



Ocean of Affection


الحمد لله



Ocean of Affection

Assessment of life events of Pujiyapaad Gurudev
Acharya Bhagwant Shrimad Vijay Omkar Surishwarji Maharaja

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Life Journey

of Pujiyapaad Gurudevshree Important Avenues

Date of Birth : V.S. 1979 Aaso Sud 13, Zinzuwada

Date of Initiation : V.S. 1990 Maha Sud 10, Zinzuwada

Date of Badi Diksha : V.S. 1990 Ashadh Sud 11, Juna Deesa

Date of Conferment of Gani Title : V.S. 2006 Magsar Sud 5, Radhanpur

Date of Conferment of Panyas Title : V.S. 2006 Magsar Sud 6, Radhanpur

Date of Conferment of Acharya Title : V.S. 2010 Maha Sud 1, Mehsana

Left his Mortal Body on : V.S. 2044 Vaishakh Sud 5, Ahmedabad

Diksha Conferred By : His Holiness Dada Gurudev
Acharya Shrimad Vijay Bhadrasurishwarji Maharaja

Gurudev : His Holiness Shree Vilas Vijayji Maharaja

Mother : Kankuben

Father : Ishwarlalbhai (Pu. Vilasvijay Maharaja)

Born as : Chinubhai



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*In commemoration of the
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His Holiness Param Puja "Bhakti Yogacharya"
Aacharya Yashovijay Suri Maharaj

His Holiness Param Puja "Shastra Sanshodhak"
Aacharya Munichandra Suri Maharaj

His Holiness Param Puja "Swadhay Premi"
Aacharya Rajpunya Suri Maharaj

His Holiness Param Puja "Pravachan Prabhavak"
Aacharya Bhagyesh Vijay Suri Maharaj

His Holiness Param Puja
Muni Mahayash Vijay Maharaj



TASMAI SHREE SADGURUVE NAMAHA:







We have seen the profound life influence of Pu. Gurudev (Pu. Ach. Shri Omkarsuri M S) and also his influential persona with his sharp intelligence. Let's see an example of his devotion and dedication to God and his Guru (Dada Gurudev Pu. Ach. Shri Bhadrasuri m.s.)

This event took place in the Phagun month¹ of the year 2013 of the Vikram Samvat (V.S.) Calendar. At that time, Dada Gurudev and Pujya Gurudev Shri were staying at Zinzuwada with other Jain Monks.

The devotees of the Zinzuwada Sangh had a strong wish that Pujya Gurudev Shri should stay for Chaturmas in Zinzuwada. Many other Sanghs had also approached and requested Dada Gurudev for Chaturmas at their respective places. But, he would deny their request and would say, "We will see."

Pujya Gurudev Omkar Suriji's dedication towards his Guru (Master) was so deep, that he never questioned or wondered that even when Phagun month is going on, why Dada Gurudev is still not deciding on a place for Chaturmas.

A shishya (disciple) is like a blank slate. He dedicates himself entirely to Guru's command. Whatever be the Guru's wish and his words the disciple accepts it gladly and does as is bid to him by his Guru.

In the beginning of the month of Chaitra², the members of the Junadeesa Jain Sangha came to request Dada Gurudev for Chaturmas at Junadeesa.

On hearing their request, Sahebji said, "Call Omkarvijay" (Dada Gurudev always addressed Gurudev as Omkarvijay, he never called him Omkarsuri. Thus, when Dada Gurudev passed away (kaldharma), Gurudev said, "Now who will call me Omkarvijay?").

When Gurudev came, Dada Gurudev said, "Omkarvijay, the Shree Sangha of Junadeesa has come to invite us for Chaturmas, reply them in the affirmative. On hearing 'Yes' from Gurudev, Junadeesa Shree Sangha rejoiced and chanted 'Jai'.

Through this incidence, we can see the devotion, dedication and reverence to his Guru which he observed for all his life.

Gurudev had once said that Gurukripa is my Vidya Datri, Saadhana Datri and Shakti Datri. This means that through Guru's grace and blessings, he (Gurudev) acquires his knowledge, spiritual study and practice, and strength.

1. 5th month according to Gujarati Calendar.
2. 6th month according to Gujarati Calendar.

It is indeed a wonderful experience and a great fortune
to see God in the moist eyes of Gurudev.



AN EPISODE FROM THE HALLS OF HISTORY

Once upon a time a Sadhak¹ approached Gurudev to learn Brahma Vidya². Before imparting the knowledge, Gurudev wanted to test him. He asked him that you have crossed the entire city and come to this ashram to seek knowledge; so what did you see in the city. Very politely the Sadhak replied, "Gurudev, I saw idols of clay running and toiling for clay"³.

Gurudev liked his answer, but still wanted to test him further. Gurudev was curious to find out, for someone who termed others as idols of clay what does he term himself. So he asked another question, "What is happening in this room currently?" Humbly the Sadhak replied, "An idol of clay is sitting near Gurudev to gain the sweet nectar of Wisdom⁴. Guru got pleased with his answer and he started imparting him the lessons of Brahma Vidya.

A Guru is capable enough to determine the potential of a disciple by reading his face. Same was true in the above case, yet, to test the disciple and teach a lesson to others, they resort to such tricks and techniques.

1. Seeker of spiritual knowledge. 2. Divine Knowledge, essentially it means the knowledge of the absolute.
3. Figurative for people running and struggling for money. 4. Here Wisdom in the form of Brahma Vidya.

IT'S NOT I WHO
ACHIEVES; IT IS GURU'S
GRACE THAT ENABLES
ME TO ACHIEVE.

It was in the year 1994 of Vikram Samvat, when Pujiyapad Gurudev, Shri Omkarvijay was a Balmuni (child monk) of merely 14 years. He read Kalpasutra¹ (with the Subodhika Tika – Sanskrit version). His oratorical skills and the ease of explaining the Sankskrit Shlokas in simple Gujarati, left the listeners spellbound.

After the completion of Chaturmas, Gurudev met Pandit Shri Kantivijayji Maharaj in the Patan city. Pu. Shri Kantivijayji Maharaj was aware of Gurudev's Kalpa Sutra reading skills (The fame having reached Kantivijayji owing to some of the listeners). Panditji asked Balmuni (Gurudev), "You must have read Kalpasuta Khimshahi (the abridged Gujarati version of the Kalpa Sutra).

To this, the 14 year old Balmuni replied, "No, Panditji. I read Kalpasutra Subodhika. On hearing this Panditji was amazed. He asked, "How is it possible?" To this Balmuni humbly replied, "It was not I who read it; so it doesn't matter whether I could or couldn't read it skillfully. Dada Gurdev gave aagnya (bid me) to do it. I simply bowed at his Holy feet and he gave me his blessings which enabled me to read.

God is like the rain cloud and the heart of Sadhak is like parched earth. Sadguru unearths the unfertile soil (in the form of ego) and digs a pit which eventually gets filled by the blessings of God and becomes a lake.

People say that I read Kalpasutra Subodhika. I say that I was able to do it because of Guru Kripa (guru's blessings). This is my Sadguru's Shaktipat (transfer of strengths and power through blessings).

Panditji was very impressed with this answer. But he was still curious and wanted to hear Balmuni's reading. So, he asked for the Kalpasutra Subodhika to be brought from the library. He selected some difficult passages and gave them to Balmuni to read. Balmuni chanted the name of his Gurudev and started fluently reading and then translating those passages.

Panditji was extremely pleased at this and said to Gurudev, that you have successfully received your Gurudev's blessings. He himself blessed Gurudev and said, "May you move ahead and attain even more."

1. The *Kalpa Sūtra* (Sanskrit : कल्पसूत्र) is a Jain text containing the biographies of the Jain Tirthankaras.



One day a disciple came to Upashray¹ and requested Gurudev to give him diksha².

Gurudev asked him to clean the Upashray. Gurudev's command became the purpose of that disciple's life. He took up a broom and started cleaning the Upashray. Every morning he used to come, bow to the Gurudev, would listen to his discourse and during rest of the day he would continue to clean the Upashray.

Owing to some physical circumstances Gurudev could not do Vihar³ and so he had to stay at the same place. But he would keep changing his room in the Upashray & thereby follow Navkalp Vihar and abide by the Prabhu agnya⁴.

The disciple kept on continuing this daily routine for days which eventually turned into years. In this way 12 years passed. On the eve of the 13th year, Gurudev lovingly asked the disciple, "What are you doing?" The disciple very enthusiastically and reverentially answered, "Gurudev, you had once asked me to remove the dirt from the Upashray and keep it clean. I am simply obeying your words and while doing so I am enjoying the task you assigned to me".

Gurudev was very happy to hear this answer. He said, "Relax, You have successfully cleared the dirt that has accumulated over the many births that your soul has lived. Your soul is now purified and free from all vices." The dust/dirt (Agyan⁵) accumulated over many births which is tangled with our soul can be purified by Guru Kripa (Blessings of the Guru).

1. Abode of the Sadhus. 2. Diksha is spiritual renunciation of all personal possessions, family ties and worldly duties. It also involves undertaking a vow of celibacy, and entering the monastic order. It also encompasses following a path of spiritual learning, working towards self enlightenment and enlightening others. 3. Jain monks never stay back at one place for long periods of time except during Chaturmas. This journey that they make continuously is called Vihar. 4. Literally agnya means command or summoning. Here it can be understood as commandment. 5. Agyan is the opposite of Gyan. Roughly gyan can be understood as knowledge in English. In Sanskrit, Gyan encompasses a much wider scope as compared to its English equivalent.

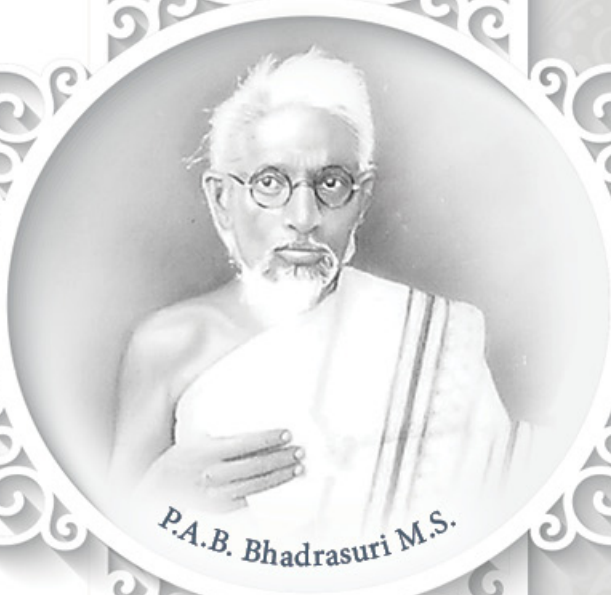


P.A.B. Siddhisuri M.S.

GURU^o
PARAMPARA^o



P. Muniraj Vinayvijayji M.S.



P.A.B. Bhadrasuri M.S.

GURU
PARAMPARA



P. Muniraj Vilasvijayji M.S.



P.A.B. Omkarsuri M.S.

THE POWER OF INNER EYES: FAITH

This is an episode from a few years after Guru's diksha. Pujiyapad Dada Gurudev's Chaturmas was at Nava Deesa. Pravesh happened & Dada Gurudev gave the pravachan (discourse).

Now it was time to begin with the Chaturmasik Pravachans (the series of holy discourses). At that time discourse were delivered keeping the Pothi (The divine Scriptures) in front. However Dada Gurudev's eyes had weakened to the extent that he wasn't able to read the scriptures.

The day when the scripture reading was to commence, Dada Gurudev summoned Gurudev and said to him, "Omkarvijay, come here." Gurudev was a very humble and obedient student; he immediately came to Dada Gurudev. He bowed to Dada Gurudev and said to him, "I am dedicated to you. I am at your feet, what should I do?"

Dada Gurudev said, "From today onwards, you will give the lectures by reading the scriptures and I will sit besides you." Gurudev, immediately accepted Dada Gurudev's command and asked, "Guruji, what am I to read and how should I read it?"

Dada Gurudev replied, "You have been reading the Vardhaman Deshna granth with me. The pattern is that you first read the scripture in Sanskrit and then translate it to Gujarati. You must now read it in the same pattern while sitting on the Paat². Wherever an explanation is needed, I will do the needful."

The journey of Gurudev's pravachan which began on that day continued for his entire life.

Through this incident we get to understand Gurudev's complete submission to his Guruji's command. Similarly we should also whole heartedly accept and apply Guru's command to us. Because, no matter how difficult the task, with Guruji's blessings even the impossible becomes possible. We are simply a medium to accomplish the Guruji's instructed task and it is with his power that the task gets accomplished.

This is the generosity of Sadguru, that they get their work done by the student and yet he isn't burdened with the onus of "doership".

Student becomes burdenless as Guru is always burdenless.

Pujya AnandGhanji Maharaj had once quoted, 'Guru Nirantar Khela'. He means here that Guru is filled with Joyful Spirit of happiness of his souls' equanimity. Thus, A Guru always maintains a playful spirit and never experiences any burden of his duties and his actions.

Tavayan Sevana (Guru Vachan Seva) is the purpose of the student's life. A student should have complete faith in Guru's Vachan (Words).

Devotees many a times recite this,

अज्ञानतिमिरान्धानां, ज्ञानाञ्जनशलाकया।
नेत्र-मुन्मीलितं येन, तस्मै श्री गुरुवे नमः॥

With the help of knowledge Guru helps open the eyes of the student. These eyes are the Inner eyes of Faith. With these eyes a devotee (student) should worship God and his Guru.

1. Chaturmas is a holy period of four months which commences in the start of the Ashadh month and ends at the end of Kartik month. In Jainism it is believed that during the rainy season, countless bugs, insects and tiny creatures that cannot be seen with the naked eye would be produced massively. Therefore, these monks reduce the amount of harm they do to other creatures so they opt to stay in a village for the four months to incur minimal harm to other lives. Pravesh is the period just before the beginning of the Chaturmas when the monks stay at one place for the next 4 months. 2. Paat is a wooden platform. Jain monks sit on this platform and give discourses to the lay people.



A JOURNEY THROUGH HISTORY

One afternoon at approximately 3'o clock, a Shishya (disciple) came to Upashray to meet Gurudev. Gurudev told him, "It is so dark outside." To this the disciple replied, "Yes, Gurudev."

The Shishya didn't make intellectual argument because he didn't have the wordly Buddhi (more often known as the practical mind); he only had dedication, faith and submission to his Guru. If he would have used his practical mind he would have asked, Darkness? "Where is darkness?"

To attain spiritual knowledge, one must loose Buddhi. In the western world, it is I.Q. (Intelligence Quotient) that is measured and is talked of. But here in East we talk of A.Q. (Awareness' Quotient).

Gurudev used to say that, "The darkness of Agyan (Lack of knowledge in spiritual sense) has encompassed our souls. To see the light of God's preaching we need to see with eyes of faith and devotion".

1. Jagruti – Spiritual Awareness.



HARDER THAN VAJRA (INDRA'S WEAPON – THUNDERBOLT) AND SOFTER THAN FLOWER



Muni Mahayash Vijayji took diksha (renunciation) at the very tender age of 10.

Pujyapad Gurudev, undertook the task of imparting spiritual teachings to him and asked him to memorize 5 gathas (stanzas) every morning before sitting for Navkarshi¹. Till such time that you don't memorize 5 stanzas you are not allowed to consume your breakfast.

Young Muni started to regularly memorize these gathas and ensured that they are perfect.

But one day, the young Muni thought that since Gurudev was very kind and gentle, he wouldn't mind if today he didn't memorize his gathas.

Gurudev took a note of this and summoned him, "Mahayash, give me the gathas that you have memorized." But, Mahayash M.S.² had not memorized the gathas so what would he give? He got nervous and afraid.

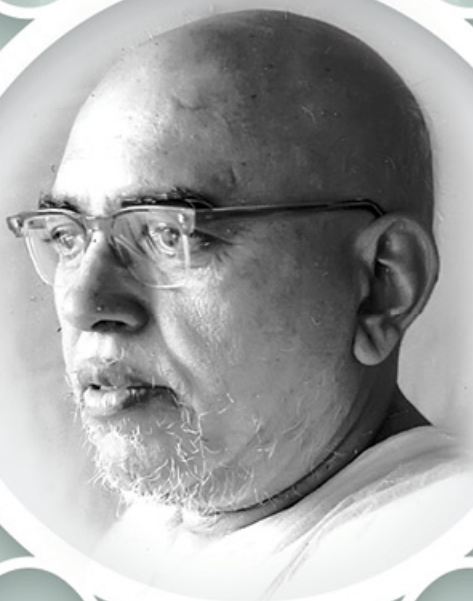
He confessed to Gurudev that he had not prepared any gathas, but that he would definitely do them later in the day. But Gurudev did not agree to this. He very firmly asked Mahayash M.S. to prepare the gathas first and only then sit for breakfast.

Sensing the firmness in Gurudev's words, Mahayash M.S. began memorizing his stanzas. After some 30-45 minutes he was done with learning them. He recited them to Gurudev.

After this, Gurudev not only gave him permission (Pachchakaan) for breakfast but also accompanied him to Gochari Mandli³, and lovingly served and fed him with his own hands.

Through this incident, one can see a heart which is stronger than vajra but in compassion, softer than a flower. Such was the heart of Gurudev.

1. Navkarshi means breakfast. It is basically taken 48 minutes after sunrise. Before that no food or water is consumed. 2. M.S. is abbreviated version for Maharaj Saheb a reverential term used for Jain monks. 3. Gochari Mandli is the place where the monks eat their food.



A GLIMPSE IN THE PAST

This is an event from the life of Shree Yogeshwar that I recollect. Shree Yogeshwar is the author of the book – ‘An Autobiography of a Yogi’.

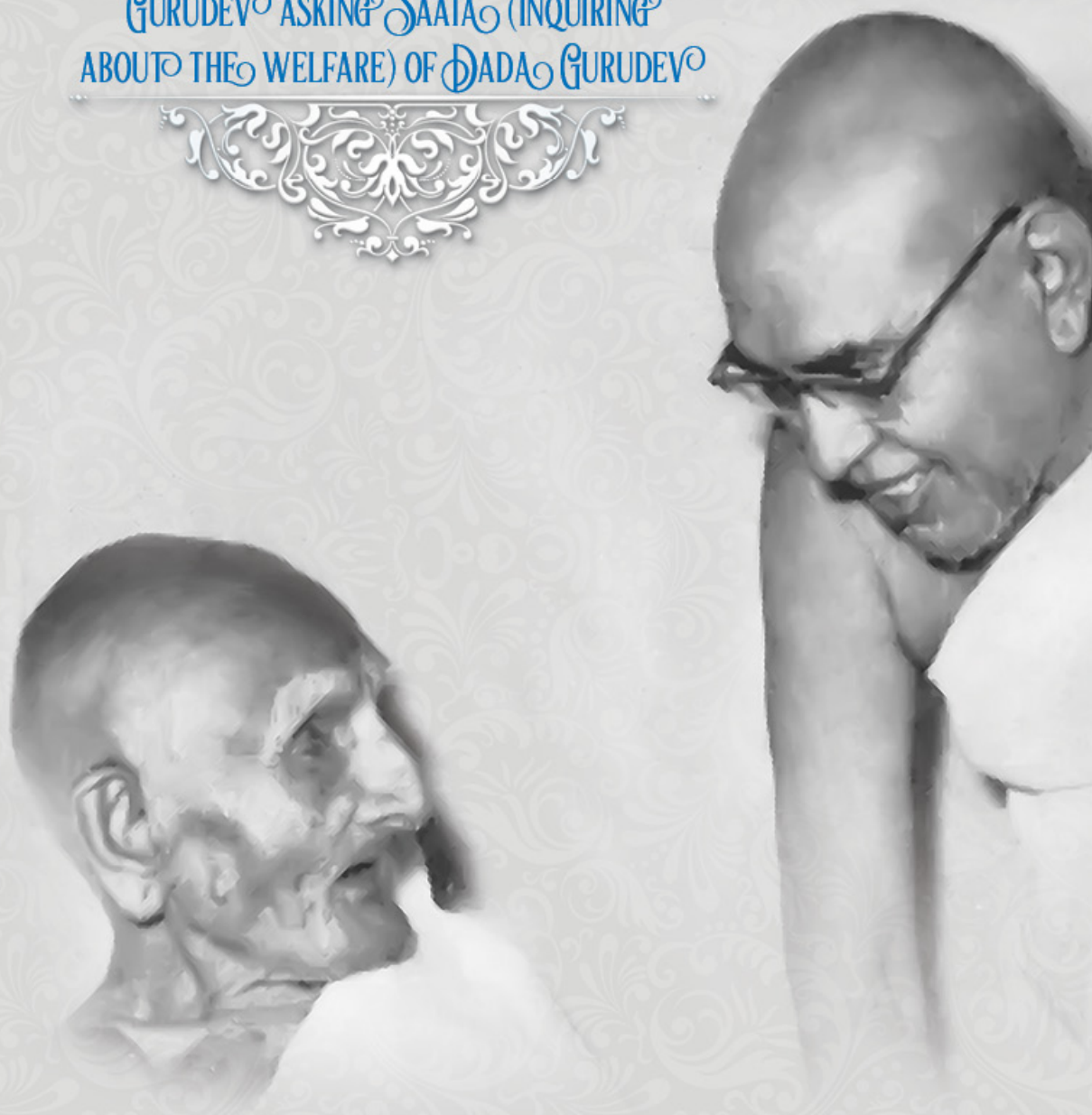
He used to do his Sadhana and Adhyayan (spiritual studies) under the guidance of Guru Yuktेशwar. He started feeling that his progress in studies was going very slow. He wanted a quicker method to climb the spiritual ladder faster and attain success.

One night, he left the monastery without informing anyone. He reached another monastery and stayed there. But even there he wasn't satisfied. He left that place too and went to a monastery of another Guru. Even there he wasn't satisfied. Only then did he realize that he was better off at his own Guru's ashram. He returned back to his Guru's ashram and started his study routine there. Guru started teaching him again with the same fervour and said nothing to him. He taught with the same love as earlier.

One day Shree Yogeshwar asked his Guru, “Why didn't you reprimand me?” To this Guruji replied, “My river of compassion knows no bounds.” This episode reminds us of the endless love and compassion that a Guru holds for his students.



GURUDEV ASKING SAATA (INQUIRING
ABOUT THE WELFARE) OF DADA GURUDEV







SELF-REALIZATION^o

Pujyapad Gurudev used to talk about the brilliant intelligence of Pandit Chotalalji and Pandit Varshanandji. Both these Pandits have taught Gurudev.

Pandit Chotalalji could effortlessly and without any mistakes recite Panini¹ Vyakaran (a type of Sanskrit Grammar) in Anulom² and Pratilom³ manner.

From such capable teachers Gurudev had studied Siddhahem Vyakaran (a type of Sanskrit Grammar). Gurudev himself possessed a very sharp memory. Acharya⁴ Shri Munichandra Vijayaji (who at that time was still a Muni) describes Gurudev's sharp memory in the event below.

"It was the year Vikram Samvad 2024, the second year of my renunciation. Gurudev was teaching me Siddhahem. It would have been some 30 years earlier that Gurudev must have learnt it. I was astonished that having learnt this so many years ago, Gurudev was still able to recite it flawlessly. While explaining, Gurudev was able to speak all the suffixes and prefixes fluently. I kept on turning the pages. I asked him then : 'how are you able to remember all this so well after so many years'.

Gurudev replied : 'Knowledge is best when memorized'.

There is a beautiful proverb in Gujarati - 'Garath Ganthe ane Vidya Pathe'. It means that money is useful only when it is in our hands and similarly knowledge when memorized is useful."



This incident is true not only for bookish and worldly knowledge but also for spiritual knowledge too. This, Gurudev lived in his own life – He attained self realization through experience.

1. Panini was a Sanskrit Grammarian. He is known for framing the Sanskrit Grammar and formulating the 3959 rules.
2. Anulom – From first line to last line i.e. Forward. 3. Pratilom – From last line to first line i.e. Backwards. 4. Acharya is the highest leader of a Jain order. They are the final authority in the monastic order and have the authority to ordain new monks. They are worshipped by Jain monks and laymen.



FROM THE HISTORY

Kathopanishad says : नायमात्मा प्रवचनेन लभ्यः, न मेधया, न बहुना श्रुतेन... "Nayamatma Pravachanen Labhya. Na Medhaya, Na Bahuna Shrutena."

Self realization of soul cannot be attained by listening to lectures/discourses, nor can it be gained by intellect, nor by reading spiritual books. It can be attained only by experience.

Once, a Guru asked his scholarly disciple, "What do you know about the soul (Aatma Tatva)."

The disciple spoke about the soul nonstop for over an hour. But Guru observed that they were mere words which lacked depth and feelings.

Guru asked him, "Can you satisfy your hunger by just visualizing the picture of bhakari? You have only the picture of Bhakari (Soul), not the Bhakari itself.

The disciple realised his mistake and went deep into analysing and achieved self-realization himself.

1. Bhakari means Indian bread.





KNOWLEDGE WITH LOVE

This is an episode of how Acharya Bhagyesh Suri M.S. experienced the endless love of Gurudev. Here is an account in Acharya's own words.

In the year Vikram Samvad 2030, I went to Bhoyni tirth and participated in the Upadhan Tap (a form of fast). I joined as a tapasvi.

During the fasting days, I started crying before the Ayambil¹ day arrived. Pujya Gurudev asked me, "Why are you crying?" I replied, "I can't do Ayambil tap. On seeing the Ayambil food, I feel like vomiting." Gurudev lovingly consoled me. He said, "This is such a small matter, why are you crying? Come, don't cry. Wipe your tears and don't worry."

On the day of Ayambil, Gurudev sat besides me and made me eat the Ayambil food. It was a fantastic experience that made me realise his pure love.

Even today, whenever I recollect that incident, my heart is filled with joy.

Great Jain religious leader Pujyapad Haribhadra Suri Maharaj says, "Ha Anaha Kaham Hunta. Jai Na Hunto Jinogamo." But I say, "Ha Anaha Kaham Hunta, Jai Na Hunto Gurudev." (This means that what would have been my condition without Gurudev.)

Only Gurudev had the skill to impart gyan (knowledge) with infinite love. He used to explain even the most difficult of topics with love and great ease.

1. Ayambil : Eating food once in one sitting. The food contains only cereals and pulses not sprouted and it is spice free and boiled or cooked, without Salt, milk, curds, ghee, oil, oil seeds, or green/raw vegetables, fruits and sugar and its products.





Powerful blessings of Gurudev

Sadguru can recognize the potential of a disciple and gives him a conducive environment, for the growth and realization of the said potential. At times, they have to create new circumstances for the benefit of the disciple.

CONTINUITY WITH THE PAST

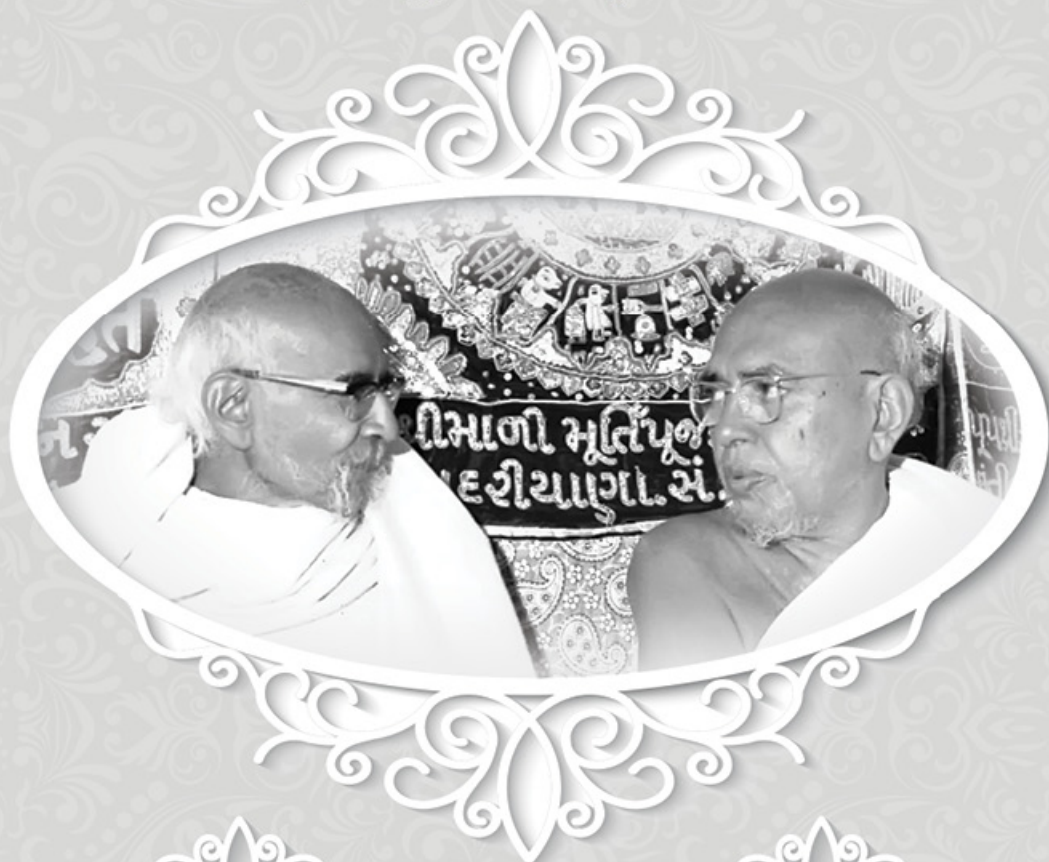
A great Buddhist monk named Bodhi Dharma once went to a monastery in China. He sat there facing towards a wall.

One day a disciple came to worship him. He requested in a voice filled with pain, "Guruji, please look at me." Guruji realised the potential in the disciple and asked him, "It took me less than 5 seconds to look at you. But, when will you turn to me?"

Gurudev explained in such a loving way, that the disciple at the very moment surrendered in the lotus feet of Sadguru.



Muni Jambuvijayji M.S. with Pujya Gurudev Shree





SHREE KALIKUNDA PARASWHANATH STOTRA
IN GURUDEV'S OWN HAND WRITING.



ॐ श्रीं तं नमह पासनाहं
ॐ श्रीं धरणिंद नमंसिद्यं दुर विणासं
ॐ श्रीं जस्मपभा वेण सया. २
ॐ श्रीं नासन्ति उवदु वा सव्ये ॥१॥
ॐ श्रीं पदु सप्ररं ताण मणे
ॐ श्रीं नहोइ पाहि नतं मशदुक्खं
ॐ श्रीं नामं पिदु मंत सभं
ॐ श्रीं पयदं नत्थि त्थ संदे हो ॥२॥
ॐ श्रीं जलजलण मेयेतु सप्य सिदु
ॐ श्रीं चोरारि संभवे खिप्यं
ॐ श्रीं जो समरइ पासपदुं
ॐ श्रीं कली. परा हुवइ न कयो वि तंतस्स. ॥३॥
ॐ श्रीं कली हुं हुं इइ लो गहि परलो गहि
ॐ श्रीं कली जो समरइ पासनाहं तु
ॐ श्रीं हुं गं गौं गौं गः तंतः सिज्जइ खिप्यं
ॐ श्रीं कली इय नाउ सरह भगवंतं ॥४॥

“ॐ श्रीं कली शौं श्रीं गौं कली कली कलि कुण्ड -
- स्वाग्निने नमः स्वाहा”

ॐ ५।२२२१

GREAT MEN.... UNFAZED BY CIRCUMSTANCES / EVENTS

Pujyapad Pravartak Jayananand Vijay M.S. worshipped and served Gurudev till his last breath.

He has narrated many events in Gurudev's life, which are unfamiliar to others. This is a description of one such event.

In Zinzuwada¹ Upashray there was an idol of Manibhadra Veer². The Upashray was old and in need of renovation. The Sangha decided to do a complete overhaul of the Upashray starting from the foundation itself. When the renovation work began, a few devotees requested that the place where Manibhadra's idol was kept be left intact and that the idol not be relocated.

Thus, the Upashray got completed without making any changes to the Manibhadra Veer idol's abode.

A few days after the Upashray got completed, Gurudev came in Zinzuwada. He saw the new look of the Upashray and asked, "Why is the wall which houses Manibhadra Veer Ji's idol not newly made?" Sangha's leader replied that some of the devotees had requested not to make changes to the said wall.

Pujya Gurudev called upon those devotees who were against making changes to the wall. He asked them : "Do you think, it is

appropriate to renovate the Upashray but keep Manibhadra Veerji in an old decayed place?"

Devotees were convinced by this, but they asked, "Guruji, how can we do the Uthapan (taking the idol from its current place and establishing it in a new place)? Would that not amount to disrespecting the idol?" Guruji said, "Manibhadra Veerji is a Dev devoted to Jain Shashan, and we aren't trying to disrespect him by replacing his idol. Instead we are going to keep this idol in a new place, so that we can make a beautiful devkulika (abode for the idol) made of intricate mirror work.

Devotees agreed to this. But again a question arose, who will move the idol? Gurudev said that moving the idol was his responsibility. Devotees agreed to this and on an auspicious muhurta³ the idol was moved to a new place.

This incident indicates that Gurudev was unmoved by external circumstances; but he was completely devoted to God's service. Many such events illustrate his devotion to his duty yet he was never burdened by them. This is his ultimate affection and devotion to God.

*Sadguru is always burden free.
The person who has God
in his heart, never experiences
any burden.*

1. Zinzuwada is a village located in Surendranagar district of Gujarat. This village is the birth place of Gurudev.

2. Manibhadra is one of yaksha (a demigod). 3. Muhurta denotes a division of time: a period of 48 minutes.



A JOURNEY THROUGH HISTORY

Once, Subhash Chandra Bose was giving lecture to a huge audience. Suddenly someone hurled a shoe in his direction. The shoe fell near his feet.

A normal person would have got affected by such an act. But, Subhashji's remained unfazed, and continued with his speech. He calmly lifted the shoe and addressed the audience, "This shoe is far superior to that which I have worn. I would request the gentleman who has thrown this shoe to also throw his other shoe, as having one shoe is quite useless. Thereby, I can use this new pair of shoes and do away with my old worn out pair."

This example illustrates the art of remaining unfazed by incidents.





A PLACE OF FAITH

In Radhanpur, Pandit Hargovandas was teaching Bhruhat Sangrani to Gurudev. The topic that was being taught at that time was the construction of Vaymanik¹ Dev Vimanas.

Panditji was teaching this topic to the best of his knowledge. But Gurudev was also sagacious. Gurudev kept on discussing the topic till such time that he didn't understand. He made some valid arguments to Panditji. Panditji told him, "Saheb, I accept your arguments but I don't have another explanation. I have taught this topic to many students, but none of them have asked such questions. Also, this question has never occurred to me but today after listening to your arguments, I feel, I must study this topic more".

On that very night, Gurudev saw a dream. In that dream, he saw a deity. The deity said to him, "Do You want to see the arrangement of our Dev Vimana? Come, I will show it to you". In the dream, Gurudev went with the deity and he saw the structure of Dev Vimana and its arrangement.

Next day, Panditji approached Gurudev and told him that he wasn't able to sleep the entire night. He spent the entire time analysing, yet he wasn't able to get a satisfactory answer to his arguments. To this, Gurudev, explained the arrangement as he had seen in the dream. He told : "This arrangement agrees with our arguments and satisfies them completely."

On this, Panditji was astonished, he exclaimed, "Wow! Excellent! How did you get this answer?" Gurudev then, explained the dream he had the prior night.

Panditji commented on hearing the dream that, "Definitely, the deity you saw in your dream, must have been a friend of yours from a previous birth, who came in your dream to clear your doubts."

1. According to Jain and Hindu scriptures Vaymanik devs are a class of deities that are said to reside in the Urdhva Loka heavens. Vaymanik means those that dwell in Vimanas - flying palaces, chariots or aerodynamic flying vehicles.





A GLIMPSE INTO THE PAST

Once a retired judge of India approached Acharya Ratnasundar Suri M.S. and told him that he believed that God has inspired him to give the benchmark verdict regarding Indian Culture.

Acharya Ji asked him, "What makes you think so?"

The judge replied, "Today, when I read the verdict, I realise that I do not have the wisdom to impart such a verdict. It is the power and will of God that has used me as a channel. Acharya Ji was pleased to hear this answer.

Faith begins, where reasoning ends.







ON THE OCCASION OF CONFERMENT OF AACHARYA TITLE



A MIRACLE OF FAITH

In the year 2033 V.S. Gurudev started experiencing trouble while walking. Even if he would walk some 100 steps he would experience excruciating pain and would have to sit down for the pain to subside. Expert doctors were consulted and they all diagnosed it to Slipped disc.

The doctors advised him to get operated. But Gurudev did not agree to this and he firmly refused to get operated. Gurudev had an iron will and he was firm on his decision.

A year later, after completing a Pratishta¹ ceremony of Shree Shantinath² Dada in Madka³, Gurudev arrived in Juna Deesa en route to Ahmedabad.

During vihar from Junadeesa, Gurudev went to the shrine of Shrimad Vijay Bhadrasurishwar Ji and he bowed down humbly at his holy feet. At the moment he bowed down to worship, the pain in his backbone vanished. It was the 11 day of Jeth (3rd month according to the Hindu calendar) in the full moon cycle of year 2034 V.S.

To the astonishment of devotees and disciples alike, Gurudev could now walk continuously without any problems. He who had to take rest after walking a mere 100 steps now walked without taking any rest and without experiencing any pain too.

Bowing down at the Guru's feet healed him miraculously from all the pain. When you truly surrender yourself to the Guru, you can feel his

divine presence in the form of his love and blessings. This is what Gurudev experienced in his entire life.

Higher the faith, more the blessings you receive. This incident is a shining example of how Guru's grace descends upon a disciple on the back of his unswerving faith.

1. Pratishta literally means figurative establishment/ representation of a person or a thing in some form be it a image, idol, etc. Pratistha ceremony or the Prana Pratistha ceremony is the Hindu and Jain theological term for a rite or ceremony by which a deity is infused or brought to inhabit a murti or icon of that deity. Whenever a new temple is constructed or an old is being renovated, this ceremony is held and it is celebrated with great splendour. 2. Shree Shantinath was the 16th Tirthankar of the present age. 3. Madka in Vaav Taluka is a place in Gujarat.



AN EXCERPT FROM HISTORY

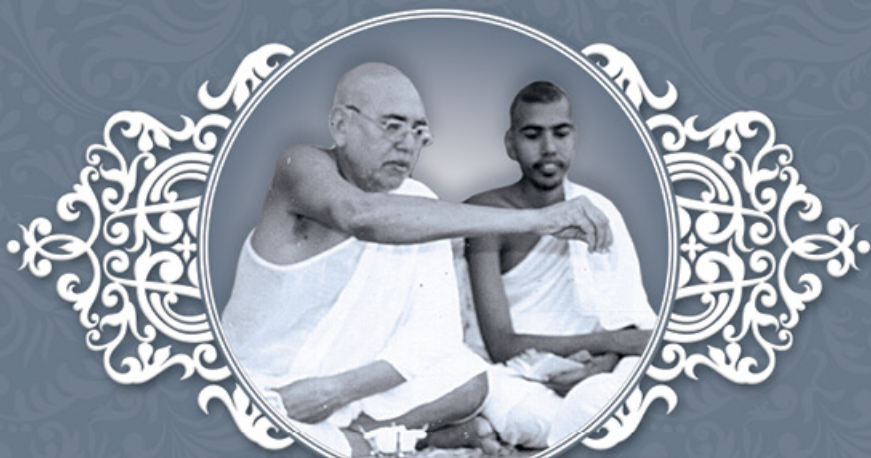
Once, three devotees were living on an island. Once, a Pandit visited the island. The devotees did not know any prayers, yet, they would pray to God in their own way and in their own words and they were living happily. Panditji told them that this was not the right way to pray and that he would teach them the correct method of praying. The devotees being innocent people agreed to this and asked the Panditji to teach them.

Eventually, the Panditji left the island in his boat. When the boat went a little further, a devotee came walking on water (just like a person would walk on ground) and approached Panditji's boat. He told Panditji that all of them had forgotten the prayer he had taught and asked him to teach it again.

Panditji was astonished to see this. He asked the devotee; "How were you able to walk on water?" The devotee replied, "We chanted God's name and thus were able to walk on water."

Panditji bowed to the devotee's inner faith and told him that his method of praying was right because it reached God. Panditji realised that their mode of praying was correct for their prayers were heartfelt; while his own prayers were mere words. Their devotion was far more intense and superior to his.





POWERFUL BLESSINGS

Once, Gurudev was in Sirohi¹ for Chaturmas, when Dr. C.K. Vora came to seek his blessings. He had come along with his younger brother Dineshchandra.

The doctor inquired about Gurudev's health and suggested medicines and treatment accordingly. When he was about to leave, he asked Gurudev to bless him with Vasakhkshep². Gurudev took the pouch containing the Vasakhkshep to bless him.

At that moment, Dineshchandra prayed, "Please give us blessings with the same Vasakhkshep that you use to bless devotees of Vav Pradesh and Deesa regions".

Gurudev laughed on hearing this and told him that he had only one pouch. I was present at the time and clarified to Dinesh that Gurudev's Vasakhkshep was the same. But the devotees of Vaav and Deesa regions were receptive to Gurudev's blessings due to their intense faith and devotion towards Gurudev.

The blessings of Gurudev gets multiplied with the devotee's devotion.

I also added, Dinesh, you too must revere Gurudev and must receive his blessings with deep faith.

1. Sirohi is a place in Rajasthan.

2. Vasakhkshep is Chandan powder with which the monks bless the devotees who come to visit them.



Nothing but the Grace
of Guru can lead to
Self-realization...

GLIMPSES FROM THE PAST

After taking up a long penance as graced by his Guru, MahaMuni Arnik came from a prostitute's house to Guruji and knelt down at his lotus feet. Guruji blessed him with a shaktipat.

A question here arises that, Guruji was the same and so was the student, then why did Guruji not bless him earlier.

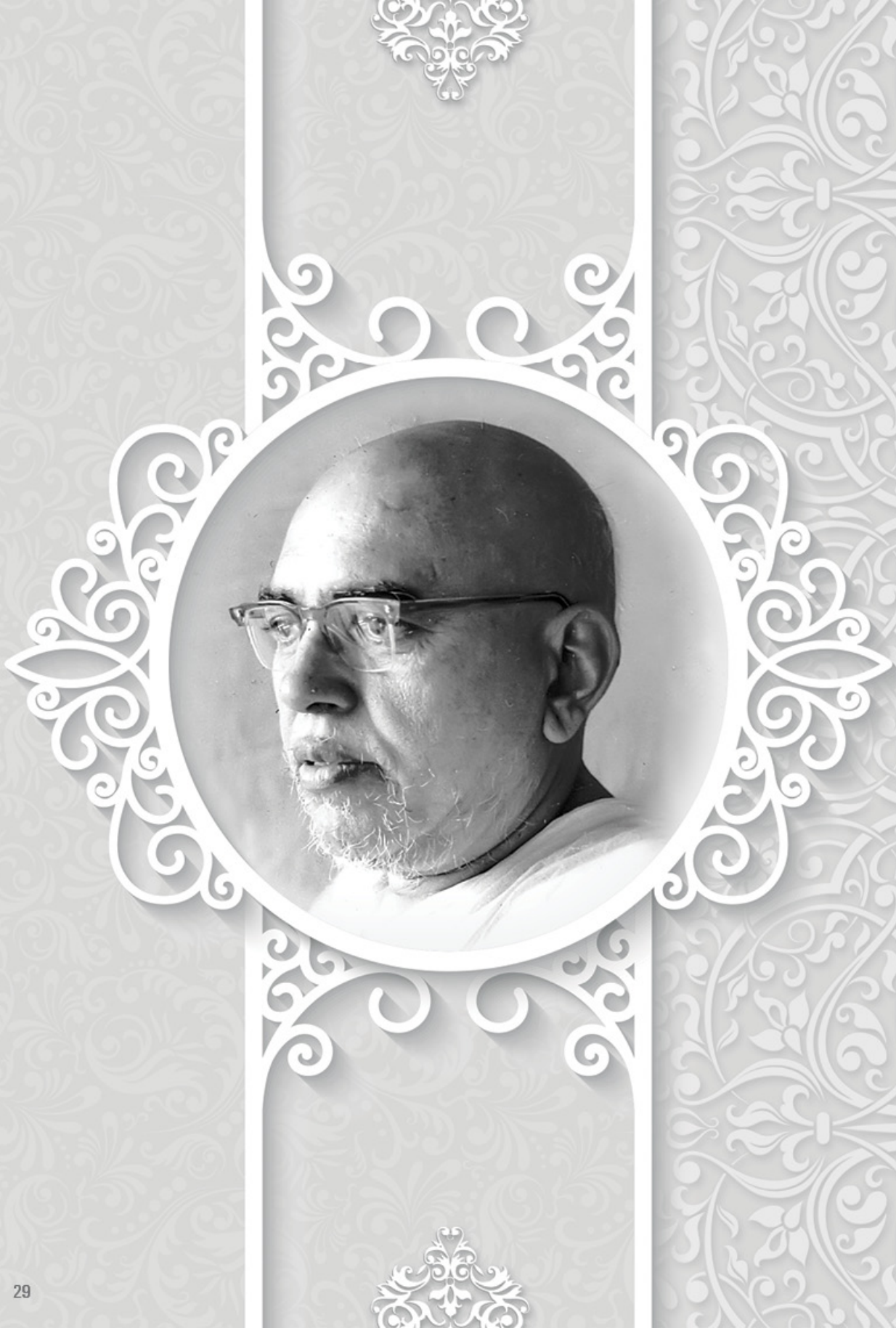
The answer to this is that Guruji was ready to bless Munivar from the first day of his renouncing the worldly life. But the deep respect necessary for receiving the Grace was missing until then. It blossomed only after coming back from prostitute's house and thus Guruji showered him with blessings.

The self-confidence that Munivar had in his own sadhana was shaken up and it is then that he realized that without Guru's Grace, it was not possible to walk even a single step on the path of self-discovery and self-realization.

We receive Guru's blessings as per our devotion.

1. Munivar. Best amongst the monks.









OCEAN OF AFFECTION

In Vikram Samvad 2044, Param Pujya Acharya Hemratna Suri M.S. stayed with Acharya Gurudev at Mr. Vadibhai's (originally of Vaav region) bungalow situated at Paldi¹, Ahmedabad. They stayed there for a month. During this period, he had experienced the affection and blessings of Gurudev.

Here is a description in Acharya Hemratna Suri's own words –

I asked Gurudev : Sahebji, where do you plan to go after Chaturmas? Gurudev said that he wanted to go for a pilgrimage to Sammetshikhar².

I was happy to hear this and I said, "That's very good. Right now there is some renovation and construction work pending in some 2-4 temples. If you will be there, then this work can be recommenced and completed in your presence. Pratishtha of the idols can also be done by your divine hands."

To this Gurudev replied, "You are very smart. You don't want to come and hence you are entrusting me with all this work. Tell me, will you accompany us, if the Sangha³ decides to go to Sammetshikhar?"

Captivated by this affection shown by Gurudev. I said : "If there is a sangha under your guardianship. I will certainly come."

While residing at the bungalow in Paldi, Panyas Shri Shilchandra Vijayji M S and Panyas Shri Pradyumna Vijayji M S went to meet Gurudev. During the conversation, Gurudev wanted a pen to jot down something. He checked his bag, but he did not find his pen.

Gurudev immediately said, "Just check near Yashovijay's asana⁴, you will find it there. It is his habit that whatever thing he takes, he forgets to return it. If anything is missing in the Upashray, it is typically found near Yashovijay's asana."

Reflected in the above words of Gurudev, is his profound love for his student. Just like a mother takes note of the mistakes of one's children, Gurudev used to take note of his students. Such incidents demonstrate Gurudev's mother like affection for his students by way of his words.

1. Paldi is an affluent area located in South Western Ahmedabad, India. 2. Sammetshikhar is a Jain pilgrimage site where 20 of the 24 Tirthankars have attained Nirvana. 3. Sangha – A religious group comprising of Sadhu, Sadhavi, Shravaka and Shrivika. 4. Seat of the monk.





JOURNEYING THROUGH HISTORY

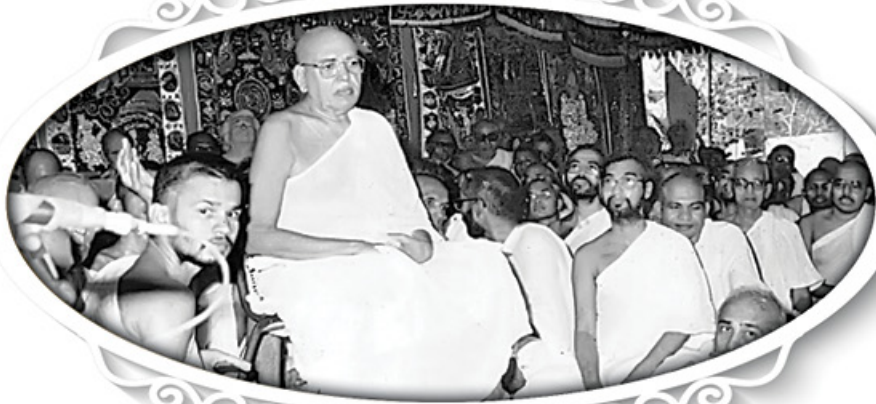
Once, Guru asked an ascetic, “Who are you?” (Bear in mind; Gurudev is not asking him his name.)

The ascetic replied, “I am Jotan” (Jotan being his name).

With great affection, Gurudev replied, “10 years back when you had come to visit me, even then, you were Jotan; and today also you are Jotan. Then what about your nameless experience (experiencing the nameless soul).

On hearing this, the ascetic realized that, “He is not Jotan, but he is pure soul.”

Thus, Gurudev was able to remove the materialistic barriers in the mind of the ascetic with his affection.



RESPECTING ERUDITION

In order to teach Balmuni Omkar Vijayji M S, very learned scholars such as Pandit Varshanandji and Pandit Chotalalji had come from Bihar.

Once, it so happened, that Gurudev was the only one who was studying under them. He used to learn for 5 to 6 hours and would memorize everything by next day. The next day, when Panditji used to ask, he would narrate it perfectly. Panditji was pleased with his sincerity and dedication.

Once, a Panditji had come to teach Gurudev for a duration of 6 months. He prepared the syllabus accordingly. But his grasping power was so powerful that he completed the 6 months syllabus in two and a half months. Dada Gurudev had to leave around this time for some function. So, the Sangha members thought of sending the Panditji back home.

One day, some leading members of the sangha were in a meeting with Dada Gurudev when the Panditji also came. Dada Gurudev asked Panditji, "How is your student Panditji?"

Panditji replied, "He is very intelligent." And he jokingly added that, "It will be a loss for me, because he has completed his 6 months course in 2 and ½ months only and so now I will get the salary of 2 and ½ months only."

Generous leaders of the Sangha said, "We have witnessed your efforts and dedication in teaching Balmuni so we would like to give not only your entire salary of 6 months but also a reward for your dedication. Kindly accept it."



A LOOK IN THE PAST

Maha Mahopadhyay Shree Yashovijay Suri M.S. was in Khambhat. Devotees would come to hear his spiritual discourses.

When Mahopadhyaji had gone to Kashi¹, a Pandit used to teach him. His daughter was now getting married and on this occasion, Panditji remembered Mahopadhyaji.

He travelled from Kashi to Khambhat. Mahopadyaji was delivering discourses at the time Panditji arrived (It was 10:00 in the morning). Panditji's clothes were soiled due to travelling; he arrived clad in these unclean clothes at the Upashray Hall where the discourse was being delivered.

When Upadhyaji saw Panditji, he asked the Sangha members to respectfully receive him and give him a seat. He then informed all the assembled devotees that this person was a scholar (Pandit) from Kashi and that he had learnt Navya Nyaya from him.

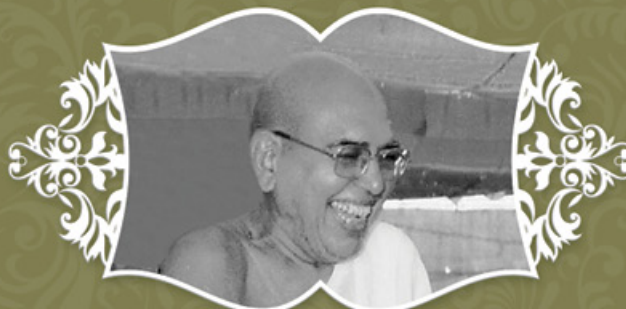
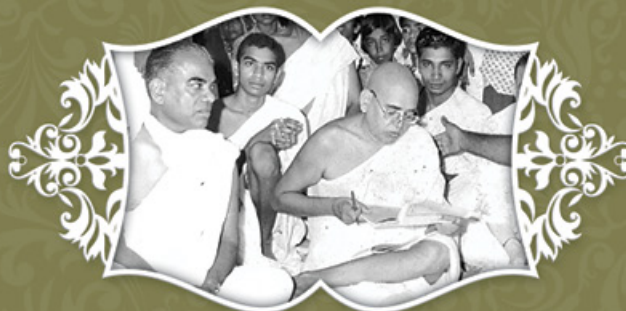
As soon as the spiritual speech was over, many women who were present gave their gold ornaments to Panditji.

Panditji was pleased.

1. Kashi better known as Varanasi or Benaras is an Indian city on the banks of Ganga in Uttar Pradesh. It is considered to be the holiest of the seven cities in Hinduism. It also plays a very important role in Jainism and Buddhism.







GURU^o AGANA (GURU'S COMMAND) IS THE REAL DHARMA

At Hatibhai's wadi in Ahmedabad, there was Anjan Shalaka Mahotsav¹ in the years 1995 to 2000 V.S. i.e. some 65 – 70 years back. In those days, such ceremonies were held rarely.

Balmuni Omkar Vijay wanted to attend the Pratishtha Mahotsav. With his childlike authority he asked Dada Gurudev : "Let us go to Ahmedabad and attend the function. And we have also received various requests for Chaturmas in Ahmedabad. So, we can do our chaturmas there."

When narrating this incident, Gurudev said that it was the first and last time in his life he had expressed his desire to Gurudev. There is no scope for desires in a disciple's life; Guru's command shapes the life of Disciple. A disciple never asks questions, nor does he crave for anything.

Dada Gurudev patiently listened to Balmuni's request and he then lovingly kept his hand on Balmuni's head and smiled. At that time, he did not say a single thing. After some days, they received a request for Chaturmas from a small village from Banaskantha district. Gurudev accepted this request.

Thus, Balmuni's desire remained unfulfilled. But Dada Gurudev was far-sighted and could foresee the events of future. Balmuni did not know this then. But

the events that unfolded in the future helped him realise this.

After the Chaturmas, various Munis came from different places like Shankheswar and other neighbouring regions of Ahmedabad. Balmuni very eagerly asked them the highlights of the Anjan Shalaka ceremony. They narrated it to him, but also told him about the troubles they experienced while in Ahmedabad.

Balmuni was surprised to hear this and asked : "What troubles?" They said : "Have you not heard about them?" They then informed him that riots had broken out. Because of this they had to collect Gochari from few houses located in close vicinity of the Upashray. Moreover, due to the curfew rules, people could not come to the Upashray for their daily prayers and rituals. Their own movement too was restricted to the area and Upashray where they had stayed.

They then added that after coming to North Gujarat, they felt much more relieved as they could walk in the open air. At this time, Balmuni realized how far-sighted Gurudev was. And he decided to live by the rule of "Tavvayan sewana"² and never doubt Guru's words – "Aagya Guruna Avicharniya".

Here I would like to quote words from the book 'Gurutatva Vinischay' – "Guruanaye Mukha". To obey Guru's words is to be on the path of Moksha (salvation).

1. Anjan Shalaka ceremony is the part of the Panch Kalyanak Pratishtha ceremony which consecrates one or more Jain Tirthankar idols. The name Anjan Shalaka is given to the ceremony of decorating the eyes of idols of Tirthankars with collyrium made of many special substances using in the process a gold-stick. 2. Jain ascetics do not cook their food, do not get it prepared for them, and do not accept any food which was prepared for them. They go to different householders that are Jains or vegetarians and receive a little food from each house. This practice is called Gochari. 3. Obeying and accepting Guru's command whole heartedly.



Once upon a time, a Shishya (disciple) went to collect Gochari after taking his Guru's permission. Gurudev asked him to bring a knife. Shishya readily accepted this and said Tahatti ("Yes").

After collecting the Gochari, Shishya returned to Upashray and gave the knife to Gurudev. Gurudev asked him to keep it in a cupboard. They then finished the Gochari and completed their daily rituals. Gurudev made no mention of the knife again, nor did the Shishya ask anything about it.

It was a full moon night; the moonlight brightened the Upashray. Gurudev woke up at 12 o'clock in the midnight, and opened the cupboard and retrieved the knife. He came near the Shishya's bed, and he bent down; but suddenly the knife slipped from his hand and fell to the ground, the noise of which woke up the Shishya. Shishya on seeing that it was Gurudev, closed his eyes, without a worry.

Guru opened the knife and slit one of the veins of Shishya. Blood oozed out from the cut. He collected it in a cup and then used some medicines to stop the further flow of the blood.

Next day morning, when the disciple woke up, he went and bowed to Gurudev. Gurudev asked him "What happened yesterday night?" Shishya wasn't curious to know what took place.

Then Gurudev told him that through his knowledge he had realised that a snake who was a past births' enemy of Shishya would come at midnight to harm him. To save his disciple, Gurudev conceived an idea. He inflicted a small cut to the Shishya and collected a small quantity of his blood and kept it in a cup such that it would be on the snake's path. Snake drank that blood and his animosity subsided. He went away and thus the disciple was saved.





GURUDEV'S AFFECTION¹: DEVOTEE'S DEVOTION²



Once, Gurudev visited Sanwal (a place in Vaav district, Gujarat). The joy of devotees knew no bounds and they walked some 3-4 kilometres to welcome and receive him. The women carried Kalash (auspicious pitcher – considered a holy symbol in India) on their heads.

After arriving in the village and worshipping in the temple, Gurudev took his seat in the Upashray and started with his spiritual discourses. Both Jains and Hindu devotees were listening with deep interest. Gurudev's simple, captivating and heart warming discourse touched the spiritual chord of the listeners. As soon as the discourse was over, the leader of the Sangha made an announcement : "At 9 am tomorrow, Gurudev will deliver discourse".

Gurudev smiled and told the Sangha leader : You could have atleast asked me if we will be here tomorrow. Only if we are here, we can have a discourse tomorrow.

The leader interrupted Gurudev and told him : "Gurudev ! you arrived just today, so, we deserve atleast on more day." Gurudev agreed.

Next day after the discourse, the Sangha leader approached Gurudev. He had brought along another person with him. He asked Gurudev, "This man wants to do Siddhachakra Pujan (One holy ritual – worship of Navpada).

Please suggest an auspicious day for it. Maharaj Saheb's don't visit this village very often, and Acharya Maharaj Saheb's come even more rarely; so we wish to get the puja done in your holy presence."

Gurudev was pleased to see the devotion and thus, the date and time for the puja was decided and the puja was accomplished.

Next morning, when Gurudev and his disciples were preparing for their Vihar (departure); some girls approached them and took Pacchkhaan¹ for Attham² tapa³.

Gurudev asked, "Why are you taking vow today?" The girls said that they are doing Chandanbala's⁴ Attham.

"Oh! Chandanbala's Attham", Gurudev exclaimed. It is necessary for Guru to go to the house of the person doing this fast for Gochari on the day of Parna⁵, for the vow to be complete. So they had to stay back for 4 more days.

Since, Gurudev had no other immediate plans, he could extend his stay. Thus, Gurudev was able to satisfy the devotees' requests.

During those days, we would look at Gurudev, and exclaim, "This indeed is infinite love!" and look at devotees and admire their devotion.

1. It is the process of taking a vow for fasting, abstaining, etc. The one, who undertakes fasting or abstaining, takes this vow from his Guru or an elder person. 2. Attham: To give up food and water or only food continuously for three days. 3. Tapa can mean fasting or deep meditation. Fasting is a very common practice in Jainism. There are various types of fasts, which encourage Jains to do fasts, according to their self control and capacity. 4. Chandanbala is one of the Mahasatis (noble women) whose chastity, trustworthiness, patience and endurance were tested with all kinds of hardships and difficulties. These Mahasatis are mentioned in Jain scriptures. She was the head nun in the monastic order of Lord Mahavira. When Lord Mahavira was about to complete his 12 years of fasting, he decided that he will take Gochari from a lady who fills 13 requirements. One of these 13 requirements, one was that the lady should not consumed food or water for 3 days. 5. Parna means breaking of the fast.





GURU'S BHAKTI IS GREAT (WORTH PRAISING)

We had one Chaturmas in Arkhi (a place in Pathawada).

One day, when we had just reached Upasharay after coming back from the temple, it started raining. It would drizzle for sometime and then there would be a heavy downpour followed by a drizzle again.

We were all occupied with our studies. The people living there were highly devoted. As soon as the rain would slow down, they would come and request, "Sahebji, please come for Gochari. It doesn't look like the rain would stop today."

As soon as Muniraj would take patra¹ and drape Kamali² to venture outside, it would start raining heavily again. This disappointed the devotees.

It finally stopped raining at 10 am. Muniraj then went out for Gochari and we had our Navkarshi thereafter. We learnt only later that except for small kids, not a single devotee had eaten anything until we did Navkarshi.

We were amazed, on seeing this wonderful devotion towards Guru.

1. Patra is a wooden vessel, in which the Jain monks, take Gochari. 2. Kamali is a woollen shawl.









SHRAMAN SAMMELAN (VS.1990)



*Balmuni Shree
Omkar Vijayji*



SHRAMAN SAMMELAN (VS.2044)





NAME AND BEYOND NAME



Shakespeare has written in one of his famous plays, "What's in a name?" For mere mortals like us, this is a reasonable assertion because the name does not hold any significance. But, for great sages, their names and even their nicknames are of great importance.

Gurudev was born on 'Aaso Suda Teras'¹ in the year 1979 (V.S.) in Zinzuwada'. On that day, under the auspices of the Aacharya Gurdev present there for Chaturmas, Upadhan tap² commenced.

Gurudev was named 'Chinukumar' as per his Zodiac sign. But since he was born on the first day of Upadhan, he was affectionately nicknamed 'Upadhaniyo'.

Thus, his nickname was also very inspiring. His nickname itself indicated that in future the child would become a great Aacharya and under his presence; Upadhan and many other such Aaradhanas would be undertaken.



At the time of Diksha of Gurudev, a wonderful thing happened. Gurudev's father Ishwarlal Bhai (Tapasvi Muniraj Shri Vilasvijayji Maharaj) and young Chinukumar took their Diksha together.

At that time, Dada Gurudev was accompanied by Pandit Varshanandji

Jha. He was an expert in astrology. Dada Gurudev began discussing with Panditji the name that should be given to Balmuni.

He said that since Diksha is also like a new birth, it is not necessary to follow Zodiac sign at the time of birth. The new name could be based on the Zodiac sign at the time of Diksha.

And thus, Dada Gurudev named him Omkar Vijay.



After Gurudev's Kaldharma (passing away), a book was being written as a tribute to him. The artist designing the cover page of the book approached me and showed me its draft. All that the draft contained was the word 'Shraddhanjali' with a smiling photo of Gurudev besides it.

At the time, my friend Pandit Shri Pradyumnaji Maharaj (now an Aacharya) came to meet me. I showed him the draft of the cover page and asked him if the cover page should contain the formally written name : 'A tribute to Pujya Aacharya Bhagvant Shrimad Vijay Omkar Surishwar Ji Maharaja' or if it should be kept the way the artist had designed.

He looked at Gurudev's photo and said that Gurudev's face was a personification of Omkar himself. So there was no need for these words.

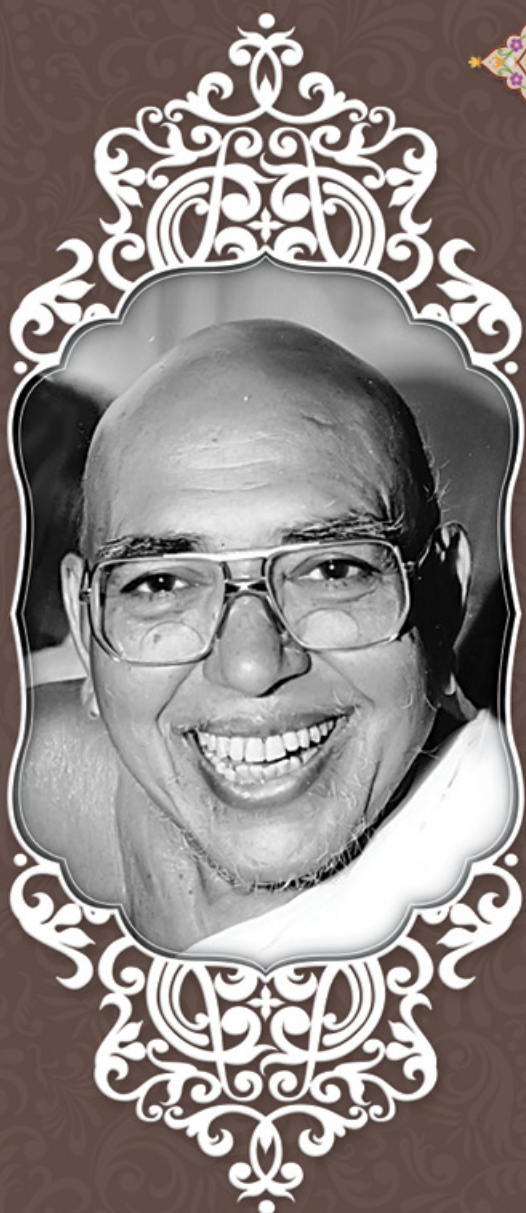


Indeed, his face was like 'Omkar'. Thus, he was Omkar personified. This also made sense when looked at from a different perspective : it encoded the message of going from shabda (that which is spoken) to Ashabda (that which is understood in allegorical sense).

I bow down in the holy feet of Gurudev who left his name behind to achieve a nameless identity.

1. Aasa suda teras means the 13th day of the full moon cycle of the Aaso month of the Gujarati Calendar.
2. Upadhana is a type of tapa which can be performed in three parts for 47 days 35 days and 28 days separately. During these days one must fast on one day and the second day one must do Ekasan, which is eating one meal in one place. It is called Nivi.

PEEPING INTO THE HISTORY



Once there was an ascetic named Ramya Ghosh. He came to Gurudev to take Sadhana Diksha. The first lesson that Gurudev preached him was – 'Your name is not yours.'

The ascetic sat near Gurudev and started chanting and trying to experience the first lesson given by Gurudev, by saying the words – "I am a nameless person. Beyond the words, I am not Ramya Ghosh."

After around half an hour Gurudev summoned him. The ascetic immediately answered – "Yes, Gurudev".

Gurudev laughed lightly at this. The ascetic realised that this was Gurudev's attempt at testing him, in which he failed. He failed to remember that he was not Ramya Ghosh. That was a label given to him, a norm of the society. He himself was nameless.

SAVIOUR DOESN'T DROWN

This is an episode when Chinukumar was 7 years old. His sister Vimlaben and some others had gone to a lake to wash clothes. Chinukumar accompanied them. The lake of Zinzuwada village is big, deep and built with strong stones. Vimlaben was engrossed in washing.

Chinukumar went to the edge of the lake. He didn't know to swim, yet he ventured near it. He who was going to be the saviour of many lives didn't know how to save his own. With childlike curiosity, he thought that using the staircase, he would go down and then climb up afterwards.

He must have stepped down some 2-4 steps when he slipped on the moss gathered on the steps. He slid down and fell into the water.

What could he do now! He didn't know swimming, so if he didn't come back up quickly enough, then what would his fate be...? The fear of death never crossed his mind, but instead his mind was occupied with just one thought: 'I want to take Diksha. Will I not be able to take Diksha? Will I not be able to walk on the path recommended by God?'

With these thoughts in his mind, his hands and legs were searching for the firm surface of stairs. Suddenly, his leg found one of the steps and he was out.

Someone asked him once, "How is it possible to think of Diksha when death itself is so near? This is indeed amazing."

Gurudev humbly replied, "This is all due to God's grace. Any good thought entering our mind is due to his divine grace only.

These holy thoughts come only due to the Sadhana done in previous births."

The one who asked this question was extremely pleased with this answer. Gurudev had not taken any credit for himself. He was entirely devoted and thankful to God.





IN CONTINUITY WITH THE PAST

I heard recently that a book on bhakti yoga has been published in Europe. The 250 page volume was beautifully bound. The title of the book was 'Total Surrender'.

The interesting aspect of the book was the concept used by the author to explain the meaning of "surrender". He had left all 250 pages of the book totally blank.

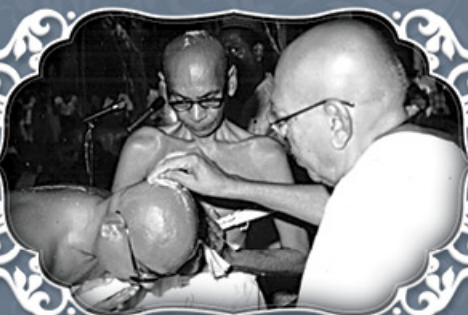
Here the intention of the author was to depict that one can surrender oneself to God, only when one becomes blank. i.e. gets rid of all the impure thoughts.

It is said that Devotion means Division.

When you divide 16 by 4, the quotient is 4 and remainder is zero. Likewise Bhakta (devotee) has to become like the remainder zero. On one side, there is God and on the other side, there is Guru. He becomes sandwiched in between.

And thus, it is said that : One who is ready to become Vibhav Shunya (free of all impure thoughts) is a disciple. And one who makes him Vibhav Shunya is a Guru.



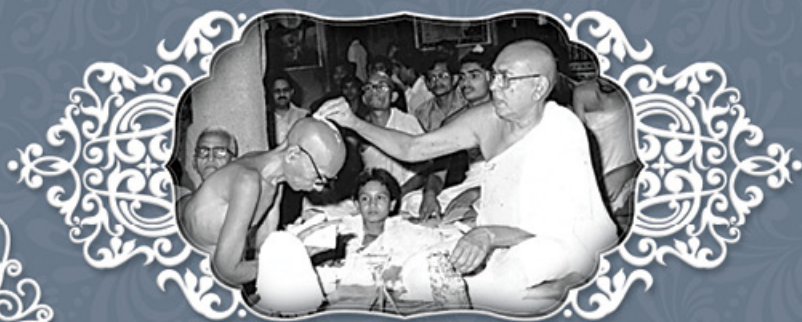




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IDENTITY OF DEVOTEE

Below is a wonderful incident narrated to me by my scholar friend Acharya Shri Pradyumnasuri Maharaj in his own words -

Once, I was going in the direction of Jagvallabh Parshvanath derasar¹ in Panjrapole². Suddenly, a man with turban approached me and said : "Baapji* ! You are here ? Now when will Gurudev come ?"

I gathered that the man must have mistaken me for Yashovijayji since our faces look similar and that he must have been enquiring about the arrival of Acharya Omkarsuri Maharaj Saheb.

I told him, "Brother, I am not Yashovijay, I am Pradyumna Vijay. But Acharya Maharaj and Yashovijayji are expected to come to Ahmedabad within a week."

As I was saying this to him, I couldn't help but notice his face and moist eyes. The excitement on his face as I mentioned the name of his Guru was quite palpable.

It was then that I remembered the shloka (stanza) from the Shikshastak

written by Chaitanya Dev :

नयनं गलदश्रूधारया,
वदनं गद्गदरुद्धया गिरा।
पुलकैर्निचितं वपुः कदा,
तव नामग्रहणे भविष्यति ॥

The above lines mean - 'God, when will that time come, when while chanting your name, my eyes will overflow with the tears of joy, my voice will get choked because of the intense happiness and every cell in my body will experience pure bliss.'

On hearing the name of Gurudev, I saw how ecstatically emotional the Shravaka³ had become.

A few days later when I met Yashovijayji I said to him that the devotees from the Vaav and Deesa regions can be recognised by their eyes itself. This devotee that I met had worn a turban. But, had he not worn the turban, I would have still recognized him as a devotee of Omkarsuri Maharaj by merely looking at his joy filled tearful eyes and ecstatic face.

1. Derasar is the place of worship for Jains. 2. Panjrapole is a place in Ahmedabad. 3. Shravaka in Jainism is a lay Jain. He is the hearer of discourses of Jain munis and scholars i.e. Jinavani. The Jain chaturvidha sangha includes monks, nuns, lay men (shravas) and women (shravikas). * A reverential term used for someone when spoken out of affection.



A RELIC FROM THE MYTHOLOGY

Hanuman Ji, an ardent devotee of Shri Ram Chandra, had dedicated his entire life to the devotion and faithful service of Lord Ram.

Once Lord Hanuman asked Lord Ram : "O Lord ! People call me your devotee. But that does not satisfy me. Indeed, do you approve of my devotion ?"

The beautiful answer given to this by Lord Ram has been recorded by Saint Shri Tulsidasji in his epic "Ram Charita Manas":

करत भक्ति मम पुलक शरीरा, गदगद गिरा, नयन बहे नीरा...

It means, that the one whose every cell in the body is filled with happiness, whose throat gets choked with emotions and eyes get filled with tears while doing Bhakti¹ is a true Bhakta (devotee).

Narad Rishi's Bhakti sutra also includes a similar description for the identity of a true Bhakta. It says –

भक्ता एकान्तिनो मुख्याः, कण्ठावरोध-रोमाञ्चाश्रूभिः
परस्परं लपमानाः पावयन्ति कुलानि पृथिवीं च॥

1. The Sanskrit and old Hindi noun bhakti is derived from the verb root bhaj, whose meanings include "to belong to", and "to worship". "Devotion" as an English translation for bhakti doesn't fully convey two important aspects of bhakti—the sense of participation that is central to the relationship between the devotee and God, and the intense feeling that is more typically associated with the word "love".



GURUDEV'S PRESENCE IN EVERY CELL OF MY BODY

Once a leader of Vaavpanthak, was conversing with a Jain monk. While conversing, he mentioned the many favours and help that Gurudev had bestowed on him and that he would never be able to repay the debt of them all.

But the muni observed that while talking, the entire body of that Shravaka radiated happiness and his eyes were overflowing with tears of joy. When the muni was narrating this incident to me, he said that he had never seen anyone getting so overwhelmed with joy while talking about Gurudev.

In a slightly different context, I remember the words of the song of Pravin Desai –

‘Tari Dhara ne mein Jhili jyare jyare,

Mare Rome Rome ful khilya tyare tyare.’

This translates as : when the showers of your blessings (words, love, etc.) fall upon me, my entire being blooms.



I would like to cite a verse from the Upanishad - ‘एकां हं बहुः स्याम्’ Gurudev manifested in multiple forms from a single form.

Gurudev resides in the heart of many devotees, but for some, Gurudev pervades their entire being. O Gurudev ! you are right here.

A philosopher has said : ‘Gurudev’s so called farewell is also a form of his arrival.’ Gurudev exists in the form of aura. Gurudev exists in the form of Memories in the hearts of devotees. Where does Gurudev not exist?

O Gurudev ! You exist here, there and everywhere.



JUST THE NAME OF GURUDEV IS ENOUGH

We were in Palitana for Chaturmas under the tutelage of Shrimad Vijay Arvind Surishwarji. During that time, a couple from Madhya Pradesh had come to pay their obeisance to Acharya Bhagvant Shri Kalapurna Surishwarji Maharaj. After seeking his blessings, they set out to pay their obeisance to all the other monks.

We were in Vaavpanthak. Shrivika' was the first to enter our room. After paying her respect, she said that her husband would be there shortly. She further added that his devotion towards Acharya Kalapurna Suri M.S. was so deep that everytime he would hear his

name, his entire being would excited.

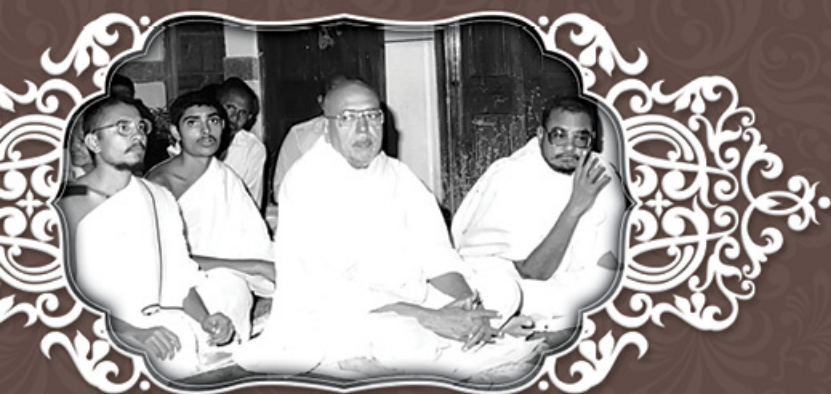
This piqued my interest in seeing the shravak because although I had read accounts of such devotion in scriptures, this was an opportunity to see it in real. After Shrivak entered the room and bowed down to us, I told him that they had a memorable Chaturmas because every morning, they would get to not only worship Shatrunjay Taleti but also get an Opportunity to meet Acharya Kalapurnasuri and seek his blessings.

As I was saying this, I could see joy exuding from his body upon the mention of Acharya's name.

1. Jain lay women









THE EXTERNAL (PHYSICAL) & THE INTERNAL (EMOTIONAL) PERSONALITY OF GURUDEV

Great and eloquent Acharya Shri Shilchandra Suri Maharaj had spent a month in the company of Gurudev. He later on penned the character portray of Gurudev in his powerful words. Below is the description in his own words :

“He was fair skinned and possessed a commanding stature. His posture was such that the person accompanying him would also walk in respect and awe of Gurudev’s self assured gait. His face was an equal blend of serenity and intensity; the happiness and serenity was determinedly reflected on his round countenance. He possessed an unalloyed mind, a sharp wit, a determined resolve, respect towards others views and to keep all these values in a balance, a relentless assertion. And with the combination of these virtues, the soulful eyes gleamed radiance that gave completion to the powerful personality that is Omkarsuri Maharaj.



In the short yet very intimate time that I spent with Gurudev, I saw many remarkable traits in him. He was always at work with one task or

the other, but he used to shirk away from useless talks of all kinds. He never used to try to dazzle others by his charisma; he maintained a very simple demeanour in spite of his powerful personality.

He had such a blending nature – that he would himself become a child when in presence of children, with a devotee he would become the loving and doting Guru, when with big or small but respectful personalities, he would be gentle and respectful with a behaviour befitting an Acharya Shri. And when with his equals, he would become a strong willed person engaging in healthy & spirited conversations. Thus, he had a mature nature with which he would adapt himself according to the situations and people.

I think that a person, who judges with a sharp mind and keen wit all of his actions, would only be able to achieve the balance that Gurudev exhibits in his life.

And the most attractive aspect of his nature was that he would never get influenced or swayed by the opinions of others. Also he would never enforce his ideas and his opinions on others.





A GLIMPSE INTO THE HISTORY

Though all the above mentioned was a portrayal of his external nature, I had a deep curiosity to explore the internal nature of Gurudev. Accidentally, I got an opportunity to fulfil this curiosity on the occasion of Vaishakh Sud Beej and Treej (The second and third days of the full moon cycle of Vaishakh month – gujarati Calendar).

In these 2 days I got the opportunity to spend some informal light, intimate and sentimental moments with him. I became acquainted with his childlike innocence, an openness of nature that would make anyone feel at ease and a lack of pretentiousness. All this made me very happy.

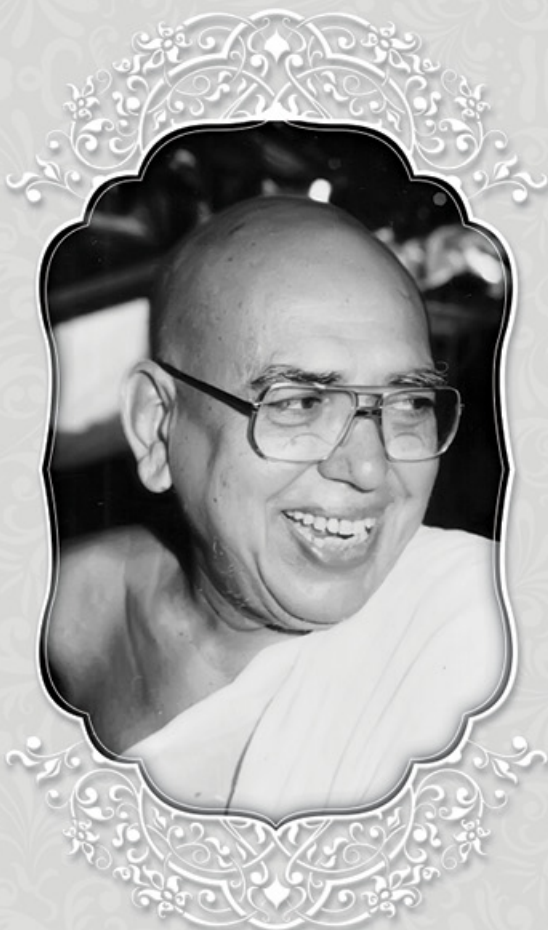
All powerful personalities have an incomprehensible yet irresistible magnetic attraction. But when we come to know of the source of their attraction, we find ourselves gratified. This realisation makes our lives complete and blessed."



This is an excerpt from the life of James Whistler, a renowned landscapist. His friend once asked him, "Why do you always draw landscapes and sceneries only?"

To which James answered, "I have never found a person grand enough, whom I can paint?"

If James Whistler had met Gurudev, he would definitely have made his portrait.





PAYING OFF THE DEBTS

Jelana is a small village in the Vaav district. People living there are largehearted. Only one or two Jains used to stay there at the time. But since Gurudev was a divine person, all the Hindus also were excited about his arrival there. The women had carried the holy Kumbha on their heads. Devotional songs and dhol, etc was being played in the honour of Gurudev. This carried on till Gurudev, reached the house of the person where he was to stay.

In the morning discourse, Gurudev narrated beautiful incidents from the Ramayana and Mahabharata, but the people were not satisfied with this half hour of discourse. So, Gurudev continued for another one hour or so in the afternoon, and it was announced that there would be a discourse in the night too. People wanted to make as much of Gurudev's one days time as is possible.

At night after pratikraman¹, when I went to touch the feet of Gurudev and get his blessings, I noticed that Gurudev had fever. This was the result of daily Vihaar², hectic schedule that comprised of 2-3 discourses everyday and constant presence of visitors. I requested Gurudev to take rest that night so that he could get over the fatigue and be ready for vihaar

the next day. Gurudev agreed. I draped him with blanket and other warm stuff and then went outside where people were waiting for the night discourse. As soon as I began with the discourse, I heard murmurs amongst the people. They were waiting for Gurudev to deliver the discourse, but were disappointed when they didn't see him. The noise of murmurs reached Gurudev and having inferred the cause of these murmurs, he immediately put aside the blanket and with only one shawl draped around him, he arrived at that place. He then told me that he would take care of the discourse and asked me to go to bed.

I went inside and slept, but within, I was overwhelmed with awe: I had read about the boundless compassion of great sages but today I witnessed it myself. I wondered: What was the driving force behind Gurudev's will to deliver the discourse in such chilling cold, open air and with a body suffering from fever?

It was his single-minded determination to give something to the people. He strongly held the belief that only if the message of God touched the hearts of people would he be able to repay the debt of God in some minuscule way.

Many salutations at the holy feet of Gurudev!

1. Pratikraman (literally Sanskrit "introspection"), is a process of repentance of sins (prayaschit) during which Jains repent for their sins during their daily life, and remind themselves to refrain from doing so again. Devout Jains often do Pratikraman at least twice a day. 2. Vihaar in Jainism refers to the practice of travelling from one location to another by foot and is typically undertaken by Jain monks.

FROM THE PAST

This is a story of the great Shravika Sulsa. Once, Lord Mahavir sent Sulsa the blessings of "Dharma Labha" with the Shravak Ambad.

On receiving Lord's blessings she was extremely overjoyed. Her eyes were overflowing with tears of joy, she had lumps in her throat and her entire being was exuding joy.

After overcoming her emotions, she said: "O Lord ! You are the Supreme Being; you are the lord of the entire universe. And I'm a mere servant of yours. Yet, you remembered me and sent your blessings....O Lord ! How shall I become free from this debt of yours?





MOHI LAGI LAGAN
GURU CHARANAN KI...





GARDENER OF THE SPIRITUAL GARDEN



In the year V. S. 2015, Pujya Dada Gurudev and Gurudev were in Rajkot for Chaturmas. Noted writer Vaidya Mohanlal Dhami lived in Rajkot. Every morning, after doing Puja at the temple, he would come to the Upashray to seek blessings of Gurudev. Once he requested Gurudev: "My servant will get you a set of my books. Would you be able to go through them to check if they contain any inconsistencies with what's written in the scriptures? I would like to be apprised of such mistakes."

The books arrived. But before Gurudev got a chance to look at them, they caught my (Yashovijay's) attention (I had been a bookworm ever since I was a child!). The first book that I got hold off was titled "Siddha Vaital". So intriguing was the plot of the book that I couldn't get my mind off it. The story that split across three volumes completely gripped me. I would read until it got dark in the evening. And my night would be spent in curiosity, pondering over what would happen next. In the morning, after finishing my daily rituals and breakfast, I would quickly get back to my study room. Even while having breakfast, my mind would be occupied in the story.

At that time, I was studying Sanskrit grammar with a Panditji. He would come around 9 am. I was so hooked to the story that I would hide it behind the Sanskrit textbook and continue reading it. As soon as I would hear his coughing (that indicated his arrival), I would hide it below my desk to escape his attention and pretend to be reading the Sanskrit book. Panditji would think I was studious!



Gurudev's compassion had nurtured this habit of reading in me. He had complete faith that, whatever I read, I would never go on to the wrong path, as the roots of my dedication towards God was very strong. So reading would never let me waver from the right path.

I will forever be indebted to his kindness and faith in me.





A PEEK IN^o THE PAST

The great social worker Deenbandhu Andrews' once went to a slum. He visited a house there where a family lived. The husband was a wastrel who spent all his earnings on liquor. There was no food for children to eat. When the wife complained about this, the husband beat her up.

Deenbandhu was shocked to see this. He told the poor man, "Brother! At least have faith in God! Will God pardon you for these actions?" The man replied, "I do not believe in God."

Deenbandhu said, "You may not have faith in God, but he has faith in you. What will you do about that?" He was stunned and questioned: "God has faith in me." "Yes" was the reply and his life changed forever.

1. Charles Freer Andrews (12 February 1871 - 5 April 1940) was a Church of England priest. A Christian missionary, educator and social reformer in India, he became a close friend of Mahatma Gandhi and identified with the cause of India's independence. He was instrumental in convincing Gandhi to return to India from South Africa, where Gandhi had been a leading light in the Indian civil rights struggle. For his contributions to the Indian Independence Movement Gandhi, his students at St. Stephen's College, Delhi, named him Deenabandhu, or "Friend of the Poor".





COMPASSION^o OF SADGURU^o

I was 30 years old. I had widely read literature from East and West. The result of this was that the filth of ego crept in - I had become proud of my refined literary skills, I had become proud of my vast repertoire of scriptural knowledge.

This did not escape the ever-compassionate Gurudev's attention. Once an innocent reader of "Siddha Vaital" and now tainted with the dirt of ego, Gurudev was moved upon seeing this condition of mine and he quickly acted to correct the situation. Indeed, cleansing the disciple's consciousness of the accumulated filth is Sadguru's mojo. This act of Sadguru is aptly described in the following verse by Anandghanji Maharaj.

गुरु मोहे मारे शब्द की लाठी,
चेले की मति अपराधिनी नाठी.

In compassionate voice Gurudev called me. He asked me, "You have read so much; so have you read the books written

by Haribhadra Maharaj. I replied, "No, Gurudev, I haven't read them." So Guruji asked me to read all the books written by Haribhadra Maharaj. I asked him: "which book should I start reading." With the intention of destroying my ego he told me to start reading Yoga Bindu.

I started reading the book, at the end of the book the following lines were written - 'Vidusham Shastrasansaarrah, Sadyagarhitatmanaam'. These words imply that without the yogic vision all the scriptures are only a collection of pages even for the erudite.

I was shaken upon reading this. This is what I had done; I had merely collected and devoured the books. The scriptures whose purpose was to give me salvation, I used them only to inflate my ego.

I was again filled with wonder towards my compassionate Gurudev.



IN CONTINUITY WITH THE PAST

Milarepa¹ was a very learned scholar in Tibet. He became spiritually inclined and was longing for someone to give him Sadhana. At that time, Naropa was a highly renowned Guru in Tibet. Milarepa came to Naropa and requested: "Kindly initiate me into Sadhana".

Naropa was a master of face-reading. He could sense that Milarepa wasn't yet ready for initiation into Sadhana because of his inflated ego. He said: "We need stones to build a hut inside the Ashram. Please get some stones from the surrounding mountains." Milarepa agreed and went to the mountains to gather stones. By evening, he was back with a cart full of stones and

he then proceeded to meet Naropa. Naropa said: "Let us meet tomorrow morning." In the morning, Naropa again asked him to get stones saying more were needed. This trend continued for a week. On the seventh day evening as Milarepa was grinding the rocks into stones, he began to ponder: "What exactly is Gurudev doing? What is his motive?" And suddenly it dawned on him that by asking him to gather stones, Gurudev's intention was to not make him grind the rocks into stones, but rather grind his own ego. With this illumination, his ego dissipated. He came to Naropa. Naropa noticed his ego-less countenance and immediately initiated him into Sadhana.



1. Jetsun Milarepa is generally considered one of Tibet's most famous yogis and poets.





In the year 2023 (V.S.) Puja Dada Gurudev Shri and Gurudev Shri were in the Vaav village for Chaturmas. After the Chaturmas, Gurudev travelled in the Vaav region. He was delighted to see the devotion of the people there. Just as a skilled jeweler can ascertain the authenticity of a diamond by a mere gaze at it, so was Gurudev able to see the guilelessness and warmth in the people there and assess that a few spiritual discourses could easily inspire them and yield beautiful results.

He remembered the well-known principle of economics: "Minimum effort, maximum result".

And thus, like Deesa and other regions, he gave this region too, a special place in his heart. Truly, the people of this region are fortunate and blessed. It is said in the scriptures that blessed are those that have Gurus in their heart, but what could be said about the fortune and the blessedness of the people who hold a special place in Gurudev's heart. Their blessedness is indeed non-describable.

The entire region had become beautiful with to the numerous temples (Derasars), Upashrayas and Paathshalas¹. Wherever there were no temples, new temples were built, where temples needed renovation, renovation work was undertaken.

Thus, in Gurudev's words, Vaav Panthak (district) transformed into Bhaav panthak (region full of emotion and feelings). The incident below describes the

simplicity and the devotion of the people of that region –

We were in Vihaar and were to pass through a small village near Chothar Nesda. We were to stop there for an hour and then continue further. There were only about 2-3 Jain households in that village. Despite this, the entire village had assembled to receive us with a ceremonial procession. Hindu women were carrying Kumbhas (auspicious pitchers) on their heads.

The procession stopped near a place where Gurudev was to give a discourse. Addressing the Hindu majority in the assembly, Gurudev asked: "What is the identity of Hindu? The house where parents are respected and treated like God and the house where cows are worshipped is the house of a Hindu".

After the discourse, we had our breakfast and then continued with our journey.

Later, during Chaturmas, a person from that village came to meet us. He told us that Gurudev's discourse had such deep impact on the people that almost 30-40 households now had cows. Owing to the daily culture, people already had buffaloes earlier, but the indifference towards cows had now been removed.

How wonderful this Bhaav Pradesh is!

1. Pathshalas mean school, but in this context they refer to the schools where the religious scriptures are taught.

ALONG WITH THE GURUDEV

Gurudev arrived in a village near Sirohi (Rajasthan). In afternoon, a Sravaka came to meet Gurudev. He had worn unclean clothes and had an unshaven beard.

He said to Gurudev, "I have a request." Going by his appearance, we thought he was a poor Sadharmik¹. Gurudev possessed deep empathy for such people and was always keen to help them.

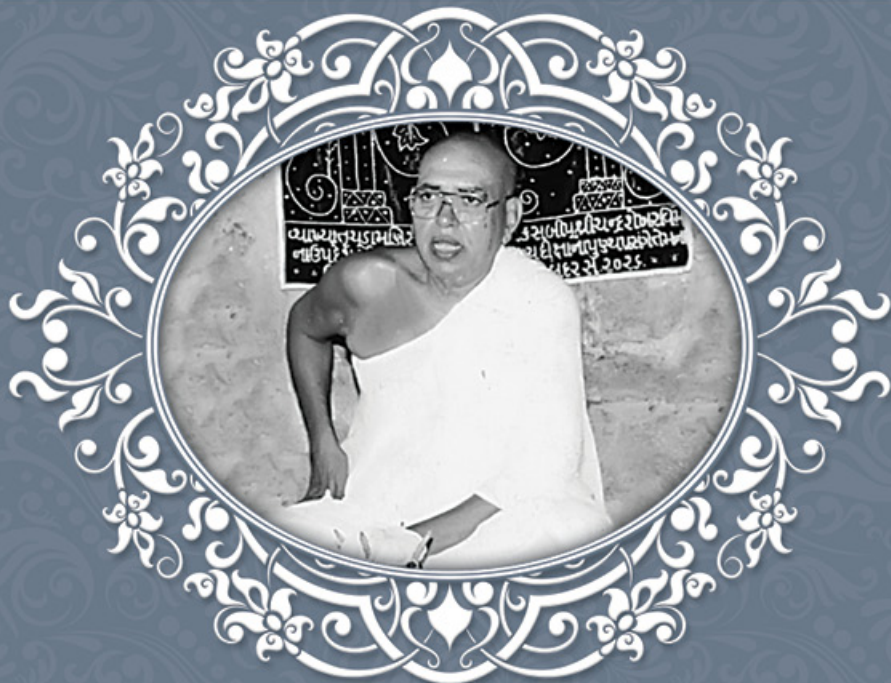
But, looking at this man, Gurudev figured that the matter was something else. And when we heard his request, we were all astonished. He said: "Gurudev! I have organized a Sangha Yatra to SammetShikhar and there will be a special train for the same. Before the Sangha departs, I would like to

perform Ashtanika Mahotsav² and Shanti Snatra³. Can you kindly suggest a muhurta (auspicious day and time)?"

We were astounded with the benevolence of this person. The entire endeavor would have cost him about one crore rupees and here he was with us, dressed very modestly and giving no hint of his multi millionaire status. How down-to-earth he was! Perhaps, it must have been firmly etched in his mind that whatever he had earned was due to the grace of god and that it must be spent in His service.

He embodied the principle of "Simple living and High thinking".

1. A fellow follower of Jainism. 2. It is a ceremony which consists of 8 holy rituals. 3. Snatra is a ritual related to the Janma Kalyanak.





DEESA REGION^o: DEVOTIONAL REGION^o

Gurudev always had a soft spot for Deesa Pradesh and its inhabitants. He would go there often.

Dada Gurudev and Gurudev always showered blessings on the Junadeesa region and Gurudev had spent more than 14 Chaturmas in that region.

I remember Aacharya Hemchandra Suri M.S. also used to come here. Aacharya Hirvijay Suri M.S. also stayed here for a long time. In his biographical book “Hirsaubhagya”, he described a special type of Sadhana (spiritual practice or penance) he had conducted over there.

When he was in Junadeesa, he pondered on whom he should nominate to be his successor. To solve this problem he thought, he should invoke (call respectfully) the Shashan Devi (demi goddess who are the protector and propagator of Jain dharma). Aacharya Ji invoked her and asked her, as to whom he should make his successor.

With her divine powers and gyan, the devi said, that Aacharya Sensuri would be ideal as his successor. Aacharya Ji was satisfied.

This is the place where Pujiyapad Heervijay M.S. walked on, the place where the great Sadhanacharya and Bhakti Yogacharya Puja Bhadra Suri of this generation (yug) did his Sadhana. This is the place where Japyoganishta and the humble natured Aacharya Bhagvant Shrimad Kirtisagar Suri did his sadhana.

Gachchadhipati Aacharya Bhagwan Shree Subodhsagar Suri and Shrimad Vijay Jinprabha Suri M.S. also would visit this place frequently.

Thus, this place and its soil is very holy for us, it's like a Tirth (pilgrim) place. The surrounding villages Vaghpura, Deesa, Rajpur, Junadeesa, Nesada and Aaseda all contribute to being the Bhakti Pradesh.

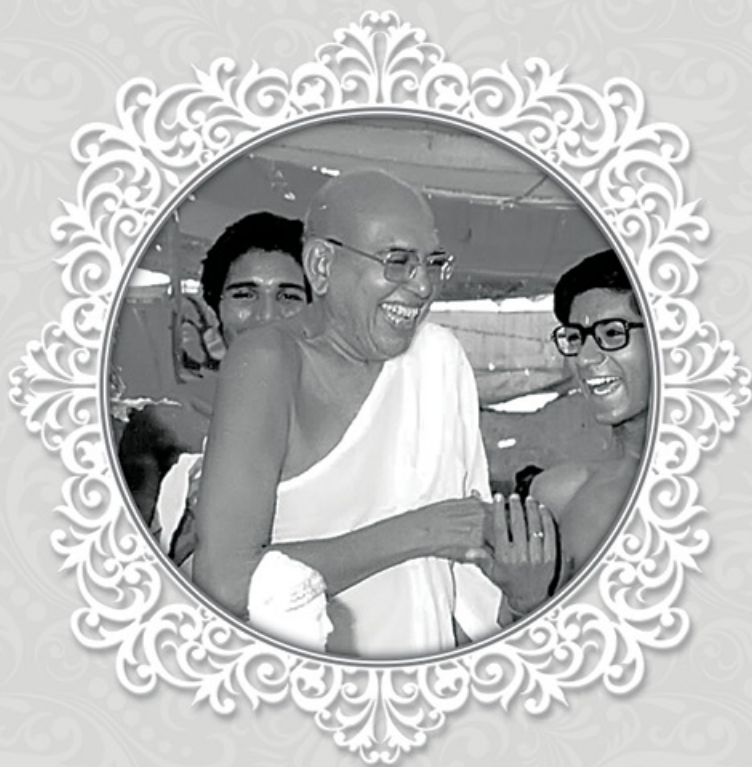
A GLANCE INTO THE PAST

Kalikal Sarvagya¹ Acharya Hemchandrasuri Maharaj arrived in Patan. His foremost devotee, King Kumarpal, accorded him a grand welcome with a ceremonial procession. During the welcome procession, Kumarpal's gaze fell upon the thick and rugged cloth worn by Acharya. After the procession and the concluding Manglik (auspicious) discourse were over and when everyone had dispersed, Kumarpal approached Acharya and asked him:

"Gurudev! Why have you worn such a thick cloth?"

Gurudev replied: "I had been to Deesa (now Juna Deesa) on my way here. A humble Shravak there gifted me this cloth with great affection. Moved by his devotion, I accepted it - I didn't look at the cloth but looked at his feelings. How incredible those feelings were! Tears were rolling down his cheeks as he gifted me the cloth." How blessed this devotee was!

1. A title bestowed upon Acharya Hemachandra that means "all-knowing of the Kali Yuga". He was a Jain scholar, poet and polymath who wrote on grammar, philosophy, prosody and contemporary history. Noted as a prodigy by his contemporaries, he gained the title Kalikal Sarvagya.



TEMPLES OF JUNA DEESA



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TEMPLES OF VAAV



INSCRIBED ON THE HEART

Once, a merchant of Zinzuwada (birthplace of Gurudev) went to the shop of a merchant from the village Vaav. The merchant from Zinzuwada did not know that the other merchant was from Vaav.

After seeing the photo of Gurudev in the shop, the man from Zinzuwada said, "He is our Gurudev." To which the man from the Vaav replied, "He is our saviour. In our region, people were not so religious, but after the arrival of Gurudev our entire region has become religious. He sowed the seeds of dharma in us and later watered and nurtured it with his spiritual discourses." His wet eyes said that whatever they were was due to the blessings of Gurudev. He has conveyed us from the bottom to the top.

On hearing this merchant from Zinzuwada felt very proud: Gurudev was born in our village; this diamond from our village has turned out to be lustrous, priceless and precious.

I remember a rule that Gurudev lived by. Even after presiding over so many pratistha ceremonies he never got his name engraved on the stone. If we would tell this to the leaders of the Sangha they would get angry. To this Gurudev replied, "We work as per God's Aagna. Getting your name



inscribed on the stone is a useless (worldly) desire. Also it has been said by God and it has been inscribed in red letters in the Aacharanga Sutra –

‘No Logassasenam chare’. It means never give in to worldly desires.

Be free from desires.

Thus, Gurudev's name wasn't ever inscribed on the stone because he didn't like it, but his name is engraved on the hearts of so many people that he has been able to reach to. They say that Gurudev has done a lot for them.

Thus, even if not inscribed on stone, his name is immortal in the hearts of people.



BIRTHPLACE OF GURUDEV SHREE

Zinzuwada is the birthplace of Gurudev. It is also the birthplace of the scholar and learned saint Muni Dan Suri M.S. Describing the historical background of Zinzuwada, Aagam Pragya Shree Jambuvijayji M.S. said –

Just 16 kilometres from Sankheshwar Mahatirth (great pilgrim place), in the South west is a village named Zinzuwada. It is an ancient village. The remains of the fort of Maharaj Jaisingh are present even today.

Since it is located on the Saurashtra-facing border of Gujarat, it is believed that its ancient name might have been "Yuddha Patak" (Zunzwada).

The village has a good number of followers of Jainism. And it is adorned with a two-storey beautiful temple of Shree Shantinath, two huge Upashrayas, a library, a Panjrapolez and other such religious institutions.

1. Jambuvijaya (1923–2009), also known as Muni Jambuvijayji Maharajsaheb, was a monk belonging to the Tapa Gaccha order of Svetambara sect of Jainism. He was known for his pioneering work in research, cataloguing and translations of Jain Agamas and ancient texts. He was responsible for discovering and publishing many ancient Jain texts lying in different forgotten Jain jnana bhandaras (ancient Jain libraries). 2. A shelter of cattle.



PERSONIFICATION OF SEVA², PERSONIFICATION OF AUSTERITY



Kanku Maa was the mother of Pujya Gurudev Shri (indeed her soul was blessed). She was deeply devoted to God. She used to pray every day that of her five sons, let at least one walk on the path instructed by God and serve the Jain Shashan (Jainism/Jain Dharma).

Prayers to God are always answered and so it happened in her case. The events that led up to it were as described below.

The company of Dada Gurudev had a profound impact on Gurudev's father Shri Ishwarlal and he became completely detached from the material world. One day, he called his five sons and said: "I want to take diksha (renunciation). I am requesting you all to whole heartedly grant me your leave. And my second wish is that one of you should walk on the path instructed by God with me."

Young Chinukumar (Gurudev's worldly name) was a detached individual right from his birth and hence he too agreed to taking diksha. In the V.S. year 1990, both Chinukumar and his father took diksha in the presence of Dada Gurudev.

Ishawarlalji was given the name Vilas Vijayji M.S. and young Chinukumar was given the name of Pujya Omkarvijayji M.S. And hence Vilas Vijayji became the Guru of Gurudev and Bhadra Suri M.S. became his Dada Gurudev.

Pujya Vilas Vijayji M.S. shunned all kinds of laxities and practiced severe austerities that included fasting. His final fast lasted for 70 days.

Sadhana¹ personified Dada Gurudev.

Austerity personified Gurudev.

Seva² personified Disciple.

How peerless this confluence was!

1. Sadhana is an ego-transcending spiritual practice 2. Seva is a Sanskrit word that means more than just service or to serve. It means to serve without the existence of one's own identity - to serve selflessly.



FROM THE HISTORY

Once, an eight year old boy came to Gurudev and requested to be given diksha. Gurudev was Master at face reading and hence he immediately recognised the detached soul that the boy possessed and his potential. He realised that this boy was someone who could be given diksha right away.

Many other people were seated there and they were astonished to see that such a young boy was willing to take diksha.

To convince these people Gurudev asked the young boy, "Son! What is the reason that you want to take diksha." The boy replied, "Yesterday, I was seated near mother while she was cooking. I saw the wood burning

in the kitchen stove. I saw that the big pieces of wood burned slowly and turned to ashes, but the smaller pieces quickly burned and turned into ash. I was shocked to see this.

I am also like the small piece of wood in this world. I don't know when I will also be consumed in the fire of this worldly desire. To save myself from such a fate, I have come to you. Please give me diksha."

There was a flame of detachment that burned in the young boy's soul. Initially it was slightly covered with ashes. But this incident blew away the accumulated ash and allowed the flame of detachment to burn bright.





CHATURMAS - A FESTIVAL OF 4 MONTHS



Acharya Shree Hemratnasuriji had once asked Gurudev: "Why do you spend most of your time travelling in the villages of North Gujarat and Rajasthan? People living in the cities too should benefit from your immense knowledge!"

Gurudev smilingly said: "The people living in cities are fortunate as it is, because a lot of monks travel and stay there, so they get their benefit anyway. As for me, I see two benefits of staying and travelling in the village regions which is why I prefer spending my time there."

Acharya Hemratnasuriji further asked: "What is the first benefit? If we know of the benefits, we too can come to the villages."

Gurudev replied: "The first benefit is that the villages provide a very conducive atmosphere for carrying out spiritual practices. The villages are small, but the temples are grand and majestic and the Upashrayas are huge as well. Also, the hearts of the people residing there are pure and magnanimous. Also the cultural sanctity is still maintained in the village and this makes the experience of Sadhana even more joyous. We get a positive aura from such atmosphere. Also, the air there is unpolluted which is beneficial for health."

HemratnaSuri Maharaj was convinced with this answer. He then asked, "What is the second benefit?"

Gurudev replied, "The second benefit is the satisfaction of having

imparted something beneficial to the villagers. Even if we go to a village for a day and give a half an hour discourse, all the villagers irrespective of their caste and religion come to attend the discourse and after listening to it, they vow to leave tobacco, cigarettes etc. These people are easily influenced.

There are many a villages in the Vaav region that, in between the duration of my visiting one year and then my going to visit again in the next year, do not get the benefit of any other Mahatma visiting them."

Gurudev concluded with a smile, "The people over there are starved to do the darshan of a Sadhu and when they get the opportunity to meet one, are overwhelmed. And when the seeds of piety and positivity are sown into their tender hearts, they are bound to sprout and grow into beautiful trees."

Hemratna Suri agreed with Gurudev's philosophy. But Gurudev further continued, "It is imperative for charismatic speakers and influential Gurus like you to stay in cities, so that the youth can be directed towards our culture and values."

Hemratna Suri was pleasantly impressed by Gurudev's impartial and deep thought process. He said to Gurudev: "Though you live in villages your thoughts are deep and wonderful."



Jasvantpura, Rohida, Padiv, Kalandri, Vankadiya Vadgam, Sanchor, Sirohi, Kalapura, Dhaniyawada, Panthawada, Aarkhi, Bhadhat, Aahwada, Palanpur, Patan, Radhanpur are the regions of North Gujarat and Rajasthan where Gurudev frequently visited and even did Chaturmas.

I remember an incident of Chaturmas from one of these regions. Since the day we arrived for Chaturmas, the derasar and upashray were decorated with festoons, etc. Mandaps¹ were erected.

These mandaps were undamaged even during the rainy season. A devotee from a city had come to seek blessings of Gurudev. Upon observing the decorations, he inquired with Gurudev if some festivities were going on. Before Gurudev could reply, a resident of that village interjected and said: "For us, the entire Chaturmas has become a celebration. It is after many years of continuous pleading that Gurudev has finally come here for Chaturmas."

The devotee from city was quite surprised to hear this. The villager continued: "Last winter, Gurudev formally accepted our request for Chaturmas. People were so enthused about this that even the people living in cities were keen to come to the village, open their closed houses and stay there for the length of Chaturmas so that they could get the benefit of Gurudev's presence. Hence the houses that were closed for years and needed repairs were repaired. Plumbers, electricians, masons, painters etc. were summoned from cities etc. to get the work completed.



The houses were decorated as if they were being prepared for a marriage celebration. People who were staying in cities like Mumbai, Chennai, Bangalore, etc. left their work behind and arrived here and got immersed in the colours of devotion."

The devotee from the city later noticed that there was so much excitement amongst the people for Gurudev's gochari that it almost seemed like there was a competition going on. The discourses and Pratikraman² too were fully attended. He mused: "Gurudev Shree does Chaturmas in villages, but he benefits from it in equal measure by the way of being able to influence the lives of these villagers. They really gain a lot from him."

For the people in these regions, Chaturmas begins as soon as their request for Chaturmas is formally accepted by Gurudev - in the form of fervor and in the form of enthusiasm in anticipation of Gurudev's arrival. And it never ends - it stays forever, in their hearts, in the form of fond memories.

1. Mandaps are temporary tent like structures made of wood, cloth, etc. that are used for the purpose of ceremonies and weddings in India. 2. Pratikraman (literally means "introspection" in Sanskrit), is a process during which Jains repent for their sins during their daily life.





GURUDEV...!



'YOU ARE IN OUR HEARTS...'



THE BLESSINGS OF GURDEV & GODDESS SARASWATI

It must have been some one and a half year since Gurudev took diksha, when his elder brother Kanti bhai came to meet him. For 1-2 days, he observed Gurudev's daily routine. He noticed that Gurudev had study sessions with Panditji daily for about an hour and a half. And the rest of the time would be spent in the company of young kids who used to surround this "Bal Muni" (child monk).

Slightly concerned by this, one day he asked Panditji : "My brother takes lessons from you daily. But, I have never seen him open the book outside of the study sessions. Do you ask him lessons the next day to ascertain whether he has memorized and grasped them correctly?"

Panditji replied: "Your brother has blessings of Gurudev and Maa Saraswati. His retention abilities are so powerful that he doesn't need to reopen the book - whatever he reads during the study sessions virtually gets imprinted in his memory. Irrespective of whether I was to ask him to recite chapters from the

previous day or from a few days earlier, he is able to recall and recite them flawlessly. His retention abilities as well as his logical prowess have been noticed by a lot of people including some of the highly acclaimed scholars and sages. In V. S. 2014 at the time of Muni Sammelan¹ in Ahmedabad, Gurudev would go to Vidyashala daily for paying obeisance to Baapji² Maharaj. At that time, amongst the assembled monks, the revered Acharya Shree Lakshmansuri Maharaj was also present there"

Once, when Gurudev went to pay his respects to Lakshmansuri Maharaj, he asked: "How deeply have you studied the Tithi³ discussion? Gurudev replied: "Let's see. Let me play the role of P. Sagarji Maharaj while you impersonate P. Acharya Ramchandrasuri Maharaj and let's debate. Lakshmansuri Maharaj agreed. The debate ensued. There were arguments and counter-arguments from both sides. After a while, Lakshmansuri Maharaj remarked : "You made some incredible arguments."

Gurudev then said : "Now, let's reverse our roles - you play P. Sagarji Maharaj while I will impersonate P. Acharya Ramchandrasuri Maharaj. The debate ensued once again. Lakshmansuri Maharaj was left spell bound. He was really enthralled by Gurudev's arguments.

1. A gathering of monks for some purpose. 2. Baapji Maharaj was a highly revered Acharya whose real name was Pujya Siddhsurishwarji Maharaj but was affectionately called "Baapji" by his followers. 3. Tithi literally means a date as per the Jain or Hindu calendar.



FROM THE PAST

There was a seven year old boy named Jaswant. In the village where Jaswant lived, there was a Chaturmas of a Sadhvi Maharaj. Every morning, she used to recite Bhaktamar¹ for the villagers. Jaswant used to go every day with his mother to listen to Bhaktamar. His mother had taken a vow to have breakfast only after listening to Bhaktamar.

One night it rained heavily. It continued raining the entire next day; the rain did not halt. Jaswant's mother did Upvas² on that day. She could not go to the Upashray that day due to the rain water that had accumulated. Next day also it kept on raining and hence she did Upvas on the next day too. On the third day, Jaswant asked his mother, "Why don't you eat?" Mother told him about her vow. To this, Jaswant said, "Mother! I have memorized Bhaktamar, let me recite it for you."

Mother was surprised to hear this and asked him, "How come you know Bhaktamar?" Jaswant replied, "Oh, I hear it

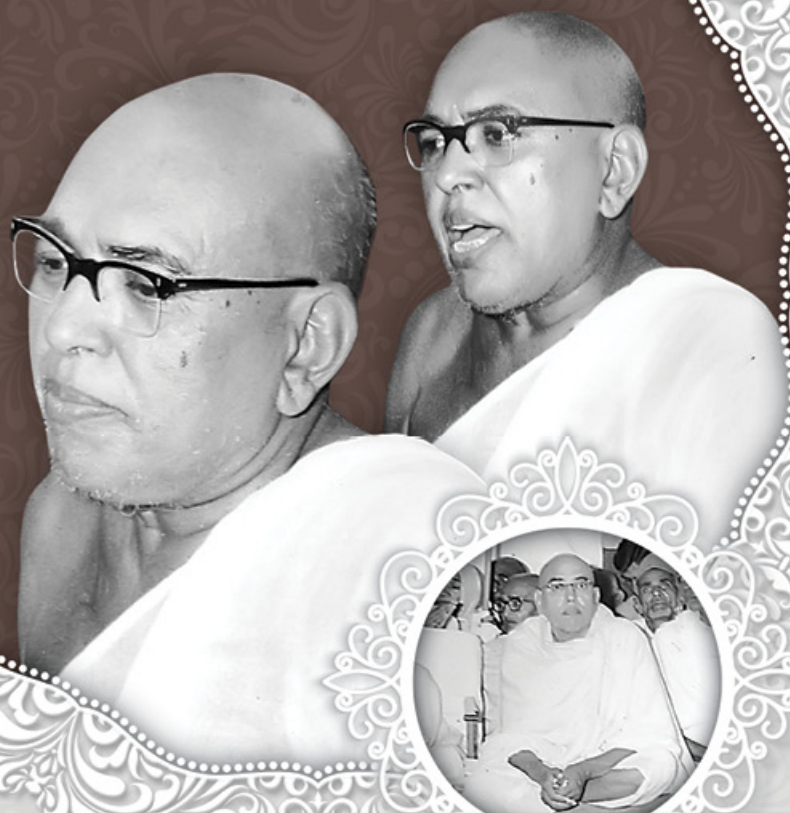
daily, so it has gotten memorized." His mother asked him to recite and Jaswant immediately started reciting the verses correctly. Mother herself did not know the shlokas, but felt that what her son was reciting must be indeed the correct shlokas.

After hearing the Bhaktamar, mother broke her fast. On the next day, when it stopped raining, Jaswant and his mother went to Upashray. Mother asked Sadhvi M.S. to hear Jaswant's Bhaktamar recitation and tell whether it was correct. Sadhvi said : "How come this young child will know Bhaktamar when he is still learning the Vandittu sutra". But she still asked Jaswant to recite Bhaktamar. On hearing his faultless recitation, Sadhvi said to his mother, "Your son possesses a wonderful memorizing power, let him follow the God's path and he will do wonders."

This young Jaswant later on became Mahamahopadhyay Yashovijay Maharaj.

1. Bhaktamara Stotra is one of the famous Jain sanskrit prayers. It is said to be composed by Manatunga. The name Bhaktamara comes from a combination of two sanskrit names, "Bhakta" (Devotee) and "Amar" (Immortal). The prayer praises Rishabha, the first Tirthankara of Jainism. There is some variation in the number of verses of the available manuscripts; some have 48 verses, while others have 44 verses. A few have 52 verses. According to legends, the Jain monk Manatunga was chained and imprisoned by the local King Bhoja. Manatunga composed his stotra (hymn) in the prison. With the completion of each verse, a chain broke, or a door opened. Manatunga was free when all the verses were finished. (2) Fast : To give up only food for the whole day.





APPENDIX

THE BEST ACHIEVEMENT OF LIFE - UNITY OF SHRI SANGH

- Acharya Bhagyesh Vijay Suri M.S.

Pujya Gurudev was bestowed with the name "Sangh Aekta Shilpi" means the "Sculptor of Sangh's unity", during the last year of His benevolent life. This achievement, indeed, had come very naturally to a Superhuman like Gurudev.

The feelings of "Shri Sangh Aekta" were overflowing from His heart many-a-times for several years. Whenever, He used to be in Vihaar with other Wise Acharya Bhagwant, He used to always say that we all must unite to make Jain Religion strong and for better progress of the Religion. He said that once we all unite, we all can give a better and practical understanding of Samta (mind equilibrium) and Samadhi (ultimate peace of mind). As these feelings in him become stronger, His inner conscience also became stronger. And he was able to give an existence to His feelings in real world, in the last year of his life, V. S. 2044.

In V. S. 2044, by paying His gratitude to the request and feelings of Vartmaan Taponidhi Pujya

Acharya Shri BhadrakarSuri Maharaj, Pujya Gurudev and many other Acharya Bhagwant or their disciples as representative of Tapagachh (a sect within Shwetambar Panth), attended "Conference of Jain Acharya" at Amdavad. Various points, questions were discussed on the basis of Shastra (religious scriptures) in this conference and many decisions were also taken. In this conference, what played an important role were the Sharp Mind and Foresight of Pujya Gurudev Shri OmkarSuri Maharaj, as His extraordinary role, he gave unfailing answers which satisfied all the Acharya Bhagwant. It was this time, when all noticed the great Art of Pujya GurudevShri to convince all in their words.

With the pouring qualities of being straightforward, brave, stable and impartial; He was able to win the hearts of all the Acharya Bhagwant and the other Sadhu. In a very short time span of the conference, He ensured to create an atmosphere



for unity. He won the trust of all and so took the conference to the level of success.

"The success of the complete conference was indebted to Pujya GurudevShri"; this was quoted by many Acharaya Bhagwant and other Sadhu during his sudden death.

PROFOUND REVERENCE WHILE PAYING HOMAGE

- ♦ Pujyapad Tapasvi Samrat, admirer of Shri Sangh Samadhi, Acharya Shri HimanshuSuri Maharaj, gave his tribute by saying that the results which I have not been able to get even after around 1800 Aayambil, He, Pujya OmkarSuri Maharaj got merely in 18 days.
- ♦ Pujya Aagam Diwakar Vishwa Vishrut Shri JambuVijayji Maharaj had written in his tribute that in Pujya GurudevShri has played a very vital contribution in obtaining the solutions for solving various questions and problems of Jain Religion. He had accomplished one of the most necessary work of solving many problems at that time.
- ♦ During the conference, a thinker and a writer, Pujya Acharya Shri SheelChandraSuri Maharaj's outgiving for Pujya GurudevShri "During, the delicate time of Shri Sangh unity and equality, it is obvious for many to lose their patience and in such situations obstinacy can happen without much efforts. However, Pujya OmkarSuri Maharaj had been neutral to take all the opinions and compile them soulfully without getting driven by any feelings about His prestige. And He as so able to take this conference to a higher level of success.
- ♦ Pujyapad Rashtriya Sant (national saint), Acharya Shri PadmaSagarSuri Maharaj,

commented that from Wisdom to Peculiar and from Politeness to Smartness, PujyaShri's great efforts of Shri Sangh unity completed and so the final objective of His life was accomplished

- ♦ Pujyapad Vardhman Taponidhi, Acharya Shri BhuvanBhanuSuri Maharaj graced his tribute that amongst all the same feelings that all of the Sadhu possessed, but the feelings of Pujya OmkarSuri Maharaj used it with great guts and gave a historical example of friendly feelings with all and hence he became the driving force for prosperity of Shri Jain Sangh.
- ♦ Pujyapad AdhyatamYogi (Spiritual Yogi), Acharya Shri KalapurnaSuri Maharaj, valued his tribute by saying "I wanted to ask him that during this unity conference, the way he worked so friendly with all and with all peace in mind. I observed this as the most eye-catching thing and from where he learned this, I was curious to know and before I asked, he passed away."
- ♦ Pujya Acharya Shri HemchandraSuri Maharaj (at that time, he was a Gani) said that when Shri Sangh was in the dark jungle of mysteries and puzzles, Pujya GurudevShri came as a guide, guided all of us and became invisible.
- ♦ Pujya Acharya Shri ChandrajitSuri Maharaj (at that time Muni), disciple of Pujya Panyas Shri ChandraShekhar Vijayji Maharaj, told "This impossible task of Shri Sangh Unity, was only possibly achieved by Pujya GurudevShri by his Guru's grace. He was popular during his lifetime however, he is still being remembered after his death for this noble work. He has made the path clear for Shri Sangh.



CLEAR VISION IN UNBEARABLE ILLNESS

In V. S. 2044, on Vaishakh Sud 1, the time for the concluding meeting of the fruitful conference held, was at 08:30 AM. Puja GurudevShri slept after having breakfast at 07:30 AM. At that time, he called Puja Panyas Shri YashoVijay Maharaj and told him to go to the meeting held at Pankaj Society (Amdavad) and inform others that I won't be able to come to conduct the meeting as I am having severe headache, am not able to say a single word. At that time, PanjyasShri replied that Gurudev, without you this meeting is impossible. Without you, nobody can give a clear understanding on the resolution draft. Please do something and come!!!

Nobody knows what had happened suddenly and GurudevShri woke up immediately said "Come, let us go." Both the Guru and the Shishya left for meeting at Pankaj Society. And he started the great meeting with his guidance and wisdom. This was indeed the last but a historical sermon by PujaShri. There were comments from very intellectual section of Shravaka that had been present at that meeting that, we have rejoiced this great moment of life when we heard about the most important resolutions in a very clear way and without any ambiguity from Puja GurudevShri. Today is the day when we all came to know that about the actual power of this Superhuman. Today only we felt that even after spending 4 months each year in small villages, this Superhuman is so much powerful and filled with enormous meritocracy. He gave sermon even while suffering from illness shows his dedication to Jin Shashan and the clear vision of Shri Sangh Unity.

SUPREME FEELINGS FOR UNITY

In V. S. 2044, on Vaishakh Sud 1, when Puja GurudevShri went to conduct this final concluding meeting on the conference at Pankaj Society, the scene was somewhat like this: -

PujaPad Tapasvi Samrat, Acharya Shri HimanshuSuri Maharaj did around 1800 Aayambil only for the purpose of Shri Sangh Unity. All Acharya Bhagwant, Sadhu Bhagwant and complete Shri Sangh, had a wish that Puja Tapasvi Acharya must break his long and continuous Tapascharya by doing Parna, because his long-lived dream of Shri Sangh unity had

got fulfilled. And so all had come there. However, Puja Tapasvi Acharya did not agree saying that the dream he saw is not fulfilled yet. The dream is somewhat pending, once that is fulfilled, I will definitely do Parna (break the Tapascharya). So, I desire to continue doing Aayambil and with God's grace and the strength of Tapascharya, all work will be done and even faster. Everyone present over there insisted but Puja Tapasvi Acharya rejected to do Parna.

At that very point in time, Puja GurudevShri reached there. He understood the situation and came to know that Puja Tapasvi Acharya said "No" to do Parna. He went to Puja Tapasvi Acharya and asked him about his wellness and about his Parna. Puja Tapasvi Acharya said "As little bit of work is still pending, I won't be doing Parna."

Puja GurudevShri replied "You are very correct. But, trust me, I will give full dedicated efforts to complete this work and fulfill your dream. Shashan Prabhavak Gachhadhipati Puja Acharya Shri RamchandraSuri Maharaj is now at Mumbai. Will meet and discuss with him and try to complete this work aptly. You hold your trust in me and do the Parna." To this, Puja Tapasvi Acharya quickly replied "In the manner, in which you have done this work in last 18 days, I trust you and you can finish this work. You are indeed graced with the divine blessings of your Puja GurudevShri Acharya BhadraSuri Maharaj and also Puja Dada GurudevShri SiddhiSuri Maharaj. And so you possess this extraordinary power of doing this work. I trust you and so I have decided to do Parna and you also do this work as soon as possible." And then on Vaishakh Sud, Puja Tapasvi Acharya Shri HimanshuSuri Maharaj did his Parna after around 1800 continuous Aayambil.

Such was the supreme vision of Shri Sangh unity that Puja GurudevShri OmkarSuri Maharaj possessed.

His soul was dense with the feelings of let there be Friendship amongst all...

Innumerable bows into the Lotus Feet of the Sculptor of Shri Sangh Unity Puja SadGurudevShri Acharya OmkarSuri Maharaj...



The eyes of Sadguru radiate God in his full splendor. Undoubtedly, being able to behold God directly is an engaging and delightful experience in itself. But, to be able to behold Him in His unbridled reflection gleaming resplendently in the eyes of Sadguru is an opportunity of a lifetime.

Those endering,
soulful eyes of a Sadguru...!

Rahim says :
Pritam Chhabhi Nainan Basi,
Par-chhabhi kaha samaay...
Bhari Saray Rahim Lakhi,
Pathik Aap Phir Jaay...

When the portrait of beloved dwells in one's eyes, where is the scope for any other portrait? When a tourist visits a tavern and finds no vacancy, he has no choice but to go back.

(i.e. When our heart is filled by love for the Lord, there is no space for ego or anything worldly - our materialistic desires and ego have no space to enter and have to return).





He was fair skinned and possessed a commanding stature. His posture was such that the person accompanying him would also walk in respect and awe of Gurudev's self assured gait. His face was an equal blend of serenity and intensity; the happiness and serenity was determinedly reflected on his round countenance. He possessed an unalloyed mind, a sharp wit, a determined resolve, respect towards others views and to keep all these values in a balance, a relentless assertion. And with the combination of these virtues, the soulful eyes gleamed radiance that gave completion to the powerful personality that is Omkarsuri Maharaj.

Here we present some events from the life of Pujoyapadshri...

