

## **Satsang Parichay Essay 1**

### **Chaturmas: Divine Festivals of Devotion**

What follows is a reflection on Brahmawarup Pramukh Swami Maharaj's Ashirwad in honor of the start of Chaturmas

- Shriji Maharaj has said in the Shikshapatri to take extra niyams and do extra bhakti during the months of Chaturmas by reading scriptures, doing darshan, fasting. This will help us attain peace in our lives.
- Many think that what is done during Chaturmas need not be extended to the rest of the year, but a true devotee of Bhagwan does all of this for all twelve months.
- Shriji Maharaj states in the Vachanamrut to do all fasting and following of niyams in order to please Bhagwan only and by remembering Him.
- Shriji Maharaj also states in the Vachanamrut that to sing without remembering Bhagwan is like not singing at all. We should always remember Bhagwan and do everything to please Him because we can do many things, but if we do not please Bhagwan, it is all useless.
- Remembering that everything we have belongs to Bhagwan and doing proper bhakti will please Him. We should put Bhagwan to sleep before going to sleep and never think that Bhagwan is not actually being put to sleep through our bhakti. If we have true bhakti, Bhagwan will be put to sleep.
- Bhagwan speaks from within the murti. Bhagwan ate prasad from Yogiji Maharaj, and he spoke to Yogiji Maharaj through the Ghanshyam Maharaj murti in Gondal.
- The Pandavas had Bhagwan with them, so they won the Mahabharat. Duryodhan was very strong, and he even had Krishna Bhagwan's army. But he did not prevail in the end over Krishna Bhagwan.
  - Arjun was a true devotee of Bhagwan, so he had the strength of Bhagwan behind him. This is the strongest strength of them all.
  - We are in a fight with our mind and our swabhavs. We must fight with the strength of Bhagwan by taking total refuge in him and offering our bhakti to Him.
- We should engage in this yagna of our bhakti and samjan throughout the year, but never feel pride about it. We must immerse ourselves into the Gunatit Satpurush, then Bhagwan will be most important in our life.

(14-08-2005, Bochasan) – Pramukh Swami Maharaj

## Satsang Parichay Essay 2

### Fasting: Medicine for Self-Purification

What follows is Pragat Brahaswarup Mahant Swami Maharaj's guidance on fasting at the beginning of the holy months of Chaturmas

- Shriji Maharaj has placed great importance on fasting in our sampradaya. Many people fast for the health benefits, which is valid because fasting leads to great improvement in one's health.
  - However, for satsangis, fasting yields a much greater benefit – the rajipo of Bhagwan.
- One of Bhagwan Swaminarayan's names which we say in the Janmangal Namavali is 'Tapapriyay Namaha'. *Tap* is *priya* to Him.
- Our body and health benefit greatly from fasting, especially in terms of cleansing our bloodstream. Even animals fast from time to time as it also builds strength that is good for the body.
- From an external perspective, fasting may seem to make our bodies weak. However, fasting actually purifies our bodies from the inside. Yogiji Maharaj used to say that fasting eliminates gas, colds, cough and other common ailments.
  - Many say that fasting causes acidity, but the acidity is actually our body trying to flush out toxins to cleanse it. In reality, fasting leads to cell regeneration and removal of old cells. For this reason, though we may think our bodies weaken during a fast, they are actually strengthening.
- Doctors in America and Africa have proven through experiments and observation that fasting has many positive effects on a person's health. Though fasting may seem basic and simple, it actually has profound positive effects on our body.
- But the greatest fruit of fasting is the rajipo of Bhagwan Swaminarayan.
  - Shriji Maharaj has specifically said for all haribhakto to do Ekadashi throughout the year and to take extra niyams related to *tap-vrat*. We must follow those niyams properly.
  - Fasting is necessary for discipline in life and to overcome our flaws. Fasting is the medicine for self-purification.
- If we break our fast improperly, we do not gain the fruits of the fast. Therefore, it is important to maintain discipline in ending our fast as well.
- Yogiji Maharaj said to eat one less bite than needed each day, which means we should be disciplined in our eating even when not fasting. We become stronger by eating in moderation.
- Doing *pakka ektānā* strengthens our soul and helps us control our mind.
  - In England and America, there is no talk of discipline in eating. Only those who are concerned for their health practice discipline in their eating habits. However, we have spirituality in our lives, so we should understand the health and spiritual benefits.
- In order to fast properly, we must develop firm willpower. Otherwise, we will slip midway.
  - Our sole purpose for fasting should be to please Bhagwan Swaminarayan and the Satpurush. Then Bhagwan will accept your fast.

(6-6-2018, Limbdi) – Mahant Swami Maharaj

## Satsang Parichay Essay 3

### Tribal Region of Godhra: Swamishri Spreads Spiritual Joy

#### Swagatam

- Mahant Swami Maharaj arrived to Godhra, in the eastern part of Gujarat on 28-7-2018 from Bochasan.
- The landscape of Godhra, filled with lush greenery, was blessed with a beautiful mandir inaugurated by Brahmaswarup Pramukh Swami Maharaj in 2011.
  - Because of this mandir, the tribal people of the region have become immersed in Satsang and bhakti.
- Haribhakto lined the path that Mahant Swami Maharaj was to take to arrive in the mandir for his darshan.
- Swamishri arrived to Godhra and went directly to the sabha mandap where devotees greeted him with the Jaynaad.
  - The Pratik Guru Purnima Samaiyo was also being celebrated. Youths danced to 'Aavo padharo re, Mahant Swami Maharaj'. Swamis welcomed Harikrishna Maharaj and Mahant Swami Maharaj, and all attendees offered *mantrapushpanjali* in honor of Guru Purnima.
- In his ashirwad, Swamishri said, "As yesterday was Guru Purnima, with Swamibapa's (Pramukh Swami Maharaj) blessings and our prarthana, you will all become financially, mentally and physically happy and do bhakti through thought, word and deed.
  - Pramukh Swami Maharaj did so much vicharan and undertook so much physical stress. Now all we have to do is do bhakti.
- From 28-7-2018 to 4-8-2018, Mahant Swami Maharaj's puja darshan and all evening sabhas were organized in the Motibag Party Plot. Thousands would gather early in the morning for puja darshan and for darshan and ashirwad in the evening. Let us relive the smrutis from this divine Satsang.
  - On 29-7-2018, Ashadh Vad 2, Hindola Parva began. In the evening sabha, the theme was 'Samarpan Din' in which the prasang of Samat Patel was presented. Swamishri talked about *samarpan* in his ashirwad as well. Haribhakto did *tula* of Harikrishna Maharaj at the end of the sabha.

#### Smruti Din

- On 30-7-2017 Hethal Mandir Mahotsav was celebrated in honor of which a skit titled '*Mandir ma Prabhu Biraje Chhe*' was presented.
- Mahant Swami Maharaj also did murti-pratishtha for a mandir in Kanbipaalli. Chandubhai Bhagat of Kanbipaalli had been told by Pramukh Swami Maharaj, "We want to build a mandir in your village." Mahant Swami Maharaj fulfilled this on this day.
- A yuvak presented a prarthana titled 'That there would be shikharbadh mandirs everywhere.' Mahant Swami Maharaj gave ashirwad and reminded all of Yogiji Maharaj's words that in 500 years, Bhagwan Swaminarayan will be worshipped in every corner of the Earth. Then Swamishri talked about purifying the mind, body and soul.

#### Vanvasi Din

- On 31-7-2018, tribal haribhakto presented their legacy and story through the program of Vanvasi Din.
- A beautiful stage had been created for this occasion. Prior to Swamishri's arrival to the sabha venue, a devotional dance had been performed and true stories of local transformations were being presented through various mediums.
  - Pramukh Swami Maharaj's efforts at uplifting and transforming this tribal region were evident through the light of Satsang that could be seen spreading through the region.

- An illiterate haribhakta presented mukhpath from the Yogi Gita that he had learned. Hearing this, the whole sabha was stunned and could only bow in reverence to the impact Pramukh Swami Maharaj had on transforming the people of the region.
- In his ashirwad, Swamishri credited Pramukh Swami Maharaj's monumental efforts for the region's progress. He highlighted how a tribal person or a person who lives in America are all joined through samp and suhradbhav. Shriji Maharaj came on this Earth to liberate all jivas, so trust that he will.
- The tribal haribhakto who had presented their legacy at the beginning of the program returned to add one line to their legacy: 'Avo avo re Mahant Swami re mare aanganiye.'
- On 1-8-2018, Swamishri's favorite word was celebrated through 'Samp Din.' After inspiring talks from the Swamis, the program began with the story of Ratnakar and his four brothers presented in a musical format. Swamishri's ashirwad was on the subject of samp.

### **Prerna (Inspiration) Sabha**

- On 2-8-2018, the program was centered around the theme of Ghar Sabha, which is the answer to any family problems.
- Swamishri gave inspiring guidance on this day: "Ghar sabha has been made sacred by Pramukh Swami Maharaj. Ghar sabha has come from his direct experience, so we should definitely do ghar sabha.
  - Swamishri gave the example of a woodcutter who did not sharpen his sword because he felt he didn't have time and could subsequently not cut any trees due to his dull sword. Swamishri was making the point that though we may say we do not have time for ghar sabha, it is extremely important so we should make time.
  - Ghar sabha brings everyone closer together in the family and facilitates understanding among the members.
  - Ghar sabha brings peace to the home, which subsequently solves other problems as well. So without a doubt, we should do ghar sabha.

### **Pratik Pushpadolotsav**

- The Pratik pushpadolotsav samaiyo through the concept of 'Fulo ki Holi' was an especially special memory for all in attendance.
- The stage, the murtis of Akshar-Purushottam Maharaj and Pramukh Swami Maharaj, and Swamishri's asan were appropriately decorated with flowers as well.
- After dhun, prarthana, katha and aarti, Bal mandal performed an enthusiastic dance to Sadguru Premanand Swami's bhajan, 'Vadtal Gam Fulvadi.'
- In his ashirwad, Swamishri reminded everyone how much Shriji Maharaj enjoyed the festival of Fuldol and how it is discussed repeatedly in the Bhaktachintamani.
  - Our Satsang is divine. Everyone in Satsang is divine, so we should never harbor ego, jealousy or other swabhavs. Let us pray that this is how we can celebrate this celebration properly.
- To begin this memorable celebration, Swamishri placed flowers on Harikrishna Maharaj and at his feet. Thereafter, swamis poured flowers on Swamishri and Harikrishna Maharaj.
  - Haribhakto also received the same opportunity by coming up near the stage for Samip Darshan. This was a unique and memorable opportunity for all haribhakto.
  - An atmosphere of pure joy and happiness pervaded the air.
  - Swamishri was very happy, seeing all the haribhakto and their joy.
- In this way, Swamishri gave a divine experience to more than 4,000 devotees and just as many women devotees.

– Sadhu Brahmavatsaldas