals at the new BAPS *hari* mandir, during which Mayor Stephanie Chadwick, MP Todd McClay and other dignitaries had attended.

**2-5 May, Hamilton**

Satsang assemblies were held in Hamilton.



‘Kariye Raji Ghanshyam’ *shibir*, Sydney



Group photo after the *shibir* ‘My Mandir, My Home’, Sydney



Mahant Swami performs pujan of mandir *kalash*, Melbourne



Mahant Swami performs the *murti-pratishtha*, Rotorua



Mahant Swami blesses a satsang assembly, Rotorua



Balaks perform in satsang assembly, Brisbane



Satsang assembly, Christchurch



Kirtan bhakti programme, Darwin



Mahapuja rituals in a satsang hall, Singapore



Satsang assembly, Hong Kong

### 3-9 May, Auckland

Satsang *shibirs*, *parayans* and a cultural event were organized.

### 10-13 May, Christchurch

Satsang *shibirs*, *parayans* and a cultural event were held.

### 13-18 May, Wellington

On 15 May, Pujya Mahant Swami blessed the Yogi Jayanti celebration in Wellington. A kirtan bhakti programme was held during the Sunday satsang *sabha*.

## AUSTRALIA

### 18-25 May, Brisbane

A welcome assembly, *sant parayan* and satsang *shibirs* were organized.

On 20 May, a satsang picnic (*dabra utsav*) and kirtan bhakti programme were held at Gold Coast.

On 23 and 24 May, a cultural event and Pramukh Varni Din celebrations were held in Brisbane.

### 25-27 May, Darwin

Pujya Mahant Swami blessed satsang assemblies and the *sant mandal* performed a kirtan bhakti programme.

### 27 May-1 June, Singapore

Pujya Mahant Swami performed the *mahapuja* rituals to sanctify a hall purchased for conducting the weekly satsang assembly. On 31 May, many



dignitaries and devotees attended the welcome assembly to honour Pujya Mahant Swami and the *sant mandal*.

### 1-3 June, Kampuchea (Cambodia)

Pujya Mahant Swami and the *sant mandal* visited the Angkor Wat and other ancient mandirs in Kampuchea.

### 3-7 June, Bangkok (Thailand)

Satsang and morning *parayans* were held for aspirants.

### 8-15 June, Hong Kong

A *parayan* in Hindi was held and the first *patotsav* of the BAPS *hari* mandir was celebrated in Pujya Mahant Swami's presence.

### 9-10 June, China

(Contd. from pg. 49)

On several occasions while flying at night, with nothing but the vast sky and myriad stars, I've had darshan of Shriji Maharaj and Pramukh Swami Maharaj showering flower petals in the night sky. I consider myself blessed for the divine darshan and for the fact that they are always with me. Whenever my schedules permit I go for darshan at the BAPS mandir in Nairobi and also meet the

A satsang assembly was held in Shanghai and Pujya Mahant Swami and *sant mandal* visited the Buddha temple in Wunshi.

### INDONESIA

### 16-18 June, Bali

A satsang assembly was held at a well-wisher's home.

### 19-20 June, Jogjakarta and Jakarta

A one-day *parayan* was held.

Pujya Mahant Swami and the *sant mandal* returned to New Delhi on 21 June.

In summary, the 80-day *vicharan* included seven *shibirs*, two leadership seminars, two *murti-pratishtha* ceremonies, inauguration of a satsang *sabha* in Shanghai, *padhramanis* and personal counselling. ♦

sadhus. I believe satsang protects one from vices and gives confidence, focus and the enthusiasm to do one's duties properly. Over the years I've realized the benefits of satsang and following *niyams*. In addition, I believe that having a bona fide guru enables one to weather the storms of life and live a meaningful spiritual life. I am greatly indebted to Bhagwan Swaminarayan, guru Pramukh Swami Maharaj and his sadhus. ♦

## CHATURMAS NIYAMS

27 July to 22 November 2015

As instructed by Bhagwan Swaminarayan in the Shikshapatri and by the wish of Pramukh Swami Maharaj, devotees should undertake extra spiritual observances during the four holy months of *chaturmas*. This year *chaturmas* is from Ashadh *sud* 11 (27 July 2015) to Kartak *sud* 11 (22 November 2015). To please Bhagwan Swaminarayan and 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 (15 August to 13 September).
2. Extra *malas*, *dandvats*, *pradakshinas* as per one's convenience and faith.
3. Daily read one extra Vachanamrut and five Swami-ni Vato.

4. Reading, for elder devotees: 'Bhagwan Swaminarayan Jivancharitra', Parts 1 and 2; 'Brahmasannidhi 2013'
5. Reading, for Youths: 'Jivan Pari-mal' and 'Sarvopari Bhagwan Swaminarayan' (Note: 'Brahmasannidhi 2013' will be available in BAPS bookstalls after Janmashtmi)
6. In accordance with the wish of senior sadhus listen to 'Pramukh Swami Maharaj's Amrutvani', Samput 3 or 4.
7. Inspire five people to give up addictions, attend satsang *sabha* and conduct a daily *ghar sabha*.

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

# Vicharan

PRAMUKH SWAMI MAHARAJ'S

April 2015, Sarangpur



Swamishri inaugurates a drama DVD, *Kuldipak*

## 3, Friday

Swamishri gave Nirmalbhairav *sadhak* the *parshad diksha* and re-named him as Dashrath Bhagat. Prior to the final *diksha* rituals a *mahapuja* was held in a Yagnapurush Mandapam (assembly hall).

## 15, Wednesday

Swamishri performed the *murti-pratishtha* rituals of *arti* and *mantra-pushpanjali* of the *murtis* for the newly built BAPS *hari* mandirs in Poshina and Hatharva villages (Sabarkantha district). Swamishri touched the *suvarna shalaka* (gold-tipped ritual stick) on each of the *murtis* and infused the presence of the Divine. Thereafter, he blessed the devotees.

## 16, Thursday

Swamishri performed the *murti-pratishtha* rituals of *arti* and *mantra-pushpanjali* of the *murtis* for the newly built BAPS *hari* mandir in Biliya (Mahesana district) and of *murtis* which will replace the existing *murtis* at the BAPS *hari* mandir in Samoj (Atladra region). Swamishri blessed the devotees.

## 19, Sunday

Swamishri inaugurated a drama DVD, *Kuldipak*, produced by the BAPS Children's Central Activity Cell and published by Swaminarayan Aksharpith. The DVD portrays parent-teenage relations on the central theme of inculcating spiritual values in children.

## 20, Monday

Swamishri performed the *murti-pratishtha* rituals of *arti* and *mantra-pushpanjali* of *murtis* for the newly built BAPS *hari* mandir at the Akshar-Purushottam Chhatralaya (APC) and *murtis* for the new BAPS *hari* mandir in Ambardi (Gadhada region). Thereafter, Swamishri blessed the devotees.

## 24, Friday; 99<sup>th</sup> Patotsav of Sarangpur Mandir

After the *mangala arti* at 6.00 a.m. senior sadhus commenced performing the *patotsav* rituals amidst the singing of Vedic mantras and *abhishek* of the *murtis*.

About 8.00 a.m. Swamishri arrived for Thakorji's darshan at the mandir. After doing darshan Swamishri performed *panchamrut abhishek* of the *chal murtis* of Shri Akshar-Purushottam Maharaj. Thereafter, Swamishri gave darshan to sadhus and devotees at Pramukh Darshan Vatika.

From 3.30 to 4.30 p.m. the *patotsav mahapuja* was held in the presence of senior sadhus in the Yagnapurush Mandapam. At 4.30 p.m. the celebration assembly commenced at Pramukh Darshan Vatika. The programme highlights were as follows:

- **Speech:** Atmatrupt Swami talked about the





Swamishri participates in a *yagna* ritual as part of the launching of the Shatabdi Celebrations of Sarangpur mandir



Swamishri presides over the launching of the Shatabdi Celebrations

glory of Sarangpur mandir and the initial construction period.

- **Speech:** Aksharcharan Swami talked about the challenges and difficulties faced during the mandir construction.
- **Drama:** Youths of Botad Satsang *mandal* enacted the difficult times during the construction work.
- **Audio:** An audio blessing of Yogiji Maharaj narrating the situation during construction of Sarangpur mandir was relayed.
- **Speech:** Narayanmuni Swami talked about the feelings of sadhus and devotees involved in the mandir construction.
- **Speech:** Pujya Kothari Bhaktipriya Swami elaborated on how everyone could repay their debt to Shastriji Maharaj for building the Sarangpur mandir.
- **Speech:** Pujya Ghanshyamcharan Swami talked about the history and progress of the mandir after its consecration.
- **Speech:** Pujya Viveksagar Swami talked about the staunch faith of the BAPS gurus.
- **Speech:** Pujya Mahant Swami talked about how everyone should celebrate the mandir centenary celebrations.

At 7.00 p.m. Swamishri arrived in the celebration assembly. He was welcomed with the sounds of *jais*, blowing of conch shells and festive music. Youths waved BAPS flags and performed a

welcome dance on the bhajan, “*Mandir Shatabdi Mahotsav āje Sarangpur ujavā...*” Thereafter youths performed a drama on the “Glory of Sarangpur”. At 7.20 p.m. Swamishri inaugurated the Sarangpur centenary celebrations logo on an ipad. Then Swamishri graced all the devotees from the main stage.

Students of the Vidyamandir in Sarangpur performed a traditional dance on the *shatabdi* theme bhajan. This was followed by brilliant displays highlighting various programmes to be held as part of the mandir centenary year: anti-addiction campaign, *maha-annakat*, *yagna* for world peace, *jnan-satra parayans*, mandir darshan *yatra*, *padyatra*, medical camps, blood donation camps, cultural programmes, tree-planting drive, bhakti-*yagna*, cleanliness programmes, a procession in Botad and a grand celebration of Swamishri’s 95<sup>th</sup> birthday.

In conclusion, *arti* was collectively performed by all and a traditional dance was presented by the youths of Bhavnagar Satsang *mandal*.

## 27, Monday

Swamishri performed the *murti-pratishtha* rituals of the *murti* of Ghanshyam Maharaj to be installed at the BAPS *hari* mandir in Detroit (USA). Swamishri placed his thumb on the chest of the *murti* and then offered sweet items as *thal*. ♦

(Translation of excerpts from Swamishri’s daily report in Gujarati)



## India

### NEW BAPS MANDIRS

**Bhersam (District: Bharuch), 15-16 January 2015**



Pramukh Swami Maharaj had previously visited and sanctified Bhersam and with regular visits by sadhus from the BAPS Mandir in Bharuch, satsang flourished.

Shri Manubhai generously donated his land to build a mandir, which was completed in ten months.

On 15 January over 200 *yajmans* participated in a Yagna for World Peace. In the afternoon, the *murtis* were paraded in a grand *nagar-yatra* through the village.

On 3 May 2014, Swamishri had previously performed the Vedic *murti-pratishtha* rituals of the *murtis*. And on 16 January 2015, Ghanshyamcharan Swami ritually installed the *murtis* in the new mandir.

### Hatharva (District: Sabarkantha), 19-20 April 2015

Since Pramukh Swami Maharaj's visit to Hatharva in 1982, satsang has steadily grown. Shri Hasmukhbhai Patel donated land to build a new BAPS mandir, which was completed in 11 months.



On 15 April 2015, Pramukh Swami Maharaj had performed the Vedic *murti-pratishtha* rituals in Sarangpur of the *murtis* for the new *hari* mandir.

Then, on 19 April, the *murtis* were taken in a grand *nagar-yatra* through the town.

On the morning of 20 April, a Yagna for World Peace was held and then Bhaktipriya (Kothari) Swami ritually consecrated the *murtis* in the new *hari* mandir.

### Magnaad (District: Jambusar), 22-23 April 2015



On 22 April 2015, over 200 devotees participated in the Vedic Yagna for World Peace. In the afternoon, the *murtis* were devoutly paraded in a grand *nagar-yatra* through the town.

Previously, on 14 October 2014, Pramukh Swami Maharaj had performed the Vedic *murti-pratishtha* rituals of the *murtis* for the new *hari*



mandir. On 23 April 2015, these *murtis* were ritually consecrated in the new *hari* mandir by Pujya Tyagvallabh Swami.

### **Koyli (District: Vadodara), 24-25 April 2015**

On Maghshar *sud* 10, Samvat 1974 (23 December 1917), Shastriji Maharaj was honoured in a *nagar-yatra* on a decorated elephant by the devotees of Koyli.

The town of Koyli has also been blessed by the frequent visits of Yogiji Maharaj and Pramukh Swami Maharaj.

To commemorate the opening of the newly built BAPS *hari* mandir here, over 375 *yajman* couples participated in a Yagna for World Peace on 24 April 2015. Thereafter, in the afternoon, a grand *nagar-yatra* of the *murtis* was held through the main streets of the town.

Previously, on 14 October 2014, Pramukh Swami Maharaj had performed the Vedic *murti-pratishtha* rituals of the *murtis* for the new *hari* mandir.

On 25 April 2015, these *murtis* were ritually consecrated in the new *hari* mandir by Pujya Tyagvallabh Swami.

### **Amlad (District: Taloda, Khandesh), 25-26 April 2015**

To mark the opening of the newly built BAPS *hari* mandir, 220 devotees participated in a Yagna for World Peace on 25 April 2015.

In the afternoon a grand *nagar-yatra* of the *murtis*, seated on six decorated floats, took place through the town's main streets.

Previously, on 20 January 2014, Pramukh Swami Maharaj had performed the Vedic *murti-pratishtha* rituals of the *murtis*.

On 26 April 2015, these *murtis* were ritually consecrated in the new *hari* mandir by Pujya Bhaktipriya (Kothari) Swami.

### **Vidyanagar, 25-26 April 2015**

Vallabh Vidyanagar is renowned throughout



Gujarat as an excellent academic centre. Shastriji Maharaj, Yogiji Maharaj and Pramukh Swami Maharaj have all sanctified the city on countless occasions.

In 1945, Yogiji Maharaj had expressed his wish of establishing a 'Brahmavidya College'. He regularly visited students here and began a regular satsang *sabha* which was held at the Ramkrishna Mission Hall and, on some occasions, at the V.P. Science College.

Thereafter, on the land donated by Shri Ambalalbhai (Kalyan Yojna), Yogiji Maharaj began the building of a students' hostel on 27 April 1964.

On 20 June 1965, Yogiji Maharaj inaugurated the hostel. Then on 7 August 1967, Yogiji Maharaj performed the *murti-pratishtha* of a new BAPS *hari* mandir adjacent to the hostel.

Subsequently, on 7 December 1993, Pramukh Swami Maharaj inaugurated a new *hari* mandir and assembly hall.

To cater for the continued expansion of the hostel, and the increased number of resident students, a new *hari* mandir has been built.

The Vedic *murti-pratishtha* rituals of the *murtis* for this new *hari* mandir were performed by Pramukh Swami Maharaj on 20 April 2015 in Sarangpur.

On 25 April, a Yagna for World Peace was held and on 26 April, Pujya Tyagvallabh Swami ritually consecrated the new *murtis* in the new *hari* mandir.

### **Biliya (District: Patan), 23-24 April 2015**

Decades ago, distinguished devotees Maganlal



and Ambalal – who were disciples of Bhagatiji Maharaj – frequently visited the village of Biliya to establish satsang.

Years later, in 1980, BAPS sadhus visited the town in the build-up to Bhagwan Swaminarayan’s bicentenary celebrations. Satsang was consolidated and flourished with continued visits by the *sadguru* and other sadhus.

Subsequently, with the efforts of Chhagan Shivram’s family and other devotees, the mandir was built. They were enthusiastically supported by other town residents, who despite having relocated to Surat, came in groups of 15 to stay for two weeks at a time and help in building the *hari* mandir.

Prior to the *murti-pratishtha*, from 17 to 23 April, a *parayan* was conducted by Prabhucharan Swami, which was attended daily by around 5,000 people.

On 23 April, 850 *yajmans* participated in a Yagna for World Peace, seated around 101 *yagna kundis*. In the afternoon the *murtis* to be installed were taken on a *nagar-yatra* through the town.

Pramukh Swami Maharaj had previously performed the *murti-pratishtha* rituals of the *murtis* on 16 April 2015 in Sarangpur.

On the morning of 24 April, these *murtis* were ritually consecrated in the new *hari* mandir by Dr Swami.

### **Samoj (District: Jambusar), 24-25 May 2015**

Samoj has been sanctified by the visits of Shastriji Maharaj, Yogiji Maharaj and Pramukh Swami Maharaj. Satsang was established and Pramukh Swami Maharaj consecrated a *hari*

mandir here on 18 February 2005.

As part of the mandir’s 10th anniversary celebrations, new *murtis* were consecrated. Over 300 *yajmans* participated in a Yagna for World Peace on 24 May 2015. In the afternoon, the new *murtis* were taken in a grand *nagar-yatra*.

Previously, on 16 April 2015, Swamishri had performed the Vedic *murti-pratishtha* rituals of the new *murtis*, and on 25 May, Tyagvallabh Swami ritually consecrated the new *murtis* in the existing *hari* mandir.

### **SATSANG SHIBIR**

#### **Dhulia, Maharashtra, 28-30 May 2015**

Over 450 BAPS devotees attended the three-day *shibir* in the presence of Dr Swami.

Based on the theme ‘Yagnapurush Sukhkari’, the devotees were inspired to progress spiritually by learning about the life and work of Shastriji Maharaj. The *shibir* featured speeches, skits, audio-visual presentations, question-answer sessions and other inspiring activities.

### **GOVERNOR OF GUJARAT VISITS AKSHAR MANDIR**

#### **Gondal, India, 16 April 2015**

The Governor of Gujarat, H.E. O.P. Kohli visited Akshar Mandir, Gondal. At the Akshar Deri, Divyapurush Swami welcomed the Governor by applying a kumkum *chandlo* on his forehead, tying a *nada-chhadi* on his wrist and garlanding him, while students from the BAPS *gurukul* chanted Vedic mantras. The sadhus prayed for the Governor’s good health and success. They





explained the glory and importance of the Akshar Deri and the significance of performing *pradakshinas* here. Thereafter, the Governor performed circumambulations around the Akshar Deri. Then, the Governor had darshan of all three shrines of the main mandir and performed *arti* of Shri Ghanshyam Maharaj.

### **YUVA SHIBIRS**

#### **Best Friend Forever: Books**

**Gujarat & Mumbai, India, 27 April -7 May 2015**



During the summer vacations, over 15,350 *yuvaks* and *yuvatis* participated in the annual one-day *yuva shibirs*, which were held at 21 BAPS centres in Gujarat and Mumbai.

The *shibir* theme, ‘Best Friend Forever: Books’, focused on reading as a life-long friend, whose companionship should be developed and strengthened.

Through inspiring speeches by senior, experienced and learned sadhus, specially scripted theme-oriented skits, quizzes, theme-related games and activities, and discussions, the youths learnt the importance of reading good books and articles for their personal, professional and spiritual progress.

The youths were also encouraged to appear for the annual Satsang Examinations, since this would help them develop a better and deeper understanding of satsang history, traditions, principles and festivals.

### **BAL SAMPARK YAGNA**

**India, 1-31 May 2015**



Approximately 5,500 BAPS Children’s Wing volunteers visited more than 45,000 children and their families over one month to personally motivate children in studies and satsang and to meet their families. This Bal Sampark Yagna took place in 4,200 *bal* and *balika mandals* across Gujarat and in major cities across India. At each home, the volunteers spoke to the families about their personal satsang and spent time with the children and parents to help the children improve in their studies. Each family was also shown a short video to help increase the children’s confidence.

To conclude the visit, each child was given a ‘Goal Card,’ on which the child set study targets for the year. Afterwards, the volunteers and the family prayed together for the child’s success.

### **YUVA SHIBIR**

#### **Theme: ‘Eni Rite Reet’ – ‘His Way’**

**Sarangpur, 22-24 May 2015**

Over 1,750 *yuvaks* and *yuvatis* from Vadodara and Bharuch gathered in Sarangpur for this special 3-day *shibir*, which Pramukh Swami Maharaj inaugurated by lighting the *divo*.

Based on the theme ‘Eni Rite Reet’ – ‘His Way’



– the *shibir* revealed to the youths that the way of the Satpurush is the most ideal path to follow in life to experience peace, stability and fulfillment. The youths learnt that the spiritual values taught by the Satpurush enable them to tackle any life situations.

Topics such as the all-doership of God, divinity of God, daily personal puja, daily satsang reading, observing *niyams* and dharma, appropriate use of mobiles and internet, preserving traditions and others were presented to the youths through speeches by senior and experienced sadhus, audio-visual presentations, skits, and question-answer sessions. An evening session of bhajans was also presented by the sadhus.

The highlight of the *shibir* was the regular darshan of Swamishri throughout the three days.

At the conclusion of the *shibir*, the youths pledged to strengthen their satsang and observance of *niyams*.

### SATSANG READING COMPETITION

India, 31 May & 7 June 2015

A Satsang Reading Competition was organized across Gujarat in which youths participated in two groups based on age: 14-18 years – Nilkanth and 19-27 years – Sahajanand. Youths in the Nilkanth group were tested on ‘Kishore Satsang Prarambha’ and youths in the Sahajanand group were tested on ‘Kishore Satsang Pravesh’.

The competition involved three parts: (a) written test (b) oral and (c) *prasang* narration (one for Nilkanth group and two for Sahajanand). Youths

were ranked according to their total scores.

The competitions were held separately for *yuvaks* and *yuvatis* in two phases. First, on 31 May 2015, 6,650 *yuvaks-yuvatis* at 70 BAPS centres participated in the *kshetriya* (regional) competitions. Based on their performance, *yuvaks* and *yuvatis* from each region were selected to compete in the next phase. In the second phase, on 7 June 2015, 4,800 *yuvaks-yuvatis* competed at 28 centres in the *antar-kshetriya* (inter-regional) competitions.

The *intra*-regional and inter-regional events served to strengthen satsang knowledge amongst these youngsters while also keeping alive a healthy spirit of competition.

### DIGNITARIES VISIT SWAMINARAYAN AKSHARDHAM, NEW DELHI

14 June 2015

The Hon. Luke Foley, the Leader of the Opposition in New South Wales (NSW), Australia, Mr Daniel Mookhey, a Member of the NSW Legislative Council and the NSW Parliament’s first MP of Australian-Indian origin, and other delegates were welcomed in a traditional Indian manner on their visit to Swaminarayan Akshardham.

They then went to the Mayur Dwar (Peacock Gate), Swaminarayan Akshardham Mandir, Gajendra Pithika (Elephant Plinth) and Sanskruti Darshan boatride. They also offered prayers for world peace and harmony by performing *abhishek* on the sacred *murti* of Shri Neelkanth Varni. In the evening they saw the Sahaj Anand Water Show.





Before departing, Hon. Luke Foley wrote, “Thank you for receiving us at Swaminarayan Akshardham and for your most gracious hospitality. The memories of this wonderful special place will stay with me forever. God bless you all.”

Hon. Daniel Mookhey wrote, “The Akshardham has meaning to all Indians including Indians in Australia. As an Australian politician of Hindu descent, my visit to Akshardham will stay with me as I do my duties.”

**18 June 2015**



Tanzania’s President Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, along with Tanzania’s First Lady Salma Kikwete and a 50-member delegation visited Swaminarayan Akshardham.

After the traditional welcome, the delegation were taken to see the Mayur Dwar, Swaminarayan Akshardham Mandir, Gajendra Pithika, and Neelkanth Darshan and Sanskruti Darshan exhibitions. In addition, they offered prayers for world peace and harmony by performing *abhishek* on the sacred *murti* of Shri Neelkanth Varni.

Commenting on his experience, President Jakaya Kikwete wrote, “Thank you for the

opportunity to visit this holy and marvelous place. I am short of words to express my feelings. I am simply very impressed with the work that has gone into creating this temple.”

## UK & Europe

### BRITISH PRIME MINISTER DAVID CAMERON VISITS NEASDEN TEMPLE

**London, 2 May 2015**



The Rt. Hon. Prime Minister David Cameron MP visited BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir, London on Saturday 2 May 2015 in the run-up to the general elections.

In his speech to the assembly after visiting the main mandir sanctum and before meeting several of the worshippers, he said, “I go around the country, I see our iconic buildings and statues – Stonehenge, the Angel of the North, Big Ben. And I’ll tell you what: Neasden Mandir is one of them; one of our great British landmarks. The first traditional Hindu temple built in Europe wasn’t in Germany, or France, or Spain. It was here in Britain – right here in Neasden – and I’m so proud of that.

“I know this is a big year for you – the temple’s 20th anniversary. I think of everything that went into creating it: the 3,000 tons of Bulgarian limestone, the 1,200 tons of Italian marble, the 1,500 sculptors in India, the countless hours of volunteering by young and old. It really was a labour of love – and it really is a thing of beauty, a marvel. And I know the celebrations here this summer will be equally spectacular. The swamis

and trustees here certainly know how to organize the best show in town.

“You know, I come here, and there’s a lot that stands out – the dedication of the volunteers, the music, the dance and language classes, the sheer size of the congregation. But for me what stands out most is this: the values. British Hindu values.”

The Prime Minister concluded by saying, “I want to end by sharing some personal ambitions with you. I want to visit some of the temples you are building in America. I want to see your iconic Akshardham monument in Delhi – I haven’t got round to visiting yet, but I will definitely make it there.”

### **ELDERLY APPRECIATION DAY** **BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir** **London, UK, 10 May 2015**

As part of the Mandir’s 20th anniversary celebrations, many events have been organized to thank various groups of people for their continued support and commitment.

Central to its establishment and various ongoing activities has been the dedicated support of elderly volunteers. Thus, a special event was organized at the Mandir to celebrate their efforts in helping build the Mandir over 20 years ago and to appreciate their dedicated services to this day.

Upon arrival, each guest had a photograph taken with the Mandir in the backdrop, which was later gifted to them as a memento of their visit.

The senior volunteers were then entertained by musicians, comedians, a colourful dance, various games and presentations, and a magic show, before being treated to a sumptuous vegetarian meal.

Sadhus and trustees of the Mandir also offered their personal notes of appreciation, thanking everyone for their invaluable contribution over the years.

The event was thoroughly enjoyed by all and many gave their personal testimonies.

### **NEIGHBOURS APPRECIATION DAY** **BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir** **London, UK, 21 May 2015**



BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir in London has fostered a profound sense of community spirit since its inauguration in August 1995.

As part of the 20th anniversary celebrations, more than 150 local residents, including representatives from the three local schools, businesses (including IKEA, Tesco and Europcar), staff at the nearby health centre, clergy from the local churches, and the neighbourhood police were invited to the Mandir.

Guests were welcomed and personally looked after by a team of dedicated volunteers. Upon arrival, each had their photograph taken with the Mandir in the backdrop. This photo was later presented to them as a memento of their visit.

The visitors enjoyed a special guided tour which included an exhibition explaining the various activities organized by the Mandir. After a video about the Mandir’s making and its current role as a hub of community services, everyone was again thanked by the Board of Trustees for their years of support and friendship, stretching back over 33 years in some cases.

A sumptuous vegetarian meal followed during which neighbours shared more of their personal experiences of living near the ‘Neasden Temple’. They departed with a greater understanding of the Mandir’s local, national and international contributions and a deeper sense of pride and appreciation for this iconic building in their neighbourhood.



One of the residents later shared: “Thank you for a wonderful evening. You made us all feel very special and part of your community. Everyone we met could not do enough for us and appeared happy that we were with you all. The Mandir is an amazing place, one of the most beautiful places I have ever seen.”

### FAMILY SHIBIR

Edinburgh, Scotland, 3 May 2015



More than 60 adults and 20 children gathered at Stoneyhill Community Centre in Edinburgh, Scotland for an enlightening one-day family *shibir* in the presence of sadhus from BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir, London.

The programme was titled ‘My Family, My Satsang’, which explored practical methods of developing harmony and understanding between family members.

The content was delivered through insightful discourses from sadhus and creative multimedia presentations. Younger children were also educated through specially tailored activities and games.

In addition, the *shibir* included a family team-building activity, family discussions in which they shared their thoughts and learning experiences, and a question and answer session with the sadhus.

The attendees also learnt about Pramukh Swami Maharaj’s principles and guidelines for family unity.

At the end the participants pledged to imbibe these teachings to strengthen their family harmony.

### FAMILY HARMONY SEMINARS

UK, 18-19 April 2015



As part of the on-going 20th anniversary celebrations of London Mandir, three seminars fostering family harmony were organized around the UK in the presence of sadhus from India, including Pujya Ishwarcharan Swami.

The seminars were held at the BAPS Swaminarayan mandirs in London and Leicester on Saturday, 18 April and in Manchester on Sunday, 19 April 2015. They aimed to bring families closer together by helping to improve communication, enhance understanding and strengthen unity.

Each day-long seminar featured insightful speeches, video presentations, family discussions and teambuilding activities, a family photograph session, interactive discussions tailored for different age groups, and video blessings from Pramukh Swami Maharaj and senior sadhus.

Ishwarcharan Swami spoke of the importance of mutual understanding, patience, flexibility and tolerance as the bedrock of a sturdy family bond.

He emphasized that an open mind and a forgiving heart are essential to keeping family relationships firm and healthy.

Swamishri’s video blessings reinforced the messages imbibed throughout the day providing a fitting conclusion to each highly educational and inspiring seminar.

Over 1,100 such individuals benefitted from the three seminars in the UK.

**KISHORE DIN AND RETREAT**  
**Paris, France, 28 April-1 May 2015**



More than 450 devotees gathered at Espace Noisy Le Sec, Paris for an enlightening Kishore Din that lucidly explored the positive impact of Satsang in Paris through an informative programme of creative videos, insightful dramas and lively devotional songs.

The programme began with the arrival of Shri Harikrishna Maharaj, who was adorned in beautiful hand-made French attire and accessories, and welcomed by traditional French accordion music.

This was followed by a vibrant traditional dance and devotional singing. A series of sketches supported by videos illustrated the benefits of satsang to the local communities in Paris.

Sadhus discussed the unity and dedication of youths, sharing inspiring accounts of how Swamishri and satsang have improved their lives.

The visit also included a teambuilding trip to Normandy, North-West France, where the youths participated in a number of devotional and other indoor activities.

## Asia-Pacific

**NATIONAL LEADERSHIP SEMINAR**  
**Adelaide, Australia, 13 April 2015**

At the new BAPS *hari* mandir in Adelaide, *karyakars* from throughout Australia and New Zealand attended the National Leadership Seminar in the presence Pujya of Mahant Swami. The *karyakars* were guided on how to carry out their duties according to Swamishri's wishes.

They were also guided on how to strengthen their personal satsang and practise it in their daily lives.

## Africa

**ANNUAL KARYAKAR SHIBIRS**  
**Theme: 'Siddhantam' – 'Principles'**  
**East and South Africa, 4 to 26 April 2015**



A total of over 800 BAPS satsang activities volunteers from centres in Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi, Congo, Botswana, Rwanda, Burundi, South Sudan and Madagascar participated in the four Annual Karyakar Shibirs held in Jinja, Uganda; Nairobi, Kenya; Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania; and Lenasia, South Africa.

Based on the theme 'Siddhantam', each *shibir* was presented in four parts.

The first part focused on developing pride for the *siddhant* (principle), in which the *karyakars* learnt about the Vedic roots of the Akshar-Purushottam doctrine. The second part demonstrated that it is this doctrine which helps to resolve the many problems which arise in one's day-to-day life. The third part revealed how the Gunatit guru *parampara* have enthusiastically lived by and propagated this doctrine. In the fourth part, the *karyakars* were taught that to gain a true working knowledge of the doctrine, one must profoundly associate with the manifest Satpurush.

The *shibirs* included speeches by learned and experienced sadhus, skits, audio-visual presentations, group discussions, question-answer sessions and teambuilding activities.

Through these *shibirs*, the *karyakars*



consolidated their understanding of the Akshar-Purushottam doctrine and resolved to imbibe it in their daily lives.

## BAPS Charities

### BAPS CHARITIES SUPPORTING KISUTU GIRLS SECONDARY SCHOOL Tanzania, 12 March 2015



BAPS Charities donated funds to the Kisutu Girls Secondary School for the year's school fees and uniforms for 68 underprivileged students.

BAPS Charities supports the school in various ways throughout the year. In addition to this donation, BAPS Charities has committed to supporting the students' further education through scholarships and grants. Additionally, chairs for the school library were also donated.

### BAPS CHARITIES FOOD DRIVES Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, April 2015

During April 2015, BAPS Charities in Tanzania donated over half a metric ton of food and supplies to the following charitable organizations:

**Children's Retention Home** – run by the Tanzanian government, it helps to rehabilitate children and prepare them for re-entry into society as productive individuals.

**Help2Kids Orphanage** – run by Help2kids International, a Swiss NGO that operates in Africa, the orphanage provides housing, education, food, healthcare, and a family environment to grow up in. The goal of the NGO is to help the children break the cycle of poverty, and live

productive lives.

**Salvation Army Matumaini** is a home and school for 200 physically disabled children, aged between from 3 to 17. The children are provided education to help them progress in their lives, despite their disabilities.

### ANNUAL WALKATHON – KARURA FOREST Nairobi, 24 May 2015



Around 450 walkers aged between 5 and 85 years participated in the Inaugural Annual Walkathon organized by BAPS Charities at the Karura Forest to collect funds to plant 10,000 trees in 2015. In 2014, BAPS Charities planted 7,000 trees and in 2013, 3,000 trees.

BAPS Charities chose to hold the Annual Walkathon at Karura Forest as it plays a significant role in the conservation of trees and forests in Kenya.

### WINTER WARMER DRIVE 2015 Lenasia, South Africa, 30 May 2015

The aim of the drive is to donate clothes, blankets, hot meals and non-perishable food and household items to underprivileged and



impoverished communities in preparation for the winter season.

As part of its annual Winter Warmer Drive BAPS Charities donated 50 boxes of clothing, four months' worth of nutritious non-perishable vegetarian food, building ware and household appliances required for daily feeding and maintenance to Phuthamahae Community Care Givers,

a non-profit organization in the informal settlement of Orange Farm, outside Johannesburg, that serves orphans, vulnerable children and child-headed families with daily necessities and also serves as a day care facility. Volunteers also served hot meals and spent quality time with the children, interacting with them and bringing a smile to their faces. ♦

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## SAD DEMISE OF SHRI DR K.C. PATEL

5 June 2015



Dr Kantibhai C. Patel was a dedicated pioneer of BAPS satsang in America and through his selfless service and devout life, he had earned the innermost blessings of Yogiji Maharaj and

Pramukh Swami Maharaj.

Born in 1934 and a native of Porda village, he gained an MSc in Chemistry from Sardar Patel University and a PhD in Organic Chemistry from London. During his time in London, he was drawn by the spirituality of Yogiji Maharaj. In 1970, at Heathrow Airport, Yogiji Maharaj instructed him to go to America to further his career and said, "Go to New York and establish a mandir; promote satsang to all in America." When K.C. Patel requested Yogiji Maharaj to visit America, he replied, "Pramukh Swami Maharaj will come to America and perform the mandir *pratishtha*."

With Yogiji Maharaj's blessings, he furthered his career as a professor in Brooklyn College.

In 1970, four sadhus led by Tyagvallabh Swami visited America and formally established the BAPS satsang there. Among the pioneer devotees were Dr K.C. Patel, Shri Bhagubhai Patel, Shri Kunjbhai Shah and others.

From 1971 onwards, Pramukh Swami Maharaj regularly wrote letters to inspire them and the satsang office was set up. With the blessings of Pramukh Swami Maharaj, Dr K.C. Patel served as the president of America Satsang Mandal from 1970 to 2004.

Guided by Swamishri, he endeavoured to establish *hari* mandirs throughout America. In 1991, as part of Yogiji Maharaj's centenary celebrations, the Cultural Festival of India and Swamishri's platinum *tula* was celebrated in America, during which Dr K.C. Patel offered his heartfelt services.

He travelled thousands of miles across America, enduring many hardships to seek out aspirants and encourage them to join satsang. He dedicated his life to setting up BAPS centres and mandirs, and managing and streamlining other BAPS activities.

Dr K.C. Patel was a decisive leader, with firm, undivided *nishtha*, who totally surrendered his life at the feet of *guruhari* Pramukh Swami Maharaj. His contributions to the growth and organization of satsang in America are matchless and unforgettable.

He also instilled such dedicated service and devotion in his sons and other family members.

His departure is a great loss to the BAPS.





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### DIKSHA CEREMONY

21 May 2015, Sarangpur

On the occasion of Swamishri's 66<sup>th</sup> Pramukh Varni Din, he initiated 14 youths into the *parshad*-fold and 2 *parshads* into the *sadhu*-fold.

1. Initiates perform the *diksha mahapuja* rituals.
2. Swamishri blesses one of the new sadhus.
3. Sadhus and devotees rejoice during the *diksha* ceremony.
4. Swamishri presides over the *diksha* ceremony.
5. Newly initiated *parshads* with Swamishri.





### CELEBRATION OF 'TRANSCENDENCE'

28 June 2015, Ahmedabad

**Top:** Distinguished guests with the *sadguru* sadhus on stage during the celebration assembly.

**Left:** Exterior view of the celebration venue – Gujarat University Convention & Exhibition Centre.

**Bottom:** Invited dignitaries and guests in the auditorium enjoy the celebration programme.

