

॥ श्री स्वामिनारायणो विजयतेतराम् ॥



Vachanamrit
Bi-Centenary Issue

This is the divine place, where Lord Swaminarayan enlightened innumerable souls by His Nectar-like sermons! Bhagwan Swaminarayan had delivered 20 Vachanamrits in Vadatal.

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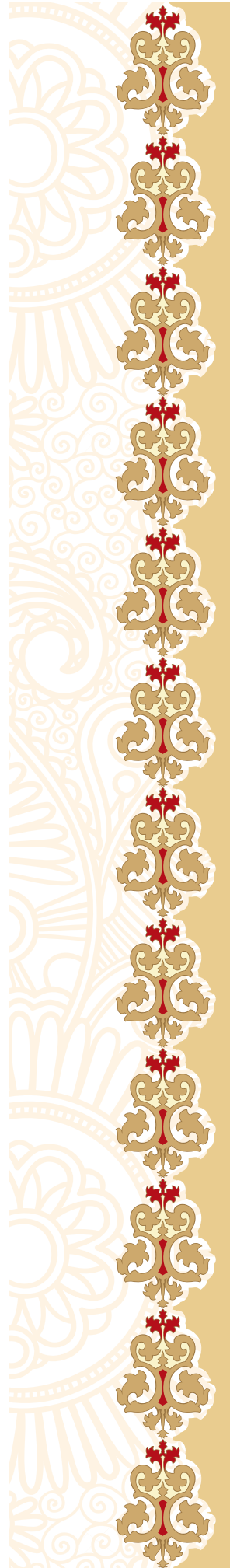
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Prelude

H. H. Acharya Shri
Rakeshprasadji Maharaj

*O*ur Vadtaldham is celebrating the Vachanamrit Bi-Centenary Celebrations from 6 to 12 November 2019 at Vadtal. Some musing about it.

Vachanamrit is a compilation of nacterian discourses showered by Bhagwan Swaminarayan. Lord Swaminarayan, out of sheer sympathy for every seeker, showered these nectar-like speeches. These holy discourses carry deep meanings. The devotees, who want to imbibe the true knowledge of the Holy Fellowship, must study the Vachanamrit sincerely with positive attitude. Only then the followers will comprehend it's true meaning.

The real motive of celebrating this festival is this : Lord Swaminarayan narrated these Vachanamrits two hundred years ago. This was His Dakhado (a unique colloquial word, rarely used) sincere effort. In those days, Lord Swaminarayan explained the meanings of the Vedas to His followers in simple local language.

Lord Swaminarayan narrated these Vachanamrits with one solitary aim : He wanted to impart Kalyan to innumerable souls. His narratives were collected and compiled by the Paramhans saints. We are lucky that even after two hundred years we have the original manuscript of the Vachanamrit. The message of the Vachanamrit should reach to all. This is the main objective of this Bi-Centenary Celebrations.

Now a days life is hectic; people are busy with their profession and occupation. They rarely have time for reading or religious activities in their busy schedules. Moreover, superficial information is catered through every media. In this situation, through this celebration we would like to search gem-like principles hidden within the discourses of the Vachanamrit.

Lord Swaminarayan preached these Vachanamrits for ten years, from 1819 to 1829; delivered them at different places and different times, before groups of either fifty people or five hundred people or more. Lord Swaminarayan wished that all

worship the Parmatma and thereby attain Moksha.

Lord Shri Swaminarayan delivered these messages through questions and answers. Lord Swaminarayan asked questions, answered them; the saints and the Satsangis asked questions and the Lord answered; He even asked the saints to question and answer among themselves. The questions were simple as well complex. But all were related to Atma, Parmatma, Bhakti etc. The guidance of Lord Shree Swaminarayan should reach to all. As Lord Swaminarayan delivered these Vachanamrut for ten years and we feel if we celebrate this festival, we will be able to train a generation which would create a bright future of the Sampraday, in the following decade.

Now-a-days, there are different diversified beliefs prevail in our Holy Fellowship. As a result of that a situation is created in which the true followers of the original Holy Fellowship often lured, because all worship Lord Swaminarayan, all talk about our scriptures. The real task before us is to convey the true message of Lord Swaminarayan and with the help of Vachanamrit we can do this.

Vachanamrit Bi-Centenary Celebrations aim to hold a grand Samaiyo at

Vadtaldham. It will have discourse sessions and highly educated and experienced Sadgurus will deliver talks, exhibitions regarding the life and work of Lord Shree Swaminarayan will be held and there will be programmes like quiz competitions. Through all these activities we would like to acquaint the people with Vachanamrit. With a hope that if one sentence of this holy scripture touches and appeals the heart of a person, that person will start treading on the path of Final Beatitude. If this happens, then Lord Swaminarayan and all Paramhans saints will be pleased. We have to work on this line.

Our Vadtaldham temple board and all the saints have been putting maximum efforts to celebrate this Bi-Centenary. It has carefully planned the distribution of Vachanamrit, so that everyone can get it easily at an affordable price. A two-day satsang is organised on every full-moon day at Vadtaldham. Vachanamrit Mahasammelan on every Sunday at different cities across our country is also organised by the saints of our Holy Fellowship.

This festival, Vachanamrit Bi-Centenary Celebrations, will be a unique one - *Na Bhuto Na Bhavishyati* : Never before never again. Each and every follower should take part in it

directly or indirectly, and those who are unable to attend it should experience it through internet or television channels. That would make all familiar with this Holy Fellowship. They would know about the places where Lord Swaminarayan delivered these sermons. Thereby we would understand the message and if some one happens to remember it at the time of the death and the remembrance of this event will beautify his/her death! Let us all strive together for this.

Our two periodicals, one Gujarati and one English, sincerely try to impart the message of our Lord among the youths. All such efforts aim towards one goal - the true message of the Lord reaches to the last man of the society. In every heart, the faith gets strengthened for the Lord, follows the traditions of the holy faith and become true Satsangi. When this happens we will achieve the real motive of this celebration. Vadtalvihari Shree Harikrishna Maharaj will definitely inspire each and every person and lead the festival to a grand success. Praying to Lord for the ultimate good of all, our Jay Shree Swaminarayan.



Vachnamrut, the main scripture of Swaminarayan Sampraday, is a kind favour on mankind from Shree Sahajanand Swami. It is a compilation of sermons delivered by Sahajanand Swami. These sermons are neither verbal acrobatics of the elite, nor the result of the religious dialogues of the Vedantis. This is a para-vani of Parbrahm Parmatma. The world literature is flooded with extraordinary religious texts. They are the indirect result of the Parbrahm. Even the sectarian literature reflect the personal realisations of the Dharmagurus.

Vachnamrut is at the pinnacle among the modern day's religious literature. This claim is based on some extraordinary facts. The first one is the first paragraph of every sermon. It contains the date, the time, the place, the

Vachnamrut
*The pinnacle among
the religious literature.*

details about the audience and the dress and costumes of Shree Sahajanand Swami. This description creates an ambience of that time. They are exemplary and not found in any book of world religions. Each Vachnamrut is full of the drops of nectars. This Holy Faith has got these nectars without any churning.

Swaminarayan Sampraday's contribution in local Gujarati vernacular language is noteworthy. The Vachnamrut is considered the first book of modern Gujarati prose. It is a Pathey (sure guide) of the spiritual path. It is a Guru-like key for the seekers to find the ways of liberation from Maya.

This scripture is यंनी: स्वशीतम वेदः। It is a breathing of the Vedas. Vachnamruts are the

verbal form of the Vedas. It is one form for both the Shabda- Brahman and par-brahman.

The Vachnamruts are in the form of pari-prashna, the question-answer form of the Upnishads. This is a higher form of acquiring knowledge. Pari-prashna means questions asked repeatedly. One can go on asking a question till the doubt is not cleared. It is a privilege of the disciple. No disrespect for the Guru in this method. Where in such a shield the pseudo Dharmachays have made the Gyan Marg a play and comfort.

In this atmosphere, Bhagwan Shri Swaminarayan adopted the Pari-prashna method for His discourses. He encouraged His Saints and followers to follow this method and thereby eliminated the corrupt practices of His time. He himself joined in this process and encouraged all for this Pari-prashna method. With the help of this, Lord Swaminarayan created the best Gyan Ganga of spiritualism. The four Sadgurus compiled these sermons and that compilation has become Vachanamrits for us.

The Vachnamrut enters the inner core of the Sadhak to find out his hurdles and with the help of the Pari-prashna help him to solve the problems and gives proper guidance. It is not the design of words but the soul of the message of the Parbrahman. Today, the sources of the religious literature have been fading out and the readers are running away from it, the reading of the Vachnamrut provides unimaginary results.

On every page of Vachnamrut, the wetness of Bhakti, the status of Gyan are entwined there. Its regular reading helps one to realise Aaatma-Parmatma. That is why it is said that this scripture is a mirror of the sadhak. One who succeeds in understanding this scripture, succeeds to read himself.

- Dr. Santvallabhdasji

Thus Shree Hari Dressed...

Shreeji Maharaj, after becoming the Acharya of the Uddhav Sampradaya, generally put on all white garments; yet, he adorned whatever the devotees offered to him.



When Shreeji Maharaj renounced the world at a tender age of eleven only, he wore merely a kopin (lower-body undergarment) and deer-skin whether it was winter, summer or the monsoon season. "I stayed without any shelter and only wore a small kopin" (G.F.29). Muktanand Swami in his letter to his guru Ramanand Swami also wrote, he wears only a deerskin at Loj. Muktanand Swami gave a new name Sarjudas to Neelkanth Varni and asked him to wear alfi. Ramanand Swami initiated Sarjudas at Piplana on V.S. 1857 Kartak Sud Ekadashi and gave white clothes to wear. Since then he wore a white loincloth, a saffron gatariyu and an alfi.

During the Dhoraji Samaiya of V.S. 1863, the Surati followers offered a Mugat (crown) and costly costumes which Shreeji Maharaj willingly adorned. This was the first occasion when the followers offered a Mugat. The Surati followers paved the way for future offerings from all the

quarters of the society.

The first paragraphs of many chapters of Vachnamrut provide us a glimpse of what Shreeji Maharaj wore on various occasions. He had put on red trousers and a red Jacket. He has wrapped a rich garment with golden borders round his head and an equally rich, garment round his waist (G.F. 13). He had covered his body with a large white double sheet of cotton and had put a white turban on his head and a white khes with black borders. (G.F. 21). He had tied a white fento on his head and had put on a white khes. He had put on a red woolen Jacket and had covered his body with a white double sheet of cotton (G.F.24). He had tied a saffron colored rich silken cloth woven with gold and silver threads at the ends, round his waist. He had put on a saffron colored headdress made of equally rich cloth on his head. (G.F. 53). He had put on a pair of trousers prepared from red brocade embroidered with golden threads. He had put on a jacket, also prepared from black brocade, imprinted with the words Nar Narayan and Swaminarayan. He had put on a saffron colored turban interwoven with golden threads. He had tightly rounded his waist. (Ka.6). These are some examples only.

Shreeji Maharaj wore various garments like Shurval, Dagli, Shelu, Pagh, Khes, White Chadar, White Chofal, Fento, Angarakhu, White Dhoti, Pachhedi, Buttadar Rajai, Modiyu, Chogalu, Jamo, Rento, Patko, Rumal, Topi, Bokani, Pitamber etc.

As Shreeji Maharaj possessed intense Vairagya, he preferred simple white clothing. Shreeji Maharaj generally wore a dhoti, referred to as khes. A white dhoti is mentioned only once in the Vachnamrut, Gadhada-II 34. He rarely wore a surval, but when he did, he preferred a white one rather than one made of kinkhab. He only wore a kinkhab surval when it was presented by a loving Bhakta. He rarely wore an angarkhu, dagli or jamo. He usually draped one of the following garments on his upper body, thin cotton cloth, thick cotton cloth chadar, khes, reto or shelu. Shreeji Maharaj rarely wore rich garments with embroidery.



Shreeji Maharaj wore warm clothes during winter. For example, during the Katha in Gadhada I-24, he wore a warm Dagli. Also in Loya 1, Loya-3 Loya-7. Shreeji Maharaj wore a cotton padded surval and wore double layers on top of his warm Dagli. These must be the three coldest days at Loya.

We come across many stories in the literature of the Swaminarayan Sampraday that reveal devotees love for Shreeji Maharaj or Shreeji Maharaj's generosity for them. Devotees prepared priceless garments for Shree Hari and he was unequivocally generous in giving away such priceless garments to the needy and deserved ones.

Once a devotee from Surat and staying at Bhavnagar, one Mr. Atmaram, stitched silk-woven Dagli and gifted it to Shree Hari. When the Bhavnagar Maharaja saw Shree Hari wearing that splendid Dagli, he thought of having one for him. The Maharaja asked the devotee Atmaram to prepare one such Dagli for him, which he politely refused. The Maharaja got annoyed at the denial but the devotee remained firm. He said, 'Your highness; I have no objection for sewing a splendid Dagli for you. However, it will be impossible to create one like that. That dagli is priceless. It is stitched with threads of my love towards Shreeji Maharaj. My heart has been stitched into that dagli. Your highness kindly understand my feelings.' The king accepted the devout reasoning and settled for another one.

Once Deva Bhakta, a disciple of Parshad Bhaguji went to Cholera-infected Gujarat and collected mangoes at the instance of Shreeji Maharaj. When he returned to Gadhada with bullock-cart loaded with mangoes, Shreeji

Maharaj became very happy and embraced Deva Bhakta and also gave him a gift of dhoti offered to Shreeji Maharaj by a Bhavsar devotee.

Once Premanand Swami wrote a kirtan in Five languages and sang before Shreeji Maharaj. Pleased with the Kirtan, Shreeji Maharaj gifted a Shelu to Premanand Swami. Premanand Swami refused to accept that Shelu as he being a Saint could not possess that garment. So, Shreeji Maharaj asked Laduba to bring a Surati topi having five Phoomakes. The Swami did not accept that costly garment too. Then Shreeji Maharaj asked for a Kutchi cap and gave it to Premanand Swami. This was Shree Hari's nature. He never hid his pleasure and honored the devotee by presenting a gift.

Wardrobe of Shree Hari.

Angarkhu : A long sleeved, upper garment that is made of a thin cloth. It reaches down to the knees, and is tied with strings on the left side of the chest. A long tunic, which covers the body from the neck to the knees. In certain instances, it can be slightly longer, in which case it is more commonly referred to as a kediya. The fastening of the upper portion of the tunic usually with strings rather than buttons can be central or to one side.



Bokani : Cloth tied around the head, with one end crossing from under the chin to cover the ears and cheeks. Worn during cold weather. A piece of cloth used as a chin strap.

Chadar : A thick blanket, which is 7.5 to 9 feet long and is used to wrap around the body. It is also used to cover a mattress.

Chhint : Indian cotton cloth on which a pattern

has been drawn by dyeing and hand drawing with a bamboo. Chhint would usually have been made smooth or glossy with a shell or beaten with wooden mallets to produce a shiny surface. Mostly designs are based on flowers or leaves.

Chhoglu : A bunch of cloth either emerging from the end of a pagh or left hanging from one side. Sometimes inserted into a pagh when made of a string of flowers.

Chofal : A thick shawl made of cotton. It is 36 feet long.



Dagli : Waistcoat with inner lining usually worn in cold weather. It does not have a collar. Styles vary; some have sleeves while others are sleeveless.

Dhoti : An unstitched, long piece of cloth traditionally worn by males as a lower garment. It is usually worn around the waist with one end tucked in after passing it between the legs. Also known as Dhotiya; loincloth.

Fento : A long sleeved, upper garment that is made of a thick cloth, with rich embroidery. It reaches down below the knees, and is tied at the waist with long strings.



Kediyu : A long sleeved, upper garment that is pleated at the chest, and reaches down to the waist. Approximately twelve feet of cloth is

used up in the pleats.

Khes : Piece of cloth that can be worn as a shawl to cover the upper body or worn as a dhoti to cover the lower body.

Kinkhab : Fine silken fabric brocaded with golden or silver threads, originally made only in Egypt.

Moliyu : Rich fabric with silky finish woven with golden or silver threads and detailed, decorative edges, used to tie around the head as a turban.

Pachhedi : A thin shawl used to cover the upper body.

Pagh : Turban. Long thin piece of cloth tied around the head; styles vary region wise.

Reto : Feto, Moliyu or shelu with silky decorative edges woven with golden or silver threads. Tied around the head or waist or left to rest upon the shoulders.

Safo : A pagh with one end hanging at the back or the side of the head.

Shelu : Rich fabric with a silky finish woven with golden or silver threads and decorative edges. It is worn as upper garment or tied around the head or waist or even left to rest upon the shoulders.

Posh : Garments can be made of posh which is a kind of double layered cloth filled with wool between the two layers. Clothing made of posh are worn during the cold season.



Surval : A trouser garment, which can be loose or tight, depending on the particular style.

Tora : Tassels of threads or flowers, which are used to long down from a turban, as a form of decoration.

Life is a struggle and man has to fight external and internal battle in this (invisible) struggle. In the routine practical life, one has to face physical and mental friction with each other, and due to this reason a sequence of pleasure and pain is created in man's life. How can one attain supreme bliss in spite of all these barriers creating action and reactions to the pleasures and pains of one's routine life? The solutions of this enigma have been shown by Lord Swaminarayan in His VACHANAMRITAM.

Shreeji Maharaj applied one grand method to uplift even the low (soul) person who came close to Him, and He sustained this practice incessantly. Once Shreeji Maharaj had offered very profound preaching to His associate cook devotee, and this was specifically cited by Him in the holy meeting next day. Then Muktanand Swami beseeched Him to explain that point in detail. And as the result of this request the Vachanamritam – 15 of Gadhada Antya was created!

Shreeji Maharaj says: "When a devotee of God sits for mental worship of God or for meditation, he normally recollects how he was defeated by the five objects of pleasure, due to



adverse place and times or he recollects his defeat by lust, anger, avarice etc., Here is an illustration. Suppose a brave warrior is wounded in the war. As he is wounded he lies down on a cot. The pain of the wound would not subside as long as the bandage is not well adjusted and he would not get even sleep. When the bandage becomes well-adjusted and the wound starts healing he would have no pain from the wound and he would

also get sleep."

Here Shreeji Maharaj puts the seeker or Satsangi in the place of a warrior. This material life and the field of Satsang are the synonym for the battle field. The sharp effect of the five sense-objects are reflected in the heart, and therefore there comes obstacles during Manasi Puja and Dhyan. This is a reference to the injured in the battle field. The thought regarding Atma, of Parmatma, about imperishable abode of God – are in the place of (ICU) bed. When the battle between decision-indecision is pacified then comes the stage of 'sleep' and there appears the Moorti of God in that sleep.

If the region, time, action and association are hostile, the heart gets disturbed with the

thoughts of lust, anger, greed jealousy etc. and becomes very unstable. If bandages are tied on the body of an injured person but the pain does not decrease until right medicine is applied on the wounds and he is not able to get proper sleep even. But he begins to get ample sleep only after the wound begins to heal.

We get busy with Kirtan in Satsang but the decision-indecision like forces depress us in life. Shreeji Maharaj shows the remedy to this problem. He says that the devotion to God is nine-fold. And if five senses and the mind get engrossed in it, the expected result can come out. If verbal wounds are torturing you, this pain can be removed by getting associated with the words related with God. If wounds come as form (beautiful figure), that can be healed by getting Darshan of God's Moorti and by reading and recitation of the holy scriptures. If wounds are generated by alluring touch, they can be healed by touching God's lotus-feet or the feet of great saints. The wound generated by taste can be destroyed by eating God's Prasad. The wounds generated by smell can be removed by smelling the incense, flowers and scent offered to God. In this way these methods serve as antidote to the malice of the five senses. While doing this procedure one enters the nine- fold devotion and the mind gets closely associated with God by following this process. First identify this process and then listen to such words which nourish the devotional process. Nine facets of the devotion are as given below.

1. Shravan – Listening. To listen to the glory, virtues and other holy narrations of God with love. 2. Kirtan - Recitation of holy lyrics individually or in group while clapping or

dancing. 3. Smaran - Devotion of Remembrance. Whatever holy narrations about God are listened and holy Kirtans are sung should be remembered. 4. Pada Sevan - Serving the holy feet of God. To remain focussed at the lotus feet of God. 5. Archanam - Ritualistic worship of the Moorti of God. 6. Vandanam - Bowing down before the Moorti of God. 7. Dasya - Devotion to God with the sense of servitude. 8. Sakhya - Friendlyhood with God. Association of God with the feeling that He always nurtures and protects our self. 9. Atmanivedan - Total dedication to God. Our body, mind and spirit should always be Godward.

When a devotee practises one of the nine types of devotion and his mind becomes fixed in God and would think of nothing but God, he would sense that particular attitude is his very characteristic. Then he should predominantly practise that very type of devotion. Many medicines bring temporary relief but it is a symptomatic relief, and not a sure-cure. So, if we can consolidate any one of the nine facets of devotion we can successfully meditate upon the Moorti of Lord Swaminarayan.

In this Vachanamrita, Shreeji Maharaj has shown the remedy to overcome the mental stress and tension caused by contemporary forces in the 21st century. And these remedies are worth understanding and putting in practice. By following this process, one can experience the bliss derived from the Moorti of Lord Swaminarayan.

- Lalji Bhagat

Jnanbaug, Vadtal

The 2nd canto of the Geeta is regarding Sankhyayoga (The Yoga of Knowledge). The following stanzas teach about outcomes of the contact of the senses and objects.

मात्रास्पर्शास्तु कौन्तेय शीतोष्णसुखदुःखदाः।
आगमापायिनोऽनित्यास्तास्तितिक्षस्व भारत॥ (१४)

(Lord Krishna preaches Arjuna, “O son of Kunti, the contacts between the senses and their objects, which provoke the feelings of heat and cold, pleasure and pain are transitory and fleeting; therefore Arjuna, endure them.)

यं हि न व्यथयन्त्येते पुरुषं पुरुषर्षभ ।
समदुःखसुखं धीरं सोऽमृतत्वाय कल्पते॥ (१५)

(Arjuna, the wise man to whom pain and pleasure are alike, and who is not tormented by these contacts becomes eligible for immortality).

The question arising from the above stanzas is that “Is there any other way in which a person would not have to endure such outer effects of the objects that he comes into contact with. Answer to this is ‘YES’. Lord Shri Swaminarayan’s ‘VACHANAMRITS’ have it.

The 8th Vachanamrit of Gadhada First Chapter reads like this, “the activities of sensual organs are spared (engaged) in the service of Lord Shri Krishna and His devotees; the

person’s (devotee’s) heart becomes pure and the sins stuck to him; of infinite times are abolished. On the contrary, if the activities of the sense organs are directed towards carnal pleasures, his heart gets polluted and as a result he or she is drawn back from the path of ultimate salvation.”

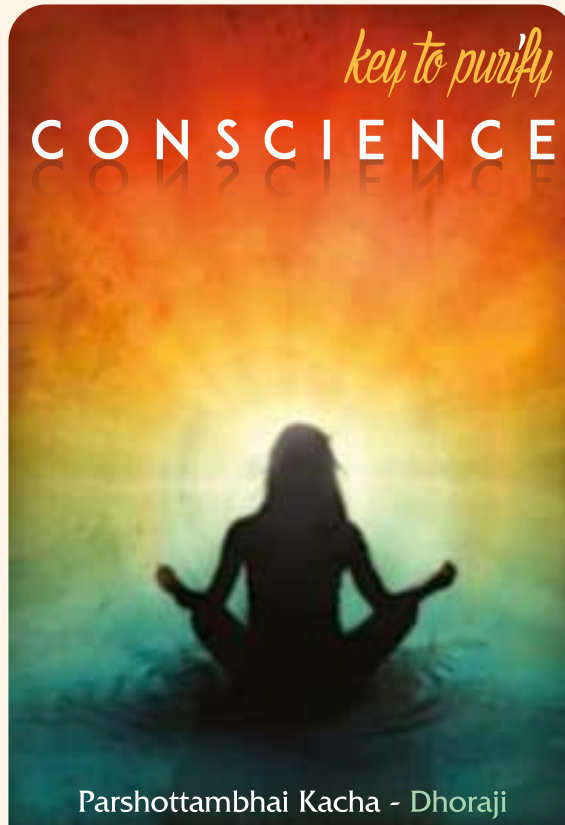
In fact, the activities of all the sense organs are same and equal. Because the service offered for livelihood of the family or for God requires the same type of efforts through body, mind and spirit. Then where does the difference lie?

The only answer to this question is that the service offered to God purifies and sanctifies heart while the service offered for family defiles one’s heart some times. And there is a significant reason behind this.

The objective behind offering both the services is quite different from each other.

The motivating force is different. The objective only either purifies or defiles one’s heart. Hard work neither purifies nor defiles one’s heart.

Shriji Maharaj directs our attention to one important thing. The direction of our sincere efforts should be towards God and His devotees. The shelter of all senses ought to be God. A knife’s real task is to cut vegetables for food. If it is used to cut someone’s finger, it would cause harm to



the both. It would not be beneficial to the either. Sense organs and heart have been narrated as 'reflective agencies'. They return what they are given. If we sow neem-seed; we will not get sugarcane.

If sensual objects are entered into heart through sense organs, desires and lust would get collected inside the heart. Then they would come out as and when there is an opportunity to emerge out as a fountain of water. If things related to God are enjoyed; intuitions regarding God would rise and lead one more and more towards devotional activities leading to salvation.

If worldly objects related to hunger, anger, greed are enjoyed; it would lead one's mind and heart to mental pollution. One would have only thoughts regarding craving and satisfying one's material desires etc.

Those; who are engrossed in enjoying worldly sensual objects have not to think over this as they do not even have such differential ideas. But the seekers of Shriji Maharaj have to contemplate over this. That's why Shriji Maharaj has graciously preached through this Vachanamrit that if the sense organs are directed to the service of God and devotees of God, the heart is purified.

Human heart is very much pure. We can write an abusive word as well as name of God on a blank paper. It depends on our way of thinking and living. But we should keep in mind that such ideas born into mind only through the objects enjoyed by senses. Therefore, we have to engage our senses in the service of God and His devotees; if we want to elevate ourselves or for downfall; sensual objects are waiting for us at the door of sense organs. It all depends upon our way of thinking.

As a Satsangi we should think over this inspiring Vachanamrit. We should observe at every moment whether our sense organs are directed to enjoyment through sensual objects or through service of God and His devotees. The choice is ours.

The following is a list of Vachanamrits with the same kind of topic.

Gadhada 1st Chapter - 8th, 38th, Sarangpur - 2nd, Kariyani - 3rd and 10th, Loya - 1st, 5th, 8th and 14th, Gadhada Middle Chapter - 8th and 33rd, Gadhada Last Chapter - 11th, 24th and 32nd.

All these Vachanamrits guide and inspire the devotees how to divert mind from physical pains to everlasting peace!

Those ears are genuine, which listen to the holy narration of Shri Hari.

That tongue is genuine which sings the praise of Shri Hari.

Muktanand says: Those eyes are real which meditatively observe the Moorti of Shri Hari!

Those hands are worthy, which remain busy in sacred task related to God.

Muktanand says: Those feet are worthy which tread towards the abode of Shri Hari.

The holy scripture Vachnamrit contains the sermons delivered by Sahjanand Swami during 1819 A. D. to 1829 A. D. at different places in Gujarat. Sahjanand Swami came to Gujarat in 1800 A. D. and left for His abode Akshardham in 1830 A. D. He was appointed as the Acharya of the Uddhav Sampraday by His guru Ramanand Swami in 1802 A. D. at Jetpur in Saurashtra. Since then He started His revolutionary mission to uplift humans amid the precarious situation of Gujarat.



British. In 1822, the Nawab of Junagadh relinquished to the British all responsibilities for collection of taxes, and after that entire Kathiawad was under British control.

The Gujarati people were constantly subjected to the strains of war, plunders, changes in political rule and hardships arising out of instability. During the first two decades of the century, the Rajputs and Kathi chiefs of Kathiawad and Kutch conducted many raids and

As the Acharya of the Uddhav Sampraday Sahjanand Swami inherited some 40 saints and some thousand followers from His guru Ramanand Swami. He got His address when the two Kathi chiefs of Gadhada, Ebhal Khachar and Jiva Khachar accepted Sahjanand Swami as their guru and offered their hospitality at His feet. Yet, He continued His satsang vicharan throughout Saurashtra, Kutch and Gujarat.

There were around three hundred small states and principalities of Gujarat in the early nineteenth century. There was no suzerian with the name or power to hold the princes and the rulers in check or to provide order and security for public. The Maratha rulers had been content to send an army to collect tribute from the local chiefs. In the first quarter of the nineteenth century, British influence - military and political, gradually spread like a slow wave throughout greater Gujarat. The major accession came in June 1818, when the Peshva of Poona were defeated and Sir John Malcolm negotiated an agreement whereby the rights of the Gaekwad of Baroda were confirmed and the territory of Kathiawad was ceded to the

wars resulting in a general breakdown of law and order in the territory. There was civil warfare in Kutch in 1812 and literally no government existed there. Crops and cattle were destroyed and land lay idle because of war and brigandage. In the space of a few months 136 villages in Kathiawad were plundered by raiders from Kutch; 40000 heads of cattle were carried off, and property in the amount of 8 lac rupees was damaged or destroyed.

The times were made even more difficult by natural calamities. There were three major famines. The worst was in 1810. Sahjanand Swami organised 18 day long non-violent Yagna at Dabhan in Kheda district of central Gujarat in this year. In the previous year there was heavy rain and in winter the locusts settled in Rajasthan and Gujarat. A lack of rain in 1813 resulted in a terrible famine in Kathiawad, for which Sahjanand Swami had warned the followers and the people in advance. This was followed by an epidemic in 1814 in which many people died. On 16 June, 1819 Kathiawad experienced a severe earthquake. The third famine came in 1835.

In an era of three hundred principalities it is

difficult to get a true picture of the fate of the people. Yet, we get a faint picture of the life people lived then. The people were superstitious. They feared ghosts and perhaps one person from every house was haunted by it. Every street had one haunted house. People followed and lived caste system. Social taboos ruled the society. People defecated in public and practised all kinds of impurities. The society was deprived of all primary amenities. They lived their lives without any expectation.

The mahajans, the powerful bodies of rich and influential people, followed either the Vaishnav or the Jain Dharma. The Vaishnav and the Jain sects had become prey to all religious irregularities. Religious sects like Kabir panth, Kuda panth, Kaul, Shakt, Vammarg, Shushk Vedant - were also followed by the people. People believed in violent sacrifice and mostly were non-vegetarians. The Vairagis, a powerful force, believed in Narsinh, Shiv, Bhairav, Kali and Hanuman. They kept weapons and moved around in large groups. Their retinues carried the pomp of kingly retinues. They demanded and forcibly collected the ransom as per their wish from the innocent people and in the case of denial they let loose all kinds of terror. Many Nand Saints of Swaminarayan Holy Fellowship often faced their cruelty. Some saints like Brahmanand Swami of the Holy Fellowship and kavi Manohardas of Junagadh have described the then Vairagis in their poems. People rather suffered from the religions too.

Kishorilal G. Mashruvala, a follower and a Gandhian, very rightly opined that conservatism was the order of the day and it was not the period of the reformers. Yet, Kishorilal Mashruvala noted that there were signs of awakening in the religious life of Gujarat. He wrote, "Dayaram was 12 year old boy. Girdhar was to take birth after five seven year. But Dhiro had become a young man. Bhojo had started writing Chabkhas (sharp satirical lyrics). Devotees hoped for a true religion. Dhiro, Ranchhod, Lalo started singing the praise of the

Lord and made others sing in their respective areas. Swami Ramanand preached Uddhav Sampraday."

Some sporadic information regarding the awakening in the religious life of Gujarat.

The founder of Sat Kaival Sampraday Shree Karunasagar Maharaj (1773 - 1878 A.D.) sang the glory of the Kaivalkarta at Sarsa (Dist. Anand), his native place. At Simarda, a village in Anand district, Aatmajnani saint Mahatamramji (A.D. 1826 - A.D. 1889) founded the Sat Rametiram Sampraday at the age of 14. Santaram Maharajshri, a wandering monk, visited Nadiad in 1816 A. D. and left his body in 1831 A.D. at Nadiad. His preaching soon took the form of Santaram Sampraday.

At Chalala (Dist. Amreli) Dana Aapa (1728 - 1822) served the helpless people. Chamar Bhakt Dasi Jivan (- 1831) prayed to Lord through Kirtans. Lalasaheb (1741- 1833), a disciple of Ravi Saheb of Sherkhi, through Satsang and Shabda Sadhana became aatmasiddh saint at Patan in North Gujarat. Bapusaheb Gaekwad (1779-1843), a disciple of Dhira Bhagat first and then Nirant Bhagat, got the aatmanubhuti through Bhajans. Ranima, the Mirabai of Bharvad community of Lunsariya village, was a true devotee of the Lord and was vachansiddh, whatever she uttered proved true!

Prince from Banaskantha Mansinghji became Morar Saheb after initiating himself as the disciple of Ravi Saheb and established a diocese at Jam Khambhalia in 1876 A. D. and turned out as a graceful Bhajanik of the Sampraday. His disciple Das Hothi, a Muslim, became a Siddhpurush through his Bhajan Bhakti.

Bhoja Bhakta (1785-1850), a Patidar from Galol village in Saurashtra, became popular through his Chabkha. Jalaram Bapa (1800-1881), a Lohan's of Virpur village, served food to all and worshipped the Lord. Isharram (1789-1897), a native of Naadara village in Kutch, established an Ashram at Vaandhay (Ishvarnagar) and passed his life in

singing the praise of the Lord and service to mankind.

Thus many worshipped the Lord in their own ways during 1785 A.D. to 1850 A.D. and shined as the glittering stars of the religious world of Gujarat. I wanted to note down such glittering stars of all religions but could not do so; may do in future.

In 1799 , Nilkanth Varni visited Gujarat in search

of a guru and God. At Loj, near Mangrol in Saurashtra, He met Muktanand Swami who answered His questions about Jiva , Ishvar , Maya , Brahman and Parbrahman satisfactorily. He had asked this question to all throughout his roaming all over India. The Vachnamrit is His answer to this question.

- Prof. Harendra Bhatt

॥ ऋते ज्ञानान् मुक्तिः ॥ Rute Jnanann Muktihi

Until you have known Him perfectly, there is no Final Beatitude.

TO KNOW IS TO BECOME

What is “knowing Him”? Firstly we hear about Him – the Lord. We hear about His greatness, His extraordinary divine attributes and His power. We see His idols. That is knowing alright, but it is only up to our sense organs of hearing and seeing.

We, then, meditate upon Him. His idol on which we have developed extra ordinary intense love, we meditate. We live our daily life in perfect accordance with His welfare causing commands. We desire nothing but Him, and we meditate on Him. We start visualising and experiencing Him without external efforts. This is knowing Him by inner organs.

Then also the knowledge is not complete, because the Lord is all blissful, we have yet not gained that experience. Ultimately, on repeated unceaseless meditation, the Lord is pleased and lo! our Jivatma – our spirit – gets sublimed and becomes identical with the form of God Supreme (virtue wise).

Then it is knowing by the experience. The perfect or complete knowledge is achieved.

Thus to know is to become identical like Him i.e. Mama sadharmya gataha.

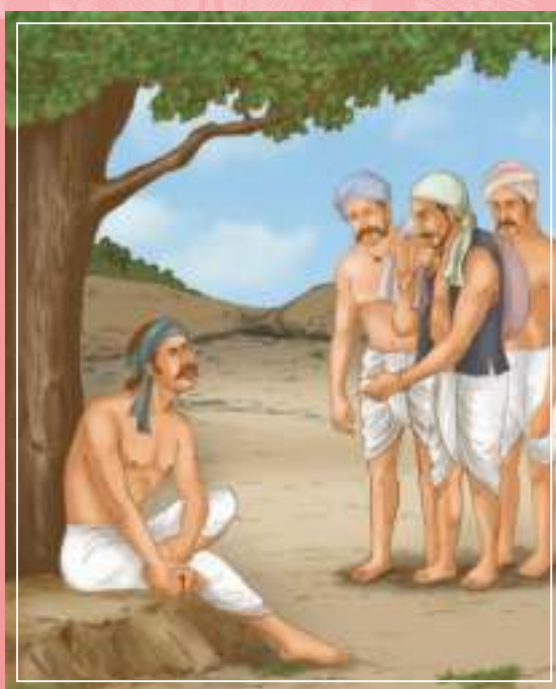
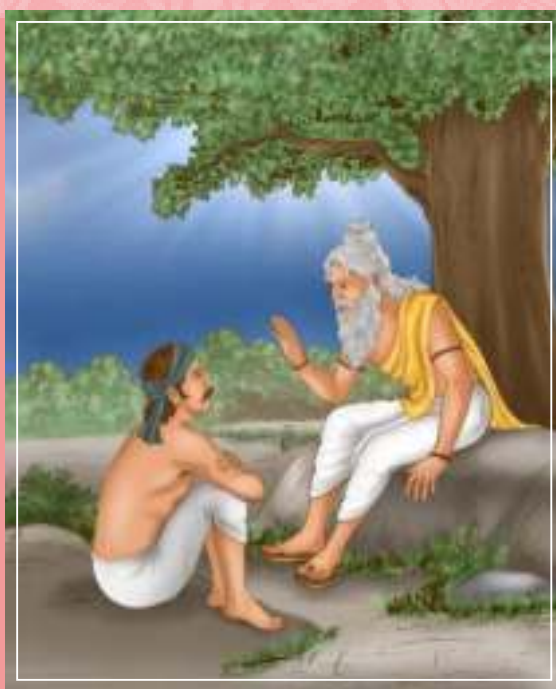
But even when a Bhakta attains this final experience and becomes one like Him, he ever remains in service divine of God Supreme as His most obedient servant, because he experiences unsurpassable bliss from Him. With this knowledge, although he is one with Him, he is always meek servant of Him.

(Vach. Loya - 7, Gadhada M.- 67)

- Dr. Bipin P. Swadas,
Vallabh Vidyanagar

Parable from

VACHANAMRIT



The Thorn-prick on the way to Satsang helped the thief to get free from the death sentence!

Once upon a time there was a town where some thieves lived together. One of them used to serve a saint occasionally. The saint was pleased and blessed him with some good thoughts.

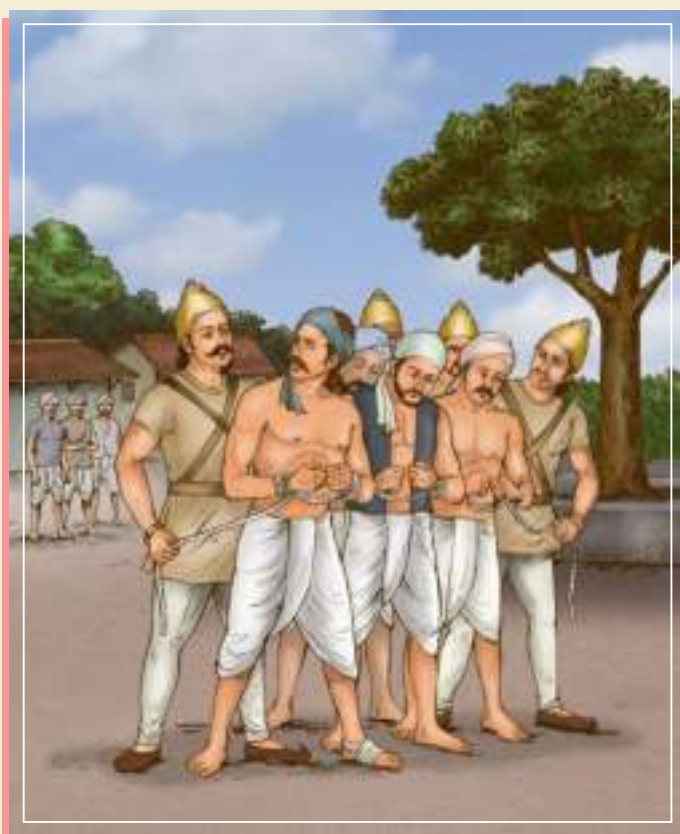
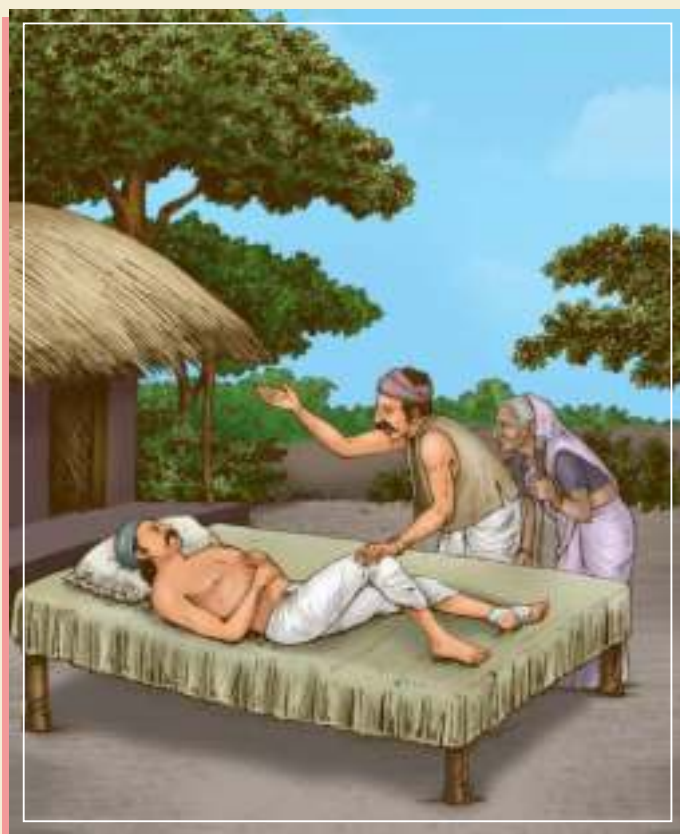
The thieves asked him to go with them for burglary but he declined as his foot, pricked by a thorn while going for holy association with the saint. The thief returned to his house with empty hand.

His parents rebuked him for not going with thieves who had returned with royal treasure stolen by them.

The innocent thief too was arrested, handcuffed and taken into custody, but freed later on at the witness of the saint.

Even a little devotion to God or service to a saint goes a great way in saving a person from the greatest difficulty. So we should always serve God and His saints with true devotion. If one is destined to be hanged, he would receive only a prick of a pin if one keeps association with a saint!

(Vachanamrit Gadhada F. 70)



In this Vachanamrit Shriji Maharaj has emphasised the need of all four qualities viz. (1) Atmanishtha (soul awareness), (2) Bhakti (devotion to God), (3) Vairagya (renunciation) and (4) Swadharma.

Now let us note the significance of above four qualities individually.

1. Atmanishtha (Soul awareness)

By this quality, a devotee behaves as if he is soul and not body. A soul, in fact, is quite distinct from three bodies: gross, subtle and casual body and also distinct from three stages of body: awakening (Jagrat), dream (Swapna) and sleep (Sushupti). Such a devotee is not proud of his physical body.

2. Bhakti (Devotion to God)

Devotion means intense love for God, accompanied with a due sense of His divine glory. This love for God becomes more intense, when one practices nine fold devotional practice to God

श्रवणं कीर्तनं विष्णोः स्मरणं पाद सेवनं;
अर्चनं वंदनं दास्यं, सख्य आत्मनिवेदनं.

*Shravanam Kirtanam Vishnoh,
Smaranam Padsevanam;
Archanam Vandanam Dasyam,
Sakhyam Atmanivedanam.*

(1) Listening to holy narrations of God's Lila, (2) Praising Him, (3) Remembering God, (4) Serving at His feet, (5) Applying holy materials to His idol, (6) Bowing down, (7) Feeling and behaving like most obedient, humble devotee, (8) Friendly attitude, (9) Total submission to Him.

3. Vairagya (Renunciation)

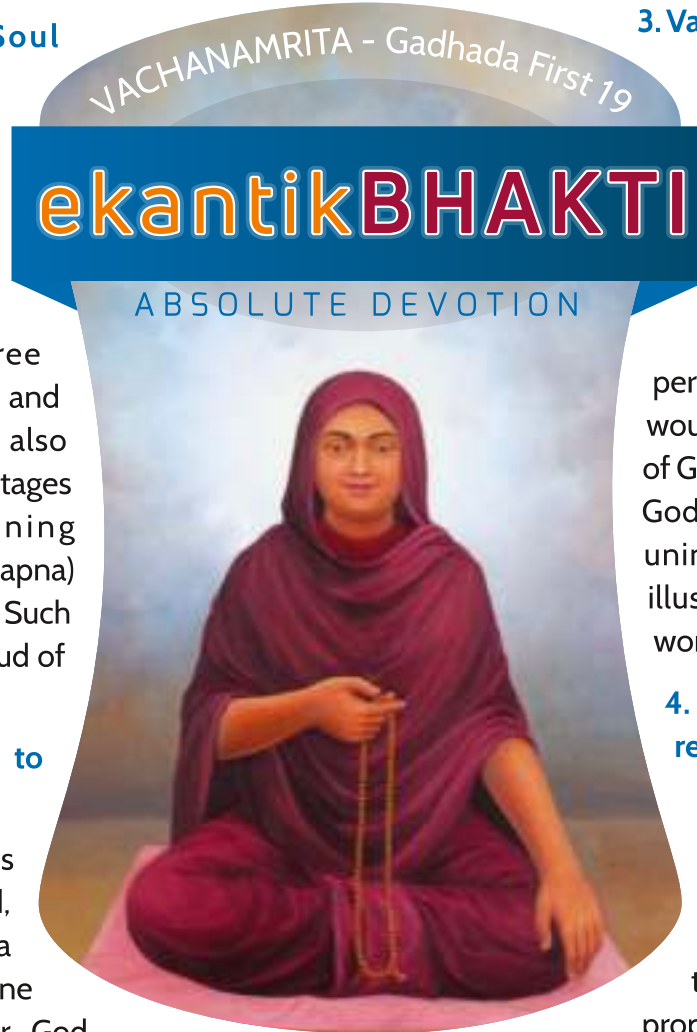
Renunciation is indifference to worldly objects. In other words, it means absence of satisfaction to any object except God. A person with renunciation would like only the form of God. Except the form of God, he would remain uninclined towards all illusory objects of the world.

4. Swadharma (Code of religious conduct)

This is the good practice, which is enjoined both by the Veda (Sruti) and by the law (Smriti) propounded by the Veda.

To behave according to the religious code of conduct is very important for a devotee. In fact, if an act, attended with large recompense, be not in confirmation with Dharma, that act ought not to be committed, because Dharma confers all desired objects.

Now, in this Vachanamrit, Shriji Maharaj has established interrelationship of above



mentioned four qualities as follows :

1. A person has Atmanishtha, (soul awareness), but has no love for God, then he cannot please the God. And without pleasing the God, he cannot master that great strength, which would remain undefeated by the three attributes of Maya. Such great prowess can be achieved only by pleasing God.

A person has love for God, but does not have Atmanishtha, then due to strong bond with the body, the love for God remains meaningless.

2. A person has Atmanishtha, and he has love for God, but if he has no strong sense of renunciation, then, due to attachment to the five illusory objects of pleasure, he will have no benefit of both Atmanishtha and love for God.

A person has renunciation towards worldly objects, but if he has no Atmanishtha and has no love for God, then he would not get divine happiness, which can be attained only by realizing the divine form of God.

3. A person has all the three qualities: Atmanishtha, love for God and renunciation, but if he does not follow the codes of religious conducts, all these three would not succeed.

A person follows the codes of religious conduct – Swadharma, but he has no Atmanishtha, no love for God and no renunciation, the status of his soul, cannot be beyond the earth (Bhulok), the atmosphere (Bhuvarlok) and the heaven up to the world of Brahma. This means that, his soul ascends the divine abode of God i.e. Akshardham, after transgressing the universe and rising above the dark illusory aura of Maya.

Hence, in this Vachanamrit, Shreeji Maharaj has established mutual relationship of above four qualities. Hence, a devotee having all these four qualities is an Ekantik Bhakta (absolute devotee). If any of the four qualities is lacking in a devotee, he should develop it by sincere service and association of an Ekantik Bhakta.

- Bhagawanji A. Kotak, Vadodara

A s s o c i a t i o n

A rain drop from the sky : if it is caught by clean hands, is pure enough for drinking. If it falls in the gutter, its value drops so much that it can't be used even for washing your feet. If it falls on a hot surface, it will evaporate...

If it falls on a lotus leaf, it shines like a pearl and finally, if it falls on an oyster, it becomes a pearl...

The drop is the same, but its existence & worth depends on whom it is associated with...

Always be associated with people who are good at heart. You will experience your own inner transformation"...

- Swami Vivekanand

SWAMI-SEVAK BHAV

Shastri Swami
Shri Bhanuprakashdasji
Porbandar

The words 'Master' and 'Servant' are interdependent and interrelated. Master can exist when there is somebody to serve as his subordinate and 'Servant' will subsist when there is someone superior master to conduct or govern him. First let us examine the meaning of the word 'Master' स्वं ऐश्वर्यम् अस्य अस्ति इति स्वामी That one is called 'Master' who possess all richness, wealth and power. That one is the Master who possess all pervasive richness and power. This meaning has been specifically clarified in the Vishnu Sahasranam i.e. लोकस्वामी त्रिलोकधृत् The Lord of people and the holder of three worlds. The Lord and Master of all fixed, movable material animate and inanimate beings, and one who holds the three Lokas, and this is the definition of the word Swami or Master. That one is Lord Master or Swami who accepts all types of services rendered by the (subordinate, associate, assistant) servant or attendant. If considered as living body or as an embryo in the womb the existence of the soul is considered distinct as the soul quite separate from God.

The soul obeys God, passes through Varnashram (four castes, categories stages of life) and following the process of nine-fold

devotion as stated in the Bhagwat. In this sense the soul is in permanent service of God. Shrimad Bhagwat says that one who takes shelter and offers devotion with expectation or desires is not God's servant but a merchant or a tradesman.

The devotee of God does everything to please God. Every action for them, is a part of devotion and worship. This is the essence of all holy scriptures. All souls are servants and attendants of God. This servitude is eternal in the state of liberation or bondage. In verse 121 of Shikshapatri, Shri Sahajanand Swami says that the servitude and shelter of God (Krishna) brings natural spiritual attainment and even in the state of liberation, servitude of God has been considered as real liberation. ब्रह्माडहं कृष्णदासोडस्मि "I am the servant of Krishna who is Parabrahman." We should keep such feeling in the heart. Brahmanand Swami also says Rate Brahma thai Parabrahman ne re. We should worship Supreme Brahman by being Brahman.

In the eyes of society in general service is always painful, but in reality it is not painful, because the soul feels pain due to the result of previous actions. The soul in reality is the epitome of pleasure derived from knowledge. Knowledge and pleasure are its basic qualities. If the service comes through sinful action it becomes painful. The service of God does not come through sinful action. If the Master whom you serve has bad qualities, service becomes painful for you. If the Master possesses good qualities, service gives pleasure to you. When you love to render service that service gives pleasure. Unwanted, undesired, unloved, forcefully rendered service becomes painful for the Servant. So remember, God is always innocent, faultless, possessing all sacred

welfare-bringing qualities; the friend, guide and companion of all. The services emerging from sacred qualities of God lead to liberation and remains in the state of liberation. It has been stated in first chapter of Shrimad Bhagawat.

“Those whose knot of ego has been untied, who have attained Brahmi condition and yet who practice desire less, devotion to Lord Shri Hari Who Possesses all divine qualities.” In Chhandogya Upanishad, it has been explained that when the soul gets free from all bondages, it becomes free to reside in the Bhagawat dham and he attains eight divine qualities.

1. They become free from all passions and become totally sin free. 2. He enters the state where there is no aging and no permanent old age. He attains the state of agelessness. 3. In imperishable abode there is no fear of death, because death is absent here. 4. He remains away from all types of sorrow. 5. He becomes free from all types of hunger. 6. He

Because of the prowess of God, the devotees of God may be as great as Brahma, Shiva, Shukaji and Narad. They may become as great as even Brahman but none is ever powerful enough to become like Purushottamnarayan. Association with them should be given up and listening to their scripture should be discarded immediately. If such scriptures are listened to there would be a breach in the Upasana of God and Swami - Sevak Bhav - the follower's relation to God as Master and servant would end.

- Vach. Kariyani - 10

becomes free from all types of thirst. 7. He gets the achievement to be successful in everything he desires. 8. He gets the achievement where he gets all his volitions fulfilled by God.

These eight divine qualities are possessed by the Supreme God who resides in imperishable abode and they remain in the worshipers and liberated souls who practice devotion to God.

Then the question raises that if these eight qualities are the same in Supreme God and his devotees then what is the difference between the two? And if there is no difference how can these be the difference between Master and Servant?

The perfect answer to this question can be found in verse 100 in Shikshapatri. In Shri Bhashya, Shri Ramanujacharyaji in the Brahmasutra (4-4-17) says: जगद्व्यापारवर्ज प्रकरणादसंनिहित्वाच्च “Though there is similarity of eight divine qualities in Super Soul and Liberated Soul. There is differences and distinction between the two – that creation, operation and destruction of the universe remains under the control of Supreme God Narayan, who is omniscient, omnipresent and omnipotent.

Even in worship and as the mature fruit of worship in the state of liberation through the eight divine qualities are similar between liberated souls and Supreme God, the potency of being omniscient present and omnipotent

remain in the hands of Lord Narayan. For this reason, the distinction between Master and Servant persist even in the state of liberation. The Vachanamritam explains this point in simple and direct language. The Vachanamritam is based on the discussion among the Paramhansas - Nand Saints and Satsangi devotees, planted in Prasthan Trayi – (1)

Brahmasutra (2) Upanishadas (3) Bhagawad Geeta – in question answer form – as they emerge from this profound philosophy the speeches of Shri Hari are perfectly Vedic.

In Vachanamritam Gadhada First 14, Shreeji Maharaj says the servants of God do not need to do anything but other souls get welfare by getting his Darshan. So if he gets welfare then what surprise is there in this matter? But to attain servanthood is hard, because the servant of God understands his body as futile and his soul as real, and never desires to enjoy the objects which are to be used by his master. He would not do anything which is not liked by his Master. Such fellow becomes real humble devotee of Shri Hari.

In Vachanamritam Gadhada First 43, Shreeji Maharaj says, "It has been told in Shrimad Bhagwat – The absolute devotees who have been stabilized in passion-free devotion, qualify themselves to get My abode and all the wealth and riches and a quiet place to live close to me." So real devotee does not desire four-fold liberation but desires only 'absolute service to God.' God admits such desire free devotees within his service.

In Vachanamritam 61 of Pratham, Shreeji Maharaj says "God Himself goes under the control of that devotee who is passion free absolute devotee as Vamanji snatched the three-fold empire of King Bali and divided 14 Lokas into two steps and for the third step King Bali offered his body. And in this way he dedicated all to God out of faith. In this way God was bound to King Bali and he does not go away from King Bali even for a moment.

In this way let us abandon all passion, remain as the servant of God (Here also the difference

between Master and Servant has been clearly confirmed. In Vachanamritam 71 of Pratham and Lord Purushottam who resides in the imperishable abode which is as radiant as crores of suns and moons and Brahma like liberated souls worship his lotus feet (Shreeji Maharaj emphasize here the difference between Master and Servant).

In Loya-1 Vachanamritam, Shreeji says, "And God is the soul of Brahman and He is the master of innumerable liberated ones, and I am the Brahman like servant of that supreme God."

In Vachanamritam – 3 of Gadhada Madhya, Shreeji Maharaj says that God Supreme is the cause, support and motivator of Brahman. Keeping this principle in mind, worship God with humble servitude. In Vachanamritam 67 of Gadhada Madhya, Shri Hari says the grandeur of God is eternal and limitless and in no way it can increase or decrease. For this reason, the devotees who have become one with God prefer to worship God with Swami-Sevak bhav even if the devotee gets identical to God the difference between Servant and Master persists.

In Vachanamritam 3 of Amdavad Shri Hari says, the favour of the Master descends upon the Servant. So the one who pleases the Master becomes real humble devotee. In this way in the opinion of Shreeji Maharaj the imperishable Mukta has limitless importance. Even if desire free liberated Muktas attain divine virtues that of God, still the difference of being Servant and Master persists there forever!





Vigilant Watchman
at
The Gate
of
The Abode
of
The Divine

Bhagwan Swaminarayan, on Aso sudi 11 (11th October 1826) in Gadhada, addressed the assembly of sages as well as devotees hailing from various places : ‘The senior saints in my ascetic group behave in such a manner that the awareness within their minds is the door-step to the abode of God and they remain standing on that gate like a king’s guards who do not allow any thieves or robbers

coming near the king, by standing at the entrance of the palace. They have enough courage that if anybody comes to the king to cause problems, they would cut them into pieces, but in no way would they let them reach the king. With such a courageous conviction, they stand there all the time armed with shields and swords. Similarly, all of these saints are standing at the gate of the abode of God in the form of awareness. Inside that gate of Akshardham dwells God, where they have His Darshan. There, they do not allow lust for ladies, wishes for wealth or any other worldly desires for mundane objects to enter and infiltrate pondering the form of God in their consciousness. If in any case, any worldly desire for mundane objects does forcefully attempt to enter the mind, they destroy it but in no way they let it allow to enter the Divine self where they have secured the Moorti of God. In this manner, they remain constantly alert like a brave warrior, and at the same time they do not move from their position without caring for progress or regress, happiness or distress, honour or insults etc. countless types of difficulties. They can do it like a woman who draws water from the well with awareness and same as a man who rides the horse. In the same way, all these saints, while introspecting, remain in the service of God and also perform their bodily activities, but they are not deflected from their state.’

Now we start to brood over above mysterious sayings of Bhagwan Swaminarayan with a view to spiritual aspects. First of all, we need to understand that the reference of saints herein above is not only for sages but for all elevated souls – they may be ascetics or householder devotees, they may be men or women, they may be old or young, because it is a question of spiritual status which anybody can belong due to his or her previous life accomplishments. Now we try to understand how our awareness plays important role in the realization of God.

As a matter of fact, awareness is an inherent nature of soul. When embodied soul is defeated by inner enemies like lust, anger, greed etc. by indulging in worldly affairs, he forgets his such an inborn attribute. But when by grace of God, that soul comes to be in contact with any elevated soul or any holy scripture, he comes to know his innate nature of awareness. In that situation, his devotion and holy association with God and realized souls empowers him to go ahead on his way to God. As soon as, he goes on winning the fights with his inner enemies like lust, anger etc., his awareness increases more

and more. That is why Bhagwan Swaminarayan in the beginning of this Vachanamrit says: 'I shall now describe the elevated state of their consciousness and understanding of our senior Paramhansas in its real form. The senior most saints among the saints of our Holy Fellowship behave in such a manner that their awareness is the gateway to the abode of God.' Means only elevated great souls can achieve such state of consciousness which is called awareness. It is very difficult to achieve such state of consciousness for ordinary aspirants without lots of practices.

Our awareness always operates in two parts. One is focal awareness and another is extensive awareness. Bhagwan Swaminarayan explains it with the examples of woman who draws the water from the well and a man riding on a horse. Now a days we all experience this two types of awareness while driving car on the road. If we are expert in driving, our focal awareness operates to drive the car with a constant watch

on the road. Simultaneously, we listen to music or talk with our companion with our extensive awareness. Similarly, we can keep constant gaze on the form of God with our focal awareness and at the same time can keep watch for not allowing any worldly desires to enter in our consciousness. If we succeed in our efforts to do so, we are on the gateway to Akshardham. But if we failed to do so, our so-called devotion to God goes in vain.

Hence in the last part of this Vachanamrit, Shreeji Maharaj preaches : ' All of you should also introspect and remain in constant service of God with such awareness. Your first priority should be God and nothing but God. Worldly desires for wealth and woman will ruin your goal to reach to God, so to keep your devotion and dedication free from such obstacles and to attain the holy feet of God, do remain constantly vigilant at the gateway of the abode of God in the form of awareness.'

- Ramesh Soni, Baroda



VACHANAMRIT in Humanlife

What is the need for temples? What is the need for Moorti?

With the Vedic recitations and rituals in the temples, the Moortis are consecrated. Likewise, staying in close proximity of : Sadguru, a virtuous man, the holy charitra scriptures, doing kirtan and hearing hymns, the one who sits before the Moorti of God in the temple and reminisces the Moorti, does Mantra recitation and abides by rituals religiously, in that soul and body, the Moorti gets established. Then the heart becomes a temple. Soul becomes the absolute and the Lord manifests right in front of one's eyes.

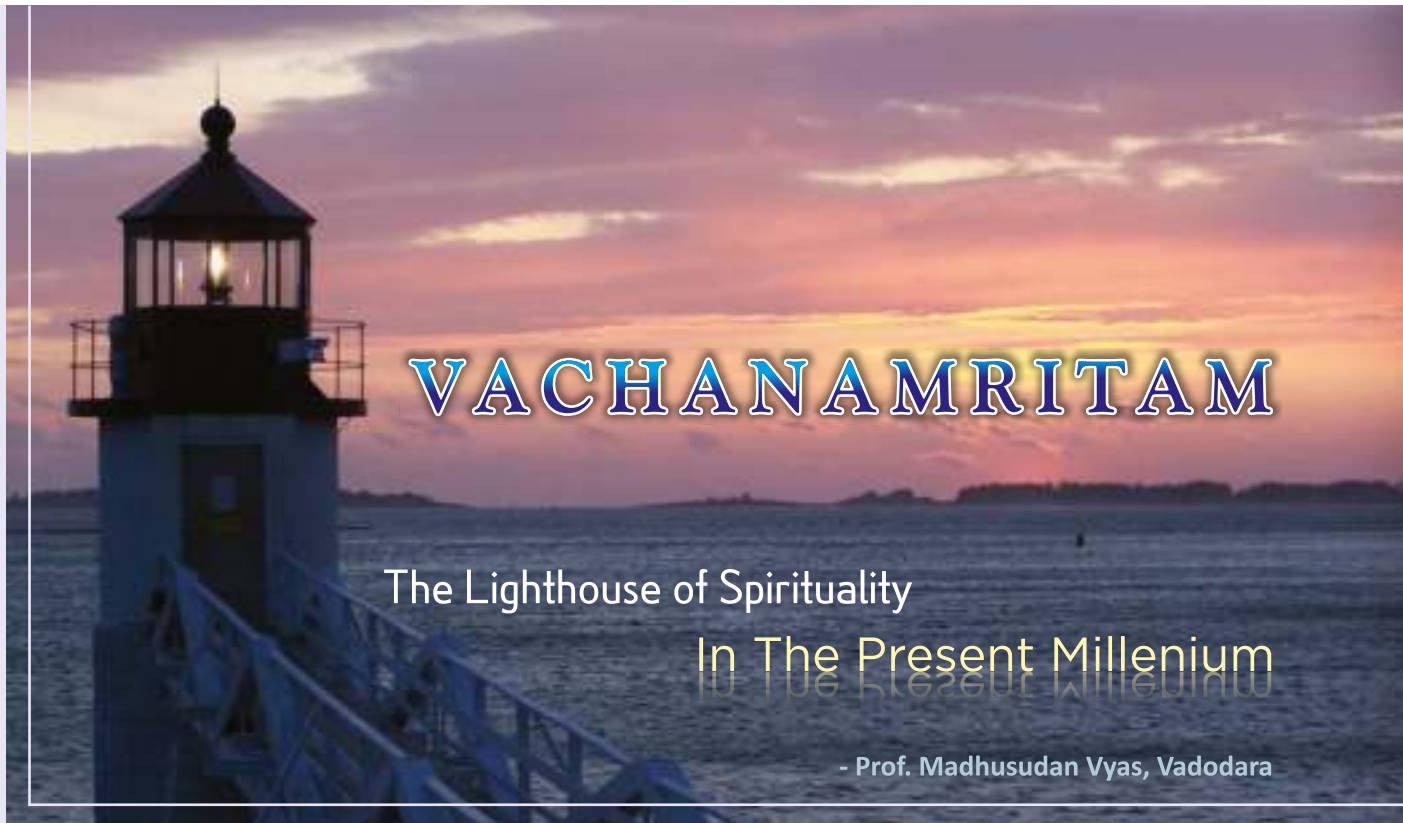
Gist: Vachanamrit: Gadhada Middle. Ch. 35

With the association of the external temple, the temple within bears shape.

Gist: Vachanamrit: Gadhada Ma. Pra. 27

Within the soul, Lord Swaminarayan's Moorti's consecration takes place, that is the real celebration of Vachanamrit Bi-centenary!

- Sadhu Shaunakmunidasji
(Bhuj)



Just think of a sailor or a sea farer who has lost his way in the vast sea and whose ship has become a drift and rudderless. What would he desire? Would he desire riches, sex, power and property? Amidst the galloping waves, lost in the condition of 'to be or not to be' the marooned sailor desires only two things 'survival and safety'.

Now as a rational being you just compare the condition of this sailor with the psycho physical condition of modern man, who has traveled as far as two decades in the new millennium. Let us have a look at the scenario of the present world which has been divided into two hemispheres.

Let us look back and walk down the memory lane for review and retrospection. Human race which inhabits this globe has witnessed a number of happy as well as painful periods in the history of civilization. We should not forget that mankind has witnessed two world wars (1914 and 1942). Poet T. S. Eliot says "I will show you horror in a handful of dust." It means a handful of gunpowder can destroy a country like Japan. The terrorist attack on the

World Trade Center (America) has made the countries trembling with the horror of terrorism. The misuse of science and technology has reduced geographical distance. It has gifted the modern human being with insomnia, schreizophrenia, amnesia and many types of phobias. Just like the lost sailor modern man is groping for pole star. He is anxious to discover a lighthouse. Where is this lighthouse which can provide the light of wisdom in this age of cut throat competition?

Where is Wisdom? It is lost in knowledge. Where is knowledge? It is lost in information. Mind blowing, bomb blasting age is starving for information. But the fundamental canons and codes of general decency are missing. These codes may apply to your response to the neighbor or neighboring country.

There is a well known proverb "Character is destiny." A clean character can bring sweet fruits in man's future life. A man's character largely depends upon his actions which are inspired by the five senses and the mind. Action and reaction between the mind and the senses result into the bondage of action. The senses

rejoice their respective objects and create a cycle of bondages. These bondages constitute the psychic condition of man, community or country. Shree Sahajanand Swami, better known as Lord Swaminarayan, descended on this earth as a torch bearer, pole star, lighthouse, trend setters, path finder and a redeemer. Here below are given a few examples of how He spread the light to uplift the downtrodden souls. The sermons contained in Vachanamrit are nectarnal sermons which have flown from the tongue of an ageless and timeless celestial Being.

In Vachanamrit Gadhada First-1, an important question has been raised by Muktanand Swami. This question is so comprehensive that it covers man's way of life, good and bad deeds in his journey from cradle to grave and its consequences after the end of the material body. The question is related with God's devotee. "When the God's devotee meets his death, leaving his material body on the earth he travels to another world. The question is what type of body does the devotee get after the destruction of the material body which has merged into five basic elements? Then Shreeji Maharaj replies, "The devotee who has taken shelter of God gets divine body when his perishable body merges into five basic elements. Here He emphasizes the point that those who do not have pure conscience are not worthy of being God's devotee and they can never qualify themselves to have divine body after their death. They have to enter the cycle of birth and death and they remain gripped by the bondages of their actions.

Now-a-days we read in the newspapers and get the reports of shameful cases related with wine drinking, gambling, harassing women and raping innocent girls. Shreeji Maharaj shows red light to such people and offers golden guidance to redeem. Look at

Vachanamrit Gadhada First 18. If the actions of the five senses are kept free to enjoy the objects related with touch, taste, smell, sight and hearing the mind wanders after them and man is tempted to commit the above mentioned sinful deeds.

These crimes are rooted in watching porn films, temptation towards sex-oriented literature, eating food items containing meat and fat, making fast money. He further says that man-woman relation in conjugal life is allowed by the scriptures. But if you overstepped the boundary line, the male-female relations become illicit, illegal cognizable offence in the eyes of the law and a great sin in the eyes of the God.

Vachanamrit Gadhada first 44 deals with the subject of wrong and faulty identification between the body and soul. It also criticizes the modern concept of tailor made gentleman. The question comes from Brahmin Vahala Dhruv of village Vaso, "How can one remove the affection and my-ness about his body and its relatives?" Then Shreeji Maharaj explained that this type of my-ness is rooted in the belief that the body and soul are one and inseparable. It is just like believing that newly made shirt and the body are one. Also Shreeji Maharaj distinguishes between real gentleman and tailor made gentleman, "If a person goes to a tailor and gets new shirt tailored by him and then begins to believe that the tailor is his father and tailor's wife is his mother!" This wrong belief creates the bondages of action. In the present time people evaluate a person by his dress, degree, status and property. All these factors are related with the body and not with the soul. Shreeji Maharaj here gives a warning to those people in the modern age who have faulty thinking and myopic vision.

In Sarangpur Vachanamrit No. 2 Swami Swayamprakashanand raises a question. How

can God's devotee cultivate deep affection for the Moorti of God? The reply to the question given by Shreeji Maharaj covers almost all the issues and problems which torture modern people on this globe. Shreeji Maharaj said that affection can be cultivated by five means (1) beautiful form, (2) lustful desire, (3) greed, (4) selfishness and (5) virtues.

If you develop affection by means of form it is likely that the affection may decrease when the beauty of the person declines. When leukoderma appears on the skin, the affection will decrease. This example is more relevant because it touches the psychology of modern youth. Young boys and girls in modern age are fascinated by the beauty appearing in the photograph. They get attracted to each other by smartness of lovely looking face and fairness of skin. Shreeji Maharaj shows them red light that such affection which is based on the form will disappear when the physical beauty decreases the person who is mad after a beautiful face will lose interest in that face when white spots and wrinkles appear on it due to disease or age. In the same way the affection which develops out of selfishness, greed or passion also disappears in course of time. The affection which is based on quality (virtue) remains stable and permanent. At present times, we hear about arranged marriages, love marriages and mass marriages where the modern youth make the choice by virtue or quality. It is usually seen that the choice is based on beauty, degree, family name, money and property. This Vachanamrit provides a mirror for the society to decide its future.

Vachanamrit Gadhada Middle 21 defines the significance of Desh (region), Kaal (period), Karma (action) and Parameshwar (God) and Maya.

A really knowledgeable person tries to

identify the significance of any one of the above and finds its significance in multiplicity. Shreeji Maharaj has given the example of a lighted lamp in a temple made of glass. Though there is one lamp, the observer finds multiple reflections of that lamp in the glass walls of the temple.

The message conveyed through the symbol of mirror and lamp is that Maya may present a number of reflections but a knowledgeable person understands that there is one lamp. In the same way a real devotee of God is not misled by reflections of thoughts. Modern man is running after shadows and fake reflections to get happiness. We should concentrate on one God who is the only source of happiness. As there is one lamp there is one lighthouse to guide you in proper direction in the ocean of life. As planets are controlled by pole star God serves as polestar. "Even an atom cannot function without the desire of God. It can move only as allowed by God."

In this way the Vachanamrit is a perennial treasure of sermons which can correct, improve and enrich the life of a man. Friendly and scholarly counsels flow from the tongue of a celestial Being and one who reads and digests the contents of these pages shall be able to solve the tangled issues and complexities rising in the present age.

It provides mirror for the past, analysis for the present and lesson for future. It lessens worry of the old, filters the dream of the young and nourishes the aspirations of the child. If we remain careless or passive towards fake attractions which are like shadows, look what can happen if the captain overlooks a tiny loose nail in the sole of a horse?

For the want of a nail, the show was lost.

For the want of a shoe, the horse was lost.

For the want of a horse, the soldier was lost.

For the want of a soldier, the battle was lost.



These are the seven celestial spots where Lord Swaminarayan flowed the super nectarnal sermons of Vachanamrit and inspired many souls to ascend on the spiritual path!

