

॥ श्री स्वामिनारायणो विजयतेतराम् ॥

Vachanamrut Bi-Centenary Celebration



sahajANAND

The Eternal Bliss



INSPIRATION

H. H. Acharya Shri
Rakesh Prasadji Maharaj
Vadtal Diocese

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Prelude

**H. H. Acharya Shri
Rakeshprasadji Maharaj**

Glimpses of Vachanamrut Bi-Centenary Celebration.

With the kind blessing from Lord Shree Swaminarayan, Vadtalvihari Shree Hari Krishna Maharaj and five hundred Paramhans, in our Vadtaldham, Shree Laxminarayandev Gadi Sansthan organised an unforgettable Vachnamrut Bi-Centenary Celebrations from 6th to 12th November, 2019. Lacs of devotees from all parts of India and also from many foreign countries participated in it. As we know, Lord Swaminarayan asked all His devotees to attend Kartiki Full moon day Celebrations at Vadtaldham without waiting for any invitation; and as per His dictate, all the devotees attended the Vachnamrut Bi-Centenary Celebrations celebrated in Kartiki Samaiyya at Vadtaldham.

As we know, this Mahotsav was declared exactly one year ago in the Kartiki Samaiyya of V. S. 2075 by the Vadtaldham temple board, senior saints of this Holy Faith and the leading followers jointly. This unparalleled approach attracted all in and outside the country. As a result, many dignitaries attended the

function. The honourable Governor of Gujarat, the Chief Minister of Gujarat, the deputy chief minister and many ministers of Gujarat state, and leading personalities of media world like Rajat Sharma along with lacs of people, attended the Mahotsav.

All the speakers of Vyakhyanmala helped the devotees understand our holy scripture in its true sense. Our intention to celebrate the Mahotsav was to make the message of the Lord Swaminarayan clear to all, which was achieved.

Lord Swaminarayan and His five hundred Paramhans moved from village to village to spread awareness about the 'Aatyantik Kalyan'. They advised us to know our weaknesses. They made the people 'nirmanji' (egoless). Shreeji Maharaj nourished the devotees. He trained the devotees to be most humble in Satsang. The

saints talked about 'Ashara', 'Kalyan', 'Upasana', 'Svabhav' in their satsang and thereby preached the message of the Vachnamrut. We are lucky that even today we have got such pious and intelligent saints in our Holy Faith. These saints have always tried to explain the message of the Vachnamrut in its true sense. In our Sampraday the devotees of every generation attain Gyan from guru-parampara. For that, the devotees should remain well updated about the literature of our Holy Faith. The Vachnamrut is at the top of the Sampradayik literature and it is the Para - Vani of Shree Hari. Moreover, during the last 150 to 200 years the scholar saints of our Vadtal Desh carefully maintained its originality. They have not allowed any interpolations, no additions or omissions or incorporated anything of their personal interest. This is a matter of prime importance.

Our Vachnamrut Bi-Centenary Mahotsav was celebrated on a grand scale. All events were grand. Annakut, Patotsav, Dev Darshan, holy sacrifices, Exhibitions - all were religiously extraordinary. The Virat Vachnamrut attracted all and even worshiped by thousands.

Moreover, our mahotsav ended without any casualty. It is said when the Parmatma involves Himself in the event, the event turns out to be a successful one. Thousands of volunteers performed their duties religiously and enthusiastically. It was realised that Shree Harikrishna Maharaj Himself inspired all and blessed all. This feeling, this realisation was the greatest outcome of the mahotsav. For that, we would like to congratulate all those volunteers. They worked hard day and night, without caring for time, hurdles and health. It

was great to have a look at their enthusiasm, energy and faith and that touched all. All had one feeling - to appease the Lord, to please the gurus. For the successful execution of the Mahotsav more than 80 committees were formed, and each committee was comprised of saints and devotees. The people of Vadtal supported wholeheartedly for the procurement of the required land for various events. All this happened because all felt that this is their own Mahotsav.

Some events left everlasting impression; for example, the release of the Titanic version of the Vachnamrut. An extraordinary, mesmerising lightening show on this occasion made the people feel that the gods and goddesses must have arrived to have a look at it. Likewise, the saint sammelan on Kartik Sud Ekadashi became the most unforgettable event of the mahotsav. Almost 700 saints, along with all the leading Sadgurus of this Holy Faith, graced the stage and that gathering created an impressive image of our Holy Faith. All these events proved one thing - to have a glimpse of the Swaminarayan Sampraday one must attend such Mahotsavs.

A national seminar on Vachnamrut also was organised a month before the mahotsav at Vadtaldham; such seminars help to create awareness among the world of literate. Those who attended showed interest for our scripture, many delivered impressive notes about the Vachnamrut. Such events help us to spread the message of the Vachnamrut in other languages. That is why we pray at the feet of Shree Hari to enable us to hold such festivals again and again. Let Vadtalvasi Shree Hari Krishna Maharaj bless all of us.



SHIKSHAPATRI

THE GOSPEL OF LIFE DIVINE



Shantikumar Bhatt

SHIKSHAPATRI AND PHYSICAL HEALTH

(Contd.)

God created sheep and goats to save the earth from excessive green grass. They are nature's lawn mowers.

The increase in deer population would cause crop damage. Therefore, nature created tigers and lions to keep the balance.

The rabbits burrow deep in the earth and soften it. The fish eat larvae and keep the waters clean.

Animal life, thus, is created to keep ecological balance for man to be happy on earth.

The Shikshapatri therefore enjoins that we should never kill goats, deer, rabbits, fish etc. for food.

People of some other religions kill animals for food. The flesh of a big animal like a cow or a buffalo cannot be quickly consumed. It is kept for other time and in spite of preservatives they use, the flesh does decay. Some people eat the flesh of dead animals. All these practices are very harmful to health and they are banned in our religion.

Some unscrupulous manufacturers of sweet meats use tallow from the slaughtered cows instead of ghee. Many restaurants use animal fat for cooking. Our rules for healthy food warn us that we should not eat at any of these places.

Shreeji Maharaj clearly lays down that we should accept food or water from only those households that we know and which follow the rules of cleanliness as laid down by Shikshapatri.

Addiction to alcoholic drinks ruins a man's life and destroys his family. Once started, the

habit of drinking is difficult to leave. It ruins man's mind, his judgement, it affects his liver. He cannot control his speech. If one drives any vehicle in a drunken state, he is sure to meet with an accident.

There are songs which elate the downfall of an addict. The habit of drinking empties his earnings. His wife and children deprive of food and clothing. He exhales foul smell from his mouth. He utters foul words; he becomes violent and angry with every-one who advises him not to drink. In the end he meets with an early death and his wife becomes helpless widow and his children, orphans. Therefore, our Shikshapatri bans the use of "three types of sura" or distilled liquors and "eleven types of fermented wines." Carefully distilled and matured alcoholic drinks, very popular among the rich and elite, also cause the same kind of damage as ordinary drinks. The detailed description of the distilled and fermented types of alcoholic drinks given in Shikshapatri is only to show how good substances like jaggery and grapes can also be made into poisonous drinks. The followers of our way of life should never drink any of these alcoholic drinks nor should they offer such drinks to others.

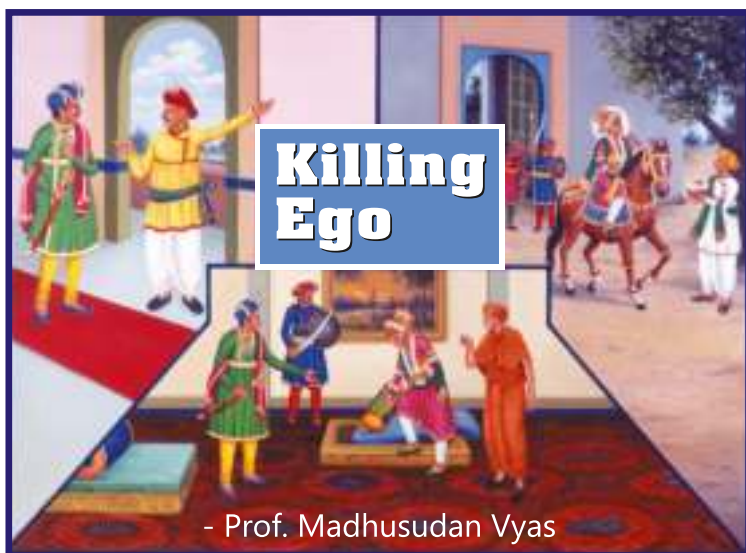
Now a days we hear of a sexually transmitted disease called AIDS. It is contracted by men and women from extra-marital sex. Our Satsang enjoins celibacy before marriage and strict practice of monogamy. In fact men and women are advised to congregate separately in religious discourses and in temple worship. Young people should avoid contact with people of the opposite sex as far as possible. They should not meet at secret places for any purpose where they may be tempted.

These rules of behaviour enjoined by Shreeji Maharaj about 200 years ago for a rural community in India are still valid today even for a so-called modern society, if it wants to avoid decadence and downfall.

Speak out loudly – May Lord Swaminarayan be triumphant.

As the Jetalpur Yajna was completed the above cheerful herald had rippled and vibrated the entire firmament. As a result the faces of Vamis were dimmed. Their hearts were burnt to ashes owing to the feeling of jealousy.

Shriji broke to pieces all the scripture-based doctrines and principles of Vami Brahmins during scholarly debates. Then the great Lord started His campaign by visiting to village called Gamdi along with his dear-wards. The group of the dear-wards included Sura Khachar, Allaiya Khachar, Ratanji,



Bhaguji, Magaji, Naja Jogiyo, Muktanand Swami, Swarupanand Swami, Mulji Brahmchari etc. The Kathi Kings were happy to welcome the group, the horses and Mulji Brahmchari with his short beard which looked like the mini-shadow of Maharaj. After a long travel they came to Gamdi and Shriji halted there during the night. The next day Shriji Maharaj and His group got ready to go to Ahmedabad.

As they travelled slowly the sweet jokes of Sura Khachar and the gentle smile on the face of Shriji Maharaj entertained everyone. Then they came to Ahmedabad. Shrimali devotee Vaidya Ambaram came to receive them. Then Maharaj halted on the

first floor of his house. The next day poor brahmin Prannath came there to get the Darshan of Shriji Maharaj. He stood before Shriji folding his hands after offering Sashtang Pranam. "O Shukla! take this chain" Shriji spoke these words as he removed new gold chain from his neck and held it to the brahmin. Shukla was overwhelmed to see the graceful glance of Shriji. He steadied his eyes in the eyes of Shriji Maharaj and felt great joy. Thereafter Ambaram, Prannath and others enjoyed the nectar of sermons delivered by Shriji Maharaj in that first floor cabin.

During this time a ruler (Suba) called Vithuba ruled over Ahmedabad and he happened to be a Vammargi. One day somebody poisoned his ears, "O Sir! Swaminarayan has come to our city and He is not a brahmin yet He preaches brahmins and performs Yajnas. He is a deceptor, so please drive Him out of city immediately. Otherwise He will destroy you and your efforts will turn to dust. It was He who killed your father."

"O.K. When did He come?"

"Two – four days ago."

"OK. I will check how does His deception operate here?" The eyes of Vithuba went red with jealousy and revenge. He decided to call Swaminarayan to his court on the next day. "I will call him

alone. I will keep a tank full of oil in the room and will put wooden planks on it. I will also put decorated silky cushions on it. When he sits the planks will break and the deceptor will drown in the oil. This is a nice strategy!" Then Vithuba left his court.

On the next day he sent some of his courtiers to invite Shriji. They visited the house of Ambaram and looking at the invitation by the king, Shriji got ready to go. He took the group of Satsangis with him. Shriji took out a decorated procession and reached Bhadra court with music and beating drums.

Vithuba sent a message, "Nobody except Swaminarayan should come in to meet me. I will be pleased to meet Him alone."

But Jad Bharat-minded Dandi Swami Devanand was stern. So he entered Vithuba's chamber along with Shriji Maharaj. Vithuba welcomed Shriji Maharaj and asked Him to sit on the silky cushion seat.

Shriji Maharaj said, "O King! We are sadhus and do not deserve such great honour. This rich seat is worthy for a king or emperor." By telling this Maharaj pressed one end of the cane stick which He held in His end. He pressed the stick strongly on the cushion and at once the cushion, sheets, the planks and everything collapsed into the oil tank! The eyes of Sanyasi Devanand went red and he raised his hand which was caught by Shriji Maharaj. The Lord pacified the Sanyasi. With the graceful glance Shriji Maharaj said, "This behaviour is not befitting a ruler like you. The support of the world (God) will not tolerate your crime."

The ruler was confused, baffled and did not know what to speak. After a moment he

raised his head and spoke shamelessly, "O Swaminarayan! You get out of Ahmedabad from today. You go through Idariya gate and never dare to enter again. Mind well." "How long are we forbidden to enter?" Maharaj said.

"So long as this Peshwa rule in Ahmedabad."

Shriji Maharaj said, "OK. That's enough." Then Maharaj got ready to go through the southern gate along with his saints and devotees. The security guard at the gate followed the order of Suba and stopped Shriji Maharaj.

Then Maharaj gave Darshan at all the 12 city gates. When he crossed Idariya gate a devotee presented a pot full of sweet barfi to Him. By eating little by little from the pot Shriji Maharaj reached Modhera village and held sermon-meeting there. The Modhera people criticised the inhuman behavior of Suba.

After some days message came that Ahmedabad city had been snatched from Peshwa. The Britishers had attacked and conquered the city which was now under British rule.

In this way the incivil and inhuman conduct of Vithuba was rewarded by his defeat and loss of empire.

The Britishers respected Shriji Maharaj as God and offered plots of land to build temples. At this place the first temple - a three-crested one - the first of its type in the Holy Fellowship was erected. The idols of NarNarayandev etc. were consecrated in this temple.

The name of Swaminarayan was heralded and the manifesto vibrated through the world!!!

Vachnamrut

The Nectar of Divine

VICTORY OVER DEATH

The serpent of death terrifies all in the universe but that serpent of death doesn't bite a person who is inclined to God and is spiritually liberated.

Birth, old age and death are the inevitable phases of life. In the ancient past someone might have secured the boon of becoming immortal but he had to embrace death for one reason or the other. Even the immortal gods die when there is deluge.

*Kings and queens and princes, must,
Like chimney-sweepers, come to dust.*

Death is ordinarily looked upon by all as the most horrible, frightening and inauspicious event of life because none can ever escape the clutches of death. A person has to leave behind all his possessions, all individuals directly and indirectly related to him and also his body – all of which are labeled by him as 'My Own'. This is the most complex and tragic problem before him. He is groping in the dense darkness of illusions, delusions and ignorance and he doesn't realise the Supreme Truth.

वासंसि जीर्णानि यथा विहाय, नवानि गृह्णान्ति नरोऽपराणि।
तथा शरीराणि विहाय जीर्णा, न्यन्यानि संयाति नवानि देही॥

*vasansi jirnani yatha vihaya,
navani gruhnati naro-parani;
tatha sarirani vihaya jirna,
nyanyani samyati navani dehi.*

(Smd. Bhagwad Gita 2 – 22)

Just as a man wears a new attire when the old one becomes worn out, the soul assumes a new body when the span of life of the present body is over, due to the consumption of the fruits of all the actions. Death is an unavoidable process in this cycle of births and deaths. This process is just like the transfer of a government servant from one place to the other or like promotion or demotion from one post to the other, where has to change his seat and the working table. In the government of God souls are like employees transferred from one place to another or from one post to another.

Those who are spiritually awakened are promoted to higher and higher posts of consciousness and transferred from one higher place of divinity to a still higher place of divinity.

Those, like menial peons and assistants who follow the dictum – eat, drink and be merry- can never make progress on the path of a better transfer or promotion to a higher post. Though a common place analogy, it conveys a deep meaning.

There is a meaningful destination for whosoever is born. Human birth is not just accidental. Everyone is born in this world to fulfill a certain mission, to reach a certain goal in life. He has to act in a noble way and proceed straight on the path to the destination by raising his soul and thus the soul has to complete his eternal journey of drawing nearer to his Creator. If he can master the art of God-realization in this very life, the question of the fear of death doesn't arise at all for him.

In short, death is a natural and inevitable process of life. Understand this eternal

Truth of death as the auspicious occasion of life. In our practical life when a person gets a marriage invitation printed, he makes the caption : AUSPICIOUS FUNCTIONS, but when the news of the sad demise of someone is to be conveyed, the letter of intimation bears the title, INAUSPICIOUS or OBITUARY. But when grim reality takes hold of the situation, the invitation for auspicious occasion loses, the glamour and festival 'match' is followed by 'follow-on' and the pitch of life is covered with quarrels, clashes and calamities. The 'match' hurts, injures and inflicts wounds, gladness is turned into sadness. But death of all passions and materialistic yearnings is the auspicious occasion for reaching God who is our destination.

When we look upon death as an auspicious occasion, the inherent fear of death, experienced by the soul melts away like the morning mist and new life goes on with new spirit on the wings of time.

Indirectly and unknowingly we do pay our respect to death. This can be observed by marking several men and women folding their hands in reverence when undertakers carry a hearse.

How can the fear of death be removed as long as the soul is enshrined in the body? Listen to what Shree Hari declared:

The fear of death is no more for four types of devotees and they feel a self-fulfillment in living. These four types of devotees are defined as : those who have faith, those who are enlightened, those who are brave and those who love God. These are the four types of devotees who are not at all afraid of death. Verily, worthy are their lives!

(Vachanamrut : Loya-2)

- Lalji Bhagat

(Contd.)

चपेटा काल का ऐसा, झपेटा बाज का जैसा।
कड़ाका गाज का जानो, सड़ाका बिजुखी मानो॥
(प्रेमानंद स्वामी)

*Like a swooping hawk,
Pounces the demon of Time.
Life here is just a flash,
Of lightning in the sky.
A bang of thunder,
And it's all over!
(Premanand Swami)*





Morning Walk

Generally, I take forty five minutes morning walk every day to keep physical health in order. Today morning I just started walk around eight o'clock; weather was pleasant; the sun was shining and very natural setting put me in better mood.

By looking at the sun, just thought coming in my mind, we are surrounded by beautiful nature - the sun gives light and energy; the moon gives beautiful light, the rain provides water to all of us; without any discrimination, wind bring air to us; trees, plants give us fruits and vegetables. The nature provides all this without any return-free of charge! Even mango tree gives us delicious mangoes; however, that tree doesn't eat for itself. Even rose plant gives beautiful smell to passer by whom so ever may be.

My thought-process continues and make me think: "Are we going to learn from very nature that we are getting selfless services?"

In essence, God has given every body special gift; so one has to share God-given gift with our fellow human beings. If we are lucky one to get good, higher education, why we can't impart our knowledge to other unlucky ones?

Who didn't get opportunity and empower him or her with your knowledge, skill? If you are wealthy, try to help needy as well as people suffering from disease. Give comfort to people who are lost and in depression or lost hope for life.

Your comfort and good inspiring word and love might change him or her for better. The nature would bestow blessing on us provided we follow this path!

Suddenly my walk-time ended.

- Mohanbhai Patel, U.S.A.

PROVERBS

REFLECTED IN THE VACHANAMRITAM

Prof. Madhusudan Vyas, Vadodara

GADHADA PRATHAM – 70



Suli no gha Soy thi tale !



***Pangs of gallows can be waived off
by the prick of a thorn.***

There was a village in which a host of housebreakers and dacoits lived. They used to earn their livelihood by stealing money and precious things. One fellow from this gang happened to receive the prick of a long and sharp thorn as he was going to see a saint barefooted across thorny bushes at night. The sharp and long thorn was so strong that it pierced through the foot. Its half part remained in the foot sole and the other part could be seen right up near the toe. Ointment and other medicines were applied and a bandage was put round the foot. His counterparts other fellow bandits were busy with house breaking and dacoity but this fellow was confined to the four walls of the house.

One day that bandit gang embarked upon royal treasury. They broke it open and stole

away profuse gold, silver, jewelry and cash. Each of the fellows got handsome amount as gain for joining the gang in the dacoity. The wife, family members and close relatives of the thorn-prick hurt fellow rebuked him for staying in bed and for not joining the gang and not sharing the act of dacoity. They said, “O bad fellow! You are coward! You have made us poor. We could become rich if you had joined the gang. Couldn't you get equally big share like others?”

As the discussion was in progress the king's soldiers appeared there and arrested each member of the gang. They also took with them the stolen material requisite from them. The king pronounced death sentence for the thieves who were indulged in the dacoity. “Put each of them on the gallows. Hang each one till death.”

They prayed, yelled, beseeched to be pardoned but the king would not budge. He shouted, “Let my order be executed soon.” The saint and the family members went to the king and stood as eye witnesses. They narrated how the fellow had received thorn-prick while going to the hermitage of a saint for Satsang and how he was put to bed due to the swelling on the foot. They said, “Sir, we saw him every day and he was too weak to get up and walk. How could he join the gang and share the theft?” After examining the witnesses the king pardoned the

fellow, declared him innocent and he was released scot free. In this way a thorn-prick relieved him from the pain, panic and pangs of being hanged on the gallows.

This proverb-related incident has been cited by the Lord to elucidate an important point from his philosophy of action. It so happened that Jivabhai from Jaska put a question before Nityanand Swami, "How can one gain unwavering faith in God?" Then Nityanand Swami said, "If we keep away from hostile people and keep close to the saints. The affinity and preaching of saints would help us to gain unwavering faith in God but stable faith cannot be gained if we keep close to the hostile ones." At this moment, Shriji Maharaj happily said, "Let me give a reply to this question." Here he explains the secret of the philosophy of desireless action. He says, "If you desire unwavering faith in God, you should indulge in it for the sake of your own welfare. But you should not do it out of the desire for any material object.

Example : **(1)** If I join Satsang my sick body would gain good health. **(2)** I am childless. Let Satsang bring to me a nice son. **(3)** My sons die soon after birth. They will get life if I join Satsang. **(4)** I am penniless. Would I get money, wealth, land, property and estate by joining Satsang? Will my lost property come back if I

join Satsang?

This type of devotion based on material desire should not be cultivated. Just imagine if a person joins Satsang for fulfilling such desire and if that desire is fulfilled after some time, he is likely to become a staunch Satsangi. And if his desire is not fulfilled his faith will oscillate and will be weakened. For this reason, every step on the path of Satsang should be taken only and only for the welfare of one's soul and not out of any worldly desire.

Example: If there are ten people in the family and sudden death comes to all ten of them. But if one person is saved by joining devotion, you should be satisfied with such little grace of God.

If begging-bowl is written in your fate and if you got adequate food to eat, you should be satisfied with that small favour of the Almighty. You should not practice devotion for profuse wealth etc. Just pray for being saved from grim poverty.

In this way great pain is reduced to small size by taking shelter of the God. Great misfortune is reduced to small pain and the pangs of gallows can be reduced to the prick of a thorn.

This example explains the gist of the philosophy of devotion without material desire.

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Whats & Whys

Answers to the questions of curious seekers

Tilak - Chandalo

Significance

There is a spiritual importance and value of the Tilak mark which we put on the forehead. The two vertical lines, in the Tilak are the symbols of lotus feet of the Lord. As per the commands of Shikshapatri, in the middle of the two vertical lines we are expected to put Kumkum round mark as prasadi of Radhaji and Laxmiji. Radha is the model of devotion, full of unconditional love and Laxmiji resides at the feet of the Lord, because she is the model of servanthood and the wealth of spiritual qualities. While putting the Kumkum mark, we should pray in our soul and speak, "O Lord Swaminarayan! Induce and develop in me the qualities that lead to welfare so that I can attain servanthood at Your feet-divine and attain absolute devotion through desireless love in Your Form."

The Tilak mark is not the symbol for 101 or a trademark, but it is a process which can take you to the depth of spirituality. Our spiritual position becomes stronger by doing this process day by day.

Generally, putting Tilak mark remains an unconscious process. But if we put Tilak mark with perfect understanding and love as explained, then throughout the day the Tilak mark will keep us in connection with the feet of Lord Swaminarayan. The reason for explaining these points in detail is that if Puja is done with proper understanding and knowledge, the process will become

meaningful and the seed of devotion in the form of Lord Swaminarayan will become strong. Otherwise, applying the Tilak mark will continue without understanding its great significance.

Now, we shall discuss about the benefits of Tilak-Chandalo.

BENEFITS OF TILAK CHANDALO

1. The person who puts on Tilak-Chandalo on his forehead, he may not be a victim of mesmerism or any kind of black magic. It protects him from the influence of evil forces.
2. At the junction of our two eyebrows there is a confluence of three arteries : Ida(induces vital air which promotes refreshment), Pingala (the chief passage for breath and air) and Sushumana (the passage for vital spirit). From these three arteries, the bio energy flows towards the different centers of our body. This junction between two eyebrows is called Ajna Chakra. When we apply the Tilak from this point of our forehead, the bio-energy activates and it helps us in our spiritual progress!
3. We make Tilak with sandal paste and Sandalwood is the giver of coolness, it helps in making our conscious cool and quiet.
4. When someone passes by any place with Tilak-Chandalo on his forehead, the person who looks at him, he will remind the existence of Lord Shri

Swaminarayan as it is a prime and basic sign of the Swaminarayan Holy fellowship. So indirectly, it becomes the cause of the welfare of someone without any effort.

5. It prevents you from doing anything wrong, unworthy and against the code of conduct prescribed in Shikshapatri. This helps you to earn the merit of the favour of Lord Swaminarayan. This leads one towards the life of an ideal human being. He will hesitate to go to a casino, liquor shop or any place promoting anti social, unworthy activities.
6. Above all, it reminds you that your ultimate destination is the lotus feet of Lord Swaminarayan as two vertical lines are the symbol of the two lotus feet of Lord Swaminarayan.

DIFFERENT CATEGORIES

1. Some devotees are very staunch and do Tilak-Chandalo under any circumstances. (Here, the awareness is crucial).
2. Some devotees do Tilak-Chandalo while doing Pooja but remove it as they go out at school, college, business or any social function. If we ask such people that why they did not have Tilak-Chandalo on their forehead? Then they give a smart reply that they washed their face so it got erased. But if we do a postmortem of this answer, there could be different reasons.

Some feel very shy when they are before public. Some feel that someone will pass comments on them and they will be looked upon as orthodox.

3. Some people think that they are not sincere in following the commands of Shikshapatri and if they put this mark on their head, then it would not be fair. So these are very common mentalities.

But the persons who feel shy, they should look upon the commands of Lord Shri Swaminarayan. A person who joins the army feels proud and honoured to have the symbols and dress of army on his body. Likewise, one should think that *it is my Lord's Command so I must have Tilak-Chandalo on my forehead. It is the prime symbol of my devotion towards my beloved Lord Swaminarayan Who looks after me in all walks of my life and at the time of my death, He will take me to His divine abode Akshardham.* If you have this type of rational thinking, you will not feel shy.

The people who think they are not sincere in their devotion, are striving hard at making up their mind firmly but are dragged away by their corrupt intelligence. Here there is violation of the commands of Shreeji Maharaj from both the sides. He does not follow the codes of conduct given by Shreeji Maharaj and also does not put Tilak-Chandalo. So both ways he is the loser but if he does Tilak-Chandalo regularly, then a day will come when he will think that he is the follower of Shreeji Maharaj, he does Tilak-Chandalo so should not deal with such type of unethical and antireligious behaviour. This will lead him to follow the path of a genuine Satsangi. This is the true benefit.

- Lalji Bhagat

*When mind knows,
we call it knowledge.*

*When heart knows,
we call it love.*

*And when being knows,
we call it meditation!*



SAINT & JOURNALIST

A renowned journalist was interviewing a saint in New York City.

Journalist : Sir! In your last preaching, you spoke about contact and connection, but these talks were pretty confusing. Can you please make us understand it with better clarity? Affectionately, the saint started questioning the journalist on a different tract altogether.

He asked the journalist : Do you stay in New York?

Journalist answered : Yes

Saint: "Who all stay in your home?" The journalist felt the saint was trying to avoid his question because the saint's question was very personal and was different to the answer expected to the question asked.

Still he answered : My mother is no more. My father, 3 brothers and 1 sister. All are married.

Saint asked : Do you talk with your father? The journalist now started getting furious.

Saint asked : When did you last talk with your father?

The journalist : Probably a month ago.

Saint asked : Do your brothers & sister meet often? When did you all meet last as a family?

The journalist started perspiring in nervousness. "Am I taking the interview or this saint?"

With a sad expression, the journalist replied : Before 2 years on Christmas Eve.

Saint asked him : How many days did you all stay together?

The journalist wiping the tears off his eyes replied : Only 3 days!

Saint asked : How long did you all spend closely with your father?

The journalist started feeling embarrassed and started writing something on a piece of paper.

Saint asked : Did you all have breakfast with your father? Have you all had lunch or dinner with him? Did you all ask him, how is he? How is his health? After your mother's death, how is he coping with the loneliness & spending his time?

The saint held the journalists' hand and said : Don't feel embarrassed or sad. I am sorry if unknowingly I hurt you but this is the precise answer to your question about contact and connection.

You are only in contact with your father. There is no connection. You aren't connected with him at all. Connection is always of the soul. It is heart to heart bonding. To sit together, to have food together, to care for each other, the feeling of love & warmth, when eyes convey emotions looking at each other, to spend time with one another is important.

You are in contact with your father, brothers and sister, but there is no connection amongst you all whatsoever.

The journalist wiping his eyes, said: Thank you for teaching this meaningful & unforgettable lesson of life.

Unfortunately, this is the scene with everyone in life. Everyone has innumerable contacts but there is no attachment, connection. Every person is engrossed and lost in his or her own life.

This saint was none other than Swami Vivekanand.

If you want to
be jealous, be jealous
like Narada, the sage.

BE
JEALOUS
LIKE
NARAD



Once Tumbaru was on his way to Vaikuntha.



I am
going to Vaikuntha
to please Lord Vishnu.
Come on with me.

O Tumbaru,
where are you
going?





Both Narayan and Lakshmi
pleased to hear Tumburu.

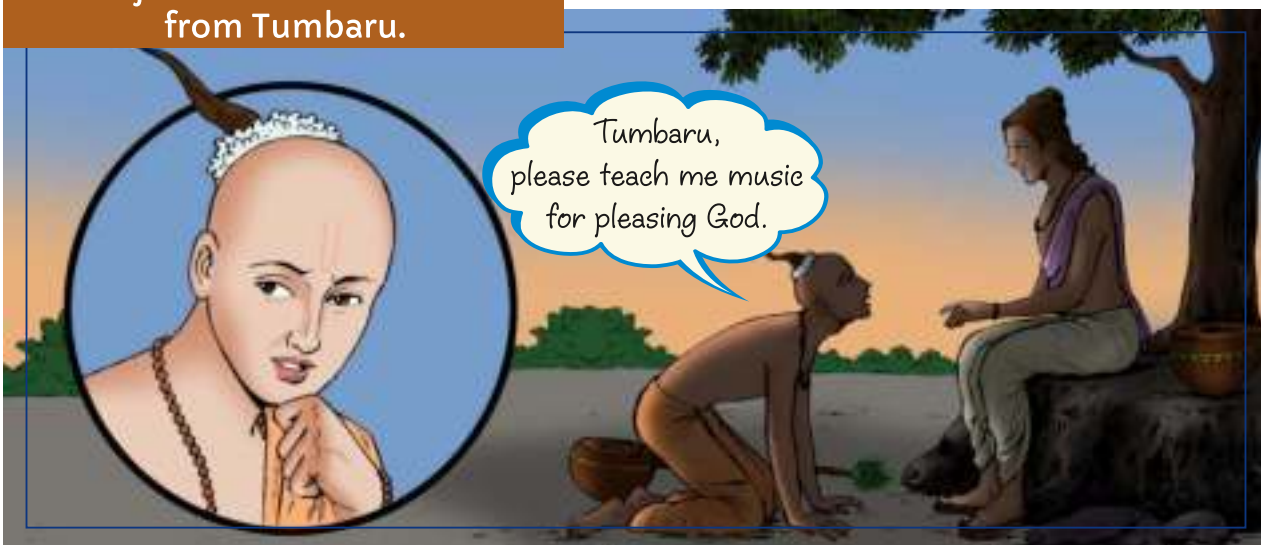




Narad learned music from Lord Shiva and sang before Lord Vishnu. But.....



Naradji decided to learn music from Tumburu.

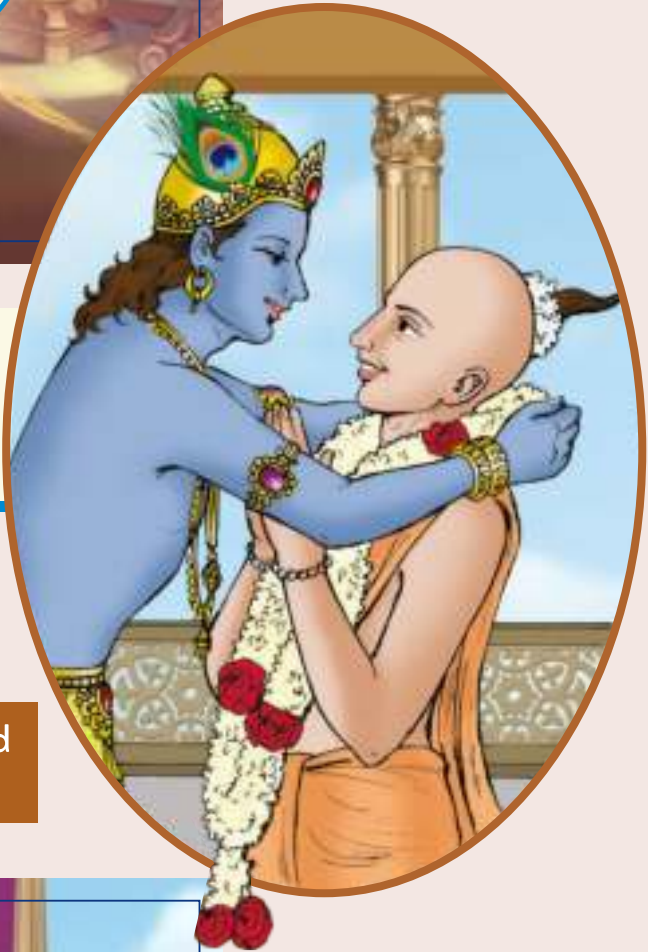


Sure !

O Lord, leaving aside
jealousy and pride,
I have learnt music
from Tumbaru.
May I present
my devotional music?

O Narad, now you are
superior to Tumbaru.
you will be known
as my best Kirtankar.

Saying so, Lord Shree Krishna offered
a garland of flowers to Narad.



Children, you
should be jealous
about the virtues, good
qualities and success
of others. Cultivate
more virtues, better
qualities and get
glorious success
instead of pushing
others down with
jealousy.



DEVOTION & FOOD

Bhajan aur Bhojan

A beggar was singing a bhajan standing outside a wealthy man's house and was asking for roti in return.

The Sethani, the woman of the house kept on telling him from inside the house for quite sometime, "I am coming." Roti was in her hand, still she said, "Wait, I'm coming."

The beggar was singing and asking for food.

The rich man was watching all this but was unable to comprehend. Getting restless he asked his wife, "You're standing with the roti in your hand, he's asking and waiting outside; you're telling him, you'll come, then why aren't you giving him?"

To which the lady said, "Yes I will give him roti but the fact is I like his bhajan very much. If I give him roti, he will go away. I want to hear his bhajan more."

Even after your prayers, if the Lord Almighty isn't answering them, please understand that like the woman, he loves your prayers.

So wait and continue doing your prayers. In life, whatever difficulties or troubles you may face, never give up devotion. Do you stop eating when troubles fall upon you? Do you stop breathing when illness hovers upon you?

No, right! Then why with the slightest of difficulty you stop devotion? Never ever stop 2 things - devotion and food. If you abandon food, you won't survive, and if you leave devotion, you'll be left nowhere! In the real sense, devotion is the food for life!



Bhagwad Gita & Management



Lord Swaminarayan considers the Bhagvad Gita as the ishta granth of the Holy Fellowship.

Shrimad Bhagvad Gita is in fact adhyay 25 to 42 of the sixth Parva - the Bhishma Parv of the Mahabharat. It contains 700 verses. Lord Shree Krishna spoke 575 verses, Arjun 85, Sanjay 39 and Dhrutrashtya 1. Most of the verses are in Anustup Chhand. The Gita is also a part of the Prasthantrayi; the other two are Ved and Upnishad.

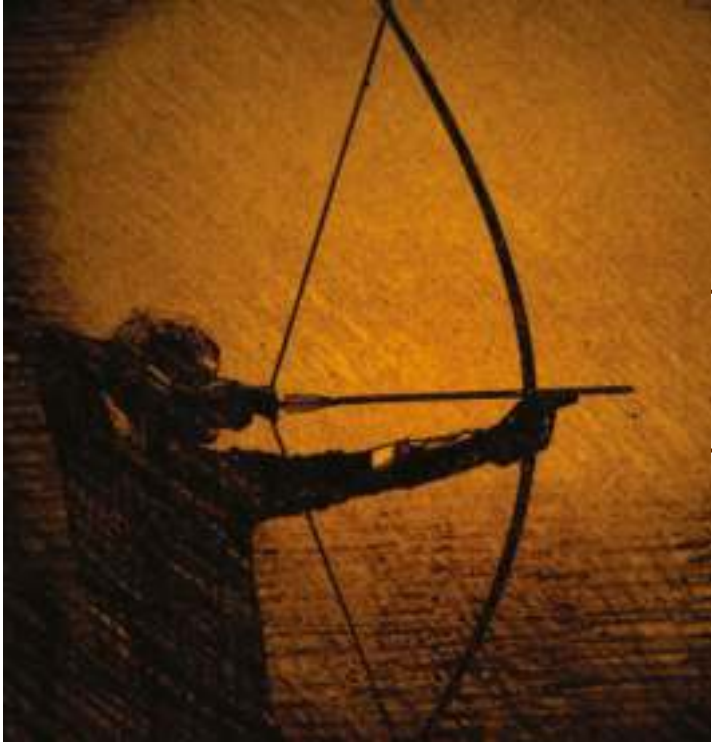
The Bhagvad Gita is a Yoga Shastra; it talks about 30 different Yogas like Bhakti Yog, Karm Yoga, Sankhya Yoga etc. It has been interpreted differently. Modern day management gurus keenly explore the hidden messages of this scripture. They try to read between the lines and explore the modern day management principles from it.

It is believed that the Gita is the answer of all the problems. For this, we have to imagine ourselves in place of Arjun. For example, in the 16 th

Adhyay of the Gita, Lord Krishna explains to Arjun the characteristics of the 'daivy' (godly) person and 'aasury' (vicious) person. If we want to be a successful person we must try to follow the characteristics of a godly person. Viz, Abhayam - the fact should be reported without any fear; Akrodh - decision should be taken without losing the temperament; Daya - the human values of the employees be appreciated; Tej - the decision power should be quick; Khsama - the mistakes of the staff members be forgiven; Dhruti - the team leaders should have patience. All these characteristics which Lord Krishna described about a daivy person are required for a management guru. These qualities make the management gurus effective and improve the quality of the administrative skill.

The Gita is a remedy for stress management and crisis management. Many scholars have interpreted the Gita on this line.

- Dr. Santvallabhdasji Swami



Dhanushya from the term Dhanurmas. Mundakopanishada (8.24) tell that Pranav, the form of Omkara, the name of God serves as a

Dhanurmasa

Dhanurmas means it is a tool like the bow which helps to attain the desired goal. It is golden opportunity to leave all worldly affairs and to become engrossed in the worship of God. This month serves as a background and preface for spiritual revolution. When the Sun god moves into the zodiac sign called Capricorn and stays for one month in Sagittarius before moving into Capricorn. This act of the sun is called Dhanurmas or Dhanark which is considered unsuitable for auspicious occasions like bethrothal or wedding. The astronomical and astrological Hindu Scriptures consider the period from 17th December to 14th January as Dhanurmas or Dhanark phase. The period when Sun God is running across and Sagittarius is the period to postpone thread ceremony, bethrothal or wedding of one's children and to join oneself in the act of spiritual welfare through kirtan and worship. Our Upanishadas explain the word

bow, the soul functions like an arrow and attainment of God is the target. We have to put the arrow (our soul) on the bow by chanting God's name with full attention. Through this practice we have to reach Parabrahman. So we should leave all worldly affairs for one month and be engrossed in kirtan-worship in order to seize this golden opportunity. The attainment will depend on our curiosity, intensity and competence of contemplation. We should shake off laziness and be fully involved in this act of bow and arrow during this month. This small act of penance will open the path to the abode of God. In Vach. 22 Shriji Maharaj says, "Those who are brave devotees of God cherish only one goal 'by using this body I want to reside in the abode of God.' Regarding the effect of Dhanurmas, Lord Krishna, too, has said, "We have imbibed sciences like Dhanurveda in the hermitage of Rishi Sandipani and had mastered 64 Kalas (devices) within 64 days. Lord Krishna had utilized this month for study and as a souvenir of his act today we offer food prasadi thaal to God in the morning so that he could spend best of the day in deep and careful study. After taking food God departs to attend school. We also place religious books and pen for better study and clear scholastic writing. This is how we express

our feeling. Lord Swaminaryan has ordered in Shikshapatri that intimation too is followed during Dhanurmas. During this month the devotees of God get enough time to rise early, take a sacred morning round, sing dhoon, kirtan and reading and listening of scriptures. Young, old and children do not avoid to take this opportunity but all get engaged in worshipful kirtan of God. The first pronouncement of this great mantra was done by Lord Swaminarayan in Faneni village in this Dhanur month on 11th day of the dark half of Margashirsha month in V.S. 1858 on 31-12-1801. This Dhanurmas brings the dawn of spiritual revolution. This period of Sun's migration from Sagittarius to Capricorn brings special benefits of doing worship and kirtan and it provides stamina for the whole year. The devotees pass the rest of the year in the mood of worship and kirtan. Lord Swaminarayan explains the process of special Dhanu-worship in Satsangi Jeevan.

"O sons! When the Sun enters Sagittarius you should offer God a warm-water bath (Abhyang Snan) and then put a small oven to warm himself, then offer routine garments. You should offer items with sesame sweetballs, curds, ghee and vegetable of brinjals, khichdi and curry, raddish, bajra-leaves with ghee spread sesame grains on the ghee-decked leaves. Then you should sing kirtans which are full of sacred qualities of God.

- **Swami Bhanuprakashdasji**
Porbandar

Festivity of DHANURMAAS at VADTAL

The 17th morning began with a Prabhat Feri. Parshad Ghanshyam Bhagat, also a trustee of the Temple Board, along with some saints and inmates of the temple, began the Prabhat Feri chanting mahamantra dhun from the temple and moved around the village. The followers of the samprada also joined them. The Prabhat Feri becomes a regular event of the Dhanurmas mornings.

The Dhanurmas mornings begin with Dhanurmas Katha. Pu. Brahmpakash Swamiji delivers morning Katha in the Sabha Mandap. The followers attend this morning discourse.

The deities of the temple get up very early. During the Dhanurmas the temple rituals have a special schedule. The deities are offered a special prasad of Shiro, made of pure ghee and dry fruits, in the mornings which is later on distributed among the devotees. The quantity of this prasad is around 100 k.gs. per day. This is also an indicator of the presence of the devotees in the mornings. It is sung:

મેં તો દૂધ ને સાકરનો શિરો કર્યો રે લોલ,
ત્રાજાના તાંસમાં ટાઢો કર્યો રે લોલ...

During the Dhanurmas the deities have a special menu: Churmana ladoo,

the brinjal item odo, millet rotla, specially made khichadi along with ghee, buttermilk, curd etc. The Dhanurmas Khichadi is a variety of this month among the Vaishnavites. The Nand saints sang:

જમો જમોને મારા જીવન જુગતે
ભોજનીયાં રસ ભરીયાં રે...

The scriptures of this Holy Faith like Satsangijivan, Vachnamrut and Shikshapatri have described the ways and manners of worship for this month and the followers follow that and spend time in devotion. The Dhanurmas is a month of worship.

Some special traditions are also observed. Dhanurmas snan, a bath with cold water is a tradition. Discarding the fears of the cold weather the followers enjoy this snan in the Brahm muhurts, i. e. the early morning, one or two hours before sunrise.

Shree Hari started shakotsav during this month. The Sampraday starts celebrating this event from this month.

Lord Swaminarayan chanted the mahamantra 'Swaminarayan' for the first time during Dhanurmas i.e. Maghsar Vad Agiyaras V. S. 1858 (30th December, 1801).

Maghsar mas is considered as highly auspicious for all Vaishnavites. Our Hindu scriptures have set apart this month to be completely focused on devotional activities. Non-devotional activities such as weddings, purchase of property etc. are prohibited during

this month. Special prayers are offered to the Lord. Feeding or giving alms to the deserving poor and the Brahmins during this month is believed to confer great merit i.e. punya. One of the most common practises is to chant Vishnushastranaam, Purush Suktam, Shri Vishnu Suktam or Narayan Upnishad during early morning hours.

It is said Lord Krishna learnt 64 fine arts in 64 days during this period. This is remembered religiously. The deities are provided teaching materials expecting them to go for their studies.

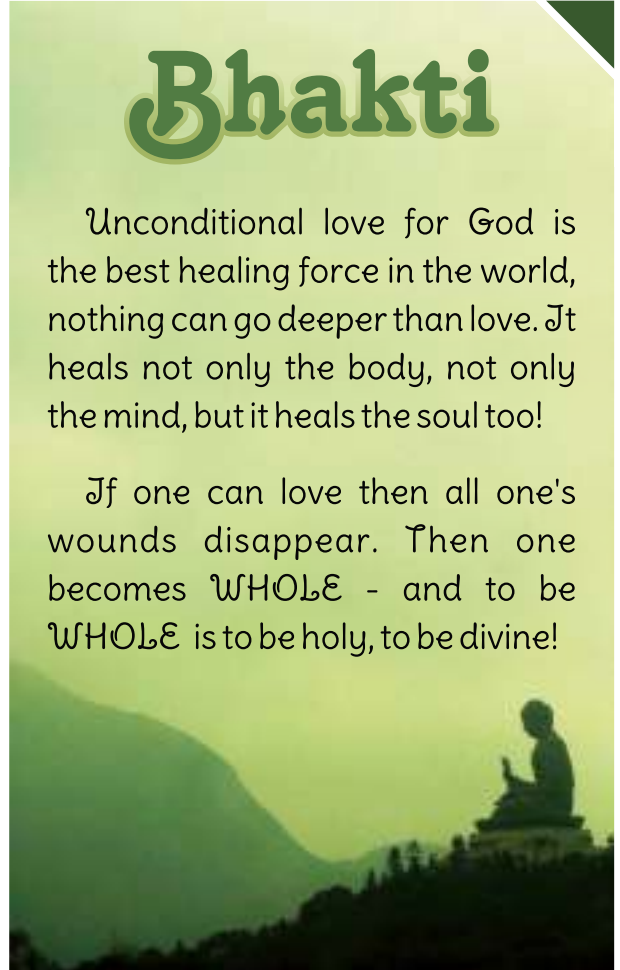
In short, Dhanurmas is a month of religious festivity for all.

- Prof. Harendra Bhatt

Bhakti

Unconditional love for God is the best healing force in the world, nothing can go deeper than love. It heals not only the body, not only the mind, but it heals the soul too!

If one can love then all one's wounds disappear. Then one becomes WHOLE - and to be WHOLE is to be holy, to be divine!



When I was young I was worried about my pimples; When I am old, I am worried about my wrinkles.

When I was young I was waiting to hold her hand, when I am old I am waiting for someone to hold my hand.

When I was young I was longing to be alone; when I am old, I am worried why I am alone.

When I was young I hated when I was advised, when I am old there is no one around me to talk.

When I was young I admired beautiful things around me, when I am old I see beauty in

*Young
Us
Old*

things around me.

When I was young I felt I was eternal, when I am old I know it will be my turn.

When I was young I celebrated the moments, when I am old I am cherishing my memories.

When I was young I found it difficult to wake up, when I am old I am finding it difficult to catch up on my sleep.

When I was young I wanted to be a heart-throb, when I am old I am worried when will my heart stop.

At extreme stages of our life, we worry but we don't realize, life needs to be experienced.

It doesn't matter whether we are young or old, life needs to be lived, lived with love

KARMA

The eye caught sight of a fruit on a tree and it immediately got tempted to grab it. But it couldn't grab the fruit, so legs went ahead to grab it. Legs couldn't grab it, so hands took the fruit and mouth ate it.

Thus, the one who saw it, didn't go; the one who went, didn't pluck; the one who grabbed it, didn't eat it; the one who ate it, didn't keep it, as it went down into the stomach.

When the gardener saw this, he got severely bashed on his back. The back said, "O God, what's my fault?" But when the back got bashing with sticks, the eyes were filled with tears because the fruit was first seen by the eyes. This is the principle of doing actions.

THE TRIO

of Faith, Trust & Hope

Once, all villagers decided to pray for rain.
On the day of prayer all people gathered
but only one boy came with umbrella.

~ That is Faith

Have a strong faith in God.



When you toss a one year old baby
in the air, he laughs because he knows
his father will catch him.

~ That is Trust

*Trust God,
He will always protect you in your adversities!*

Every night we go to bed, we have
no assurance to wake up alive next morning,
but still we set alarm for tomorrow

~ That is Hope

Have hope in God, He will make your tomorrows better.





Virat Vachanamrut

Platinum Vachanamrut Abhishek



Glimpses of

VACHANAMRUT

Bi-Centenary Celebration

Light Decoration



Yajna Shala



Pothi Yatra



Katha Mandap





Vadtal diocese, under the dynamic leadership of H. H. Acharyashri Rakeshprasadji Maharajshri, paid a glowing tribute to Vachnamrut, by organising a mega Mahotsav from 6th to 12 November, 2019. Religious events like a seven-day long discourse and Vyakhyanmala about the Vachnamrut, spiritual activities like 200 kundi Vishnu Yaag, Abhishek of the deities, informative activities like exhibition and fine-art activities along with eye-catching lightning and laser shows were the highlights of the events of the celebration which was attended by more than 20 lacs people. The Vachnamrut, a collection of the 262 discourses delivered during 1819 to 1829 A. D. by Bhagwan Swaminarayan, has been revered by the followers of this Holy Faith. The Vachnamrut Bi-Centenary Mahotsav, also organised many humanitarian and literary activities and proved its credentials as the path-breaking event!

- Prof. Harendra Bhatt