

Bochasanwasi Shri Aksharpurushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha
Satsang Shikshan Pariksha

SATSANG PRAVESH-PAPER-1

Time : 9.00 to 11.15 a.m.

Total Marks : 75

Sunday, 6 March, 2022

Note : 1. Answer of the prescribed edition only will be accepted. Any other answer from different addition will not be accepted. 2. Numbers of the right side indicate marks of question number. 3. Numbers in the blanks on the right side of the answer indicate lesson number & page number.

Important Note

In the question paper the marks of each sub-question should be written in the box (mark:1) given on the right side and the marks obtained by the candidate should be written in the adjacent box. If the answer is wrong then write '0' (zero) in the given box. The sign or indication of true (✓) or false (X) of each sub-question should be marked only on the left-side before the question starts.

Important Note

While checking the answers, when you come across lengthy answers i.e. shortnotes, reasons, brief answer in five sentence etc. Justify to the left side of the paper for any marks deducted. If the candidate has forgotten to mention any mentioned points then the examiner can deduct mark likewise and explain to the leftside of the paper that which point is not mentioned by candidate. For example there is question in March-2013, Pravesh paper-1, "Transformation of JobanPagi" JobanPagi said to Maharaj, 'Oh Lord, I am crooked worthless and foolish. I was unable to recognize you for who are you. Oh compassionate one! please have pity on me. Please free me from my sins.' If any point is not written then write "My sins" at left side.


(SECTION-1: NILKANTH CHARITRA, 6th Edition, July - 2019)

Q.1 In the sentences below, state who is speaking to whom and when. (Total Marks: 9)

Note: Who is speaking 1 mark, to whom 1 mark and when 1 mark.

1. "It is our humble request, O Lord of Akshar, that your murti does not disappear from our hearts." (21/38)
 - ⇒ Nine hundred thousands Yogis (900,000 Yogis) - Nilkanth Varni.
 - ⇒ Nilkanth Varni took a farwell on the Navlakha mountain that time Yogis told him.
2. "One should be afraid of worldly pleasures." (10/17-18)
 - ⇒ Nilkanth Varni - The queen.
 - ⇒ The queen of Vanshipur insisted Nilkanth Varni to stay in her kingdom and told him this.
3. "Having renounced with faith in God, then God will provide as necessary." (2/2)
 - ⇒ Nilkanth Varni - The Villagers.
 - ⇒ Nilkanth disturbed the food to the assembled villagers after eating some of the eatables so the villagers said, 'Why don't you keep something for this evening.' At that time Varni said this.

Q.2 From the given options, place a tick (✓) in the box next to the correct ones. (Total Marks: 4)

 **Note: One or more options may be correct. Full marks will be awarded only if all the correct options are chosen, otherwise no marks will be awarded.**

1. 1, 2 (47/94-96)

2. 3, 4 (53/107-109)

Q.3 Fill in the blanks. (Total Marks: 4)

 **Note : Marks will be given only if both answers are correct.**

1. Gopal Yogi, Yoga (17/31)

2. Vamanji, Gaumukhi (42/83)

3. Two, Sevakram (30/57)

4. Piplana, Ramanand Swami (52/105)

Q.4 Write short notes on any ONE of the following. (In 15 lines.) (Total Marks: 5)

 **Note: Main points of short note are highlighted. If points are included than give full marks.**

1. Destruction of Asuras in Manasapur (28/50-52)

A. The gardener in Manasapur's garden used to weave garlands of flowers daily and place them round the Brahmachari's neck, offered him fresh fruits and edible food. On **hearing the greatness of Nilkanth from the gardener, the king, Satradharma**, went to the garden for his darshan. Accompanied by his queen, he used to go everyday to hear the sermons of Nilkanth. One day Nilkanth described to them the importance of worshipping Vishnu and Shaligram. **The king therefore wished to have a Shaligram.** The group of ignorant sadhus who were camping in the garden had Shaligrams. The king approached the mahant for a Shaligram but he refused to give. Nilkanth sent Jairamdas to approach mahant for a Shaligram. He picked up his trident to kill Jairamdas. That night all the **Shaligrams fell into the Gandki river** as willed by Nilkanth. The mahant thought that either the king had stolen the Shaligram or Nilkanth's servant Jairamdas had taken them away. Since Jairamdas had gone out, they started pelting him with stones. Meanwhile Jairamdas returned and rushed to the king. Fighting broke out between the king's troops and the bawas. **The bawas were all killed in the fight.** Nilkanth **showed his true divine form** to the king and bade him farewell. **Nilkanth made Jairam return home** and told him, 'If you are in sorrow, remember me. If you want to become a sadhu **come searching for me in Kathiawad** and I will meet you there.'

2. Discourses to Bawas in Sirpur (Liberates the Telangi Brahmin) (19/32-33)

A. Wicked bawas had made themselves comfortable in the garden at Sirpur and had been camping there for a long time. At that time Sirpur was ruled by a **virtuous king called Siddhavallabh**. He asked Varni to stay in his palace but he refused. - The king ordered a **Brahmachari called Gopaldas to serve Nilkanth**. The king would listen to his discourses daily. The bawas burned with jealousy because of the king's reverence for Nilkanth. One day, a bawa **cast a spell on Gopaldas and made him unconscious**. He then told the king, '**Now you tell the Varni, whom you worship, to revive him if he has the power.**' Nilkanth merely passed his hand over the unconscious Gopaldas and made him get up. A few bawas approached the Varni to become his followers. This displeased some of the bawas and they **cast spells** upon them. At this some **other bawas cast spells at them**. Consequently some of them fainted. Nilkanth **revived all of them through his powers and told them to lead virtuous lived**.

3. Nilkanth at Bochasan (36/70-71)

A. Nilkanth went to Ramji mandir in Bochasan. **The priest, Narsinhdas**, received him warmly. The village chief, **Kandas Patel**, had arranged a **feast for Brahmins**. The villagers were greatly impressed by Nilkanth's darshan and his divinity. **Veribhai had told Kandas in advance about Varni's arrival** so he sent his **son Kashidas to invite Nilkanth** to his house. Kashidas was drawn by Varni's illustrious form and felt

the brightness of several suns emanating from Nilkanth's body. Kashidas requested to visit his house. The **old mother of Kandas, Nanibai**, was overjoyed on having the darshan of young Brahmachari. Nilkanth then asked her, 'Mother, bring the laddoo.' The food was yet to be offered to God so the **Brahmins didn't give the laddoos**. Nilkanth asked to bring milk and rice. But there was no milk available in the house. Kandas thought about where can he get milk at that hour. Nanibai, the wife of Kandas, had a great faith in Nilkanth's words so she took the vessel and went to the buffalo. To her surprise **she saw milk dripping from the udders**. She filled the vessel and offered Nilkanth some milk, rice and sugar. Nanibai requested Nilkanth to stay at their house. Nilkanth replied, 'Mother, I shall come again. I shall come several times and will stay in your house. I will go now as I have several things to do. Your son and your family are very fortunate. They will all worship me.' After the evening arti, Nilkanth prophesied, **'These murtis will be housed in a magnificent mandir that will be built here.'** The village folks tolh him to make Bochasan his home, then the priest said, 'What will this boy do here? There is no need for him here.' Nilkanth smiled and said, **'I am not one inclined to stay in such a small place. For me there will be a huge abode here.'**

Q.5 Answer ALL of the following, using one sentence (not just one word) for each answer. (Total Marks: 5)

 **Note: No mark for incomplete answer.**

1. When and where was Sahajanand Swami appointed as head of fellowship ? (Samvat, Month, Tithi) (55/113)
A. Sahajanand Swami was appointed as head of fellowship on Kartik sud 11 (Prabodhini Ekadashi) of Samvat 1858 in Jetpur.
2. Where did Nilkanth Varni stay in Vadodara ? (35/68)
A. Nilkanth Varni stayed at Mandvi gate in Vadodara.
3. How did the ascetics feel about Nilkanth Varni ? (4/9)
A. The ascetics felt Nilkanth himself was God incarnate.
4. What did Mohandas decide ? (15/26)
A. Mohandas decided to stay with Nilkanth.
5. What did Nilkanth Varni say after coming to Premji Thakkar's shop ? (39/77)
A. 'You will not find a jogi like me in countless universes.'

Q.6 Give reasons for the following (two to three lines each). (Total Marks: 6)

1. **The mother instructed that Bhagwandas not be admit in the house. (31/58)**
A. Bhagwandas' aged mother asked her son to go in search of God everyday. But he did not listen to her. So one day, she said her by giving a box containing foodstuffs, a bundle of clothes and one hundred gold coins, 'Do not come back without bringing God with you. If you return without him, your devout father will lose face and I shall not admit you to this house if you return without him.
2. **All the ghosts ran away, terrified. (12/20-21)**
A. Hanumanji, winding his tail around Kalbhairav held him tight and hit hime hard on the head with his fist. The blow was so severe that Kalbhairav's head sank into his trunk. By seeing this, all the ghosts ran away, terrified.
3. **In Kamakshi, the bawas tried to break their kanthis. (20/35)**
A. In Kamakshi mandir, a devotee of Kali, named Pibek used to harass people due to bad company. Some siddha yogis were also camping in the same garden. Pibek uttered some mantra and threw adad grains on a banyan tree which withered away instantly. The bawas' fright increased and they tried to break their kanthis.

(SECTION-2: SATSANG READER PART-I, 6th Edition April - 2011)

Q.7 In the sentences below, state who is speaking to whom and when. (Total Marks: 9)

 **Note : Who is speaking 1 mark, to whom 1 mark and when 1 mark.**

1. "Will show his divine powers. Seek refuge at his feet." (2/17)

- ⇒ Shivji (Sankaleshwar Mahadev) - Devidan (Child).
- ⇒ As Devidan's father was unavailable, Devidan devoutly offered abhishek and bilipatra to the murti as if Lord Shiv were really present before him. At that time Shivji granted him a boon and said this.

2. "Rules are rules. Lose some weight." (1/11)

- ⇒ Maharaj - Brahmanand Swami.
- ⇒ Maharaj was giving only a four-and-a-half feet piece of jute material to the sadhus as per rule. As Brahmanand Swami was large in size so he asked for more material, at that time, Maharaj said this to him.

3. "Lal means atma. become atmarup and worship God." (7/60)

- ⇒ Bhagatji Maharaj - Jethabhai
- ⇒ Jethabhai came to Mahuva with a group of devotees from Pij. This time however he caught a fever. Bhagatji Maharaj came to his beside to grant him Darshan that time.

Q.8 Select the SIX correct sentences from below and write them in the correct story sequence in the boxes. (Total Marks: 6)

Topic: Maharaj promised to act as Brahmanand Swami's Mother. (1/5-6)

(1) **Write the correct sentence numbers:** 1 3 5 7 9 12

(2) **Correct sequence of sentences :** 12 1 5 9 7 3

Note: (1) 3 marks will be awarded in the correct sentence number only if all the six sentence numbers are correct and (2) 3 marks will be awarded only if all the sequence of sentence numbers are correct. Otherwise no marks will be given.

Note: (1) Correct sentence numbers: Give 3 marks only if six sentence numbers are correct in any sequence, otherwise no marks will be given. **(2) Correct sequence of sentences:** Give 3 marks if all sequence of sentence numbers are correct as per answersheet otherwise no marks will be given.

Q.9 Write short notes on 'Ashabhai got convinced about his moksha' (8/71-73) (In 15 lines). (Total Marks: 5)

 **Note: Main points of short note are highlighted. If points are included than give full marks.**

The brothers, Ashabhai and Ishwarbhai, **lived in Sadhi**, a village near Vadodara. They were true spiritual seekers, quite wealthy, and **managed a Ramanandi mandir** in their village. Every punam, Ashabhai would **go to Dakor for darshan of Ranchhodray**. Here, he was saddened on **seeing some instances of unrighteousness**. One night, **Ranchhodray granted him darshan in a dream and told him, "If you wish for your liberation, take refuge in Bhagwan Swaminarayan.** At present, he is manifest and moves about within Satsang." Sometime later, a few Swaminarayan sadhus came to Sadhi. Ashabhai went for their darshan and expressed a wish to serve them a meal. **"We will accept your food only if you take refuge in Bhagwan Swaminarayan."** the sadhus replied. **He soon took vartman from Sadhu Dharmanandandas.** Ashabhai went for darshan at Vartal. He was delighted on seeing Vartal's **extraordinary mandir, sadhus and devotees**. Ashabhai was overwhelmed by an experience of **inner peace by Shastriji Maharaj's darshan**. Being with him settled his qualms and convinced him that, through Swamishri, **he had attained moksha.**

Q.10 Answer ALL of the following, using one sentence (not just one word) for each answer. (Total Marks:4)

 **Note: No mark for incomplete answer.**

1. Which wish did Devidan express to Maharaj? (2/18)
A. Devidan expressed his wish to travel with Maharaj.
2. How many years did Mota Swami serve the Sanstha as a Sadhu? (8/80)
A. Mota Swami served the sanstha for 17 years as a Sadhu.
3. Whom did Ramanand Swami appoint as his successor? (6/54)
A. Ramanand Swami appointed Sahajanand Swami as his successor.
4. From which place Brahmin Jagannath was originally? When did he was born? (Samvat) (3/23)
A. Brahmin Jagannath was originally from Nadiad and born in Samvat 1855.

Q.11 Rewrite the incorrect words shown below in relation to the sentence heading. (Total Marks: 4)

 **Note: Marks will be awarded only if a sentence is written completely correct. Otherwise no marks will be awarded.**

1. **Swami Nirgundasji:** Maganbhai took every possible opportunity to worship Jaga Bhakta and to hear his kirtans. He would go to Jaga Bhakta's home early each morning for spiritual kirtans then would accompany him to the Aji River for his morning bath. (7/59)
A. Swami Nirgundasji: Jethabhai took every possible opportunity to serve Bhagatji and to hear his discourses. He would go to Bhagatji's home early each morning for spiritual discussions then would accompany him to the Malan River for his morning bath. (7/59)
2. **Sadguru Shukanand Swami:** Sixteen months younger than Acharya, Shukmuni's physical condition had always been delicate. Magshar vad 6, Samvat 1926, Shukmuni passed away in Gadhada. (3/28)
A. Sadguru Shukanand Swami: Seventeen years younger than Maharaj, Shukmuni's physical condition had always been delicate. Magshar vad 5, Samvat 1925, Shukmuni passed away in Vartal. (3/28)
3. **Bhaktaraj Jivuba:** At that time, his daughter, Jivuba, was deep in samadhi, holding a bowl of curd and offering it to Guruji. "Set aside this nonsense," Abhel Khachar boomed. "If this Guruji of yours is really true, he'll come this instant and eat that curd." (6/51)
A. Bhaktaraj Jivuba: At that time, his daughter, Jivuba, was deep in meditation, holding a bowl of milk and offering it to Thakorji. "Set aside this sham," Abhel Khachar boomed. "If this God of yours is really true, he'll come this instant and drink that milk." (6/51)
4. **Bhaktaraj Joban Pagi:** Sundar, however, was eager as ever to test Maharaj. So, he woke up in the middle of the morning and left for the Dardar's enclave. Reaching Ranchhodhbhai's home, he slowly pushed open the entrance gate. Yet, the gate stuttered, awakening Shayamji, a devotee. (5/43)
A. Bhaktaraj Joban Pagi: Joban, however, was eager as ever to test Maharaj. So, he woke up in the middle of the night and left for the Patidar's enclave. Reaching Bapujibhai's home, he slowly pushed open the entrance gate. Yet, the gate stuttered, awakening Raiji, a devotee. (5/43)

Q.12 Give reasons for the following (two to three lines each). (Total Marks: 4)

1. The devotees learnt to work together in farming. (8/74)


- A. With Swamishri's guidance, Ashabhai bought land near Radhu. Swamishri then had various devotees purchase chunks of this land from Ashabhai, leaving Ashabhai with a profit, which he later donated for the Sarangpur mandir. In this way, Swamishri encouraged devotees to work together in farming, hoping to both benefit them and the mandir, and bring devotees closer to each other.

2. Maharaj asked Joban Pagi to offer himself in service. (5/47-48)

- A. Maharaj asked Joban Pagi to donate more for the mandir in Vartal. Joban replied jokingly, "You shut down my business, but how can I offer you money now that I am out of business?" Maharaj replied, "Rather than you giving money, I am more pleased with you helping physically, so please help me by offering yourself in service."

(SECTION-3: ESSAY)

Q.13 Write an essay on any ONE of the following. (in approximately 30 lines.) (Total Marks: 10)

 **Note : Essay is an independent original subject. In addition to following points many other point might be included. Examiner has to examin essay on the basis of originality, knowledge of sampraday, special analysis and point from any other scriptures.**

1. Laziness: A Living Person's Grave

Pragat Brahmaswarup Mahant Swami Maharaj wrote about laziness on the occasion of the Vachanamrut Bicentenary Celebrations. His article in Gujarati was published in the October 2019 issue of Swaminarayan Prakash. A translation of it is as follows.

Bhagwan Swaminarayan recommends in the Vachanamrut to beware of laziness. He says that one should abstain from the company of a lazy person. Laziness is the biggest obstacle on the spiritual and temporal paths. Thus, let us contemplate a little about laziness. A teacher in a school held an extempore essay writing competition. The subject was, "Laziness Means..." All the students immediately started writing on laziness. Someone wrote, "Laziness is a great enemy." Another wrote, "Laziness is a living person's grave." All wrote something of this nature. One student handed four pages to the teacher, but they were all blank except for the words, "This is called laziness," at the bottom of the last page. Once, a teacher asked his students, "Those who have been affected by laziness raise your hands." Nearly all the students raised their hands, except one. The teacher asked him, "Why haven't you raised your hand?" The boy replied coolly, "Sir, I feel lazy in raising my hand." These two incidents demonstrate what laziness is. Laziness is a sign of weakness, being irresponsible and careless. Laziness means not feeling like doing anything and remaining inactive. Laziness also means to rest (or sleep) more than required. Many people state, "Laziness is a living person's grave." Does anyone say, "The root of poverty is laziness."? Someone has also opined, "An idle mind is a devil's workshop." The surprising thing is that those who say these things and who have given such adages indulge in and enjoy laziness. Laziness is a sweet poison. It is difficult to give it up. Many times a question arises in one's mind that though most people enjoy being lazy, why have great people been critical of laziness? Laziness seems interesting and joyful, but its fruits are not. They are in fact deadly! One may enjoy being lazy, but one has to bear its bad consequences a thousand-fold more. No lazy person has ever lived happily in life. A thinker has said, "It is easy to escape from one's responsibility, but one cannot escape the results of shirking responsibilities." Under the pretext of laziness one postpones or neglects the responsibilities assigned to oneself. This, may seem okay for a short while, but one will experience its bitter consequences.

There is a saying, "Heaven never helps the man who will not act." When we do not help ourselves then Bhagwan will be helpless in doing good to us. Laziness is one of society's greatest evils. An expert in criminal law, Dr Shethna, once proposed, "Prisoners should always be engaged in constant activity in jails." Referring to this, someone remarked, "Since the prisoners are in jail, that itself is punishment for their crimes. So, what more punishment should they be given?" Dr Shethna replied, "Lethargy and laziness have devastated countless people. Due to laziness they resort to stealing and other crimes. To avoid work they resort to stealing! Thus, through activity they should be redeemed from their habit of laziness." Laziness gives birth to so many wrong things! Because of laziness one tends to be irresponsible and prone to neglecting things. Benjamin Franklin narrated a story that reflects the consequences of laziness. Once, a king went to battle. A nail in his horse's shoe came out and subsequently the king lost the battle. Thereafter, a saying became popular, "For the want of a nail the king lost his reign." In contrast to being neglectful or lazy there are so many examples of people who have made their lives noble (and successful) through intense effort and labour. Swami Shraddhanandji was a learned sannyasi. He was nationally renowned and was always actively working. Once, someone asked him, "Despite your old age there's not an iota of laziness in you! What is the reason behind this?" Swami Shraddhanandji replied, "Laziness is a person's grave. I do not wish to lie down in it from now!" All through his life Pramukh Swami Maharaj remained active and persevered in his work. He never postponed or delayed his work, no matter how small or big it was.

REASONS FOR LAZINESS

What are the reasons for laziness?

One of the biggest reasons for laziness is not having a goal. People who have no fixed goal in life do not know the value of every second. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel said, "A person without a goal is like a ship without a captain." A person devoid of a goal or one who has no clear goal flies here and there like flecks of dust. He does a little work for some time and then something else thereafter. Then, he gives both of them up.

Another reason for laziness is ignorance.

The third reason is the habit of leaving everything to fate.

When it comes to doing work some people leave it to fate or Bhagwan and say, "Whatever either does is okay." But, prior to starting your task, there is no need to leave it to either of them. Bring them on to the centre stage after accomplishing the task. It is not proper to leave things to fate. This is cowardice. On seeing Panini's palm, an astrologer remarked, "You do not have the palm line denoting good studies." Panini asked, "Show me where it should be." When the astrologer showed it, Panini instantly took out a knife and cut a line on his palm. Then, he expressed, "Now, I will become a great scholar!" Thereafter, he worked hard and succeeded in becoming a renowned Sanskrit scholar. He did not leave it to fate. At 10 years, Dr Radhakrishnan told an astrologer, "I will go abroad not to study, but to teach others." Thereafter, Radhakrishnan worked intensely hard and progressed phenomenally. He did not leave it to fate.

Often, some people simply make wishes but do not endeavour to realize them. But it does not suffice to make wishes. After making a wish and deciding upon the goal one has to make efforts. One has to firmly adhere to making efforts.

Lack of patience and tolerance are also reasons for being lazy. When one fails in any work or one doesn't get the desired amount of success one's patience and tolerance comes to an end. Subsequently, one feels like doing nothing. We lose interest in our work. Disraeli (of England) lost three times for the prime ministerial election, but he persevered with patience and finally succeeded in becoming the prime minister. Abraham Lincoln lost fourteen times before he became the president on his fifteenth attempt. How much patience he had!

HOW TO BECOME FREE FROM LAZINESS

We explored the words of the Vachanamrut about why God dislikes laziness. So, efforts should be made to overcome it. Let us see some solutions to overcoming laziness.

1. Clarity of Goal

Firstly, it is important to have a clear goal. Fix your goal with regards to doing bha-jan, bhakti, satsang work or your social duties. Then, organize your time to achieve your goal. Thereafter, focus on your daily timetable by detailing your schedule from morning till evening. Thereafter, firmly decide to finish the amount of work by evening. At night, evaluate how much you have accomplished and schedule the unfinished work for the next day. Pramukh Swami Maharaj had emphasized many times to write your timetable for each day.

2. Believing One's Faults to Be One's Enemy

Bhagwan Swaminarayan said that if one wants to oust any fault in oneself then one must develop a feeling of hatred for it. Make a resolute pledge, "Laziness is my enemy. It has spoilt a lot of things in my life."

3. Stop Deceiving Ourselves

Quite often we push ourselves into the pit of laziness by exclaiming, "Oh, I've laboured a lot, so I must rest for a while." Such words are uttered out of self-deception and self-pity. But, never have self-pity on ourselves. Renounce self-pity. Only when we are strict upon ourselves can we be saved from self-pity. Yogiji Maharaj often said, "'Crush' one's senses and mind. They should quake with fear."

4. Inclination for Change

Always develop an inclination to constantly improve yourself. For example, you daily perform your morning puja. However, to make your puja and ghar sabha ideal, you should consistently make efforts to improve them, otherwise laziness will raise its head.

5. Take Inspiration from Those Who Are Good

Focus on those who have given up laziness. Once, (many years ago), I went to the terrace of Dadar mandir. I saw three people sleeping there. When I went near, one person got up. But on seeing the other two sleeping, he went back to sleep. So, I woke him up and asked, "Why did you lie down to sleep?" He replied, "Because the two are sleeping." I remarked, "Besides them, can't you think of the 30 persons who have already got up and gone?" (The person remained silent.) We imitate those who have regressed. Having such an attitude, especially when one wants to give up laziness, is not correct. Instead, take inspiration from those who have given it up. In Vachanamrut Gadhada I 20, Bhagwan Swaminarayan states about giving up laziness: Bhagwan blesses that for one who has sat-sang it is easy to attain atma darshan or God-realization, however, whatever lapses that a devotee has is due to his laziness. In Vachanamrut Loya 6, Maharaj says, "If he [devotee] is very lazy, sleeps too much and when told by others to bathe, meditate or observe other niyams, says, 'I'll do it later; what's the hurry. I'll do them slowly' – then even though we may be good, one should avoid his company." Give up laziness to become a recipient of Shriji Maharaj's grace.

2. Pramukh Swami Maharaj's Devotion to Thakorji

On the morning of 2 September 1980, the auspicious day of Janmashtami, Pramukh Swami Maharaj arrived in Boston by road from New York. After a medical examination for his ripe cataracts, Swamishri departed to return to New York. To ease the fatigue from the 8-hour two-way commute, Swamishri accepted the sadhus' request to sleep on the rear seat of the van. Thakorji (the murti of Shri Harikrishna Maharaj) was also placed to rest on the upper berth of the van. The sun had set. Then, while the van was travelling smoothly on the broad highway, a sudden loud thud of something falling down was heard amid the darkness. Along with the others, Swamishri suddenly sat up, asking, "What happened? What fell down?" One saint replied, "Thakorji fell down from above." The statement was like a jolt to Swamishri. Concerned and shaken, Swamishri said, "Quickly, check whether Thakorji has fallen out." The interior light was switched on. On inspection, the sadhus noticed that the murti of Shri Harikrishna Maharaj had turned on to the side. Seeing this, Swamishri became quite perturbed. Tearfully, he continually stroked his hand all over the body of Maharaj while

repeatedly saying, “Maharaj, please forgive. Maharaj, please forgive.” It was as if Swamishri felt responsible for the fall and that Thakorji had been injured. Remorsefully, Swamishri started prostrating in the van... one...two...three...five...ten...twenty...twenty-five... Despite his own ill health and exhaustion, he continued prostrating. Yet, in his mind he was still not satisfied. To please Thakorji, he lovingly offered thal, and afterwards sat silently throughout the remainder of the journey, devoutly turning his rosary. Even on reaching New York, Swamishri’s heart remained unalleviated. That Thakorji had fallen was not his fault. But their bond was different. Swamishri offered devotion and service to Thakorji with the firm conviction that he was manifest in the murti. Such was his exemplary devotion towards Thakorji (parabhakti). Such parabhakti is described in the scriptures, but Swamishri’s life was a living form of parabhakti.

NOT A SYMBOL, BUT GOD HIMSELF

During a TV interview in Lusaka, Mr Momiz Fishi asked, “What does this small murti symbolize? Swamishri replied, “This is not a symbol, but is manifest Bhagwan Swaminarayan. This was his childhood form when he manifested on earth. He is Harikrishna Maharaj himself.” In the village of Ambardi, the murti of Thakorji was left by mistake at a devotee’s house. Swamishri was told about it when he came to his room after an assembly in Amreli. The attendant sadhus had already sent another car to Ambardi to bring Thakorji. On learning about this, Swamishri became more annoyed and said, “For whom is this Mercedes car? It is for Thakorji; not for me! Use the Mercedes for him.”

SWAMISHRI DID NOT STAND UP

On 13 June 1988, during a session of the Canadian Parliament, Hon. John Fraser, the Speaker, stood up to felicitate Swamishri, declaring, “I wish to draw the attention of members to the presence in the gallery of Pramukh Swami Maharaj, Head of the Swaminarayan Mission.” And with thundering applause, the members of parliament looked up towards the VIP gallery to have darshan of Swamishri. But Pramukh Swami Maharaj did not stand up to receive the felicitation. Instead, he first made the sadhu who was holding Harikrishna Maharaj stand up. Whatever the occasion, big or small – an honour in the Canadian Parliament or a Nairobi City Crest presentation, a meeting with Pope John Paul II in Vatican City or a meeting with The Dalai Lama, a visit to the Rashtrapati Bhavan in Delhi at the invitation of President of India Zail Singh or a suvarna tula honour by devotees – Swamishri always kept Harikrishna Maharaj at the forefront, because he firmly believed that the honours were first to be offered to Thakorji, whereas he was merely a medium. He often said that whatever greatness there is, is due solely to Thakorji.

STAUNCH DEVOTION

In public or private, even in the smallest acts, Swamishri did not forget Thakorji. In Gondal, a new room had been prepared for him. When the saints affectionately requested him to rest in that room, Swamishri ensured that Thakorji slept in that room on the first night and only thereafter did he use the sanctified room. Swamishri always insisted that the food prepared for him should first be offered to Thakorji. He even showed the medicines to Thakorji before taking them. In Kisumu, Swamishri was to take a cholera vaccine at Dr Ghanshyambhai Patel’s clinic. While taking the injection, Swamishri looked unblinkingly at Thakorji. When the doctor gave him a tablet of Novalgin to neutralize the side effects of the vaccine, Swamishri immediately said, “Sanctify it by showing it to Thakorji.” Only then did Swamishri take the tablet. After Swamishri’s cataract operations, Pravinbhai Patel from Staten Island brought new spectacles for him. Swamishri told an attendant saint, “Sanctify them by offering them first to Thakorji, and then bring them to me.” Then, when the attendant gave the spectacles to him, Swamishri said, “Bring Thakorji.” After Thakorji was brought, Swamishri put on the eyeglasses and first had darshan of Harikrishna Maharaj, thus sanctifying both his spectacles and eyesight. At Khambhala Hill Hospital in Mumbai, Swamishri had an operation to remove a lump from his thigh. When Swamishri regained consciousness, everyone thought of showing Swamishri the orange-sized tumour that had

been removed. So they placed a pair of spectacles on Swamishri and said, "See, this is the lump!" Swamishri did not give any response, but asked instead, "Where is Maharaj?" He put on the spectacles and first had the darshan of Harikrishna Maharaj. After the surgery, everybody insisted to Swamishri that he should sleep. Swamishri did not wish to sleep. Still, he closed his eyes after everyone left the room. But, he couldn't sleep. Standing at a distance, the saints had a special darshan – as if Maharaj had come in person for Swamishri! Humbly, with folded hands, Swamishri was making gestures as if he was saying something. Briefly, he would fold his hands, then he would say something. Then, he would relax his hands, and concentrate as if listening to something. This continued for about twenty minutes. After a few days, the secret of this silent conversation was revealed. When an attendant saint asked Swamishri, he said, "At that time, I was having the darshan of Thakorji in all the mandirs." Everyone realized that Swamishri remained constantly engrossed in Thakorji even when alone and under the effect of medications. In Ahmedabad, Swamishri arrived in an evening assembly. He saw that the seat for Thakorji was behind his own seat. So, he immediately called one of the organizing sadhus and said, "My seat should never be ahead of Thakorji's seat. Bear this in mind always. Fix it in your mind. Remember this. Not just for today or for this place only, but remember this norm forever."

THAKORJI IS THE ALL-DOER

In 1985, on his return to India after the successful Cultural Festival of India in London, Swamishri was felicitated in Ahmedabad. The compering saint announced, "Swamishri, who has hoisted the flag of Indian culture in the West will now bless the assembly." Then, Swamishri began, "We are unable to break even a roasted papad [i.e., to do anything]. All this is achieved only due to the wish of Shriji Maharaj." In 1985, while being honoured in the Suvarna Tula in London, Swamishri's attention and feelings were totally focused on Maharaj. This was evident when he said, "First of all, I bow to Parabrahman Sarvavatari Purushottam Narayan Bhagwan Swaminarayan, because he gave me this human body, and thereafter, I bow to my gurus Shastriji Maharaj and Yogiji Maharaj, who accepted and blessed me. With their grace and blessings, I am standing before you. Without their grace, I would not have been at this place. They gave me the chance to serve. There are so many standing before God with folded hands, but he gave me the opportunity to do this service. It is my great fortune! Nothing can be done without the grace and wish of God. God is the all-doer. Without God's wish, even a dry leaf cannot move."

ALWAYS A SERVANT

In 1982, a grand procession took place in London on the occasion of the foundationstone laying ceremony of the hari mandir in Neasden. Swamishri was seated on an elephant. After a while, it started to rain and a strong cold wind was blowing. Swamishri immediately held an umbrella to cover Thakorji. He did not mind getting drenched. During his daily puja, Swamishri so lovingly offered thal that it felt as if Harikrishna Maharaj was himself accepting the offering. Sometimes, due to the travel schedule, if Thakorji's rest time was delayed, Swamishri would instruct that Thakorji be woken up a little later next morning.

SAME FOR GOD AS FOR THE BODY

In 1981, while touring in the Bharuch district, the dusty roads caused everyone much discomfort, fatigue and inconvenience. So, whenever they reached their lodgings, the accompanying sadhus would freshen up by washing their hands and feet. Swamishri would say, "Just as we feel the effects of the dusty roads, Thakorji would also have been affected and be tired. Hence, please bathe him in the afternoon and evening before offering him the thal." There was only one place to refresh for everyone on their return from the pilgrimage to Kedarnath: in Gaurikund, where there is a natural hot water spring. Swamishri also came to the kund for a bath after returning from the pilgrimage. Swamishri said, "First, let us bathe Harikrishna Maharaj, as he must also be tired." The water in the kund was very hot. So, Swamishri specially asked for cold water. He mixed the hot and cold water before bathing Thakorji. Then, for ten to fifteen minutes, Swamishri lovingly and devoutly massaged the

murti of Thakorji while bathing him and chanting mantras from the Purushsukta. It was a wonderful experience of Swamishri's oneness with and devotion for Thakorji. Without such devotion, the thought that a metal murti would get tired would not arise. As Shriji Maharaj has said in Vachanamrut Sarangpur 3, "If a person lovingly performs puja of God, with elation and an emotion-filled voice, then regardless of whether he performs puja physically or performs mansi puja, both are superior."

GOD IS PRESENT IN THE MURTI

In 1988, on the occasion of Yogi Jayanti, the women devotees of London had prepared a cake for Thakorji. When Thakorji was offered fruits in the afternoon, the youths placed the uncut cake and offered it to Thakorji. Then they brought it to Swamishri requesting him to cut it. Swamishri cut the cake and said, "Offer the cake to Thakorji." Upendra Patel said, "It has already been offered." Swamishri asked, "How can Thakorji eat a whole cake? Now it is cut, offer it again." Then, after the cake had been offered again, Swamishri had a small piece. Once, Swamishri came to have darshan of Thakorji during the shayan arti. On seeing four murtis of Lalji Maharaj in a single bed, Swamishri suggested to the pujari saint, "You have placed all to sleep in one bed. But, since there is not much space how can they stretch or turn to their sides?" So, alternative arrangements were made. In 1986, at Gajera village, Swamishri arrived to do puja in the assembly hall. The temperature was 7°C and a cold wind was also blowing. A heater was kept facing Swamishri to keep him warm. However, when he sat down to perform his puja, Swamishri had the direction of the heater turned towards Harikrishna Maharaj to keep him warm. On countless such occasions, Swamishri's devotion and conviction that God is manifest in the murti was seen by all.

GOD FIRST

After the evening assembly at Kelod village in the Bharuch district, Swamishri sat down for dinner. While eating, Swamishri asked an attendant, "Did you offer the bhakhri in the thal?" The attendant said, "No. The bhakhris brought by another devotee from his house were offered." Swamishri said to the attendant, "Look, two or three bhakhris out of the ones being made for me should be prepared first and offered to Thakorji. Do not give me anything unless it has been offered to Thakorji. To eat without offering to Thakorji is like eating dust." In 1987, the construction for the township in preparation for the Kalash Jayanti Mahotsav in Mumbai were to be started. Swamishri arrived to inaugurate the kitchen. Dharmabhushan Swami brought shiro to offer to Thakorji during the inauguration rituals. Swamishri took the plate from him, removed his sandals, even though the ground was muddy, and offered the shiro to Thakorji. After offering it, when he touched the shiro to give it to the saints he realized that it was too hot. Swamishri said, "Oh! This is very hot. I thought it must have been cooled when it was brought for offering!" Then, he himself spread a part of the shiro on one side and cooled it and again offered it to Thakorji saying, "Maharaj, please forgive me. At first, hot shiro was offered. It must have caused you discomfort." Thus, he humbly begged pardon. Then, after lovingly offering the cooled shiro to Thakorji, he joyfully distributed it to all. In 1974, Swamishri flew to Nairobi and had to return on the same plane from Nairobi to Mumbai. On the way to Nairobi, thal had been offered to Thakorji in the afternoon. The evening thal was to be offered in Nairobi. However, due to the unexpected return, the evening thal could not be offered to Thakorji. The return flight arrived late at night in Mumbai. On reaching the mandir at about 2.45 a.m., Swamishri emotionally begged for forgiveness before Thakorji and offered about twenty prostrations. Then, he had some fresh food prepared and offered thal to Thakorji. Shriji Maharaj has said in the Vachanamrut Gadhada I 68 that, "I forever reside in the eight types of murtis." Swamishri's devout life was such that it reflected his true faith in the words of Maharaj. That is why on returning from bathing Thakorji at the seashore in Vile Parle in Mumbai, Swamishri asked an attendant saint, "We bathed Thakorji in the salty sea water. Have we bathed him in fresh water after returning?" Such devotion is possible only when one believes that God is actually manifest in the murti.

SUBTLE SERVICE

On Swamishri's return to India after the Suvarna Tula Mahotsav in London, one parshad had prepared a small set of scales and placed a small murti of Swamishri on one side and flowers on the other. In this way, he offered 'Pushpa Tula' and brought the set up to show to Swamishri. But Swamishri said, "This is not proper. Bring a murti of Bhagwan Swaminarayan." So, the parshad brought a standing murti of Maharaj, but Swamishri said, "This is not appropriate. Bring a seated murti." After a seated murti was brought, Swamishri swapped it with his murti and honoured Maharaj by weighing him against the flowers. How could Maharaj be not bound by such dedicated devotion by Swamishri, who remembered him at every moment? Shriji Maharaj has said in Vachanamrut Gadhada I 61 that God "becomes bound by anyone who offers profound bhakti to him. As a result, the mind of a devotee who has such loving bhakti becomes so bound to God that God is unable to free himself from him".

HE IS OUR MOST CHERISHED

Once, Swamishri was asked, "What thoughts do you have for all 24 hours?" Swamishri replied, "About God only." On another occasion, somebody asked Swamishri, "What is your personal opinion about Harikrishna Maharaj?" Swamishri replied, "He is our most cherished. What more needs to be said?" The real opinion about someone beloved is beyond words. His place lies in the heart, not on the lips. Swamishri possessed Maharaj in every atom of his physical form. Without him, how could the existence of Swamishri even be imagined?

THE SECRET OF LIFE

After the evening assembly in Nadiad, Swamishri asked, "Has the arti been performed?" One saint, with the intention of not troubling Swamishri, replied, "Bapa, you need not come, we will perform the arti." This reply annoyed Swamishri, "You are trying to stop me from attending the arti, but you should never stop me from having darshan. You prohibit me from doing such things. But I have come to offer devotion and worship. If that cannot be done, how do I survive?" Thakorji was Swamishri's life. The worship of Thakorji nourished Swamishri. His attachment towards Thakorji sustained Swamishri. Can the existence of fish be imagined without water? If life without air can be imagined, then one could imagine the life of Swamishri without Thakorji. In fact, Thakorji was integral to Swamishri's existence.

3. Giving Up Everything for the Adhiveshan

To prepare for the adhiveshan, balaks and balikas gave up their play and vacation time, while some even cancelled their holiday trips! Disability, illness, the passing away of a loved one – nothing could deter these participants. Below are just a few of the inspiring incidents revealing how they balanced time challenges, family commitments and emotional setbacks

CHILDREN'S DETERMINATION Not Giving Up Despite Father's Demise

Harsh Jaykishanbhai Khamar of Patan bal mandal studies in the 8th grade. His father was admitted to a hospital due to poor health. Just days before the Zonal Adhiveshan, Harsh's father's health worsened and he suddenly passed away on 1 March 2019. Harsh was deeply saddened by his father's death, but he remained firmly intent on taking part in the adhiveshan. The mourning ceremony was to be held on 3 March, the same day as the Zonal Adhiveshan. Harsh remained calm and firm in the face of this tragic loss. After the ceremony, with his mother's permission, he participated in the Zonal Adhiveshan. Similarly, Nadiad resident Chirag Rangvani's father also passed away. Yet Chirag, too, remained mentally and emotionally strong and prepared for the adhiveshan.

Unsuccessful Participants Pray for Others

Two balikas from Ahmedabad, Khushi Hingu and Krishna Panchal, took part in the Regional Adhiveshan, but did not progress to the Akhil Bharatiya Adhiveshan stage. Yet these two selfless balikas helped to prepare mukhpath papers for the balikas who had progressed. Also, Khushi and Krishna prayed for the success of their fellow balikas who had progressed. During the day, they would even go to Shahibaug Mandir to prepare decorations to be used in the Akhil Bharatiya Adhiveshan in Sarangpur.

Resolute in the Face of Illness

Sajal Keyurbhai Patel of Patan studies in the 5th grade. He had various stomach illnesses for two months. Then, on the night of 4 May 2019, having developed a high fever and severe headache, Sajal had to be admitted to hospital. He was released after treatment and reached home at 2.30 a.m. His father had passed away three years ago, so he called his mama (maternal uncle) to come early next morning to help him. His mama is disabled. At 5.30 a.m., Sajal, his mother and mama left for their region's main centre, Himmatnagar, on a three-wheeled Aactiva scooter. They arrived at 8.30 a.m., just in time for the Regional Adhiveshan. There, he gave mukhpath of 12 chapters, despite being tired and sick!

Cancelled Overseas Trip

The family of Jeet Sunilbhai Bhatt of Satellite in Ahmedabad had planned a trip to London to visit his mama. Even his ticket had been booked, yet he said, "No, I don't want to go to London. I've been selected for the adhiveshan, so I would like to prepare as best as I can and earn Swamishri's rajipo." Similarly, the family of Param Tiwari of Anand had planned to go to the Shilanyas Mahotsav in Abu Dhabi. But they postponed their visit so that Param could prepare for the adhiveshan.

Competed Despite Blood Transfusions

Vandan Mayurbhai Thakkar of Mulund, Mumbai, suffers from an illness called thalassaemia since birth. This means he has to have a blood transfusion about twice a month. Following the Zonal Adhiveshan, he went to Dubai for treatment and a vacation, but returned before the Regional Adhiveshan. Immediately after returning, he had to have a blood transfusion on 30 April 2019. Yet, on 1 May, Vandan successfully gave mukhpath for all 25 chapters. Also, he performed well in the Satsang Q & A, storytelling and monoacting competitions. During his month-long stay in Dubai, Vandan's karyakars had helped him to prepare for mukhpath via video calls.

Blind Balak Does Mukhpath

Keyur Mukeshbhai Priyan of Nikol in Ahmedabad has been blind since birth and his body remains weak and frail. Yet, Keyur memorized chapters from the Satsang Mukhpath and studied for the Satsang Q & A by listening to audio recordings of the texts, and repeatedly revising them word-for-word. He successfully memorized 25 chapters and 100 questions as well. Keyur is also a good singer. With his parents' help, he worked exceptionally hard. Keyur won a prize in the Mukhpath competition and earned Swamishri's rajipo.

Took Part Despite Operation

Kunj Patel of Ahmedabad had a major kidney operation on 26 February 2019. The following week, he participated in the Zonal Adhiveshan and qualified for the Regional Adhiveshan.

Staying Strong in the Face of Obstacles

Jeel Patel of Vadadla near Petlad had just recovered from a hand fracture when his father suffered a fatal heart attack and passed away on 4 May. Still, on 5 May, he participated in the Regional Adhiveshan. He had memorized 25 chapters, and a hundred questions and answers. Jeel prepared for the adhiveshan, despite the uncertainty about his admission to a new school and his family's financial difficulties, with the understanding that whatever Maharaj does is always for our own good.

Unbearable Kidney Stone Pain

Mit Rathod of Ahmedabad suffered from repeated bouts of pain due to stones in both his kidneys. The day before the Regional Adhiveshan, the doctors gave him a choice: be admitted for treatment or tolerate the pain. Deriving strength from how Mahant Swami Maharaj completes his daily routine despite many health challenges, Mit decided to delay admission and to participate in the Regional Adhiveshan. He was selected for Satsang Mukhpath, Satsang Q & A, Storytelling, Speech and Mono-acting.

Memorized with Understanding

Tilak Chudasama studies in Standard 3. Having progressed to the Regional Adhiveshan,

shan, he memorized all 25 chapters of the Satsang Mukhpath and thoroughly studied the Satsang Q & A booklet. Once, during his family's ghar sabha, his parents were discussing how atma darshan is possible. To their immense surprise, Tilak answered their question by quoting a passage from Vachanamrut Vartal 11, and added that by developing profound love for the Satpurush, Mahant Swami Maharaj, atma darshan is possible. Not only had the young balak memorized the passage, but had understood its meaning as well.

Mukhpath Despite Disability

Mit Kotadiya of Bhojraj Para, Gondal, is severely physically handicapped and requires assistance to complete all his daily activities. After the adhiveshan was launched, Anantcharan Swami said in the bal sabha, "God has given us infinite abilities." This motivated Mit to participate. He told his mother, "In any way possible, I want to participate in the adhiveshan." So, with the help of the audio books prepared by the Sanstha, he persevered. In the Zonal Adhiveshan, he memorized 10 chapters. In the Regional Adhiveshan, he memorized 20 chapters.

Studies Boosted

Amit Chavda of Surat performed poorly at school. But by participating in the adhiveshan, he developed his abilities of reading and memorizing to reach the Akhil Bharatiya Bal-Balika Adhiveshan. This has also helped him to improve in his studies at school. Some gave up on their favourite pastimes... some sacrificed vacation fun... some disregarded illness and physical pain... some overcame the sorrow of a family death... they all stood strong amidst many challenges... all with a common aim: to earn Mahant Swami Maharaj's rajipo. These children worked hard and participated in the adhiveshan and passed with distinction. We bow down to these children who, like flowers, have spread the fragrance of satsang and sanskars around them, and thus earned the priceless rajipo of Mahant Swami Maharaj.

SUPPORT OF PARENTS

Parents Help Their Children to Prepare

Agna, who studies in the third standard, had participated in the adhiveshan. Whenever her mother helped her with preparations, her four-year-old sister, Upasana, would be around too. So, she also started picking up the mukhpath. Thus, four-year-old Upasana learnt by heart five complete chapters. For the Zonal Adhiveshan, Agna had memorized eight chapters. But her mother felt that Agna could memorize all 25 chapters. So, for the Regional Adhiveshan, Agna memorized 25 chapters with the help of her parents. In the morning, her father would help her prepare new mukhpath and revise what she had already memorized. Her mother, a school teacher, would help her after school. Whether it be in the bathroom, in the car, while playing, while her mother was cooking or during the ghar sabha, the only focus was the adhiveshan. Besides Satsang Mukhpath, Agna also won prizes in Satsang Q & A, Colouring and Mono-acting. Her mother said, "The adhiveshan has benefited me immensely. Both my daughters, Agna and Upasana, have learnt a lot from it."

Helping Both Their Daughters

Khushi and Palak, two sisters who attend the balika sabha in Mumbai, participated in the adhiveshan – Khushi in Group 1 and Palak in Group 2. Their father's name is Anandbhai Thakkar. Since the girls are studying the CBSE syllabus, along with the adhiveshan, they also had their final exams in the same month. Their mother removed the TV cable connection. So, instead of watching TV, they would listen to the adhiveshan audio. Similarly, they would listen to the audio while bathing, getting ready and eating. Due to their hard work, Palak won five prizes and Khushi won three prizes in the Zonal Adhiveshan. These girls had their exams just prior to the Zonal Adhiveshan and then they had school before the Regional Adhiveshan. Just before the Akhil Bharatiya Adhiveshan, Palak was seriously ill, hence had to take complete bed rest. Even in such conditions, their mother helped her to work hard for the adhiveshan. And as a result, in the Akhil Bharatiya Adhiveshan, Palak won prizes in Satsang Mukhpath and Storytelling.

Grandmother and Mother Help to Prepare

Nayan Shukla of Bharuch studies in the 8th standard. His 64-year-old grandmother has only studied up to the ninth standard, many years ago. She had to have a leg operation

and was advised complete bed rest for two months. While in bed, she would help Nayan to read the questions and answers. In total, his mother and grandmother would daily spend about four to five hours helping Nayan with reading, writing and understanding and prepare him for the adhiveshan. They would also test him on whatever he had prepared. In spite of being busy serving her mother-in-law, looking after guests coming to their house, doing household chores, and looking after yuvati activities, Nayan's mother would find time to help him with his preparations as well. While cooking, she would help him to do his mukhpath. She would also prepare question papers for him to test his Satsang Q & A knowledge. Nayan's final CBSE exams finished just two days before the Zonal Adhiveshan. He developed a high fever. Even then, his mother motivated him saying, "You will receive Bapa's rajipo by participating in the adhiveshan." With help from his grandmother and mother, Nayan succeeded in getting a prize in the Akhil Bharatiya Adhiveshan.

Support Despite Lack of Resources

Umesh Rakholia (Standard 5) of Nikol, Ahmedabad, achieved success in the Shishu Adhiveshan through prayers and the support of his parents and karyakars. Daily, his parents took him to the hari mandir in Nikol where karyakars helped him and other balaks to prepare. The mandir is about 4 km from his house and his family does not have a private vehicle. So, his mother or father would drop him there and pick him up again, either by rickshaw or bus. Even at home, he would prepare for the adhiveshan.

Parents Would Bring Food and Snacks

Upendrabhai Patel serves as a sah-nirdeshak for Ahmedabad Zone 16. He reported that balaks used to stay from early morning till late at night in the local hari mandir to prepare. So, parents would bring them food and snacks. Not just for their own balak, but also for others. The parents were delighted that the children were engaged in such a constructive activity. Thus, parents and karyakars would encourage the children to earn Swamishri's rajipo. They would specially take out time from their routine activities to help the children prepare.

EFFORTS BY KARYAKARS

Grasping the adhiveshan as an opportunity to please Swamishri, the karyakars also poured their hearts into doing whatever was required to help the children prepare in the best way.

Giving Priority to Adhiveshan Preparation

Dipakbhai Soni, sah-nirdeshak for Anand 1 commutes daily to Vadodara for work. The round trip takes about four hours.

So, he would reach the home of the balaks at 7.00 a.m. to check on their progress for the adhiveshan and motivate them. On returning at 9.00 p.m. in the evening, he would again visit the balaks and encourage them and their parents to prepare properly. Due to his selfless efforts, the parents also assisted in preparing their children for the adhiveshan.

Helped to Prepare Despite a Fractured Foot

Joybhai, a bal karyakar from Satellite, Ahmedabad, was teaching the role of Joban Pagi to a balak for the mono-acting competition. As Joybhai stood on a chair, three of its legs suddenly buckled and he fell, suffering several fractures in his toe. Doctors told him he should rest for one month. Despite this, he daily gathered the balaks at his home to guide their preparations for the adhiveshan.

A Pilot Helped Children Prepare for Mukhpath

Amitbhai Shah from Mumbai is a pilot with a reputed airline. However, whenever he was not flying, he would spend all his free time to help children prepare for mukhpath competitions.

Reduced Job Hours Niteshbhai Chauhan serves as a nirikshak and BSS sanchalak in Paldi, Ahmedabad. He was assigned the task of helping the balaks with their preparations. He was wondering how he would find time for this seva. He works for 14 hours daily at a medical store. So, he decided to cut down on his overtime for about two-and-a-half months. He sacrificed on his income to find time for his seva.

 **THE END** 