

Shri Swaminarayan Arti

Inspired by Pragat Brahaswarup Guruhari Mahant Swami Maharaj

Introduction and Explanation

Jay Swāminārāyan, Jay Akshar-Purushottam,
Akshar-Purushottam jay, darshan sarvottam... Jay Swāminārāyan...
Mukta anant supujit, sundar sākāram,
Sarvopari karunākar, mānav tanudhāram... Jay Swāminārāyan...1
Purushottam Parabrahma, Shri Hari Sahajānand,
Aksharbrahma anādi, Gunātītānand... Jay Swāminārāyan...2
Prakat sadā sarvakartā, param muktidātā,
Dharma ekāntik sthāpak, bhakti paritrātā... Jay Swāminārāyan...3
Dāsbhav divyatā saha, brahmarupe priti,
Suhradbhāv alaukik, sthāpit shubh riti... Jay Swāminārāyan...4
Dhanya dhanya mam jivan, tav sharane sufalam,
Yagnapurush pravārtit, siddhāntam sukhadam... Jay Swāminārāyan...5
Jay Swāminārāyan, Jay Akshar-Purushottam,
Jay Swāminārāyan.

This arti, inspired by Pragat Brahaswarup Mahant Swami Maharaj, pays reverence to Bhagwan Swaminarayan, that is Akshar-Purushottam Maharaj. This is the arti of Swami with Narayan. In other words, it is the arti of Akshar with Purushottam.

The heart of a true devotee constantly echoes with the glory of Paramatma. The devotee's heart brims with joy and with the supreme truth that Paramatma is always and everywhere glorious. The first words of the arti – 'Jay Swāminārāyan, Jay Akshar-Purushottam' resonate this sentiment that Bhagwan Swaminarayan, or Akshar-Purushottam Maharaj, is ever glorious.

Shriji Maharaj had himself given his followers the Swaminarayan Mahamantra, which incorporated his heartfelt principle, to chant. He had himself clarified that, in this mantra, 'Swami' refers to Aksharbrahman and 'Narayan' refers to Purushottam-Parabrahman. In this way, 'Swaminarayan' indicates Swami alongside Narayan, and 'Akshar-Purushottam' refers to Akshar alongside Purushottam. This is the meaning of the words 'Swaminarayan' and 'Akshar-Purushottam'.

Thus, the words 'Swaminarayan' and 'Akshar-Purushottam' are synonyms. Therefore, the glory of Swaminarayan signifies the glory of Akshar-Purushottam, and the glory of Akshar-Purushottam represents the glory of Swaminarayan. This highest truth resonates in these words of the arti. These words further

reflect the devotee's feelings that Bhagwan Swaminarayan, or Akshar-Purushottam Maharaj, is glorious in every way.

What can be greater than to see Parabrahman Purushottam manifest with his ideal devotee, Aksharbrahman? To have the darshan, together, of Swami and Narayan, or Akshar and Purushottam, is the greatest benefit of having eyes. Only those who are truly blessed have the opportunity to have this darshan. And, those who attain this darshan are blessed with further good fortune. Each mandir of the BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha grants people such darshan. This divine and heavenly darshan of Akshar-Purushottam Maharaj, or Bhagwan Swaminarayan, has thus been referred to in this arti as 'sarvottam darshan', or the greatest darshan.

'Darshan', however, refers not only to the act of seeing. It is also used to refer to doctrinal principles. The core of Shriji Maharaj's philosophical teachings was to become like Swami and offer humble upasana and bhakti to Narayan, that is, to become like Akshar and offer humble upasana and bhakti to Purushottam. These words of the arti, therefore, also reflect that the Akshar-Purushottam Darshan revealed by Parabrahman Swaminarayan is the greatest and highest philosophical principle.

The arti's first couplet thus signifies the above-mentioned sentiments.

The subsequent couplets encapsulate the following thoughts:

- Parabrahman Purushottam Narayan presiding in his Akshardham is eternally sakar (possesses a form). His divine form is complete in every way and is beautiful. Infinite liberated souls, who have attained oneness with Akshar, offer puja, that is, upasana and bhakti to Purushottam Narayan.
- Bhagwan Swaminarayan, or Akshar-Purushottam Maharaj, described above, assumes a human form and comes to earth solely out of compassion for the jivas.
- We are blessed that the one whom the shastras call Purushottam, Narayan or Parabrahman came to earth as Sahajanand Shri Hari and graced us with his shelter.

We are also blessed that the one whom the shastras call Akshar, Brahman or Aksharbrahman came to earth along with Sahajanand Swami as Gunatitanand Swami, and that we have recognized him as such.

Therefore, for us, the two entities of Purushottam Narayan and Aksharbrahman are not non-manifest. Rather, they are present before our very eyes.

- Of these two entities, Parabrahman Purushottam Sahajanand Shri Hari is supreme God and is the all-doer. He himself came to this earth, and he alone established ekantik dharma and established the principle of becoming brahmarup and offering bhakti. And, he alone has granted us moksha. Moreover, to forever continue this unique principle revealed by him and the path to moksha, he has remained present on earth through the Aksharbrahman gunatit gurus.
- Bhagwan Swaminarayan and our gunatit gurus have also clarified for us the path of spiritual endeavor. Through their grace, humility (dasbhav) adorns our bhakti and divinity (divyabhav) beautifies our vision. By their grace we have become brahmarup, and so eligible to offer true upasana to Parabrahman. Additionally, they have taught us about samp, suhradaybhav and ekta, allowing us to experience the true bliss of satsang. They alone have established this divine path for the moksha of countless spiritual aspirants.

- Indeed, we experience good fortune and happiness today because we have attained the divine shelter of both Parabrahman Purushottam Narayan Shri Swaminarayan Bhagwan himself, and Aksharbrahman Gunatitanand Swami and the gunatit guru parampara through whom Bhagwan Swaminarayan manifests.

However, we truly owe infinite gratitude to Brahmaswarup Yagnapurushdasji, or Shastriji Maharaj, for teaching us Bhagwan Swaminarayan's Akshar-Purushottam philosophy. Shastriji Maharaj learnt this philosophy through his association with Brahmaswarup Bhagatji Maharaj. Thereafter, he dedicated his entire life to spread the knowledge of Sahajanand Shri Hari's supreme upasana and Gunatitanand Swami as Aksharbrahman. He built grand shikharbaddh mandirs and, in their central shrines, consecrated panchdhatu murtis of Sarvavatari Parabrahman Purushottam Sahajanand Shri Hari and Mul Aksharmurti Gunatitanand Swami Maharaj. For the entire Swaminarayan Sampradaya, this was a new, unique and supreme accomplishment. He himself gave the name 'Akshar-Purushottam' to Bhagwan Swaminarayan's philosophical principle and enshrined it.

For this very reason, Pragat Brahmaswarup Mahant Swami Maharaj insisted that Shastriji Maharaj's name, Yagnapurush, be included in the final couplet of this arti.

Conclusion

In this way, this arti conveys the following:

- Parabrahman Swaminarayan Bhagwan's greatness – he is eternally with a form, supreme, the all-doer and manifest through the gunatit gurus.
- Sahajanand Shri Hari himself is the entity the shastras call Parabrahman Purushottam Narayan and Gunatitanand Swami himself is the entity the shastras call Aksharbrahman.
- Bhagwan Swaminarayan established ekantik dharma, and the concepts of offering bhakti after becoming brahmarup, ultimate moksha and others.
- Swaminarayan-specific spiritual endeavors such as humility, seeing all as divine, friendship, becoming brahmarup and others.
- The experience of fulfillment upon having attained something truly great.
- A commemoration of Shastriji Maharaj, who propagated the Akshar-Purushottam principle.

In this way, this arti is the ultimate, divine tribute of Pragat Brahmaswarup Guruhari Mahant Swami Maharaj to Shri Akshar-Purushottam Maharaj – Bhagwan Swaminarayan and Aksharmurti Gunatitanand Swami – and Brahmaswarup Shastriji Maharaj (Yagnapurushdasji), who enshrined the murtis of Gunatitanand Swami and Sahajanand Shri Hari as Swami and Narayan, that is, Akshar and Purushottam, in the central shrines of grand shikharbaddh mandirs. This arti encapsulates the heartfelt prayers of and glory sung by Parabrahman Swaminarayan's devotees. It also reflects the joy of the devotees who are dedicated to the Akshar-Purushottam philosophy. Furthermore, it offers devotion towards God, guru and the Akshar-Purushottam principle. This arti is, in the true sense, a prayer to and a song of glory of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. It

represents the inner voice of the entire BAPS family. And, most of all, it is a devotional tribute offered affectionately at the feet of our beloved Guruhari Pramukh Swami Maharaj to commemorate his centenary celebrations.