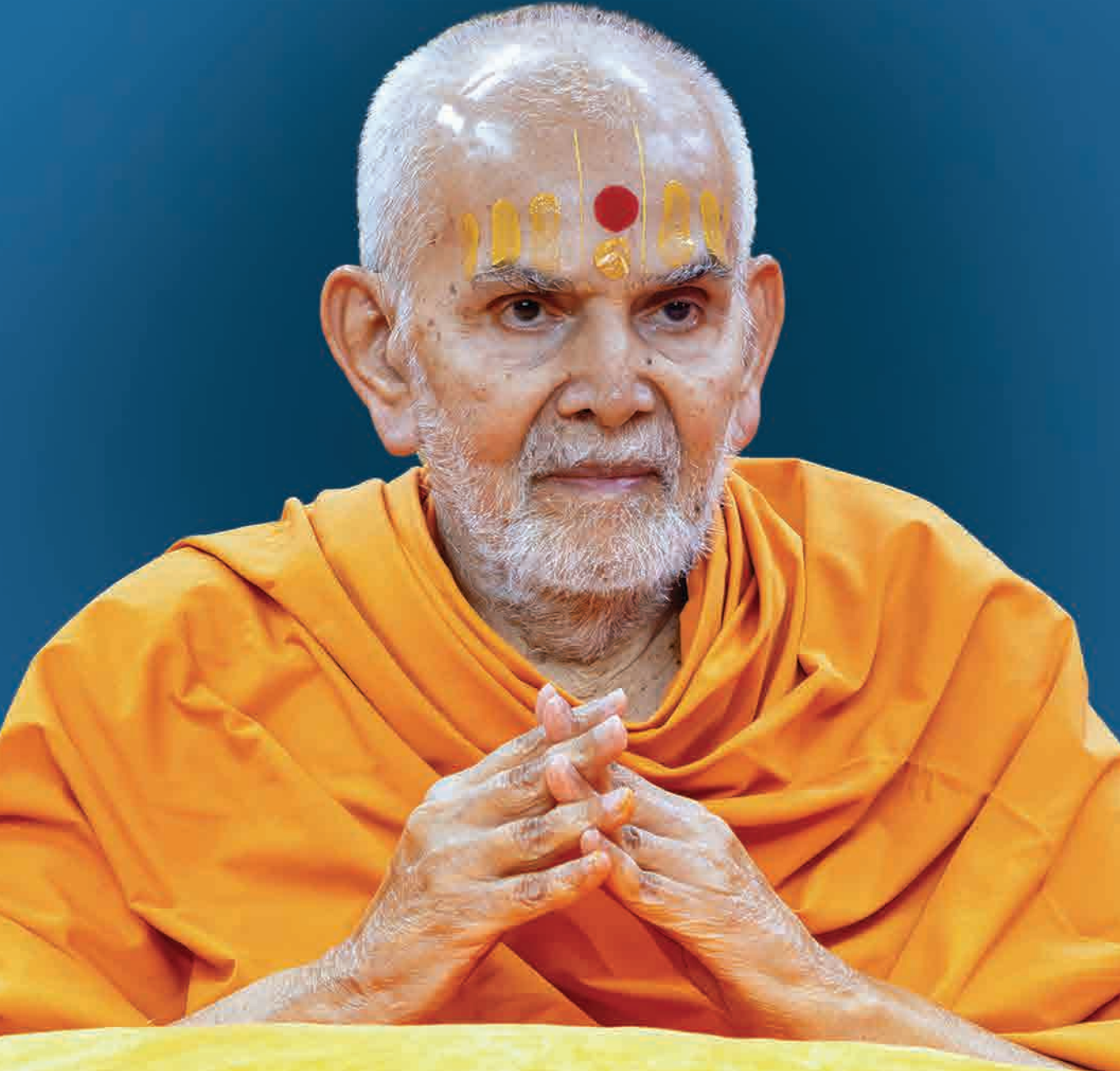


# SWAMINARAYAN BLISS

September–October 2025

Annual Subscription ₹ 80/-



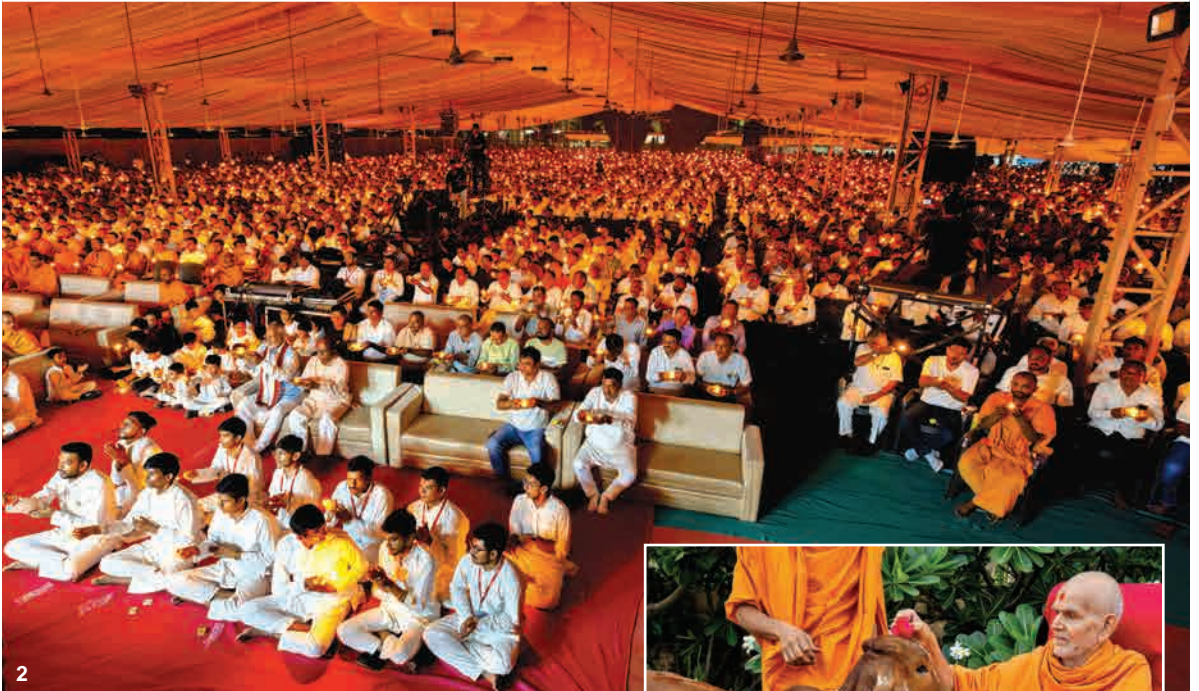
**Tributes to Mahant Swami Maharaj  
on His 92nd Birthday**

15 September 2025





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**MAHANT SWAMI MAHARAJ IN BHARUCH, JULY 2025**

1. Devotees hold Shri Nilkanth Varni Maharaj's *murtis* during the Bharuch Mandir Silver Jubilee Celebrations launch assembly, 2 July 2025.
2. Swamis and devotees perform the evening *arti* during the Jubilee launch assembly, 2 July 2025.
3. Swamishri performs *puja* of a young calf, 22 June 2025.





Shri Akshar-Purushottam Maharaj



# SWAMINARAYAN BLISS

September – October 2025, Vol. 48, No. 5

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**Published & Printed by:** Swaminarayan Aksharpath, Shahibaug, Ahmedabad - 380004, India

#### SUBSCRIPTION RATES

	Outside India (By Air Mail)			India
	Rupees	Pounds	US Dollars	Rupees
1 Year	630	9	14	80
2 Years	1300	18	28	150
3 Years	1900	27	42	220

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.

# Shri Hari Pleases the Diwan

*The Diwan of Vadodara was averse to Shri Hari. His plots to capture Maharaj had failed. In spite of all this, Shri Hari garlanded the diwan and pleased him...*

## ONE WHO IS NOT A BORN BRAHMIN CANNOT BECOME A BRAHMIN

The diwanji arrived. Shri Hari addressed him, “Diwanji, I do not win the hearts of people through magic or hypnotism. I do not covet anyone else’s kingdom. Whosoever’s fate it is to bear the burden of owning and running a kingdom, does so. I strongly believe the happiness of ruling the fourteen realms is like *narak* (hell).” Then, Shri Hari knitted his eyebrows and looked piercingly at the diwan. The latter looked downwards because he was unable to look straight into Shriji Maharaj’s effulgent eyes.

Shri Hari said to him, “Diwanji, no matter what critical talks you float about me, I am a Samvedi Brahmin. I belong to the Savarni *gotra* and the Kauthumi *shakha*. A Brahmin who has become corrupt by his bad actions and practice of *adharma* can become pure through atonements. However, one who is not a born Brahmin can never become a Brahmin, even by performing 100,000 Ashwamedh *yagnas*.”

The king was stunned by Shri Hari’s insinuation, even though he knew about the diwan’s errant past. He felt the diwan would explode any moment in anger. So, the king pressed Maharaj’s foot to restrain him from saying anything further. Nityanand Swami prayed to Shri Hari, “Maharaj, *jivas* are morally fallible from eternity. Therefore, be compassionate and forgiving.” On hearing this, Shri Hari reverted to his natural,



calm temperament. Those who were present were surprised at this – a moment earlier Maharaj’s face was red with rage and now he had suddenly become equipoised and composed.

Soon after, the two princes, Ganapat Rao and Khande Rao, performed puja of Maharaj. Ganapat Rao was eleven years old and Khande Rao was seven years old. They were both dressed regally, in a

shining *surwal* and coat and had donned a *pagh* in the Gaekwadi style. At the king’s instruction they both prostrated to Maharaj. While prostrating, Khande Rao’s *pagh* fell down. Shri Hari instantly placed both his hands on Khande Rao’s head and also placed his hands on Ganapat Rao’s *pagh* to bless them.

Shri Hari blessed the king, “Both your sons will grow up to be powerful and strong. And of the two, Khande Rao will be more powerful and enhance the glory of your kingdom.” Then, Shri Hari called Khande Rao to come near to bless him again. When he bowed, his *pagh* fell down again. Shri Hari blessed him by placing his hands on the prince’s head. Then, Maharaj picked up his *pagh*, sanctified it, and placed it on the prince’s head. Thereafter, Shri Hari took out all the garlands around his neck and placed one garland around Ganapat Rao’s neck, another around Khande Rao’s neck and turned to offer the third *mogra* garland to the diwan. But first, Maharaj spoke to the diwan, “I have reprimanded

you severely, however this garland I wish to offer to you is for peace.” The diwan got up, took the garland offered by Shri Hari and returned to his seat.

### MAHARAJ GIVES SUGAR CRYSTALS TO THE DIWAN

While Shri Hari was standing he said to the king, “Now that your diwan has seen me in person, his hatred and prejudice for me will dissolve. Prosperity will grow in your kingdom and peace will spread everywhere.” Then, as Shri Hari was about to leave, there was a chorus of “Bhagwan Swaminarayan’s *jai*”. Thereafter, Queen Chimnabai and other women in the royal balcony showered flowers on Maharaj and also hailed his name. Nath Bhakta offered a large plateful of sugar crystals to Shri Hari. Maharaj touched the sugar crystals to sanctify them and instructed that they be distributed to all present. However, prior to that, Maharaj took a handful of sugar crystals and gave it to diwanji. Then, Maharaj held the king’s right arm to sanctify the palace.

### DEPARTS FROM VADODARA

Shri Hari decided to leave. As he came down the stairs to the courtyard, there was a giant elephant waiting with a golden *howdah* strapped to its back. The elephant bent low and Shri Hari climbed into the *howdah*. Narupant Nana sat behind Maharaj to wave a flywhisk. The other sadhus sat accordingly on the other elephants, in canopied carts and palanquins. The Kathi devotees mounted on their feisty horses and circled around the stationary procession. Maharaj’s bodyguards stood around his elephant.

The procession began and it soon passed through the Champaneri Gate to advance further onto the broad Chhipwad Road. Here, thousands of aspirants were waiting for Maharaj’s darshan. The homes of Narupant Nana, Ravji Bapu, Ramchandra Vaidyaraj, and the havelis of police inspectors Jambu Miya and Abu Miya were

located on this road. Everyone got the opportunity of Maharaj’s darshan. Women, in consonance with their social tradition, engaged in Shri Hari’s darshan while standing behind a thin curtain. They welcomed Maharaj by showering flowers.

Along the route, the procession arrived at the Govardhan Nathji Mandir in Mehta Pol. Shri Hari sent donations and food items to offer to the deity. Further ahead, Shri Hari also sent a donation and food items for the deity in the Baldevji Mandir, located inside Bajvada. The officials of both mandirs were drawn towards Bhagwan Swaminarayan by his respect and reverence for the deities.

Soon, Shri Hari’s procession arrived at the haveli of Sheth Lallubhai Bahadur and Sheth Khushal Chand. Their wives and family members were seated in large ornate balconies. They all welcomed and honoured Shri Hari by showering rice grains and flowers. They also sent baskets of sweet foods to Maharaj. As the procession proceeded, it arrived at the Kanteshwar Mahadev Mandir. Maharaj’s followers sent donations and food as offerings to the deity.

As Shri Hari moved ahead, the chorus of *jais* grew in volume. Thousands of aspirants had assembled by the roadside for darshan. All felt blessed and happy on seeing Shri Hari.

### MAHARAJ WAS WORTHY OF SEEING

On the long, broad Chhipwad Road, the procession arrived at the haveli of Vaidyaraj Ramchandra and Harishchandra. Their families offered puja to Shri Hari from a distance. Nath Bhakta collected all the donations and gifts offered along the way and placed them in a cart. As the procession advanced, Ranchhod Bhavsar, a *satsangi*, pointed to Shri Hari and said to his wife, “Look, we are blessed with the darshan of Ganga at our home! Do Maharaj’s darshan as much as you can.” His wife cried and replied, “You have eyes to do darshan and relish his *murti*, whereas I am blind. How can I see him! If he



is truly Bhagwan, let him give darshan to me.” Ranchhod Bhavsar’s wife had been blind for the past twenty years.

As soon as the lady had so wished, her eyes suddenly blinked rapidly. There was a rush of light into her eyes and she saw Shri Hari’s lustrous form. She became ecstatic. Her husband, Ranchhod Bhavsar, was on cloud nine. He cheerfully told his wife, “Look, Maharaj is Bhagwan and he has blessed you with sight. Therefore, look at him and not anyone else.”

His wife revealed happily, “His *murti* has already entered my heart. I see only Maharaj – without and within me.”

At that time, the house of Narupant Nana (also Nana Saheb) arrived. Narupant prayed to Shri Hari, “Maharaj, I wish to offer *pujan* and respects to you. All the articles of worship are ready in my house. If you say so, I will instruct the mahout to make the elephant kneel so that you can get down and sanctify my house.” Shri Hari said, “Nana Saheb, it will be evening by the time we reach our residence. Since morning, everyone is fatigued, thirsty and hungry. Therefore, do *pujan* here.” Nana Saheb gestured to his wife, Savitribai, who was standing in the balcony of their house. She handed the dish containing the *pujan* materials. Nana Saheb performed Shri Hari’s *pujan* while Maharaj was seated on the elephant. Shri Hari was pleased upon him for obeying his wish and saving time.

The procession passed the Pani Gate. Here, the king’s aunt, Gayabai, honoured Maharaj by showering flowers. The wives of Abu Miya and Jambu Miya also offered respects and prayed to Maharaj. As the procession proceeded on the royal road, an old, naked Muslim fakir suddenly appeared in the middle of the road. On seeing him, Shri Hari, while seated in his howdah, threw a fistful of flowers at him. The flowers fell on him and instantly transformed into a white gown (*alfi*), clothing the fakir’s bare body.<sup>1</sup> The fakir

was stunned, looked at Maharaj and prayed, “O Swaminarayan! You are God.” He began dancing and revelling as he came near to Shri Hari’s elephant, and continued to do so till the end of the procession.

People kept showering flowers and garlands as the procession passed by. Shri Hari’s howdah was filled with flowers and garlands, and Nath Bhakta’s cart was filled with gifts. Shri Hari’s divine procession became the cynosure of everyone’s eyes. Many, after doing Maharaj’s darshan, would run ahead to another vantage point for more darshan. The city of Vadodara reverberated with the sounds of the *jais* of Swaminarayan, soulful kirtans by *paramhansas*, and music of musical instruments.

At that time, Sayajirao Gaekwad came to Shri Hari in a decorated cart pulled by a pair of large, robust oxen. Maharaj told him, “You steer your cart in front of me.” But the king countered sweetly, “You are my Bhagwan, therefore I cannot be in front of you.” Shri Hari smiled and explained, “What I meant was that you go ahead of us and make the arrangements.” Sayajirao understood and went ahead.

Shri Hari’s elephant came to the haveli of Shamal Bechar Sheth. The latter prayed, “Maharaj, come to my haveli because I wish to offer *pujan*.” Shri Hari replied, “It’s nearly evening time. If I stop the procession now, it will be too late by the time it all ends. Therefore, do the *pujan* here.” Shamal Sheth placed a garland for Shri Hari on the elephant’s trunk. The elephant raised and bent its trunk towards Shri Hari. Maharaj took the flower garland, sanctified it and returned it to Shamal Sheth. He gave donations and gifts of opulent clothes and jewellery to Nath Bhakta. ♦

(Contd. in next issue)

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

1. From that day onwards, the fakir always wore the *alfi* gown and remembered Shri Hari as God.

# A Portrait of *Mahant Swami Maharaj at 92*

Old age is a revelation. As the body slows and the rhythms of youth recede, what remains is the essence. The scaffolding of image and performance begins to fall away, and what we are, truly are, begins to surface. Our lifelong tendencies, habits, affections, and afflictions rise to the surface with quiet inevitability.

The base nature shows.

So does the beauty.

Because old age, if nothing else, is honest.

A man who spent his life chasing status might now anxiously track who still visits him, who still acknowledges him.

A person who once controlled every detail may now express that control in complaints or rigidity about small matters.

One who indulged in gossip, praise, or comfort finds those same tendencies sharpened, not softened, by age.

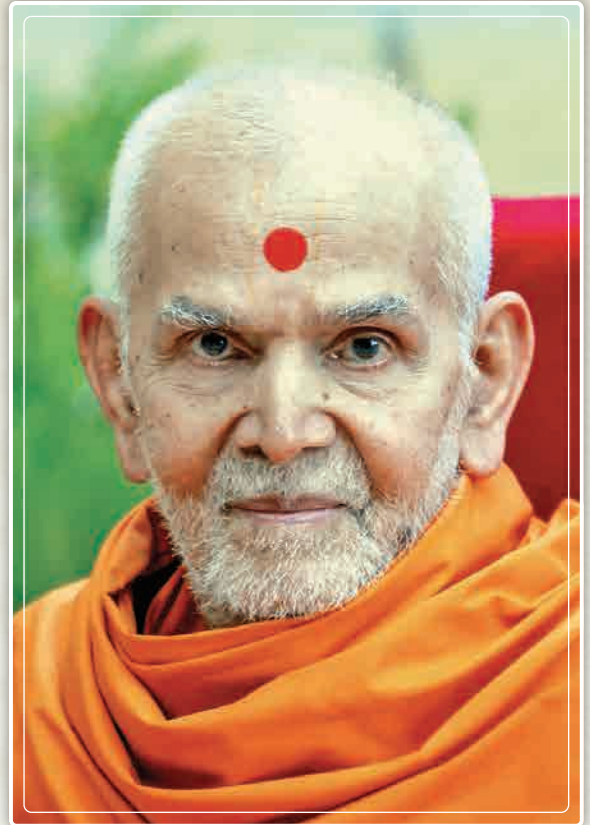
Even hobbies return with greater force, someone who loved food may talk only of meals, someone who loved music may hum the same raga every day.

Old age does not erase us. It concentrates us.

And yet, there is a wide spectrum of how people age.

Some become overactive, not because their bodies allow it, but precisely because they don't. Their whole lives they were in motion, leading, planning, deciding. And now, in old age, they cannot bear stillness. So they agitate, they over-involve, they grasp to remain relevant. They are still moving, but it is restless.

Others become almost invisible, withdrawing into the margins of life, slowly fading into passivity. No longer interested, no longer creating. Not because they have nothing to offer, but



because they believe no one is listening.

Of course, these are not rigid categories. Life rarely offers binaries. There are many shades in between, each one textured by experience and temperament.

But it makes me think.

Mahant Swami Maharaj is somehow both.

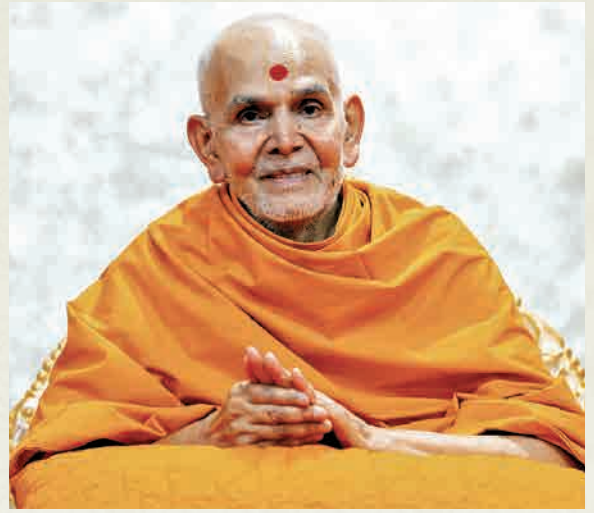
He is extraordinarily active.

And profoundly calm.

He reads. He writes. He blesses. He guides. He listens to endless meetings, offers precise decisions, carries the weight of a global organization, and remains acutely sensitive to every individual's needs.

Yet he does all this with such serenity that





it never feels rushed, never feels tense, never feels controlling.

And then there is the astonishing range of his cognition at 92.

Every single day, he is presented with a kaleidoscope of issues—each one complex, emotionally charged, or technically intricate.

One moment, a discussion on spiritual philosophy, Vedantic nuance, or scriptural hermeneutics.

The next, a financial review of accounts from a temple.

Then comes a legal matter, an administrative decision.

Then a pastoral matter: a family breakdown, a young couple considering divorce, a youth seeking guidance on anxiety, or someone on the brink of suicide.

Then a delicate life moment: a baby's birth, a death in the family, or advice for a first-time parent.

A medical decision. A planning permission. An architectural revision. A sculptural adjustment for a *murti*.

A construction timeline. A cultural outreach initiative.

A marital conflict. A decision on who to initiate into monastic life.

And all of this happens not in a week, but often in a single day.

He sits in meetings for hours.

He listens, absorbs, retains, processes, and responds without fatigue, without distraction, and without ego.

His grasp of complex matters remains astonishing.





Simply to sit in silence and grasp such a spectrum requires an exceptional intellect.

But to do so with equanimity, warmth, and grace reveals something deeper: an extraordinary purity of mind.

Mahant Swami Maharaj is not overwhelmed.

He is not irritated. He is not weary.

He is present. Receptive. Sharp.

Because his mind is Uncluttered.

Not self-centred, but God-centred.

He speaks only when the moment truly requires it. And when he does, every word carries the gravity of wisdom and the gentleness of love.

All of this, aged 92.

He smiles. He folds his hands. He offers blessings.

He reads scriptures with the curiosity of a child.

He writes letters with the focus of a sage.

People retire in old age. They lay down their burdens, hand over responsibilities, and gently step back.

But at an age when most retreat, Mahant Swami Maharaj did exactly the opposite. At 83, he accepted the full responsibility of being the guru of BAPS.

Since then, he has not merely tended this garden; he has planted new seeds, nurtured fresh blossoms, and helped its branches stretch out into ever wider sunlight.

Until December 2024, he has consecrated 694 mandirs, an average of one every six days.

He has given *diksha* to 366 youths, an average of one new sadhu every eight days.

These are not numbers; they are living testaments to Swamishri's spirit that continues to sow, nurture, and guide, day after day.

And yet, amidst this constant flowering of decisions, rituals, plans, and meetings, he carries no sense of burden.

Despite all that is happening, there is no weight on his heart.

His inner spiritual state remains profoundly steady.



In Mahant Swami Maharaj, old age is not a mirror that exposes decline, it is a window through which we glimpse what a human life, emptied of ego and rooted in God, can truly become.

And more than anything, is what his presence makes you feel.

You go to the mountains, and you love it.

You go to the sea, and you cherish it.

They do not speak. They do not act.

Yet you return feeling lighter, clearer, calmer, energized.

That's what it's like with Mahant Swami Maharaj.

You can sit beside him in silence.

No words exchanged. No actions performed.

And yet, you leave feeling loved, stilled, strengthened.

And this is all no accident.

It is the fruit of a lifetime lived in humility, in devotion, in silent service.

Mahant Swami Maharaj at 92 is not simply a testament to good health.

He is a revelation of what a pure life looks like when nothing is left to prove.

If you want to know the truth of a person, look at them in their final chapters.

In Mahant Swami Maharaj, those pages shimmer with serenity, service, and the presence of God. ♦

# Letters from Mahant Swami Maharaj



Letters last. They live on. They endure. Both tangibly and intangibly. They encourage, educate and elevate. They reinvent and revitalize. They shape and strengthen. But more importantly, they touch the heart to trigger inner transformation and resolve turmoil.

Letters have been the bedrock of civilizations for centuries. As a major form of communication, letters are an avenue for all to express and receive thoughts that may otherwise remain hidden.

From 1957, for many years, Mahant Swami Maharaj managed Yogiji Maharaj's daily correspondence, enabling him to form accurate assessments of people's psyche and the solutions to their problems.

Over many decades, he has expressed that learning in his own unique way. His letters to children, youths, students, professionals and others are tailored to the individual. Such has been their value that recipients have preserved them for decades and regularly drawn inspiration from them.

Mahant Swami Maharaj's letters are more than mere words on paper. Often incorporating sketches, his wise words reflect his care and compassion. They remove doubts, bolster faith and help people navigate the maze of life.

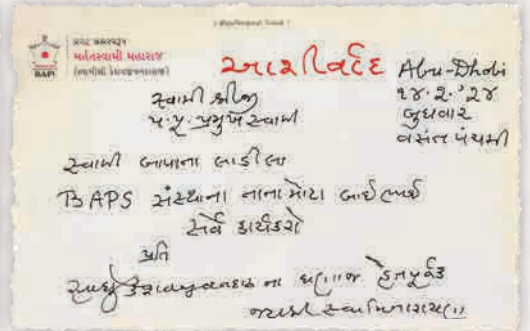
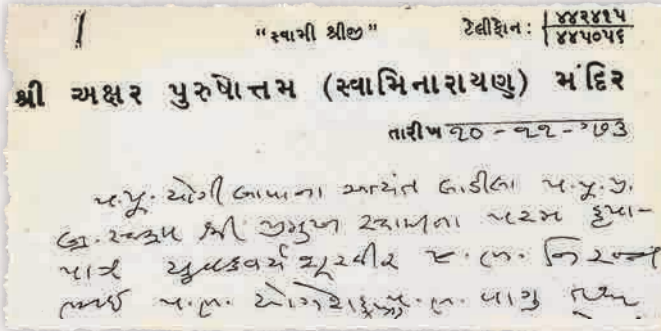
To him, reading and replying to letters earnestly sent by devotees is his *seva* and bhakti to God and guru. While many of his letters are in response, a significant number are from him directly, revealing his inner voice and wishes – what he wants us to do and where he wishes to uplift us to.

This series of articles is based on Mahant Swami Maharaj's letters. They reflect his keen enthusiasm and sincere endeavours to uplift individuals and the collective from where they are to greater personal and spiritual heights. The articles are a tribute to *guruhari* Mahant Swami Maharaj on his 92nd birthday on 15 September 2025 (Bhadarva *vad* 9, V.S. 2081).



# The Silent Sacrifice Behind Every Letter

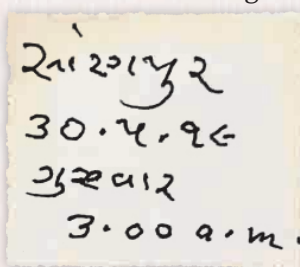
Sadhu Sahajsmarandas  
Sadhu Aksharniketdas



Love reveals itself in countless ways – a heartfelt compliment, a grand public gesture, a thoughtful gift, or an encouraging word. Such gestures, while deeply meaningful, rarely demand a significant toll on our time, physical well-being, or mental fortitude. Yet, there exists another dimension of love, one characterized by sincere, quiet sacrifice. Mahant Swami Maharaj embodies this selfless love, and one of his most cherished ways of connecting is through the personal act of writing letters. His deep love for devotees truly shines in the considerable time he invests, the physical discomfort he endures, and the mental strain he willingly embraces when writing letters.

## THE GIFT OF TIME

Time is irretrievable; hence, how we choose to spend it reveals our deepest priorities. By observing how Mahant Swami Maharaj spends his time, we can understand what he values. Despite a demanding schedule, he carves out significant personal time to read and respond to letters – a profound act of love in itself. He has even written at remarkably unconventional hours. A letter from Swamishri to Anandswarup Swami in 1973 was notably penned in the early hours of the morning, with Swamishri recording the start time as



2.15 a.m. Even as recently as 2019, in Sarangpur, he was seen writing at 3 a.m. While most would rest, Swamishri consciously dedicates his own precious time to directly nurturing his spiritual family.

His commitment to correspondence does not waver, even on his busiest days or during major festivals. Consider 14 February 2024 – the historic inauguration of the first traditional stone Hindu mandir in the Middle East. After concluding the traditional Vedic consecration ceremony early that morning, the attendant swamis urged Swamishri to rest. Since, later in the afternoon, there would be more inaugural events and meetings with dignitaries, including Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and UAE Minister of Tolerance Sheikh Nahayan Mabarak Al Nahyan. However, Swamishri’s mind was set on another crucial task. Awakening earlier than expected, he asked for his letter pad and pen, and began writing a letter to all volunteers throughout BAPS. That year, the Sanstha was celebrating the Karyakar Suvarna Mahotsav, to commemorate 50 years of selfless service by BAPS volunteers. Deeply invested in this appreciation of the volunteers, Swamishri decided to write to all of them. He concluded his message

શ્રી. મહાન્ત સ્વામીજીને મારા મનથી  
સાથે મારું મન મારવાનું છે. મહારો જય  
હો, જય હો.

with a profound sentiment, “All of your minds are on Abu Dhabi today, but my mind is on all of you.” Amidst a day filled with momentous occasions and sacred ceremonies, Swamishri’s choice to prioritize connecting with his volunteers through a personal letter is a sincere expression of his love. It shows that even amidst unparalleled achievements, his focus remains on those he cares for.

### ENDURING PHYSICAL STRAIN

At 92, writing letters is physically strenuous for Swamishri. Every letter from Mahant Swami Maharaj carries an unseen weight – the effort behind its creation. Yet, despite this arduous process, the letters always convey a sense of connection, driven by his deep and affectionate remembrance of their recipient.

Writing letters is a physical challenge for Swamishri, often enduring great physical strain to complete them. On 18 August 2022, for instance, while writing a letter, he started to experience stomach pain. The attendant swamis urged him to lie down to alleviate the pain, but Swamishri insisted on finishing the letter. To manage his condition, he pressed his left hand against his stomach, which offered temporary relief. He nevertheless continued to write. These moments reflect Swamishri’s selfless love and unwavering commitment to the well-being of and sense of duty to his devotees.

His resolve was also seen on 2 April 2015, when he was travelling from Singapore to Perth. During the flight, he started to write a letter to a devotee. The cabin temperature in the plane was uncomfortably cold for Swamishri. As he wrote, the cold began to affect his hand, causing it to stiffen and lose movement. Concerned, attendant

swamis urged him to wait until they arrived in Perth to finish the letter, requesting that he should not strain himself further. Swamishri, however, remained resolute. He explained that once they arrived there, he would have a busy schedule, making it difficult to find time to finish the letter. Instead, he asked the attendant swamis to request warm towels from the flight crew. Whenever his hand began to stiffen, he would wrap it in a warm towel until he regained movement, and then continue writing.

Not only does Swamishri finish writing despite the onset of some ailment, at times, he even writes in the middle of a health issue. On 1 April 2022, Swamishri, residing in Surat, again demonstrated his determination to connect through letters. He was not feeling well; his nose was running. He had finished his usual nightly routine earlier than normal, which delighted the attendant swamis because it meant he could get some much-needed rest. To their surprise, however, Swamishri said he wanted to write letters. The attendant swamis urged him to use this free time to rest given his health, but Swamishri remained adamant and proceeded to write letters.

On 22 December 2013, Swamishri was residing in Gondal for the upcoming *karyakar shibirs*. That morning, he felt his heartbeat was irregular and asked the attending doctor to check his pulse; his doubts were confirmed. The doctors determined that further testing and treatment in Ahmedabad would be best, so he set out the next morning. During the journey, instead of relaxing, Swamishri asked for his letters so he could begin reading and responding to them. This remarkable gesture shows that, even amid personal hardship, his foremost concern was for his devotees, whom he cherished above his own well-being.

### RESPONDING TO DISUNITY WITH LOVE

Regularly empathizing with the pain and trauma of others can lead to a state known as ‘compassion fatigue’ – a deep emotional and



physical exhaustion. It would be natural to assume that hearing about the financial, marital, and educational struggles of so many would cause similar mental strain. However, for Swamishri, this is not the case. He considers answering letters to be a spiritual service. Once a swami asked, “Swamishri, do you ever get frustrated with the sheer number of letters you receive every day? What do you think when answering these letters?” Swamishri smiled and responded, “Listening to someone’s troubles and comforting them is an act of devotion.” On another occasion, Swamishri said, “Reading and responding to letters is a *seva* that I get to do.” To him, writing letters is not a source of strain but an opportunity for *seva*.

What causes Swamishri mental strain? Once, during a visit to the BAPS Swaminarayan Vidyamandir in Mount Abu, Swamishri was asked a series of questions. One student inquired, “If things like travelling to various mandirs, meeting thousands of devotees do not tire you, what does?” Without hesitation, Mahant Swami Maharaj replied, “*Kusamp* (disunity) between devotees is what tires me out.” *Samp* or unity is a virtue that Swamishri has always valued. When unity breaks down and conflict arises within families or communities, it deeply pains him. He learns of these situations when people facing such conflicts write to him for guidance, yet he never responds with frustration or reprimand. Instead, he lovingly writes back, aiming to help those involved to restore harmony.

When confronted with disunity among

devotees, Mahant Swami Maharaj exhibits a patient approach. One might expect that when faced with something so distressing, one would seek a swift resolution to minimize their own discomfort. Swamishri, however, takes an entirely different path. Swamis who have witnessed Swamishri addressing such issues consistently observe his meticulous dedication to understanding every facet of the disagreement. Rather than making quick judgments or siding with one party, he ensures that both sides feel heard and mutually begin a journey towards reconciliation.

This deliberate engagement with what pains him is a testament to his boundless love. True love, in his view, means accepting individuals for who they are, embracing their drawbacks, even when their actions cause distress, and then compassionately assisting them in overcoming their shortcomings. It is this deep affection that compels Swamishri to draw closer to conflict rather than withdraw, transforming challenging situations into powerful opportunities for healing, peace, and renewed unity.

Most of us receive letters from Swamishri with joy, rarely considering the unseen, hidden toil of their creation. Every stroke of his pen is a dedication of his time, every sentence comes at the cost of physical strain, and every letter urging unity is penned even as he bears a personal strain. Swamishri’s letters are far more than words on paper; they are living testaments to our guru’s tireless love and hidden sacrifice.

## Divine Foresight

Sadhu Gurusankalpdas  
Sadhu Aksharmuktadas

In a world full of uncertainty, whether it is about financial security, personal well-being, or future aspirations, even the smallest hint of what lies ahead brings immense reassurance. In Satsang, when we face adversity, we turn to Mahant Swami Maharaj for guidance, often writing to him and

seeking his blessings. During difficult times, Swamishri’s replies bring clarity that guides and transforms us on our spiritual journeys. His letters not only give immediate answers, but also provide long-term spiritual guidance that gradually reshapes our perspectives and deepens our bond





would provide the infrastructure for water and electricity for the mandir. This unprecedented gesture not only resolved practical issues but also affirmed Mahant Swami Maharaj's divine foresight. It became clear that Swamishri's insight transcended borders, beliefs, and expectations and foresaw possibilities that no one else could imagine. Reflecting on this during an evening assembly at the Festival of Harmony, Aksharatit Swami shared:

“And people like me, if they are led by projections, planning, and forecasts, would never believe that this mandir was possible.”

For the swamis, volunteers, and all who witnessed the journey firsthand, each unfolding event and fulfilled word deepened their faith in Swamishri's blessings.

### A GENERATION NURTURED BY LOVE

The same divine vision that creates mandirs also cultivates the character of future generations. Just as seeds need consistent water, sunlight, and care to flourish, children require appreciation, encouragement, and guidance to reach their full potential. Mahant Swami Maharaj's Satsang Diksha project offers a clear and practical path for nurturing future generations by instilling virtues in children and inspiring them to live a disciplined, spiritual life.

In London, the children of the Bal and Balika Mandals felt Swamishri's encouragement directly. After learning they had begun memorizing the Satsang Diksha, Swamishri wrote them a letter. He praised their efforts, writing, “To memorize the entire Satsang Diksha is not a small feat, Maharaj and Swami are showering you all with their *rajipo*.” He also inspired them with courage, adding, “I am confident that all of you will finish memorizing the shastra,” and shared his vision that “10,000 to 50,000 children will memorize the Satsang Diksha and learn to speak fluent Sanskrit.”

For any child, memorizing 315 Sanskrit verses

प्रथम शास्त्राणां आदि श्रेयः संस्कारानां शोभा  
 संस्कार मन्त्रो, राम शंकर रमेश्वर भगवतः, शेष अक्षर एव  
 रामो वैश्व नक्षत्रां शिवायुः भगवतः, गणेश संस्कार — एतानि यत्ने  
 U.A.E. ना संस्कारानां आदि शिवायुः भगवतः श्रेयः संस्कारः.

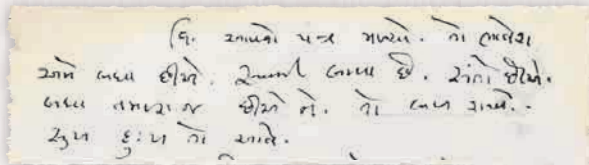
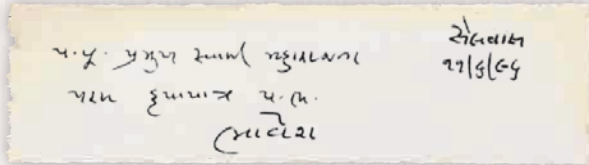
HH MAHANT SWAMI MAHARAJ  
 (Swami Keshavnandji, रामेश्वर शिवायुः)  
 न. प्र. सुभद्र शास्त्री  
 गौरीकुण्ड  
 १३-८-२२३  
 शिवायुः भगवतः  
 संस्कारानां आदि शिवायुः भगवतः श्रेयः संस्कारः  
 शिवायुः भगवतः श्रेयः संस्कारः  
 रामेश्वर शिवायुः भगवतः श्रेयः संस्कारः

१००००/५०००० बाल संस्कार प्रस्तावितः  
 संस्कारानां आदि शिवायुः भगवतः श्रेयः संस्कारः  
 संस्कारानां आदि शिवायुः भगवतः श्रेयः संस्कारः  
 संस्कारानां आदि शिवायुः भगवतः श्रेयः संस्कारः  
 संस्कारानां आदि शिवायुः भगवतः श्रेयः संस्कारः

is an immense challenge, especially when growing up with little or no exposure to the language. Yet Swamishri's inspiring words, “Do your best, and you will succeed,” filled them with powerful conviction. Moved by the deep faith he showed in them, young devotees like Yogeshbhai Patel (12, Harrow, London), Devangbhai Patel (13, Barnet, North London), and even eight-year-old Vasudevabhai Shah (Coventry) completed their *mukhpath* shortly after receiving Swamishri's letter. When asked what inspired them, their answer was simple: earning Swamishri's *rajipo*. This same love now inspires children in the United States, India, Australia, and Africa. Mahant Swami Maharaj's vision is encouraging thousands of children this year alone to memorize the Satsang Diksha – a vast field of spiritual seeds, planted by a divine farmer, now beginning to sprout. By showing such faith in them, he inspired them to place their faith in his words, allowing them to achieve what once seemed impossible.

### CHANGING THE FUTURE

Mahant Swami Maharaj's divine foresight also guides the lives of individuals during difficult



times. Devotees often write to him about a wide range of personal challenges, from marital and financial challenges to overcoming inner struggles like anger and jealousy. In these crucial moments, when all hope seems lost, Swamishri’s guidance illuminates the path forward, transforming their lives.

On 10 October 1995, Bhaveshbhai Chauhan’s father suddenly passed away. At just 18 and living alone at college in Mumbai, he was overwhelmed with grief. Struggling to focus on his studies, he poured his heart out in a letter to Mahant Swami Maharaj. Swamishri replied, “Bhavesh, you have lost your umbrella of support. The Satsang community also feels the loss.” More than a message of sympathy, those words gave Bhaveshbhai the clarity and strength he needed to begin healing. Swamishri added:

“We belong to God, and he belongs to us. We are all with you, the entire Satsang community is with you. So, stay strong. Joy and sorrow will come and go, but through it all, Swami Bapa (Pramukh Swami Maharaj) is with us; he is constantly protecting us, and he cares for us.”

Swamishri further comforted Bhaveshbhai by writing, “Everything will work out. All your sorrows will fade. Be brave and pray to Swami

Bapa (Pramukh Swami Maharaj) with deep reverence.” After reading the letter, Bhaveshbhai experienced the peace he had longed for. The understanding Swamishri provided transformed his perspective and gave him the strength to cope with his loss.

Decades later, on 23 September 2023, in Robbinsville, NJ, during Mahant Swami Maharaj’s 90<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration, Bhaveshbhai revisited these moments and shared how it shaped his journey:

“With my father’s passing, I believed I had no one left. At such a young age, I felt as if I was going to face life without support; the future seemed bleak and uncertain. But, after reading Swamishri’s letter, all my doubts and insecurities vanished. Every time I revisit those words, I’m filled with renewed strength and inspiration.”

Even today, Bhaveshbhai draws on that letter as a lasting source of faith in Swamishri’s guidance. Mahant Swami Maharaj similarly continues to write to thousands of devotees, shaping their future and instilling in them unwavering conviction.

Through his letters, we see the remarkable power of Swamishri’s divine foresight – whether guiding the completion of a monumental mandir, inspiring children to memorize the Satsang Diksha, or comforting grieving hearts. These messages are far more than replies; they are blessings that foster trust, deepen spiritual values, and instill enduring faith. In a world filled with uncertainty, Swamishri’s guidance remains our constant assurance, reminding us that we are never alone, and leading us toward a brighter, more purposeful future.

## Artful Love

Sadhu Aksharsnehdas  
Sadhu Paritruptdas

Picture yourself holding a piece of art created by someone who carries a special place in

your heart. Although it is a simple sketch, every stroke carries the weight of their affection. It’s a

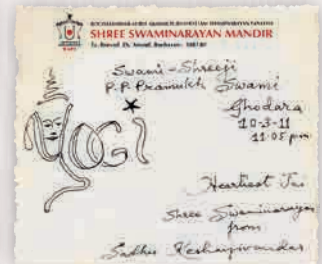
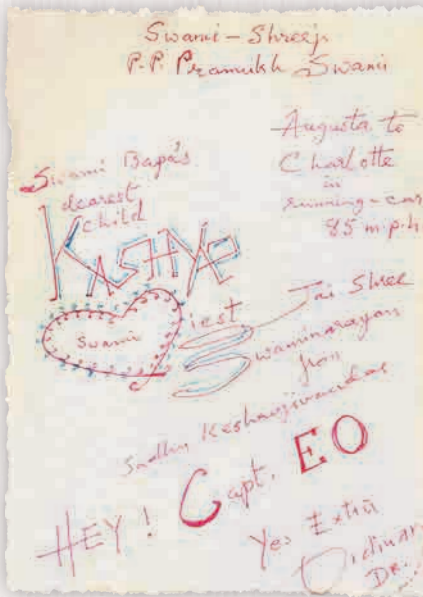


gift that doesn't just communicate; it resonates and lingers. Art possesses the power to transform emotion into something tangible, to convey meaning directly without words. Drawing for someone you love is an intimate gesture, a deeply personal offering of not just time but of feeling. Love is often felt more than it can be expressed in words, and art becomes a powerful way to give shape to that emotion. This is especially true with Mahant Swami Maharaj. His drawings are more than images; they are enduring expressions of his love; they are his language of love. The time he devotes to each piece, the consistency of his creative practice, and his heartfelt desire to uplift and inspire us all shine through his art. In every line, in every curve, Swamishri communicates what words cannot.

### ART FROM THE MARGINS OF TIME

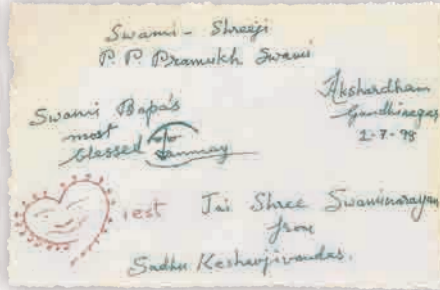
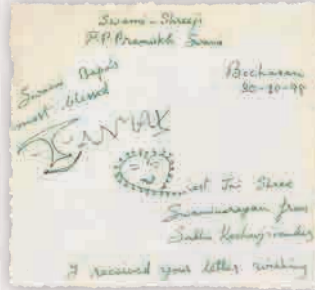
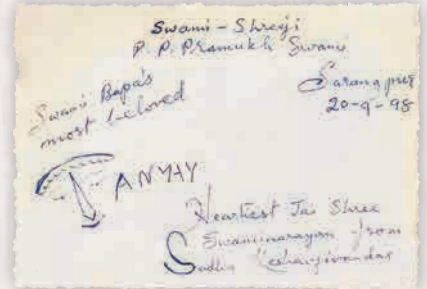
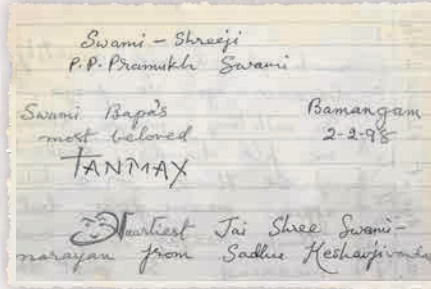
Time is one of the most valuable gifts we can give, especially in today's world, where it often feels like there's never enough of it. Drawings take time: time to think, time to imagine, and time to create. But Mahant Swami Maharaj has never let time be an obstacle. Even amidst a tightly packed routine, he makes space to draw.

Once, Swamishri was travelling from Augusta to Charlotte, on a 166-mile stretch of highway. Swamishri had just completed a series of *padhramanis* in Augusta and had more awaiting him in Charlotte, along with a satsang assembly in the evening. With such a full schedule, it would be only natural for him to use the car ride to rest. As the car sped forward and the world outside blurred past, his thoughts instead rested on Kashyapbhai. Rather than turn rest, Swamishri picked up his pen to draw. In that private space, with no audience and no expectation, he chose



to draw. That gesture alone speaks volumes: to prioritize someone else's joy over your own needs is itself an act of love.

This was not an isolated act. On 17 July 2013, high above the clouds between London and Mumbai, Swamishri seized a rare moment in the air to sketch a pilot for Mineshbhai Patel, who was himself a pilot. What could have been a chance to rest became, instead, a spontaneous expression of affection – an unprompted gift that spoke volumes. On another evening, Swamishri began a sketch at 11.05 p.m. – a time he noted in his sketch with quiet intention. It was 10 March 2011, and he was in Godhra, Gujarat. His day had already stretched long into the night, but still, he chose to create. The drawing, meant for Yogibhai, was no casual doodle; it was a heartfelt gift imbued with loving presence. The timestamp isn't just a detail; it marks a moment of selflessness. It adds a personal and intimate touch, making the drawing a cherished and irreplaceable keepsake for Yogibhai. Time, once given, cannot be reclaimed. And yet Swamishri offers it freely, sketching for his devotees in moments he steals, even late into the night. But that's the essence of his love: it's not measured in hours but in



its sincerity. For him, to love is always worth the time.

### SWAMISHRI'S UNBROKEN LINES

True affection is often measured not in grand, isolated gestures but in steadfast, consistent care. Through his repeated artistic expressions, Mahant Swami Maharaj reveals just how deeply we reside in his heart. What began in 1989 was no isolated gesture. It marked the beginning of a tradition, a steady stream of personalized drawings Swamishri would send to Yogeshbhai for over a decade. Each year, despite everything else demanding his attention, Swamishri would find time to draw for him. During these years, Swamishri's *vicharan* was nothing short of extraordinary. To give a sense of his schedule, he visited 580 villages in 1999, 651 villages in 2000, and 613 villages in 2001. But the numbers don't tell the whole story. Consider from 6–10 October 2000: on the 6th, he visited five villages; on the 7th, four; on the 8th, five; on the 9th, four; and four more on the 10th. Swami visited eighteen villages in five days, each filled with *sabhas*, *padhramanis*, and countless personal interactions. Amid his hectic schedule, Swamishri found time to draw for Yogeshbhai. These sketches became

quiet, enduring reminders that Yogeshbhai was not forgotten; he was remembered, valued, and held close.

Swamishri's love isn't reserved for a single devotee. Another devotee, Tanmaybhai, also received consistent and meaningful expressions of his

love. From 1994 to 2002, Swamishri gifted him 15 unique drawings, each styled differently, each bearing Tanmay's name with care and artistic variation. Each time, he rendered Tanmay's name in a distinct style, sometimes bold and playful, sometimes intricate, other times infused with visual metaphors that echoed the season. This wasn't merely a change in font or form; it was Swamishri's way of saying that love doesn't repeat; it reinvents. His consistency in drawing was matched only by his creativity, and through these variations, he communicated that no two moments of love are ever quite the same. These were not routine sketches. They formed a visual diary, a record of Swamishri's unwavering presence.

Even in moments of personal challenge, this love did not waver. Swamishri's consistency endured during these years despite undergoing angiography on 12 May 1997 and cardiac bypass surgery on 25 March 1998. Remarkably, despite his busy schedule, he still found time to sketch four art pieces for Tanmay. Even in the face of personal health challenges, his decision to keep this tradition alive shows his love doesn't fade. It would have been understandable if he had paused this tradition.



Surgery, recovery, the physical toll, any one of these would have been reason enough, but they weren't. Swamishri's decision to continue despite hardship reflects a steadfast connection, a love that endures not just in ease but also through difficulty.

**A VISION IN EVERY STROKE**

Swamishri's lifelong practice of creating art for his devotees was also a tangible manifestation of his unwavering care for their growth. Going far beyond mere creative expression, each piece is driven by a sincere desire to see them thrive. Through the stroke of a pen, he conveys affection and a conviction in their potential, often long before they recognize it themselves.

This visionary expression of love is captured in his drawing for a young boy named Manan. Swamishri sketched an image of a child holding a scorecard with a 99% exam score, effectively planting a vision for Manan's future. At such a young age, Manan might not have fully grasped his own capabilities, but the drawing served as a powerful vision. It was an invitation to dream bigger, to see himself as capable of achieving greatness, and to work towards his goals with determination. Through this simple yet meaningful act, Swamishri helped nurture Manan's belief in his limitless possibilities.

Similarly, Swamishri's portrait of an archer for Dipenbhai – with the caption 'Dipen – the world's best cardiologist' – does far more than offer praise; it embodies the very virtues essential to excelling. The drawing shows the archer at full

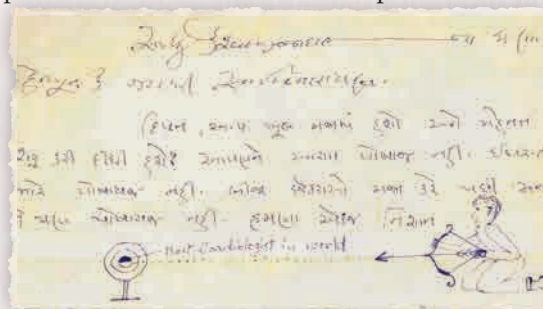


draw – arrow nocked and eyes unwaveringly fixed on a distant target – reminding Dipenbhai that, like an archer guided by God's steady hand, he must align his aim and steady his breath before every critical moment. The taut bowstring speaks to the discipline required in preparation, the arrow's flight to the trust one places in God, and the silent pause before release to the power of concentration and focus. Whenever doubt creeps in, a glance at that archer calls Dipenbhai back to these

truths: set your aim, draw upon your training and God's grace, and let your conviction guide every decision. Through such powerful imagery, Swamishri conveyed that by living these lessons – discipline, faith, focus, and reliance on God's guidance – Dipenbhai would indeed become the world's best cardiologist.

Through countless such sketches, often created during stolen moments, Swamishri expresses his boundless love for his devotees. His consistency over the years shows that these drawings spring not from obligation, but from a genuine desire to uplift and motivate. Each piece is a heartfelt symbol of his personal connection, an expression of love that speaks where words alone cannot. In every line and detail, Swamishri's enduring compassion shines through, guiding and inspiring his devotees on their journey towards their fullest potential.

Each drawing Mahant Swami Maharaj creates is a testament to his gift of time, snatched from car rides, flights, and late nights, showing us that his love is measured in the moments he gifts to



us. His unwavering consistency, sketching year after year, even amid health challenges, reveals a love that never falters nor fades. And with each image he crafts, whether a soaring scorecard or a bow-drawn archer, he plants seeds of inspiration, inviting us to aim higher, trust more deeply, and achieve our potential through the lens of his steadfast care. Through the moments he preciously spares, the lines he faithfully draws, and the dreams he inspires with his masterful works of art, Swamishri continues to show us the measure of his love.

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## A Silent Catalyst

Sadhu Jitendriyadas  
 Sadhu Gurumaydas

Can a whisper move mountains? It seems impossible; yet, when Mahant Swami Maharaj grabs a pen and writes a few lines on a simple sheet of paper, mountains move.

In an era where volume often defines value and presence indicates power, Swamishri leads with a quiet force – a force subtle yet seismic, silent yet sweeping. His presence is gentle, his persona humble, his speech sparse, and his actions understated. Yet, through this very silence, he has not only moved the entire organization forward, but each individual as well. These significant strides have very often begun with the revelation of his *sankalps* (innermost wishes) through handwritten letters, each carrying a transformative force. These letters are silent catalysts that not only fuel a tremendous movement of external achievements, but they deeply foster inner spiritual growth.

### A CALL-TO-ACTION

On 2 February 2022, Swamishri articulated a call-to-action from Atladara.

“Robbinsville Akshardham was Pramukh Swami Maharaj’s heartfelt *sankalp*. We must fulfil it. Everyone should join in *seva*

for a minimum of 15 days and if possible, stay up to 3 months, 6 months or even 1 year.”

Responding wholeheartedly to Swamishri’s letter, nearly 12,500 volunteers across North America put their lives on pause and dedicated themselves to fulfilling their guru’s vision. Just two months later on 2 April 2022, Swamishri ignited even greater zeal within everyone’s hearts.

“One goal – Akshardham, Robbinsville. Inauguration 2023.

We want to inaugurate Akshardham in 2023, no matter what.

I will come and perform the *pratishta* with great celebration.”

Though brief, these words produced results far beyond imagination. As per Swamishri’s vision, Robbinsville Akshardham was inaugurated in 2023 and stands today as the largest Hindu mandir in the western hemisphere. A global landmark of Hinduism, Akshardham bridges ancient Hindu tradition to contemporary society. For American-born Hindus disconnected from their heritage, Akshardham fosters cultural pride and reconnection. For visitors seeking a deeper understanding of Hinduism, Akshardham





આમણે કેવળ પરચર અને ઈરો, રાજીવ અક્ષરદામ નરો કરવું. માત્ર કલ્યાણારણી નમા કરવી. આમણે દિવ્ય મૂલ્યો શી અક્ષરદામ બનાવવું છે.

૨૦૨૩ ગિરનાર પ્રમુખ સ્વામીજી મેલબોર્ન

આમણે એવું ના કરવું પ્રમુખ સ્વામીજી સિદ્ધિ મેલબોર્ન દિવ્યતાથી અને ભક્તિથી ઉત્તરણી થઈ શકે છે. માત્ર અન્યો વાળુ મુળ ઉત્તરણ છે. કેમ ન કરવું? આમણે એવું ની સિદ્ધિ મેલબોર્ન છે. તેઓ આમણે માત્ર કરવું કરી શક્યા. હવે આમણે વારો છે.



provides the opportunity to explore the richness and vibrancy of Hindu traditions.

However, the transformative force of these letters extends beyond Akshardham’s visible magnificence and impact. Those who responded to Swamishri’s call-to-action experienced tremendous inner spiritual growth. They were not simply constructing an Akshardham in Robbinsville, but were also creating an Akshardham within.

Bhagwat Parekh, a college student who served on the stone inventory team, remarked, “I’m not just building something external by volunteering here; I’m also able to work on myself here.” Testimonials of these volunteers powerfully demonstrate how this *seva* deeply transformed them from within. When assigned a *seva* that required him to be off-site, Nilkanth Rao from Maryland was initially hesitant. However, through *seva* and self-reflection, he was able to cultivate a higher spiritual understanding and transform his mindset. He realized that there is no real difference in the kinds of *seva* we perform, if performed with the right sentiments.

“Every stone we place or every stone we prepare is an offering to God.” After two years of

*seva* on the stone placement team, Jay Patel from New Jersey joyfully revealed, “Before I began site *seva*, I struggled with laziness. Waking up on time was itself a project. At work, I would find a way to sleep for 1–2 hours daily. But now, I’ve overcome it and I’m able to perform *seva* with genuine enthusiasm.” Such experiences embody Swamishri’s vision of how an Akshardham should be built. On 16 February 2025, Swamishri laid out a spiritual blueprint in a letter from Melbourne:

“We don’t want to build an Akshardham of just stones, bricks and sand... but from divine values.”

Swamishri’s seemingly simple letters not only inspire devotees to engage in *seva*, but they profoundly nurture each devotee’s spiritual journey.

### ‘ONE GOAL’

On 25 February 2022, from Surat, Swamishri poured his enthusiasm for Pramukh Swami Maharaj’s centenary celebrations into words:

“One goal – Pramukh Swami Maharaj’s Centenary Celebrations. All of you have a deep desire in your hearts to celebrate Pramukh Swami Maharaj’s centenary with divinity and grandeur.

I, too, am enthusiastic to celebrate. Why wouldn't we be? It is the centenary of our guru. He did so much for us. Now, it is our turn."

This silent revelation inspired thousands of BAPS devotees across the globe to voluntarily participate in the preparation for Pramukh Swami Maharaj's centenary celebrations. In a short span of nine months, these volunteers transformed a 600-acre parcel of barren land into a spectacular spiritual wonderland, welcoming millions of visitors. The scale, planning, and execution of the event garnered widespread attention. India's Home Minister, Amitbhai Shah, notably stated, "For management students all over the country and the world, this success story is worth studying as a project." Consequently, management experts at IIM Ahmedabad, one of India's leading business schools, developed a case study on the event's management and logistics, showcasing the world-class outcomes that can emerge from the synergy of spiritual conviction, visionary leadership, and volunteerism.

Yet, Swamishri's intention was not to garner praise or recognition, but to enrich each and every visitor's personal life by offering the timeless values of Pramukh Swami Maharaj. Consequently, in many of the letters Swamishri wrote to carry out the celebration, he consistently emphasized one key message: "Our goal isn't to make a worldly impression." While the celebration did draw the attention of many, its true success lay in the way it yielded personal transformation. During the celebrations, over 11,000 people pledged to give up addictions. One such visitor, TV reporter Anandbhai Pattni, was addicted to smoking and tobacco for 26 years, despite his family's persistent efforts to help him quit. After attending the festival with his family, Anandbhai pledged to give up his addiction. Visitors also learned and carried back family values with them to their own homes. Touched by Pramukh Swami Maharaj's message of family harmony, a couple on the brink of divorce decided to resolve their differences and remain together. Additionally,

જેનપુરમાં સત્સંગી અને સ્વામીશ્રી  
દ્વારા તમારો સંસ્કૃત શ્લોકો વાંચો અને યથા સત્સંગી  
મુખપાથ કરો. એવી આશીર્વાદ રૂપિ છે.

over 250,000 children pledged to bow to their parents daily and study well. Building a spiritual mini-city in just nine months is an impressive feat, but rebuilding oneself and familial relationships is far more significant. This was the rebuild that Swamishri's letter achieved.

### A GLOBAL MOVEMENT

Another such initiative driven by Swamishri through his letters was the Satsang Diksha *mukhpath* (memorization) mission. Just two days after gifting this sacred text, on 7 July 2020, Swamishri wrote to all BAPS devotees from Nenpur:

"Those who have the strength and ability, should read the Sanskrit *shlokas* (verses) and memorize them to the best of their ability. That is my wish."

He continued encouraging *mukhpath* through numerous subsequent letters:

• "I have one *sankalp*: when our satsangi devotees have children and they begin to speak, they should immediately start to memorize the Sanskrit *shlokas* of the Satsang Diksha." 26 July 2022, Ahmedabad

• "Just as Dharmadev and Bhaktimata lovingly taught Ghanshyam Maharaj, all *satsangi* parents should teach their sons and daughters Satsang Diksha." 23 June 2024, Rajkot "For a long time, I have had a *sankalp* in my mind that all our children should memorize the Satsang Diksha scripture in Sanskrit."- 25 October 2024, Gondal Swamishri's letters spurred a global movement, inspiring thousands across all age groups to memorize and study the shastra. The widespread public engagement, especially for a text so recent, fascinated scholars and professors worldwide. These letters revitalized the ancient Vedic tradition of *mukhpath* and safeguarded the Sanskrit language.



The impact of these letters, however, surpassed preserving ancient traditions or creating young Sanskrit scholars; they instilled wisdom in each heart. In the 25 October 2024 letter mentioned above, Swamishri emphasized the benefits of *mukhpath*, stating that for those who memorize the Satsang Diksha, “The knowledge of Akshar-Purushottam will become deeply rooted in the lives... and they will be able to find the right direction.” Vinit Dodiya, age 7, is a testament to the faith and resilience gained from memorizing the Satsang Diksha. Vinit faced multiple physical hardships since birth, undergoing 13 critical surgeries by age seven, including three operations just one day after he was born. During COVID-19, despite experiencing pain in his urinary bladder, Vinit responded exceptionally with joy: “It would hurt but I wouldn’t cry, because in the Satsang Diksha, Swami Bapa has written: ‘Bhagwān kurute yaddhi hitārtham eva tat-sadā – whatever Bhagwan does is always for our benefit.’ I remember this and remain happy.”

Satsang Diksha *mukhpath* not only fostered personal strength but also empowered individuals to offer strength and wisdom to others. Devansh Patel, age 8, also memorized the Satsang Diksha

as per Swamishri’s wish. Learning of the personal struggles with depression of his father’s co-worker, Devansh called him and gave him strength and solace using *shlokas* from the Satsang Diksha. This intervention helped that individual find renewed hope and, as a result, is living a happy life today. As envisioned by Swamishri in his letters, the terse verses of Satsang Diksha transcended into the lives of even children through *mukhpath*, empowering them to conquer life’s toughest adversities and help others do the same.

On 26 May 2022, in a casual conversation with Bhadresh Swami, Swamishri said, “*Silent chhie pan pātāle pāyā nākhi daishu* – I may be silent, but I will lay the deepest foundations.” This short yet powerful statement captures the very essence of Swamishri’s leadership. In a world captivated by noise, where leadership is measured by bold declarations and grand gestures, Swamishri has shown through his letters that the most enduring impact begins in silence. Like roots growing silently beneath the soil, Swamishri’s letters sprout not only institutional, but also internal spiritual growth. He may be silent, his medium may be quiet, but the results he sparks are anything but.

## The Humble Pen of a Spiritual Giant

Sadhu Shantipriyadas  
Sadhu Keshavchintandas

*Dāsbhāvnā agādh jalmā,  
moti chhupyā amulyā...*

*In the vast ocean of humility,  
priceless virtuous pearls reside.*

In a world driven by ambition and image, humility is one of the most challenging virtues to cultivate – to some extent, it may even seem counterintuitive. Benjamin Franklin, a great American genius and revered scientist, observed, “There is perhaps no one of our natural passions so hard to subdue as pride. Beat it down, stifle it, mortify it as much as one pleases; it is still alive.” Pride – an expression of ego – is an extremely

stubborn human trait; no matter the efforts made to try to eradicate it, it always finds a way to resurface. The inherent human struggle with pride, especially in the face of personal advancement, is precisely the reality Bhagwan Swaminarayan captures in Vachanamrut Jetalpur 1: “In the beginning, when no one honours a person, imagine what their nature is like. Then, when 100 people begin to follow them, their self-conceit becomes of a different type. Further, when 1,000 people or 100,000 people follow them, or 10 million people follow them, their self-conceit becomes of a different type altogether.”

1) हुं B.A.P.S. ने शुभ्य ए.  
 शुभ्य रडी डोई मेरी पदवी नशी.  
 2) हुं शुभ्य ए. शुभ्य ए. शुभ्य ए.  
 शुभ्य ए. शुभ्य ए. शुभ्य ए.  
 3) हुं शुभ्य ए. शुभ्य ए. शुभ्य ए.

25-7-20  
 शुभ्य ए. शुभ्य ए. शुभ्य ए.



However, over the last nine decades, despite being a globally revered spiritual luminary, Mahant Swami Maharaj's innate and insightful humility has touched countless. For Swamishri, humility is not a cultivated virtue – it has been and continues to be his very identity.

On 16 July 2020, while in Nenpur, Swamishri was asked how he would introduce himself. He wrote, "I am the servant of all servants." This simple yet heartfelt introduction is silently reflected in countless letters he has written over the years. Swamishri's letters reveal virtues subtly hidden by his humility – seeking forgiveness without personal fault, offering genuine appreciation for others' efforts, and maintaining unwavering reverence for one's guru. Exploring his letters helps uncover these hidden pearls and teaches us true humility.

### PEARL 1: FORGIVENESS

Among the many pearls concealed within Swamishri's humility is his ability to ask for forgiveness, even without personal wrongdoing. In the summer of 2001, a group of BAPS children from America travelled across India to experience Hindu culture and traditions. To further nurture their faith, a convention was organized in Bochasan in the presence of Pramukh Swami Maharaj. On one of the days,

Mahant Swami Maharaj was to deliver a speech titled 'Swami Bapa: My Best Friend.' Despite a hectic schedule, Swamishri went specially to Nadiad to prepare that presentation for a mere 30 children. Tapping into his deep understanding of the children's day-to-day challenges, he spent several days contemplating how to help them overcome them. To better connect with these children from America, Swamishri prepared the entire speech in English along with hand-drawn illustrations. He prepared with the same dedication a person would prepare for an audience of thousands. Years later, when asked why he had gone to such lengths, he humbly replied: "Their bodies may be small, but their *atmas* are *akshar-muktas*."

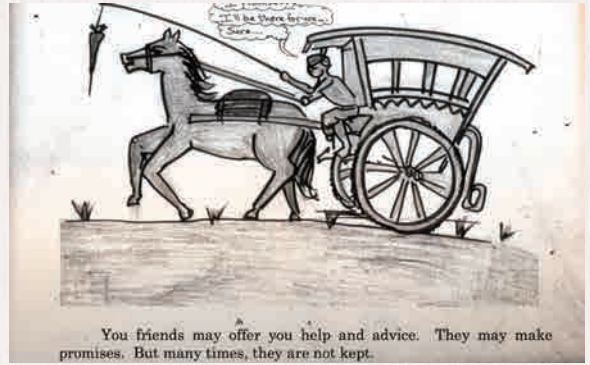
On 17 July 2001, Swamishri presented in front of the small group of children. Despite his sincere and loving efforts, the children drifted off to sleep due to exhaustion from

extensive travelling and the hot weather. For most prominent speakers, this might have felt humiliating. But instead of becoming frustrated, Swamishri felt a deep sense of regret and responsibility for not having done enough. This thought remained on Swamishri's mind as he continued his *vicharan*. That very same day, Swamishri penned a letter – a letter of apology. He lovingly expressed, "I really regret not

Swami-Shreeji  
 P.P. Pramukh Swami A-lodara  
 17-7-01  
 Swami Bapa's most blessed  
 and most beloved  
 U.S.A. Bochasan  
 K. Shreeji to all other attendees  
 I really regret, that I was unable  
 to explain you what I had in mind  
 That was best of punishment for you all  
 Secondly, you are not used to such  
 tough, long, long, spiritual lectures,  
 that's number two punishment  
 Third punishment was, speaking of  
 your knees. You are very uncomfort-  
 able, sitting cross-legged. I could feel it.  
 My lectures are never for  
 long. This was my first trial and  
 therefore time was not balanced. Next time it  
 won't happen. Sorry. Pardon me  
 Yours truly Swami Shreeji



thing cross-legged, I could feel it.  
 My lectures are never so  
 was my first trial and <sup>by figures</sup>  
 not balanced. Next time it  
 pen Sorry. Pardon me.  
 Yours S. S. or 21/11/21/11.



being able to explain to you what I had on my mind.” He wrote how he felt he had punished the children by making them sit through his talk. He even added at the end, “Next time it won’t happen again. Sorry, pardon me.”

In 2001, Swamishri was already a highly respected senior swami and a beloved leader in the Satsang community. Just a few months earlier, he had delivered a speech to a crowd of over a hundred thousand people. Yet here he was, feeling he had wronged 30 children – children who may not even remember. Years later, when asked why he asked for forgiveness, Swamishri said, “I took it upon myself. Even though I remained a dud (worthless), at least the children progressed.”

Swamishri’s letter of apology reminds us that seeking forgiveness, even without personal fault, is a powerful expression of humility.

## PEARL 2: APPRECIATION

While there’s a universal, inherent craving within us to be appreciated and noticed, the act of genuinely giving appreciation stems from an entirely different place – one rooted in humility rather than ego. This is the second pearl we uncover in Swamishri’s humility: the natural ability to recognize and appreciate others’ value and contributions without seeking to elevate oneself. The entire Satsang community was touched by Swamishri’s profound humility from the letters he wrote during the grand celebrations of Pramukh Swami Maharaj’s Shatabdi Mahotsav in Ahmedabad and the inauguration of the

Swaminarayan Akshardham in Robbinsville, NJ.

Celebrating such monumental events is no easy task. As the spiritual and administrative leader of a global organization, Swamishri shouldered immense responsibilities while enduring physical challenges at the age of 90. Amidst innumerable obstacles, Swamishri’s unwavering dedication and zeal continued to inspire and guide. His continued guidance and motivation through phone calls, meetings, and letters were the sole reason for success – making him a worthy recipient of worldwide recognition. Yet, rather than relishing praise and glory for his commitment and efforts, he chose to bestow boundless praise upon his disciples through his most beloved form of communication: letters.

When Swamishri arrived in Robbinsville, NJ, for the three-month-long inauguration celebrations, he expressed his loving sentiments for the volunteers, “There are no words to describe the magic you have created.” On 7 October 2023 – his 90th birth anniversary celebrations and the eve of the grand inauguration – any individual would be either tense or too overjoyed to remember anyone else, but Swamishri’s mind was on the volunteers as he wrote: “You have all endured great physical hardship. It pains me that I have not been able to personally repay your dedication. Please forgive me with a generous heart. Without each one of you, none of this would have been possible. I am deeply grateful to all of you. It is because of you that this *pratishtha* will even happen. You all hold a special place in my heart. I will remember all of you dearly tomorrow.”



After the Pramukh Swami Maharaj Centenary Celebrations, he expressed, “You all have performed extraordinary *seva*. Your service is truly priceless. I feel as though I should place the dust of your feet upon my head, for in my heart, I feel I have done nothing at all.”

This wasn't just mere sentiment written in letters. Swamishri's words of appreciation manifested through his actions. During both events, Swamishri applied soil from the sacred event grounds to his forehead to express his reverence for the sacred land and the selfless efforts of the volunteers. In Vachanamrut Gadhada I 37, Shriji Maharaj explains the glory of a *sant* like Mahant Swami Maharaj: “A Sant with such a conviction is so highly respected by me that even I place the dust of his feet on my head.”

Such an extraordinary *sant* like Swamishri, highly admired and revered by Shriji Maharaj himself as well as the entire Satsang community, placed the dust from the feet of ordinary individuals to his head – an expression of unparalleled admiration and humility.

Swamishri personifies a simple truth explained in Vachanamrut Gadhada II 40: Only one who is truly humble and egoless can so effortlessly praise a devotee of God.

### PEARL 3: REVERENCE

The third and most awe-inspiring pearl is Swamishri's unwavering dedication to and reverence for his gurus, despite his own personal prominence – a virtue consistently reflected in the letters he has written humbly over the last six decades.

In February 1971, the passing of Yogiji Maharaj shook the entire Satsang community. At such a time, Swamishri wrote a letter saying, “In the presence of this vast Satsang community, I am just a small child. I, too, need Pramukh Swami Maharaj's protective shelter.” After being initiated in 1957, Swamishri gradually earned respect and admiration from devotees worldwide. He even served as the head swami of the mandir in Mumbai, shouldering the responsibility of training newly initiated swamis. Despite such status, he forever considered himself a small child before his guru as he continued to serve Pramukh Swami Maharaj over the next five decades.

- In 2012, when he was assigned the responsibility of reading and responding to letters from devotees, he would begin each letter with Pramukh Swami Maharaj's name and end with the sentiment: “With Swami Bapa's blessings and my prayers.”

- In 2016, after the passing of Pramukh Swami Maharaj, Swamishri became the guru of BAPS devotees worldwide. This increased fame and spotlight did not affect him nor his dedication towards his gurus. He continues to sing their glory in the letters he writes.

- Recently, during the Golden Jubilee Celebrations honouring the BAPS volunteers for their 50 years of service, Swamishri wrote, “I can see Yogi Bapa and Pramukh Swami in all the *karyakars*.” Swamishri often reminds everyone: “Pramukh Swami Maharaj is never to be forgotten.” Swamishri himself has never forgotten his gurus. How could he? He sees his



gurus in everyone – the epitome of reverence and ultimately, the pinnacle of true humility.

In the *Vishnu Sahasranam*, three labels are given to a spiritual great: *amāni*, *mānad*, and *mānya* – only one who is humble can understand the greatness of others; therefore, only he is worthy of being great himself. Swamishri’s humility has naturally earned him worldwide recognition and respect. Contrary to the common belief that ‘getting ahead’ yields progress, Swamishri teaches

“ બચો કા ખેલ માત સમજના  
સાવધાન રહેજો.”  
‘કાખજં પ્રધાનપણજી’.

this timeless lesson that true spiritual progress does not lie in self-advancement, but rather in selflessness. These letters of Swamishri help us unravel the virtues hidden within the ocean of humility.

## Letters of Concern

Sadhu Nirmalhrudaydas

Sadhu Aksharhrudaydas

On 12 April 2016, Mahant Swami Maharaj wrote to a youth, “I will always be with you.” These six words were far more than a conventional expression of solace. Rather, they were a heartfelt promise to the entire Satsang community – a promise that countless devotees continually experience through Swamishri’s letters. During times of personal and global crises, these sacred letters are a lifeline that provide the necessary comfort, guidance, and strength to face and overcome these overwhelming challenges.

### A BEACON OF HOPE

In 2020, within merely three to four months of its initial outbreak in China, COVID-19 had escalated into a global pandemic that marked a period of unprecedented disruption around the world. Schools and universities shut down, millions of people lost their jobs, mental health conditions such as anxiety and depression increased, and the number of illnesses and deaths surged. From an economic standpoint, the pandemic also caused the largest global recession since the Great Depression of the 1930s. Individuals to entire

nations were broken, shaking the world to its core.

In this time of immense uncertainty and distress, the handwritten letters of Mahant Swami Maharaj became a beacon of hope and strength for thousands. He compassionately expressed three significant aspects that profoundly impacted the entire Satsang community, both physically and emotionally.

1. First, Swamishri conveyed the extreme severity of the situation. On 20 April 2022 he explicitly wrote, “*Baccho ka khel mat samajna.*” Meaning, “Do not take this as child’s play.” There was a widespread misunderstanding of the pandemic’s gravity that frequently led to fatal consequences. But Mahant Swami Maharaj’s five simple words

safeguarded devotees by inciting a deep awareness of the global epidemic’s seriousness. As a result, this awareness further inspired devotees to strictly adhere to the safety guidelines issued by governments and health authorities.

2. Second, Swamishri offered practical guidance for strengthening immunity. After consulting experienced doctors and professionals, Swamshri wrote a three-page letter on 22 April 2022

૨) Immunity વધારે તે લગભગ સમજાવે.  
૩) Distancing માટે સાવધાન રહેવું જરૂર છે. ઘરોમાં સ્વચ્છતા જાળવવી અને કુચી કચો નાં કચાવવામાં સાવધાન રહેવું.  
૪) Mask કામમાં પહેરવું જરૂર છે.  
૫) Sanitization ના નિયમોનું ચુસ્તપણે પાલન રાખવું.  
૬) સંતોને કોઈ સ્ટેટ્સ - members, કરીબારો નહીં મળે.  
૭) મેંદરમાંથી કોઈ બહાર નહીં નહીં, અને બહારથી કોઈ અંદર નહીં.  
૮) મહામારીના સમયમાં આ બધી સાવધાની રાખવી. સૌથી સંતોને અમલીકરણ માટે પ્રાર્થનાઓ કરવાની.

in which he prescribed specific instructions for devotees to regularly follow. “*Garam pani divasma panch vaar pivu, Ayurvedic ukalo pivu, ane pranayam karvo.* – Drink warm water five times a day, take Ayurvedic herbal decoctions, and practice pranayam.” This simple handwritten letter by Swamishri created an effective impact on the entire Satsang community. Thousands began to immediately imbibe Swamishri’s instructions into their daily routine.

3. Finally, Swamishri provided solace and spiritual strength through his comforting words. In one of his letters, he reassuringly wrote, “*Maharajni dayathi koi prashna nahi thay, raksha thashe.* – Through Maharaj’s grace, there will be no problems and you will be protected.” Thus, Swamishri instilled peace and restored courage within the hearts of many.

Mahant Swami Maharaj’s explicit instructions, practical guidance, and inspiring words of comfort and strength reflect his genuine concern for the well-being of every individual. In hindsight, countless confess that without the light of Swamishri’s letters, they would have been lost in the darkness of uncertainty and despair that blanketed the entire world.

## BRIDGING FAMILIES

In today’s world, family conflicts have become a global yet natural phenomenon. These struggles often cause the deepest wounds that seem impossible to heal. However, through his compassionate letters, Mahant Swami Maharaj has bridged families together, replacing discord and division with unity and love.

On 16 July 2016, Swamishri wrote a personal letter to Ashokbhai, a 43-year-old devotee who had been entangled in a long-standing and painful conflict with his brother. Despite the numerous efforts of family members and friends to reconcile this conflict, the drift between the two brothers remained unresolved. The strain had taken a heavy emotional toll – not only on Ashokbhai and

નોંધ –  
 Immunity વધારવા માટે,  
 ૧) ગરમ પાણી દિવસમાં પાંચ વાર પીજો  
 ૨) ગરમ પાણીને ગરમ મોડેને ગરમ કરી લેવો.  
 ૩) ગરમ પાણીમાં દુધ અને ગોળા ઉમેરવા.  
 ૪) Homoeopathy દવા, આયુર્વેદિક ઉકાળા વિ. લેવા.  
 ૫) યાત્રા કરવા.  
 સુચી કુલચંદ્રનાથ શાસ્ત્રી  
 સુશિખારામી.

his brother, but also on their respective families. The situation had reached such an extent that the brothers were no longer speaking to each other, and the deep-seated bitterness had created a wall of silence. This division led to family gatherings being avoided, birthdays feeling incomplete, and relationships within the extended family growing strained and distant.

Moved by the ongoing conflict between these two brothers, Mahant Swami Maharaj meticulously penned a four-page letter to Ashokbhai. Within it, he narrated a *prasang* involving two brothers who had resolved their differences, bringing immense joy to Yogiji Maharaj. He further explained Pramukh Swami Maharaj’s strong wish for unity, “*Jher khayne pan samp rakhvo.*” Meaning, maintain unity no matter what. He did not stop there. Swamishri gently highlighted the root causes of the conflict, the emotional toll it had taken on both brothers, and its ripple effect on the larger family. His words were not only filled with compassion and concern, but also wisdom – urging both sides to let go of ego and embrace forgiveness. Swamishri reminded Ashokbhai the importance of keeping *samp* and letting go of the past. Reading Swamishri’s heartfelt letter and experiencing his genuine concern, Ashokbhai was moved. After reading the letter many times and reflecting on Swamishri’s guidance, he changed his perspective towards his brother. He began to recognize his mistake in the situation and the pain that stubbornness and ego had caused – not just to himself, but to everyone involved. As a result, Ashokbhai took the first step and reached out to his brother. To his surprise, his brother became willing to talk. What began as a hesitant conversation



gradually turned into an honest, heartfelt exchange. Both brothers realized their mistakes and committed to rebuilding the broken relations.

In the weeks that followed, Swamishri's words sparked reflection, healing, and ultimately, reconciliation. What months of strained efforts could not accomplish, Swamishri's handwritten message achieved – reuniting a broken family.

### A PERSONAL COMPASS

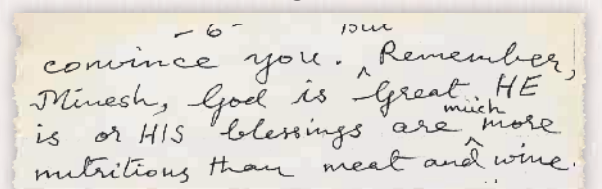
Minesh Patel was a 25-year-old aspiring pilot, full of dreams and possessing tremendous potential. Like many young individuals, he carried great ambitions, but his journey was hindered by procrastination and a lack of discipline. Over time, Minesh began to grow complacent in his studies, and his academic performance started to reflect his increasingly laid-back attitude. His parents grew concerned, unsure whether he would continue his education at all. Despite his strong desire to become a pilot, Minesh struggled to translate that dream into consistent effort. His friends urged him to take his studies more seriously, reminding him that his future depended on the choices he made now. But slowly, the spark that once drove him began to fade. Minesh was losing interest in the very goal he had once been deeply committed to achieving.

Concerned about Minesh's future, on 27 September 1987, Mahant Swami Maharaj personally wrote a letter to Minesh inspiring him to overcome his flaws and pursue his dream. Swamishri gave precise instructions that proved useful for Minesh's success. With a clear purpose and refreshed spirit, Minesh realigned his apathetic lifestyle with his lofty dream. He created goals and deadlines, effectively managed his time, avoided distractions, and drastically changed his study habits by becoming more focused and attentive. As a result, he became one of the 30 out of 10,000 applicants who were accepted to his dream training school in Switzerland. Overjoyed by Minesh's substantial progress and academic success, Swamishri wrote an eight-page letter to congratulate him. Along

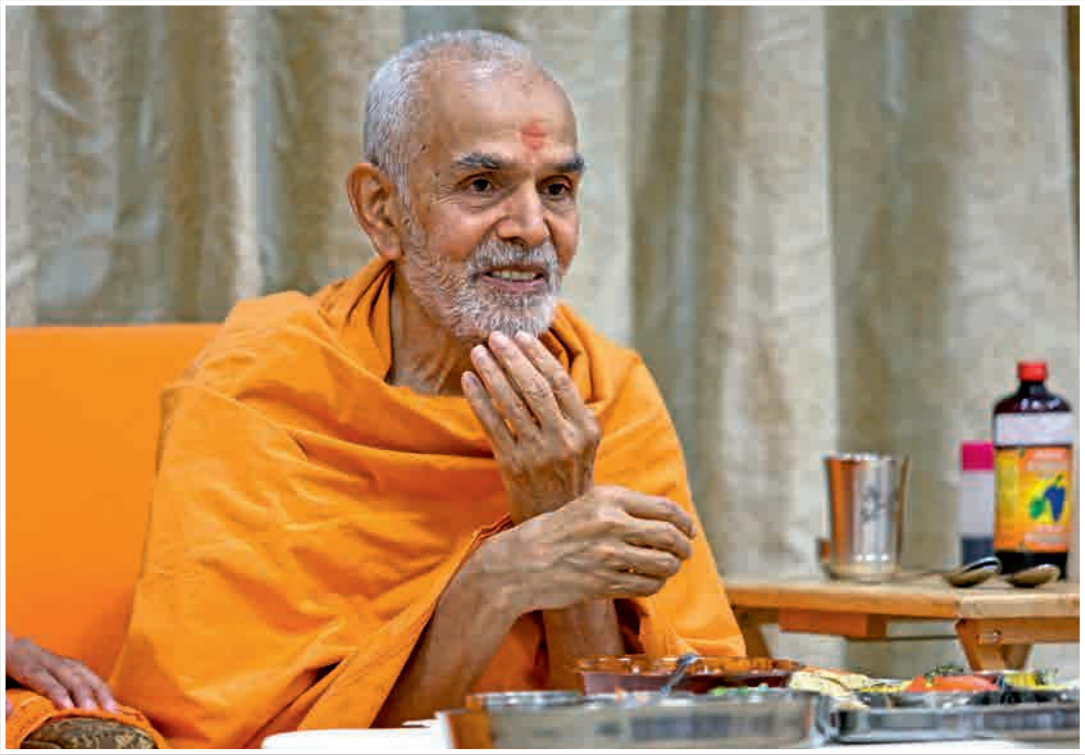
with expressing joy, Swamishri also imparted priceless words of encouragement. "Swami Bapa is always there for you so work hard and sincerely... I have faith that you will strive to achieve the best." Swamishri then concluded by saying, "Go ahead boldly and with purpose." Years later, still reflecting on Swamishri's words, Minesh reads this letter every day to his kids to emphasize to them the time and interest that Swamishri has taken in his life to make sure he strives to achieve the best. In turn, Swamishri's timeless words created a deep impact on his children as well by inspiring them to be focused and passionate in their studies.

Along with motivating Minesh to progress professionally, Swamishri also emphasized the essential significance of resolutely abiding by spiritual disciplines such as not consuming alcohol. Understanding the practical implications of Minesh training in a foreign country and foreseeing the possible situations he may encounter, Swamishri explained, "You will be tempted by your mates to eat meat and drink. Remember that Swami Bapa's Blessings are much more nutritious than that." Even amidst adverse circumstances, Swamishri's words became the source of Minesh's unwavering spiritual faith and conviction. Minesh is only one of the thousands that have personally experienced the invaluable guidance, inspiration, and strength of Swamishri's letters.

Mahant Swami Maharaj's letters are more than just words – they are a lifeline. Whether offering guidance during the pandemic, healing family rifts, or pushing individuals to reach their full potential, his messages have had a profound effect on countless lives. His words combine practical advice with deep spiritual insight, giving people not only the faith and hope to cope with difficult times, but also the strength to move forward. ♦



- 6 - 1000  
convince you. Remember,  
Minesh, God is great. HE  
is or HIS blessings are <sup>much</sup> more  
nutritious than meat and wine.



## Mahant Swami Maharaj's NISSWADIPANU

**I**n Vachanamrut Loya 8, Bhagwan Swaminarayan says, “If the tongue [sense of taste] is fully subdued, then all the other *indriyas* can be subdued.”

The physical senses – eyes, nose, ears, tongue and touch – are the essential means to experiencing material or *mayik* objects. They are the gateways that stimulate the mind and emotions. When a person controls his physical senses, then over time the mind becomes disciplined and pure. Self-control and purity enables one to remain stable, happy and equipoised.

Bhagwan Swaminarayan, divine avatars and the Gunatit gurus have an eternal and indomitable control over their senses. Having self-control over

the sense of taste, as mentioned by Bhagwan Swaminarayan, provides the key to conquering all the other senses. An unbridled desire for tasty food leads to many issues and conflicts.

The virtue of subduing the sense of taste – *nisswadipanu* – is an innate trait of Mahant Swami Maharaj. A few incidents from his life amply reflect this virtue.

### FROM CHILDHOOD

Vinubhai spent his childhood years in Jabalpur (Madhya Pradesh). Once, he sat down for lunch at his grandfather's home.

Dry *churmu* (baked, crushed wheat balls) was served on his plate. Then, the server went into the



kitchen to bring ghee and sugar powder to add into the *churmu*. The young Vinubhai, thinking he was supposed to eat what had been served, started eating the dry, tasteless *churmu*. By the time the server returned with ghee and sugar powder, Vinubhai had eaten the dry, tasteless *churmu*. Everyone was astonished as to how anyone could eat the tasteless *churmu*.

From a young age, Vinubhai was least interested in or craved for tasty food. He unhesitatingly and uncomplainingly ate whatever was served to him.

### HEIGHT OF NISSWADIPANU

On 27 August 2017, Mahant Swami was in Robbinsville, New Jersey. After his breakfast, a swami commented that in Mahant Swami Maharaj's plate all the food items lacked flavour and taste. Then, an attendant swami added, "It was a lot better now, whereas formerly it was..." Swamishri interrupted, "[Formerly it was] 70% boiled mung." And that too, without any salt and condiments.

All were astonished and concluded that to eat tasteless food all one's life was truly the apex of having mastered the virtue of *nisswadipanu*.

### NO MORE

On 2 September 2017, Swamishri was in Robbinsville. Today, Thakorji was offered *bati* and *churmu* for dinner. A swami took a little *churmu* in a spoon to feed Swamishri on behalf of all the devotees present. The reason was to celebrate the success of a festival held that evening. Swamishri, too, was happy and satisfied with the festival celebration. Then, Swamishri said out of joy, "Give me more." Thus, Swamishri ate a half spoonful of *churmu*.

The attendant swami enquired, "Did you like it?" Swamishri responded with a yes. Instantly, the attendant urged, "Then, have some more!"

Swamishri quickly responded, "Because it tastes good, does it mean I have to take more?" Swamishri was unwilling to have any more

because of his disinclination for tasty and sweet foods. In contrast to Swamishri's nature, we, on the other hand, indulge in any food that is tasty and conducive to us – a sign of our deep desire and attachment to tasty foods.

### MAMRA FROM ANNAKUT PRASAD

On 3 March 2014, Swamishri was in Selvas, Gujarat. He had returned to his room after Thakorji's darshan. A grand *annakut* was arranged before the deities in the mandir sanctums. It was sponsored by Arvindbhai Saheb, a prominent devotee of Nairobi. Swamishri was pleased with the darshan of the *annakut*. The *prasad* from the *annakut* had been brought before Swamishri in his room. Swamishri looked at the items with interest and joy. Swamis requested Swamishri, "Have a little." Swamishri remarked, "My favourite item is not here." The attendant swami understood what Swamishri was hinting at. He said, "There's *mamra* (puffed baked rice)." Swamishri asked enthusiastically, "Where are they?"

The swamis showed Swamishri a small bowl of *mamra* nestled between a variety of sumptuous sweet items. Swamishri ate the simple *prasad* of *mamra* with joy.

The swamis were amazed and commented, "You have only eaten simple *mamra* from a variety of delicious *annakut* items." Swamishri's virtue of tastelessness is mind-boggling and phenomenal.

### CHILLI-FLAVOURED CHOCOLATE

On 5 June 2019, Swamishri was in Sarangpur. The attendant swami asked Swamishri, "Today, while you were having breakfast a senior swami placed a piece of homemade chocolate in your mouth. The swami was unaware that the chocolate was chilli-flavoured because its label had come off. Only later, when other swamis tasted it did they realize it to be too hot. You must have found it very hot because you eat

chilli-free food. Yet, you did not say a word or express any discomfort.”

Swamishri smiled and replied, “I didn’t know what I had eaten.” Swamishri’s virtue of *nisswadipanu* is truly amazing and unimaginable.

### RESOLUTE SELF-CONTROL

On 17 August 2019, Swamishri was in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. For breakfast, a sweet *magas* was brought for Swamishri to eat. The *magas* was made from *mogo* by Dipenbhai, a devotee of Arusha.

Swamishri accepted Dipenbhai’s devotion by eating a small piece of the *magas* and praised, “I feel like eating more.” The swamis asked, “Shall we bring more for you to eat?” Swamishri replied, “No. It was for you [I said it].”

Swamishri ate a little *magas* to acknowledge the devotion and effort of Dipenbhai. No matter how tasty any food is, Swamishri’s self-control is unflagging and resolute.

### A BLAND DIET SINCE MANY YEARS

On 24 September 2019, Swamishri was having his meal in Nairobi. Children sang *thal* at that time. Then, to show how bland Swamishri’s food was, the items were shown to the children. Then, swamis spelled out six items: boiled *parvar* (pointed gourd), carrot strips, broccoli, *tuver* (fresh green pigeon peas), *vatana* (peas), *kolu* (pumpkin), mung, one teaspoon of boiled rice, and mung dal with no spices. Everyone was surprised to witness Swamishri’s saltless and tasteless diet.

Then, Ramjibhai, a staunch devotee, asked, “Bapa, how long have you been eating such simple, bland food?” Swamishri smiled and replied, “Since very long.” At that time, Priyavrat Swami said, “I am a witness to his bland diet since the last 34 years.”

Swamis and devotees bowed with awe

and respect to Swamishri’s silent austerity (*tapascharya*).

### ONLY MINDFUL OF MAHARAJ’S MURTI

On 19 September 2021, Swamishri was in Sarangpur. An attendant swami asked, “Swami, do you remember what you daily eat for lunch?”

Swamishri replied, “Yes, only boiled quinoa.” Then, swamis mentioned the names of other items to remind him what else he eats. Swamishri, however, could not recall *biranj* (a sweet item made of rice). This revealed his indifference to whatever he ate.

The attendant swami asked further, “Do you remember what you eat every evening for dinner?” Swamishri gestured towards the attendant swami serving him and replied smilingly, “I eat whatever he serves.”

“Do you remember what you eat daily for breakfast?”

“I eat boiled mung and a half a spoon of *shiro*.”

This was all that Swamishri could remember.

Later, the attendant swamis discussed among themselves, “One can understand forgetting what one eats when different types of food are served daily. However, Swamishri’s daily menu is the same, consisting of only a few items, yet he failed to recall. This means that Swamishri merely eats to sustain himself and relishes only the *murti* of Shriji Maharaj and his gurus.”

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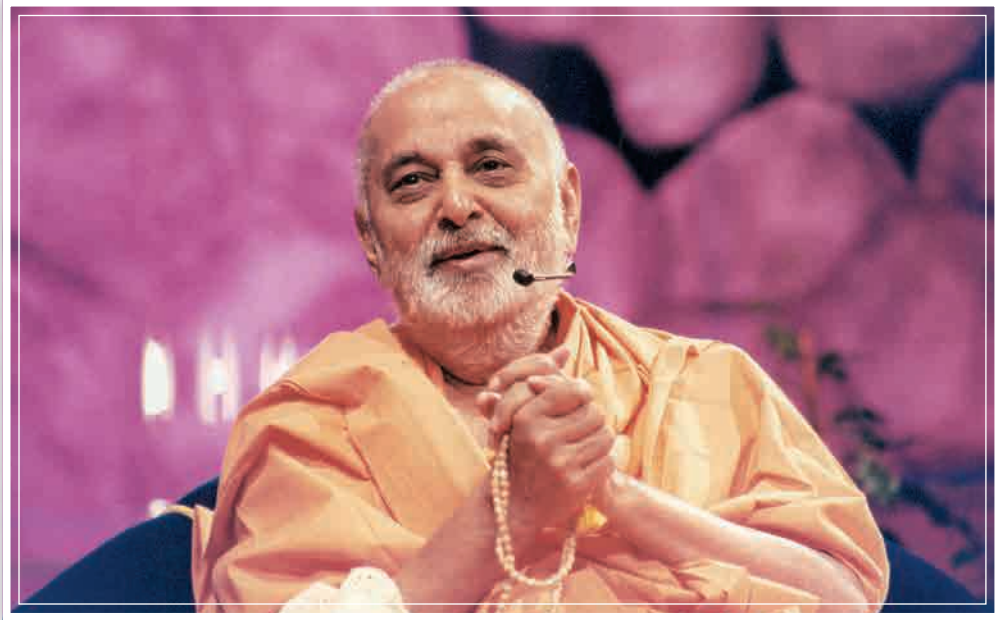
On many occasions, Mahant Swami Maharaj has revealed with regards to his daily diet, “I eat by asking my stomach and not my tongue.” This means that Swamishri’s principle of eating is not based on taste, but to merely sustain his body. ◆

(Source from Gujarati text in *Satsang Saurabh*, Part 10, pp. 24–26)

Correction: In the previous Bliss issue (July–August 2025), the Gujarati text source for the article ‘Mahant Swami Maharaj’s Guru Bhakti’ should have been Part 12 instead of Part 3.



# Question Time with PRAMUKH SWAMI MAHARAJ



**I**n Udepur, on 15 February 1979, Swamishri visited the Sarvoday Vidyalaya.

Student: If sins and merits are real and everything happens according to destiny, then why is it wrong for one person to harm another?

Swamishri: The fact that people hesitate to do immoral things shows that one should not do such things. So, steer clear of wrongdoings.

\* \* \*

In Bharuch, on 4 July 1979, Dr Maganbhai recited a verse to Swamishri, which implied that those burdened with the crown are unable to sleep. Then, he asked, “Bapa, you wear the crown, yet you are still at peace. How?”

Swamishri replied, “I have placed the burden on Bhagwan. He is the all-doer.”

Swamishri thus revealed the secret of his tension-free life.

\* \* \*

On 24 April 1980, Swamishri was in Rajkot. A *parshad* asked, “Bapa, we have become sadhus to worship Bhagwan. So, why should we bother to convince others to attend *sabha*, observe *ekadashi*, give the Satsang Exams, perform puja, apply *tilak-chandlo* and so on? What is the need for this?”

Swamishri replied, “Do you have *vairagya* like Yogi Bapa? He also did such *seva*. Do you have *vairagya* like Shastriji Maharaj? He also did this *seva*. This is not a bother. It is bhakti and *seva*.”

Swamishri, thus, reinforced Bhagwan Swaminarayan’s teaching in Vachanamrut Vartal 17: “Adopting the path of *pravrutti* in order to serve God and his devotees, is the very definition of bhakti.”

\* \* \*

On 15 May 1980, in Nairobi, Shri Rameshbhai Dave asked, “Bapa, what thoughts does the Satpurush have?”

Swamishri said, “He does not have thoughts of *maya* or this world. He is always thinking about Bhagwan. How to worship God and encourage others to do so as well.”

\* \* \*

On 20 May 1980, on the evening flight from Nairobi to Mombasa, a sadhu asked Swamishri, “Have you always slept less?”

Swamishri replied, “No, I sleep enough. Wherever I lay down, I can sleep. But, I do not sleep in the *sabha*. In Yogiji Maharaj’s time, no matter how sleep-deprived or fatigued, I never slept in the *sabha*. But, when I lay down, I instantly fall asleep.”

On the morning of 22 May 1980, Swamishri went to a television studio in Mombasa to participate in the ‘Voice of Kenya’ national broadcast. During the programme, Swamishri was asked, “Why is God manifest only through you?”

Swamishri replied, “To carry out his work, God remains manifest. The person [through whom God manifests] changes, but the underlying divinity is the same. It is God who does all the work. That God is present in everyone. The purer the glass or mirror, the clearer the reflection. Similarly, God manifests in one who is pure within.”

\* \* \*

On 13 June 1980, reporters of *Uhu* and *Daily News*, interviewed Swamishri. One question they asked, “What is special about the spiritual path compared to science?” Swamishri said, “The pleasures attained through science are a source of misery. Peace of mind is possible only through spirituality.”

Then, he was asked, “What is the solution to social vices?”

Swamishri said, “When people realize what they are born for, they will understand the problems caused by social vices. God and his Sant bring about this awareness.”

On 10 July 1980, Swamishri reached Lambeth Palace at 2 p.m. to meet the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Robert Runcie.

Before the meeting, *Church House TV* reporters

asked about the discipline sadhus observed with regard to interacting with women.

Swamishri replied, “These disciplines are the edicts of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. They do not represent any dislike, disrespect or insult towards women, but are a means to preserve (moral) character. Bhagwan Swaminarayan did many works to uplift women in society. Our devotees live their lives based on these codes of discipline. So, there are no difficulties. The women devotees are not offended. In fact, they experience joy and inner peace. We do not have any objections to the Archbishop interacting with women. The purpose of this meeting is to encourage interfaith harmony throughout the world.”

In the meeting, Archbishop Runcie asked, “What is the objective of your visit to England?”

Swamishri said, “Next year [1981] is Bhagwan Swaminarayan’s birth bicentenary. So, we are visiting to celebrate the bicentenary. People of London are righteous and we wish to encourage such righteousness.”

Later in the meeting, Swamishri asked, “Of all the many Protestant followers, how many live by the ten commandments of Jesus?”

Dr Runcie replied, “Your point is valid. More important than number of followers is how many live by the codes established by the founder.”

Swamishri added, “That is our view also. Hindus should become true Hindus, Christians become true Christians and Muslims should become true Muslims.”

Dr Runcie agreed, “Yes, my main responsibility is to ensure Christians become better Christians.”

Then, he asked Swamishri, “What message of God do you convey?”

Swamishri said, “Bhagwan Swaminarayan has written the *Shikshapatri* for the uplift and liberation of all. He has taught that all should lead an addiction-free, morally grounded life. Devotees should endeavour to become *brahmarup* and offer devotion to God.”

◆



# To the Finish



**W**e've all heard the adage, "It's not how you start, it's how you finish." But rarely do we find an example that embodies this truth with such unyielding determination as the story of John Stephen Akhwari from Tanzania at the 1968 Mexico City Olympics.

Imagine the scene: October 1968, Mexico City. The Olympic marathon, a gruelling 26.2-mile race, is underway. For many athletes, the high altitude was a significant challenge, making every breath a conscious effort. John Stephen Akhwari, a promising marathon runner, was battling those conditions, along with 74 other starters.

Around the 19-km mark, a critical moment occurred. In the jostling and pushing of the pack, Akhwari fell. He didn't just stumble; he suffered a severe injury, dislocating his knee and gashing it badly. He also hit his shoulder hard against the pavement. The pain must have been excruciating, the physical challenge immense. Most observers,

seeing his injuries, would have assumed his race was over. Many others *did* drop out that day, unable to cope with the altitude or injuries.

But John Stephen Akhwari was not most people.

More than an hour after the winner, Mamo Wolde of Ethiopia, had crossed the finish line and received his medal, as the sun began to set and the stadium lights flickered, a lone figure emerged. Limping, his leg bandaged and clearly in agony, Akhwari hobbled into the Olympic stadium. The medal ceremony was long over, most of the spectators had left, yet a few hundred remained. As he painstakingly made his way around the track, these remaining few rose to their feet in a thunderous ovation.

When later asked by a journalist why he hadn't given up, why he continued despite the pain and the certainty of finishing last, Akhwari uttered words that have echoed through history, becoming a timeless testament to human spirit: "My country did not send me 5,000 miles to start the race;

they sent me 5,000 miles to finish it. To complete the marathon was my goal.”

This isn't just a story about running. It's a profound lesson for all of us. How many times in our own lives do we start something with great enthusiasm – a new project at work, a personal fitness goal, a creative endeavour – only to hit a roadblock, encounter a setback, or face unexpected difficulties? It's in those moments that we are truly tested, and it's in those moments that we must remember the spirit of John Stephen Akhwari.

Akhwari's commitment wasn't just about pride; it was about purpose. His 'why' was so much bigger than the pain. And this brings us to a crucial point in our own pursuits: **Before we quit, think why we first started.**

We all embark on journeys with a powerful initial spark. Perhaps it's the vision of a healthier self, the dream of a successful business, the aspiration to master a new skill, or the desire to make a lasting impact. That initial motivation is like rocket fuel, launching us into action. But what happens when the fuel runs low, when the novelty wears off, and the challenges mount?

**Consider a professional setting:** One takes on a challenging new role or a complex project. The initial excitement is palpable. One sees the potential for growth, for impact, for making a difference. But then come the late nights, the unforeseen technical glitches, the difficult stakeholders, the moments of self-doubt. If one loses sight of that initial 'why' – the career advancement, the problem one aimed to solve, the team one wanted to lead – it becomes all too easy to disengage, to do just enough to get by, or even to abandon the effort entirely.

**Or think about personal goals:** Learning a musical instrument, running a marathon, writing a book. The dream inspires the first step. But the tedious practice, the muscle aches, the writer's block... these are the tests. Remembering that initial joy of creation, the satisfaction of

accomplishment, or the love for music can be the tether that pulls one through.

This leads us directly to a fundamental truth about sustained success: **Motivation is what gets us started. Habit is what keeps us going.**

We often romanticize motivation. We crave those intense bursts of inspiration, those 'aha!' moments that make us feel invincible. And yes, we absolutely need those short bursts of motivation or inspiration in our lives. They are the sparks that ignite the flame.

But motivation, by its very nature, can be fleeting. It's like a gust of wind – powerful, but not always present. What happens when the wind dies down? That's where habit steps in. Habits are the sails and the rudder that allows us to continue moving forward, even in the calmest waters. They are the consistent, daily actions, the disciplined choices that compound over time.

**For example, in financial planning:** The motivation might be the dream of early retirement or financial freedom. This gets one to open a savings account or learn about investments. But the habit of consistently saving a portion of every paycheck, week after week, month after month, year after year – even when money is tight or temptations arise – that's what builds wealth.

**In personal well-being:** The motivation to be healthier might prompt us to join a gym. But the habit of going three times a week, prepping healthy meals on Sundays, or choosing stairs over the elevator, transforms that initial desire into a sustainable lifestyle. We don't always *feel* motivated to go to the gym, but the habit, the routine, the commitment, pulls us there.

So, how do we translate this understanding of motivation and habit into sustained action?

We often picture success as a grand, singular achievement – a gold medal, a thriving business, a published book. But the reality is that success is built on a multitude of smaller, consistent applications of key human qualities:

**Passion:** This is the deep, intrinsic love for



what we do. When we are truly passionate, the work itself becomes its own reward, fueling our persistence even through difficult times. Think of dedicated teachers who go above and beyond, not just for the paycheck, but because they genuinely love helping students learn and grow. Their passion makes the long hours and challenges bearable, even rewarding.

**Unflinching Faith:** The belief in oneself and one's vision, even when others doubt, or when the path seems unclear. Think of a scientist working on a groundbreaking discovery, facing countless failed experiments, but holding onto the faith that the solution exists. Thomas Alva Edison said, "Many of life's failures are people who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up."

**Patience:** Life, and the pursuit of any worthy goal, will inevitably present obstacles, setbacks, and moments of intense pressure. We should keep patience with the process, and empathy for others involved, acknowledging that not everything will go according to plan and that collaboration requires adaptability.

**Discipline:** The unwavering commitment to keep going, even when we don't feel like it, making the tough choices and putting in the necessary effort. It's about consistency and momentum. Success is rarely achieved through sporadic bursts of intense effort followed by long periods of inaction. It's about maintaining a steady, sustainable rhythm. It's about showing up every day, doing the work, and making incremental progress. Athletes don't train only once a month; they follow a consistent, disciplined training schedule, steadily building strength and endurance.

**Determination – the unstoppable, never-ending spirit to carry on no matter what:** This is the ultimate differentiator. It's the refusal to be defeated, the resilience to bounce back from every setback, the internal fortitude to persevere. Like the entrepreneur who faces multiple rejections but

keeps pitching their idea, or students who struggle with a subject but seek extra help and practise diligently until they master it. Each 'burst' of these qualities, strung together consistently, leads to eventual triumph.

When we apply these principles consistently, we begin to see that success is a series of short bursts.

Ultimately, the most profound truth is that it's about maintaining that level not for just a few minutes, a couple of days, six months or a number of years, but for a lifetime. Life is not a sprint; it is a marathon. And in this marathon, success is not a destination you reach and then stop. It's a continuous journey of growth, learning, and persistent application.

Whether it's excelling in our careers, nurturing meaningful relationships, pursuing personal passions, or contributing to our community, the principles remain the same. The initial inspiration might get us to the starting line, but it's your unwavering commitment to finish, fuelled by habit, discipline, and that never-ending spirit, that ensures we cross every finish line life presents.

Let us remember John Stephen Akhwari, not just as an Olympian, but as a symbol of the indomitable human spirit. Remember that our 'why' is our compass, our habits are our propulsion, and our passion, faith, discipline and determination are the tools that will carry us through. And above all, remember what Confucius said, "It does not matter how slowly you go as long as you do not stop."

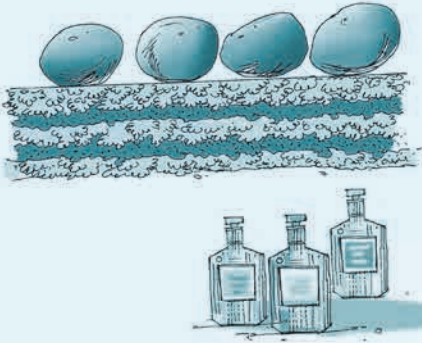
Our journey is ours to complete. Let us carry on with that never-ending spirit, and we will finish our race, achieving the success we truly deserve. ♦

(A video chronicles John Stephen Akhwari's inspiring journey at the 1968 Olympics, detailing his injuries and his incredible resolve to finish the race.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tNC2r4MOb1w>)

# INSPIRATIONS

*A potpourri of inspiring and interesting information and wisdom*

## DIVINE SCENT



Describing how scented oils were made in that era, Shriji Maharaj says in Vachanamrut Gadhada I 38, “In reality, the mind is saturated with desires for the world. But, in the manner in which sesame seeds are imbued with scent by padding them between alternating layers of flowers, the mind should be similarly saturated with flowers in the form of the constant remembrance of God’s divine actions and incidents – coupled with an understanding of his greatness.”

The process of making scented oils involved spreading alternate layers of flower petals and sesame seeds. When pressure is applied to this arrangement, the oil extracted from the sesame seeds picks up the fragrance of the flower petals, thus acquiring its characteristic scent. Similarly, we, too, should engulf our thoughts with the divine episodes of God to give them a divine fragrance.

*- Analogy from the Vachanamrut*

## MILLION TIMES CONVINCED



In a forest lived a rabbit, a snake, a tortoise and a fox. They were all friends. Once, as they sat talking, a question was raised. What would they do if the forest caught fire?

The rabbit said, “I’m a hundred times convinced that I’ll hide in my house.”

The snake said, “I’m hundred thousand times convinced that I’ll climb to the top of a tree.”

The tortoise said, “I’m a million times convinced that I’ll dig a hole and squeeze into it.”

Listening to all these ideas the fox said, “Brothers, I have only one conviction and that is that if the forest really did catch fire I would run out of the forest. If the fire comes from that direction I’ll run in this opposite direction. But I won’t stay around anywhere in the forest.”

And one day it really did happen. The forest caught fire. To escape from the fire the rabbit rushed into his home. The snake climbed a tree. The tortoise dug a hole in the earth and squeezed in. And the fox ran away. The fire spread throughout the forest. All the animals scattered. When the fire finally blew itself out the fox returned to see how his friends had fared.

He looked into the rabbit’s burrow and saw that the hundred times convinced rabbit was dead. The fox looked up at the tree and saw that the hundred thousand times convinced snake was hanging limp and lifeless. And the million times convinced tortoise had been baked to death.

The fox was convinced that it is better to have only one strong but correct conviction!



Similarly, we should have only one conviction that ‘I want to worship God.’ We should be influenced by only Shriji Maharaj and Swami.

At the cost of even a million tasks we should ensure our *moksha*.

- 101 Tales of Wisdom by Yogiji Maharaj

## INDIAN MEDICINE



Sir William Hunter,  
British historian

According to Prof. H.H. Wilson (1796–1860 CE), “The ancient Hindus attained as thorough a proficiency in medicine and surgery as any people whose acquisitions are recorded.”<sup>1</sup>

Sir William Hunter (1840–1900 CE), a British historian and Vice-President of the Asiatic Society, described the expanse and depth that Indian medicine had acquired, “Indian medicine dealt with the whole area of the science. It described the structure of the body, its organs, ligaments, muscles, vessels and tissues. The *Materia Medica* of the Hindus embraces a vast collection of drugs belonging to the mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms, many of which have now been adopted by European physicians. Their pharmacy contained ingenious processes of preparation, with elaborate directions for the administration and classification of medicines. Much attention was devoted to hygiene, to the regimen of the body, and to diet.”<sup>2</sup>

With reference to surgery, Albrecht Friedrich Weber (1825–1901 CE), a German Indologist and historian, notes, “In surgery, too, the Indians seem to have attained a special proficiency, and in this department European surgeons might perhaps even at the present day still learn something from them, as indeed they have already borrowed from them the operation of rhinoplasty [restructuring noses].”<sup>3</sup>

## MANAGING ANGER



- Think and wait before you speak. Avoid saying things in the heat of the moment as it leads to regret and discomfort.
- Once you calm down, share your problems with the concerned person or a friend. Walking, swimming or reading can help reduce stress and anger.
- Spend some quiet time on a daily basis to help you prepare better to handle what’s coming ahead.
- Never blame others; politely and respectfully share your dislikes or stressors to find a solution.
- Avoid holding grudges and move on.
- Humour can help you dissolve what’s making you angry.
- Before your temper erupts, practise deep-breathing exercises, meditation, *naam jap*, listening to soothing music, and other calming activities.
- Seek the help of experts to reduce anger and pray to God and guru. ◆

1. Har Bilas Sarada, *Hindu Superiority* (Ajmer: Rajputana Printing Works, 1906), 302.

2. W.W. Hunter, *The Imperial Gazetteer of India*, vol. 6, 2nd edn (London: Trübner & Co., 1886), 107.

3. Albrecht Weber, *The History of Indian Literature*, trans. from the 2nd German edn by John Mann and Theodor Zachariae (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co. Ltd., 1878), 269–70.

# MAHANT SWAMI MAHARAJ'S VICHARAN

15 June to 5 July 2025, Bharuch



Devotees welcome Swamishri as he arrives in the assembly hall

## JUNE: BHARUCH

### 15: Arrival

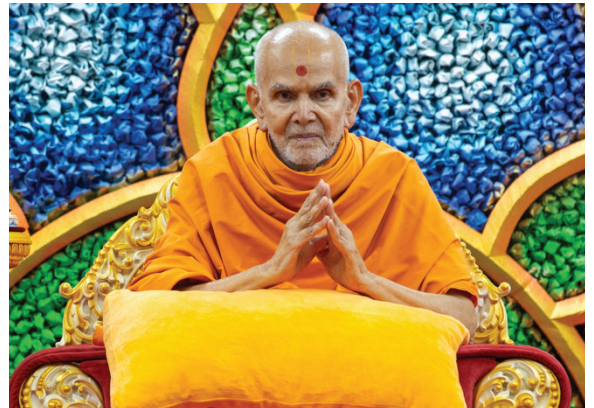
Swamishri departed from the BAPS Mandir, Surat, and arrived at 7.30 p.m. on the precincts of the BAPS Mandir in Bharuch. Amidst a light drizzle, children, youths and devotees zealously welcomed Swamishri by waving the BAPS flags. Devotees assembled in the assembly hall thunderously chorused *jais* when Shri Akshar-Purushottam Maharaj and Swamishri stepped onto the stage. After *arti*, Swamishri glanced at and blessed all.

### 18 & 19 and 22 & 23: Sant Shibir

The central theme of the *sant shibirs* was, 'Tame kaho te kem na thāy.' The two-day online *shibirs* were attended by 1,200 sadhus at their respective mandirs in India and abroad. Swamishri blessed all through Q&A sessions.

### 20: Welcome and Tulsi Tula

In the evening, Swamishri entered the



Swamishri humbly greets all after his arrival

welcome assembly on a central red carpet path in the assembly hall. On either side, devotees were enthused to have Swamishri's darshan at close quarters. The welcome path was traditionally decorated with flower petals and auspicious pots topped with coconuts. The devotees warmly welcomed Swamishri as he passed by.

The welcome assembly included two brief dramas, 'Sagram Bhakta' and 'Dubli Bhatt', enacted by youths. Thereafter, swamis gave short





Children's Day assembly

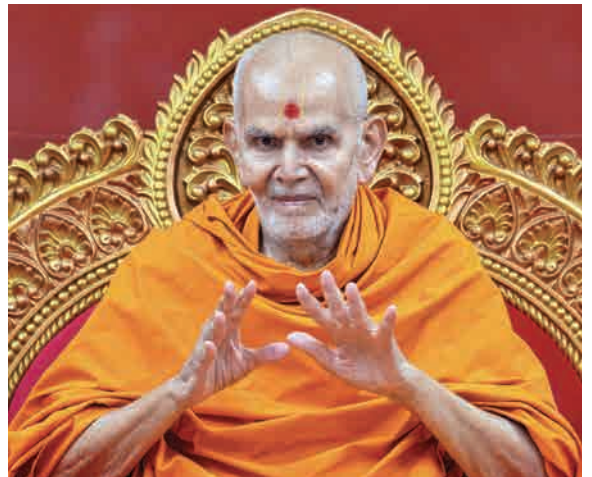
inspirational discourses. Kothari Anirdesh Swami welcomed Swamishri and spoke fittingly on the occasion. Swamis performed *pujan* of Shri Akshar-Purushottam Maharaj and Swamishri. Swamishri was then honoured with a *tulsi tula* by swamis and devotees. Thereafter, swamis offered a garland of *tulsi* leaves and welcomed Swamishri.

Finally, Swamishri appreciated the *seva* rendered by all the devotees, saying, “Bhagwan perceives the devotional feelings of the devotees. He does not require millions of rupees. You have all held the *tulsi tula* today out of heartfelt devotion. So, congratulations to all. Your *seva* for the *tulsi tula* will merit you with blessings to attain *moksha*.”

Today, in Swamishri's morning puja, students from the *chhatralaya* in Vidyanagar sang bhajans to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Akshar-Purushottam Chhatralaya (APC), Vidyanagar, gifted by Yogiji Maharaj on 20 June 1965.

## 21: Children's Day

The evening Children's Day assembly commenced with *dhun* and kirtans by children. Thereafter, children performed a traditional dance, drama and skits. The assembly was themed on 'Akshar-Purushottam Scholars'. Swamis narrated inspiring stories and facts about how children had memorized the Satsang Diksha.



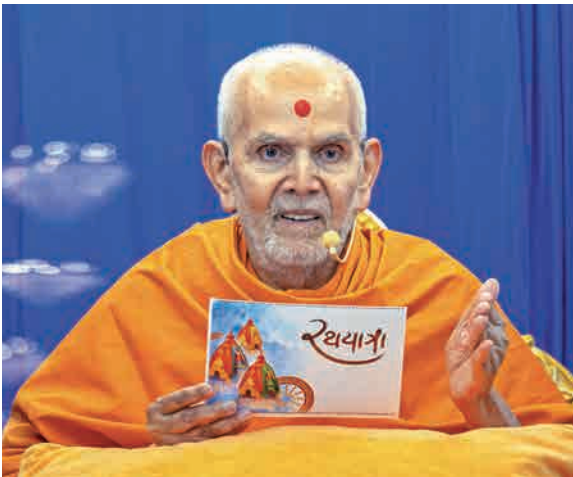
Swamishri blesses all on Children's Day

Young boys, who had memorized the 315 *shlokas* of Satsang Diksha, were honoured by carrying them in palanquins on the central pathway of the assembly hall. Thousands of devotees clapped to appreciate and honour them. Swamishri glanced at all the children to bless them. Young girls, who had memorized the Satsang Diksha, were similarly honoured in the women's wing.

Swamishri was then welcomed with flower garlands by swamis. A drama to honour Mahant Swami Maharaj was enacted by youths. Finally, Swamishri blessed the children, “You are all truly lion cubs. You can achieve whatever you aspire for. Shastriji Maharaj had accomplished the great



Devotees do darshan of Swamishri on Rath Yatra day



Swamishri blesses the festival assembly

task [of installing Akshar and Purushottam]. Because of him, we have all gathered here together to strive in his work of promoting and consolidating the Akshar-Purushottam doctrine in our lives. Though you are small, your achievements are astounding. Therefore, be strong and courageous. Study hard and hold your heads high and be proud. You have to all reach Shriji Maharaj's divine abode."

Today, after Swamishri's morning puja, 868 male and female youths from Godhra had attended a youth camp (*shibir*) themed on 'Brahmanand'. Swamishri blessed them all.

## 22: Pujan of Cow

On the auspicious day of Yogini Ekadashi, Swamishri performed the *pujan* of Uttara, a calf under the care of the mandir *gaushala*. Swamishri also blessed the calf and showered his divine love.

## 27: Rath Yatra

The Rath Yatra festival was celebrated at all BAPS mandirs. Swamishri celebrated this ancient and historic festival on the grounds of Bharuch mandir. During Swamishri's morning puja, youths sang festive bhajans on *rath yatra*. Thereafter, on the main stage, Swamishri steered a small remote-controlled decorated chariot in which Shri Akshar-Purushottam Maharaj were seated. Thousands of devotees felt blessed with the divine darshan.

The evening Rath Yatra celebration assembly commenced with *dhun* and bhajans. Swamishri arrived in the assembly in a decorated vehicle with Shri Akshar-Purushottam Maharaj and a *murti* of Bhagwan Shri Jagannathji. As Swamishri passed by on the central path of the assembly hall, devotees celebrated with joy and showered flower petals to express their reverence. Thereafter, Swamishri performed *pujan* of Bhagwan Shri Jagannathji and Thakorji.

Prior to Swamishri's arrival, youths had presented an inspiring programme as part of the



Youth Day celebration. To please Swamishri, the youths had pledged to observe lifelong *niyams*. As a symbol of their pledges they had applied thumb prints on a shawl, which swamis offered to Thakorji and Swamishri. A pot containing confession chits by male and female youths was brought before Swamishri, who then poured water on them to forgive their mistakes.

Finally, Swamishri blessed the mammoth gathering, “Today is the auspicious celebration of Rath Yatra. I also recall a special memory of today’s celebration with Yogiji Maharaj in London. [Swamishri narrated the incident.] May we give the reins of our life’s chariot to Shriji Maharaj, because he will steer it to Akshardham. We are fortunate and blessed that he is the driver of our life’s chariot.”

The devotees generously applauded Swamishri’s divine blessings. Thereafter, youths performed a traditional bhakti dance with alacrity.

## 28 & 29: Annakut Donors’ Assembly

On both days, well-wishers, who annually donate for the Annakut festival, were invited for both the evening assemblies. Swamis praised and appreciated their *seva*. Swamishri blessed them, “Bhagwan is pleased upon you all for giving donations for the *annakut* and other sacred occasions. May you all prosper financially. Pramukh Swami Maharaj used to say, ‘Bhagwan takes one grain and rewards you with a ton.’ He takes in order to give. Whosoever has donated has never suffered any losses. The more we offer *seva* and bhakti with selflessness and purity, the more we gain and benefit for our *moksha*.” On both days, 15,000 well-wishers and devotees had attended the special assemblies.

Today, 29 June, marked the 223rd year of Ghanshyam Maharaj’s renunciation of his home in Ayodhya. Thereafter, he pilgrimaged alone as Nilkanth Varni for over seven years. Swamishri narrated a few incidents from Nilkanth Varni’s life and spoke about his glory.

## JULY: BHARUCH

### 2: Announcement of Bharuch Mandir Silver Jubilee Celebrations

In 2001, Pramukh Swami Maharaj had consecrated the BAPS Mandir in Bharuch. Today’s evening assembly marked the launch of the mandir’s year-long silver jubilee celebrations. A brief report was presented about the year-long programmes. Pujya Viveksagar Swami narrated major incidents of Bharuch Mandir since its inception 24 years ago. Thereafter, youths and volunteers presented a variety of cultural programmes before Swamishri. Then swamis engaged in a Q&A session with Swamishri. Finally, Swamishri sanctified the prayer chits written by devotees. Then, the devotees formed a *samp* chain to please Swamishri.

3: On this day, 3 July 1960, Yogiji Maharaj had given the *parshad diksha* to nine educated youths, including Swamishri, in Mumbai. To commemorate the milestone event, children recited *shlokas* and youths also presented a kirtan bhakti programme.

### Murti-Pratishtha Puja

During Swamishri’s stay in Bharuch, he performed the *murti-pratishtha* rituals of *murtis* for *hari* mandirs in the Bharuch district: Chakla, Pipodara (Ankleshwar) and Mandva. Swamishri also performed the *pratishtha* of a Shivling and deities for the Suvarneshwar Mahadev Mandir – built by Golden Residency in Bharuch. Finally, Swamishri performed the *pratishtha* rituals of the Nilkanth Varni *abhishek murti* for the *hari* mandir in Columbus, Ohio.

### 5: Farewell

For three weeks, Swamishri gave the benefit of his divine presence in Bharuch. Swamishri was garlanded and given a warm farewell for his onward journey to Bochasan. ◆

Translation by Sadhu Vivekshivandas from a concise Gujarati report by Sadhu Brahmavatsaldas



## INDIA

### YUVA SHIBIRS 2025: 'BRAHMANAND - THE ETERNAL HAPPINESS'

8-29 June 2025



Over 20,700 *yuvaks* and *yuvatis* participated in the one-day Yuva Shibirs organized at 22 BAPS centres throughout Gujarat and Maharashtra. The central theme of the *shibirs* was 'Brahmanand - The Eternal Happiness'.

First, the *shibirs* introduced to the youths the Brahmanand that we have attained in the form of Satsang and the Satpurush. This was followed by a detailed examination of the obstacles on the path of retaining that Brahmanand, such as indiscriminate use of social media and the violation of male-female boundaries. The youths were guided on measures that enable the daily experience of Brahmanand day and night: daily reflection to appreciate the glory of our attainment, daily personal puja, satsang reading, studies and other practices.

The participants were guided through scholarly speeches by learned swamis, workshops, discussions, audio-visual presentations, and video blessings from *guruhari* Mahant Swami Maharaj.

At the end, the youths pledged to retain Brahmanand in their daily lives.

### CHHATRALAYA SHIBIR: 'ANTAR AKSHARDHAM' 27-29 June 2025, Sarangpur



More than 850 current students from BAPS *chhatralayas* (student hostels) throughout Gujarat attended the three-day *shibir* organized by the Satsang Pravrutti Central Office based on the theme 'Antar Akshardham' (Akshardham Within), in the presence of Pujya Tyagvallabh Swami.

The *shibir* highlighted the two essential steps required to create 'Antar Akshardham': Agna and Upasana.

In Upasana, the students learnt in detail the understanding that Parabrahma Bhagwan Swaminarayan is supreme and is manifest on earth through the Gunatit Satpurush. Today, Mahant Swami Maharaj is the living embodiment of the Aksharbrahma tradition.

In Agna, the youths learnt the necessity and benefits of daily personal puja and satsang reading. The youths also learnt about the obstacles that hinder their studies and satsang and how to overcome them to create Antar Akshardham.

This central theme of 'Antar Akshardham' was reinforced through discourses, audio-visual presentations, workshops, discussions, and other activities conducted by experienced and learned BAPS swamis.

Pujya Tyagvallabh Swami also guided the youths with his words of wisdom and encouragement.



**WELCOMING AND RECOGNIZING THE  
AKSHAR-PURUSHOTTAM DARSHAN  
1 July 2025, Kathmandu, Nepal**



In a historic gathering near the sacred Pashupatinath Temple in Kathmandu, Nepal, scholars from across the country convened to formally recognize and honour the Akshar-Purushottam Darshan, as revealed by Bhagwan Swaminarayan. The event was jointly organized by the Nepal Shikshan Parishad and the Nepal Pandit Mahasabha.

During the assembly, scholars enthusiastically welcomed and established the Akshar-Purushottam Darshan in Nepal’s intellectual and spiritual landscape. They also conferred the distinguished title ‘Vidya-Mahamanishi’ (Great Seeker of Knowledge) upon Mahamahopadhyaya Swami Bhadreshdas in recognition of his outstanding scholarship.

The gathering was graced by some of Nepal’s foremost scholars and dignitaries, including: Dr Ramkrishna Timalisina, President, Nepal Shikshan Parishad; Shri Kashinath Nyaupane, renowned scholar and National Coordinator, World Sanskrit Conference; Prof. Gullapalli Sriramakrishnamurti, Vice-Chancellor, Central Sanskrit University, Tirupati; Prof. Sukanta Senapati, Vice-Chancellor, Shree Somnath Sanskrit University, Gujarat; Prof. Dhaneshwar Nepal, Vice-Chancellor, Nepal Sanskrit University; Dr Vasudevkrishna Shastri, General Secretary, Nepal Shikshan Parishad and Member, Panchang Nirnayak Samiti; and Acharya Navaraj Kandel, Secretary, Jayatu Sanskritam.

At the start of the assembly, Prof. Kashinath Nyaupane declared, “Today, we wholeheartedly

welcome, honour, and formally establish the Akshar-Purushottam Darshan revealed by Bhagwan Swaminarayan.”

All scholars present affirmed this proclamation and individually offered their respects to the Swaminarayan commentaries (*bhashyas*) on the foundational texts of Vedanta. In his keynote address, Mahamahopadhyaya Bhadreshdas Swami delivered a precise, scripture-based exposition of the Akshar-Purushottam Darshan, drawing on the three foundational texts of Vedanta – the Brahmasutras, Upanishads, and Bhagavad Gita.

Both Dr Ramkrishna Timalisina and Prof. Dhaneshwar Nepal emphasized that universities in Nepal should include the study of the Akshar-Purushottam Darshan in their academic curricula.

On this historic occasion, Bhadreshdas Swami and Atmatruptdas Swami personally honoured and performed *pujan* of the attending scholars.

**BAL-YUVA SHIBIRS AND SATSANG DIKSHA  
MUKHPATH FELICITATION ASSEMBLY  
19–20 July 2025, Bengaluru**



Three special programmes were held in the presence of Pujya Anandswarupdas Swami:

On 19 July, over 280 youths participated in the Yuvak-Yuvati Shibir. Based on the theme ‘Brahmanand’, they were guided through discourses by swamis, videos, skits, and other engaging presentations on values like discipline, dedication, character-building, and social media awareness.

On the morning of 20 July, over 300 children participated in the Bal-Balika Shibir themed ‘Mission 90+’ in which they learnt about respect for elders, strengthening faith and devotion

in God, and channelling their latent positive energy effectively.

Also, on 20 July, a Satsang Diksha Mukhpath Felicitation Assembly was held to felicitate 60 children from Bengaluru (40) and Chennai (20) for memorizing the 315 Sanskrit *shlokas* of the Satsang Diksha as part of ‘Mission Rajipo’ project in which thousands of children worldwide are memorizing the Satsang Diksha as per the wish of Mahant Swami Maharaj.

## UK & EUROPE

### BAL-BALIKA SUMMER SAMP CAMP 2025 28–29 June 2025, Leicester



Around 150 children and 50 youth volunteers from BAPS centres in the Midlands gathered at Beaumanor Hall in Leicestershire for a ‘Samp Camp’ that focused on nurturing unity, friendship, and joy among the children, while also inspiring them to strengthen their values and bonds.

The camp featured motivational messages from BAPS swamis, a variety of sports and other engaging activities. The focus on teamwork helped cultivate new friendships and create a sense of family among the children. The dedication and enthusiasm of the volunteers ensured that each activity ran smoothly and safely.

### ISLAND OF HEROES: CHILDREN’S CULTURAL ADVENTURELAND 29 June 2025, Dublin, Ireland

More than 500 children and family members were inspired by the ‘Island of Heroes: Children’s Cultural Adventureland’ at Hansfield Educate Together National School.



Organized by BAPS Ireland’s Bal-Balika Mandal and Kishore-Kishori Mandal, the event brought together the local community for a day of joyful learning and values-based inspiration, entirely free of charge.

The ‘Island of Heroes’ was an immersive and interactive experience designed to engage children and families through a vibrant blend of storytelling, educational activities, games, and cultural performances. The ‘Island of Heroes’ included the ‘Mountain of Shraavan’ shadow play, a 3D experience on climate change, a Ramayan-based production called the ‘Sea of Squirrels’, an escape room challenge, and a live magic show. Each activity was carefully curated to not only entertain, but also instil timeless values such as hard work, selfless service, environmental care, mutual respect, and community harmony.

Many parents expressed appreciation for the inspiring messages, the professionalism of the young organizers, and the opportunity for their children to learn through fun and culturally enriching activities.

### NEASDEN TEMPLE SUMMER FAIR 11–13 July 2025, London



Thousands of visitors attended Neasden



Temple's three-day summer fair, to experience and celebrate traditional culture and cuisine.

The joyous community event was a part of the 30th anniversary celebrations of the iconic BAPS Mandir, inaugurated in 1995 by Pramukh Swami Maharaj.

On 11 July, the festivities began with an uplifting programme of devotional bhajans sung by swamis and youths that set a peaceful, spiritual tone for the weekend ahead.

On 12 July, the fair was officially inaugurated by Captain Simon Cheadle, Director of Flight Operations at British Airways.

Visitors explored more than 30 stalls offering artisan crafts, home décor, clothing, financial services, travel and other commodities.

Live performances, featuring music, dance and wellness activities on the cultural stage, continued throughout both days. From energetic drumming and classical dance to soulful bhajans, yoga, and more, the stage entertained and inspired guests of all ages. The first day concluded with an evening of music, rhythm, and soul by the acclaimed Alap Desai.

Families and children also enjoyed a lively funfair with rides, as well as face painting, henna art, and traditional games. The Health Hub promoted well-being. A second-hand clothes stall proved especially popular, selling out completely and reflecting the community's strong commitment to sustainable living.

A popular attraction for many young visitors was the British Airways A350 flight simulator, which offered an immersive and educational experience into aviation.

### **AMBANI FAMILY VISIT NEASDEN TEMPLE 13 July 2025, London**

Anant and Radhika Ambani visited the BAPS Mandir in Neasden to seek blessings on the weekend of their first wedding anniversary. They were accompanied by Mukeshbhai Ambani.

The trio joined together in darshan of the sacred images and offered prayers while



performing the *abhishek* of Shri Nilkanth Varni.

During their visit, the family took a deep interest in the Mandir's sacred architecture and intricate carvings, marvelling at the artistry, devotion, peace and values reflected throughout the iconic place of worship.

They also learnt more about the global humanitarian, cultural and spiritual initiatives of BAPS, and the upcoming BAPS Swaminarayan Hindu Mandir, in Paris, France.

Mukeshbhai also affectionately recalled his memorable meeting with Pramukh Swami Maharaj, sharing his deep appreciation for the spiritual legacy he had witnessed.

Before departing, Mukesh Ambani expressed heartfelt gratitude to all the volunteers and deeply appreciated the spirit of selfless service and spirituality that define BAPS and the Mandir.

### **SPIRITUAL FAMILY RETREAT, EUROPE 11–13 July 2025**



More than 90 devotees from Austria, Italy, Malta and Switzerland, as well as parts of southern France and Luxembourg, gathered at Sportcamp Melchtal in Switzerland to participate in a spiritual family retreat.

The *shibir*, titled 'Strengthening Families,

Securing Futures’, was held in the presence of Jnanpriyadas Swami and other BAPS swamis.

Themed around strengthening satsang within families, the spiritual retreat focused on deepening the understanding and application of core satsang practices. Across six sessions, attendees learned about daily puja, *arti*, *thal*, *ghar sabha*, and satsang reading. Each session provided practical guidance on how families can incorporate these devotional practices together in their homes and *ghar* mandirs.

The *shibir* themes were conveyed through speeches, videos, quizzes, panel discussions, group activities, and workshops. A *samuh* puja session encouraged many to grow stronger in their personal devotion and spiritual bond with God and guru.

The *shibir* also emphasized the importance of daily listening to scriptural discourses (*katha*), attending weekly assemblies (*sabha*) as a means to strengthening family harmony through collective devotion and shared activities.

## NORTH AMERICA

### BAPS SWAMIS VISIT KAUAI HINDU MONASTERY 27 June 2025, Hawaii



BAPS swamis and devotees visited the renowned Kauai Hindu Monastery in Hawaii for a spiritual and interfaith exchange.

Founded in 1970 by Satguru Sivaya Subramuniaswami, the Kauai Hindu Monastery serves as the global headquarters of the Kailasa Parampara, known for its spiritual discipline, publishing efforts, and the construction of the Iraivan Temple, the first all-stone Hindu temple in the Pacific.

Brahmaviharidas Swami and the BAPS

delegation were warmly welcomed with garlands and Vedic chants. The visit began with darshan at the monastery’s Kadavul Temple, followed by an engaging dialogue with the monastery’s head, Satguru Bodhinatha Veylanswami, at the Guru Pitham. The conversation reflected on the monastery’s global outreach, its dedication to Hindu values, and the long-standing relationship between Satguru Sivaya Subramuniaswami and His Holiness Pramukh Swami Maharaj, dating back to the 1990s – a bond marked by mutual admiration and shared spiritual visions.

Paramacharya Sadasivanatha Swami then led the visiting group on a guided tour of the monastery’s sacred gardens and the hand-carved Iraivan Temple. The visit concluded with a stop at the monastery’s Media Studio.

The BAPS swamis expressed deep gratitude for the monastery’s decades of ongoing efforts in publishing *Hinduism Today*, a globally respected magazine that presents Hinduism with remarkable clarity, authenticity, and research, and acknowledged how the publication has long served the Hindu community with truth, dignity, and justice.

### NORTH AMERICAN SUMMER CAMP 2025 1–9 July 2025, San Jose, CA, USA



Around 400 *balaks*, *balikas*, *kishores*, and *kishoris* from across North America gathered at the BAPS North American Summer Camp for nine days of focused learning, reflection, and spiritual growth. Based on the theme ‘Dradh Priti’ – deep, unwavering love for Bhagwan and the Satpurush – each day centred on one of the four pillars of Dradh Priti: Shastras, Siddhant, Sanstha, and Satpurush.



Through engaging classroom sessions, workshops, and discussions, delegates explored how to develop consistent spiritual habits and navigate real-life challenges with Satsang values.

In the afternoons, delegates participated in activities that nurtured both creativity and connection to build new skills, while anchoring them in a spiritual purpose. Whether preparing a skit, filming a story, or designing models, these sessions encouraged teamwork and self-expression, all with the goal of offering something meaningful to Swamishri.

For *kishores* and *kishoris*, a campus walk and discussion at Stanford offered a glimpse into how satsang can remain strong during college life.

The camp instilled in each youth a stronger identity, a deeper connection to Bhagwan Swaminarayan and Mahant Swami Maharaj, and a clearer sense of purpose to live with strength and conviction.

## GULF COUNTRIES

### RAKSHABANDHAN: WEAVING A TAPESTRY OF LOVE, CARE, AND PROTECTION 10–11 August 2025, Abu Dhabi



Over 20,000 devotees and community members from across the UAE came to the BAPS Hindu Mandir in Abu Dhabi to celebrate the auspicious festival of Rakshabandhan.

The celebrations unfolded in three phases in three places. A special assembly of several thousand workers where ‘rakhis’ were tied by BAPS swamis; special spots in the Mandir foreground were created where hundreds of sisters tied ‘rakhis’ to their brothers; and BAPS swamis visited dozens of

factories and companies to pray for protection and tie ‘rakhis’ to each and every worker.

The celebrations at the BAPS Hindu Mandir featured two captivating programmes, morning and evening. Brimming with traditional devotional songs presented by talented volunteers and community members, they filled the Mandir with an atmosphere of joy and reverence. Following these inspiring performances, Brahmaviharidas Swami addressed the gatherings, “Rakshabandhan celebrates one of the noblest human emotions of lifelong protection. More than 5,000 ‘rakhis’ were handmade with love by BAPS women devotees to gift to each recipient, symbolizing protection. Even this Mandir is handmade with love! Hence, in a place of great love and harmony, we pray that may God guide and guard this beautiful nation, its leadership, and all those who call it their home.”

One humble worker summarized the voice of thousands with these words, “Even though I am many miles away from my home, I feel honoured that the swamis tied a *rakhi* on my wrist. It is as if I am transported back to my village in Gujarat with my sister around me.”

The Rakshabandhan celebrations at the BAPS Hindu Mandir were a living example of how traditions can foster harmony, gratitude, and shared humanity across the UAE.

### ‘21ST CENTURY’S GREATEST COLLABORATION’: K. ANNAMALAI HAILS BAPS HINDU MANDIR 15 August 2025, Abu Dhabi, UAE



Shri K. Annamalai, one of India’s distinguished political leaders and social workers, was warmly

welcomed at the BAPS Hindu Mandir on India's Independence Day.

Shri Annamalai was garlanded and accorded a traditional welcome by Swami Brahmaviharidas.

Inside the main mandir, Shri Annamalai reflected deeply on the vast spiritual heritage of His Holiness Pramukh Swami Maharaj, especially admiring the intricate artistry of the Pillar of Pillars. He offered heartfelt prayers at each of the seven interior shrines.

Shri Annamalai emphasized that the mandir is not only a sacred place of devotion, but also a living example of India's enduring values of tolerance, non-violence, and harmony in diversity.

Emotionally moved by his visit, he added, "I strongly advise all who walk through the mandir to fully embrace the experience and the togetherness it promotes. I could feel a deep sense of connection. Not only did I see our brothers and sisters from Bharat worshiping the seven beautiful deities within, but it felt as if I was walking into the north, east, south, west, and central parts of Bharat. When anything is done with purity and the blessings of the divine, miracles happen."

He lauded the selfless efforts of the sadhus and volunteers, "This realization has come about through the dedication of the swamis and volunteers. It is their faith in their gurus, and sheer persistence that made this miracle possible. Seeing it in person, I am truly mesmerized and proud to be a Hindu today."

Praising the mandir's architectural elegance, Shri Annamalai remarked, "This is one of the most beautiful pieces of carving I have seen in recent times. I feared we had lost the art of such intricate carvings, but this mandir revives that legacy. It is living proof of what Bharat was capable of centuries ago. To see it alive today is profoundly inspiring."

Reflecting on the global collaboration behind the mandir, he said, "This is truly a story for the ages, and for history. When we look back 200 years from now, this will stand as one of the greatest collaborations of the 21st century – between a

BAPS guru who opened his heart and reached out, and the rulers of another faith who responded with generosity, resulting in this masterpiece."

Shri Annamalai concluded his visit with earnest prayers for the enduring prosperity and progress of India. He expressed profound gratitude to His Holiness Mahant Swami Maharaj, creator of the mandir, and to His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the UAE, for his steadfast support in bringing the mandir to life – an emblem of shared values, bridging hearts and cultures across the globe.

## ASIA PACIFIC

**BSRI AUSTRALIA CONFERENCES 2025:  
TIMELESS TEACHINGS FROM HINDU MANDIRS  
28 February to 6 July 2025, Australia**



The BAPS Swaminarayan Research Institute (BSRI) in Australia hosted a series of conferences titled "Timeless Teachings from Hindu Mandirs", continuing its annual tradition of celebrating the spiritual and cultural contributions of Hinduism. The conferences were held in five cities: Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth, and Brisbane (Australia), and Auckland (New Zealand).

Around 245 senior representatives from over 145 organizations, including Hindu mandirs, cultural associations, and community groups, participated in these gatherings, reflecting the growing collaboration and unity within the Hindu community.

Each conference focused on how Hindu mandirs serve as living institutions that help to shape society. The keynote addresses explored three timeless teachings inspired by mandirs: Shanti – fostering inner peace amid modern life's



pressures; Seva – inspiring selfless service to the community; Jivan Shuddhi – encouraging inner purity through discipline and spiritual reflection.

These concepts were presented through informative presentations, insightful speeches, and real-life examples of how mandirs influence individuals and communities.

The conferences emphasized the enduring relevance of mandirs in modern society, celebrating their role in promoting peace, service, and spiritual progress within the global Hindu community.

### ANZ YOUTH SEMINARS: A NEW DIMENSION TO SUCCESS

17 May to 28 June 2025, Australia & New Zealand



More than 450 *kishores* and *kishoris* participated in the seminars held at seven BAPS centres across Australia (Adelaide, Brisbane, Canberra, Melbourne, Sydney and Perth) and New Zealand (Auckland) based on the theme ‘A New Dimension to Success: 3D’.

The seminars guided the youths on discipline, determination and dedication as the key drivers of academic, spiritual and professional development at this stage of their lives.

The seminars included panel discussions with local devotees sharing their experiences on how satsang and the mandir have helped them throughout their education and careers. Resident swamis also shared insights on the role of spirituality in achieving academic and professional success.

Each seminar featured video conference sessions with guest speakers – Sandeep Patel, an Executive Director at Goldman Sachs in London and Kush Patel, CEO and Co-founder of Relative

Dynamics in Maryland, USA. Both speakers, who are dedicated BAPS devotees, shared their journey and advice through a talk and Q&A session. They provided valuable insights and practical guidance into how spirituality, satsang and mandir have provided stability, clarity, perspective and purpose throughout their careers and education.

### SATSANG VICHARAN BY BAPS SWAMIS

12 June 2025 to 16 July 2025



Pujya Narayanmuni Swami, accompanied by six swamis, conducted *vicharan* in five countries: Thailand, Japan, Hong Kong, Indonesia, and Singapore. Through inspiring satsang assemblies, home visits, and personal meetings, they spread the spiritually uplifting messages of Bhagwan Swaminarayan and Mahant Swami Maharaj – promoting peace and harmony, and strengthening faith and spirituality.

### BKYS KARYAKAR CONVENTION

9–13 July 2025, Canberra, Australia



Over 350 devoted Bal-Balika, Kishore-Kishori, Yuvak-Yuvati, and Sanyukta Mandal *karyakars* from 32 centres across Australia and New Zealand attended the BKYS Karyakar Convention titled ‘Pacific Rangvu Chhe: Agna, Seva, Samp’.

Through enlightening speeches by swamis, personal anecdotes shared by *karyakars*, captivating screenplays and thoughtful group discussions, the virtues of *agna*, *seva* and *samp* were explored in depth.

The convention encouraged *karyakars* to self-reflect on how to cultivate and nurture these virtues in themselves and provided practical resolutions to the challenges *karyakars* face in performing their duties.

The convention helped to strengthen the deep sense of purpose and devotion in all who participated.

## AFRICA

### ‘SWAMI PADHARYA MARE ANGANIE’ PADHRAMANI PROJECT

13 February to 16 March 2025



Under the guidance of the Satsang Pravrutti Central Office in Africa, over a period of 32 days, 88 BAPS swamis from India conducted over 11,110 *padhramanis* (home visits) to the homes of devotees and well-wishers. These visits were spread across 203 centres in 13 countries throughout Africa, under the auspices of the ‘Swami Padharya Mare Anganie’ project.

The swamis conveyed Pramukh Swami Maharaj’s and Mahant Swami Maharaj’s message of *ghar sabha* as a means to strengthen family harmony by resolving family discord, enhancing communication, and reducing emotional disconnects. Each family was presented a one-year outline on what to do in their *ghar sabha*.

The swamis contacted over 26,000 people and inspired many to quit addictions, take spiritual pledges, strengthen their Hindu faith, and participate in performing social services. Also, over 7,710

families pledged to conduct a *ghar sabha* regularly.

In each centre the swamis visited, they also conducted satsang assemblies and discussion sessions with *karyakars*.

The devotees also enthusiastically welcomed the swamis to their homes and agreed to sincerely fulfil their pledges.

### BAPS KARYAKAR SHIBIR: PRAPTINI PRATITI 22 May to 30 June 2025



More than 1,300 male *karyakars* and 1,100 female *karyakars* participated in the BAPS Karyakar Shibir held at 16 centres across 7 African countries: Uganda (Kampala, Lira, Jinja), Kenya (Mombasa, Nairobi, Kisumu, Eldoret, Nakuru), Tanzania (Dar es Salaam, Arusha, Mwanza), Malawi (Mzuzu, Blantyre), Zambia (Lusaka), Botswana (Gaborone), and South Africa (Johannesburg). The theme of the two-day *shibirs* was ‘Praptini Pratiti – Conviction of Attainment’.

The attendees were dedicated volunteers serving in various mandir departments and in satsang activities. The *shibirs* featured informative and inspiring speeches – in person by resident swamis and via video conference by swamis from India – as well as workshops, discussions, Q&A sessions, engaging activities, and special videos that highlighted Mahant Swami Maharaj’s love for and appreciation of the *karyakars*.

The *shibirs* guided the delegates to develop a deeper understanding of their own responsibility and commitment to Satsang duties; strengthened their thoughts on *prapti*; elaborated on awareness, faith, and spiritual contentment to help transform attainment into conviction; and highlighted the



importance of personal outreach.

The *shibirs* also provided insights on present day challenges, including cybercrime and social media awareness.

The *shibirs* deepened the understanding of *seva* (selfless service) and *sadhana* (spiritual practices) among the *karyakars*, and recharged their devotion and dedication. They pledged to reflect daily for 15 minutes on spiritual attainment (*prapti*).

## BAPS CHARITIES

### DONATION OF ESSENTIAL SUPPLIES TO BRITONS COMMUNITY SCHOOL

24 June 2025, Nairobi, Kenya



BAPS Charities Nairobi was humbled to support Britons Community and Orphanage School located in Mukuru Kwa Njenga slums. The school, established in 2009, provides education and care to vulnerable children, many of whom have gone on to join high schools and universities despite difficult beginnings.

To assist their efforts, BAPS Charities donated a range of essential supplies.

## TRIBUTES

### PUJYA SHANTCHARITDAS SWAMI: Passed Away: 13 July 2025, Age: 36



Pujya Shantcharitdas Swami was based at the Sant Training Centre in Sarangpur since receiving *diksha* from Mahant Swami Maharaj in 2023 during the Pramukh Swami Maharaj

Centenary Celebrations.

Before initiation, he had graduated with a Masters in Computer Applications (MCA) from

### FREE MEDICAL CHECK-UP CAMP

22–25 July 2025, Kampala, Uganda



BAPS Charities Uganda, in partnership with Healing Way Hospital, organized a Free Medical Camp to provide accessible healthcare services to the local community and surrounding areas.

A team of general practitioners, eye specialists, dental surgeons, and gynaecologists were on hand to offer free consultations, check-ups, and medications to patients.

The camp was inaugurated with a visit from the Honourable Minister for Kampala Metropolitan City, Mrs. Minsa Kabanda. In interviews with UBC TV, NTV, and the Daily Monitor, she stated, “We are grateful to BAPS Charities for organizing such a large-scale, four-day medical camp. This initiative is reaching not only immediate residents but also people from surrounding areas, ensuring they receive proper care.

Over the four days, over 2,960 patients benefited from medical check-ups and free medication. ◆

Mumbai. He was quiet and introspective by nature and meticulously kept a diary of daily *smrutis* with Swamishri. His sincere *seva* and *bhakti* earned the blessings of Mahant Swami Maharaj.

Tragically, he passed away when the car he was travelling in was swept into flood waters in Ranpur near Botad. We offer our heartfelt tributes to such a humble sadhu.



Pujya Narendraprasaddas Swami, lovingly known as 'Acharya Swami' throughout the Satsang, had earned the immense *rajipo* of Pramukh Swami Maharaj and Mahant Swami Maharaj, and enjoyed a very close bond with both gurus.

He was raised in Mombasa, Kenya. After his initial schooling, he came to India for higher studies. From his youth, his devotion to God and patriotism for India were evident. While residing at the Akshar-Purushottam Chhatralaya in Vidyanagar his involvement in both BAPS activities and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) increased.

Inspired by Pramukh Swami Maharaj's saintly life, he accepted initiation into the sadhu-fold in 1973 and was named Narendraprasad Swami. In his youth he was known as 'Acharya' and after *diksha*, he was fondly addressed by all as 'Acharya Swami'.

Between 1972 and 1974, he served in Mumbai with Pujya Ishwarcharandas Swami in the newly formed Satsang Pravrutti Central Office (SPCO) in Mumbai. In 1975, when the SPCO was relocated to Ahmedabad, Acharya Swami, too, moved there to serve under Pujya Doctor Swami and Pujya Ishwarcharandas Swami.

Thereafter, from 1976, Pramukh Swami

Maharaj directed him to undertake *vicharan* in the Daskroi, Charotar and other regions. From 1976, Acharya Swami also tirelessly helped in the Volunteers Department to prepare for the Bhagwan Swaminarayan Bicentenary Celebrations in 1981.

In 1983, Pramukh Swami Maharaj directed Acharya Swami to conduct *vicharan* in South Gujarat. Through his *vicharan*, he strengthened the satsang in the Surat, Selvas, Navsari and Dang areas. His efforts led to the founding of many new BAPS satsang centres and mandirs.

In 1999, after Pramukh Swami Maharaj had consecrated the new *shikharbaddha* mandir in Nairobi, Kenya, he instructed Acharya Swami to engage in *vicharan* throughout Africa and oversee the satsang activities.

After some years, due to health reasons, Acharya Swami returned to Navsari, from where he continued his *vicharan*.

He treated all with great respect, was always joyful and sincerely engaged in *seva* and bhakti. Even while fulfilling his various responsibilities for the major BAPS celebrations, he always spent time in the *bhajan kutirs* to offer devotion.

His discourses always filled the audience with laughter, yet were insightful and full of practical spiritual wisdom.

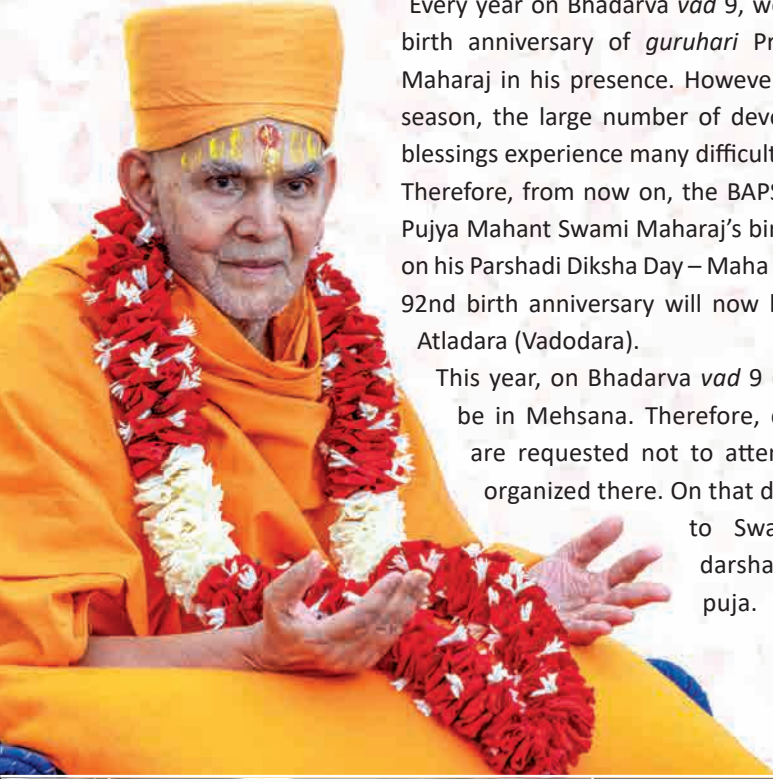
For the past several years, he was increasingly affected by Parkinson's disease, yet he sincerely continued his bhakti. Even during his gradually debilitating illness over the past few years, his joyful nature came to the fore.

Acharya Swami served the BAPS Sanstha for over 50 years in many capacities. He was loved and respected by all BAPS swamis and devotees. He will be dearly missed.

We offer our humble *pranams* and tributes to Pujya Narendraprasaddas Swami. ◆



## HH MAHANT SWAMI MAHARAJ'S BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION



Every year on Bhadarva *vad* 9, we devoutly and joyously celebrate the birth anniversary of *guruhari* Pragat Brahmaswarup Mahant Swami Maharaj in his presence. However, since this day falls during the rainy season, the large number of devotees who come for his darshan and blessings experience many difficulties.

Therefore, from now on, the BAPS Sanstha-wide celebrations of Param Pujya Mahant Swami Maharaj's birth anniversary will be held every year on his Parshadi Diksha Day – Maha *sud* 2. Hence, Swamishri's forthcoming 92nd birth anniversary will now be celebrated on 2 February 2026 in Atladara (Vadodara).

This year, on Bhadarva *vad* 9 (15 September 2025), Swamishri will be in Mehsana. Therefore, devotees not living in nearby places are requested not to attend the local celebration programme organized there. On that day, devotees may offer Guru Vandana to Swamishri from their homes during darshan of the live broadcast of his morning puja.

**Jai Swaminarayan from  
Sadhu Ishwarchandas**



1. Over 20,000 *yuvaks* and *yuvatis* from throughout Gujarat and Maharashtra participated in the Yuva Shibir themed 'Brahmanand – The Eternal Happiness', 8–29 June 2025.
2. *Karyakars* from Australia and New Zealand involved in the satsang activities for children, teenagers, youths and seniors attended the BKYS Karyakar Conventions, 9–13 July 2025.





**MAHANT SWAMI MAHARAJ IN ANAND, AUGUST 2025**

1. Swamishri presides over the Rakshabandhan celebration assembly, 9 August 2025.
2. Devotees seated in the evening satsang assembly, 12 August 2025.
3. Youths salute the Indian tricolour during the Independence Day Celebration, 15 August 2025.

*Inset: Swamishri waves an Indian national flag.*