

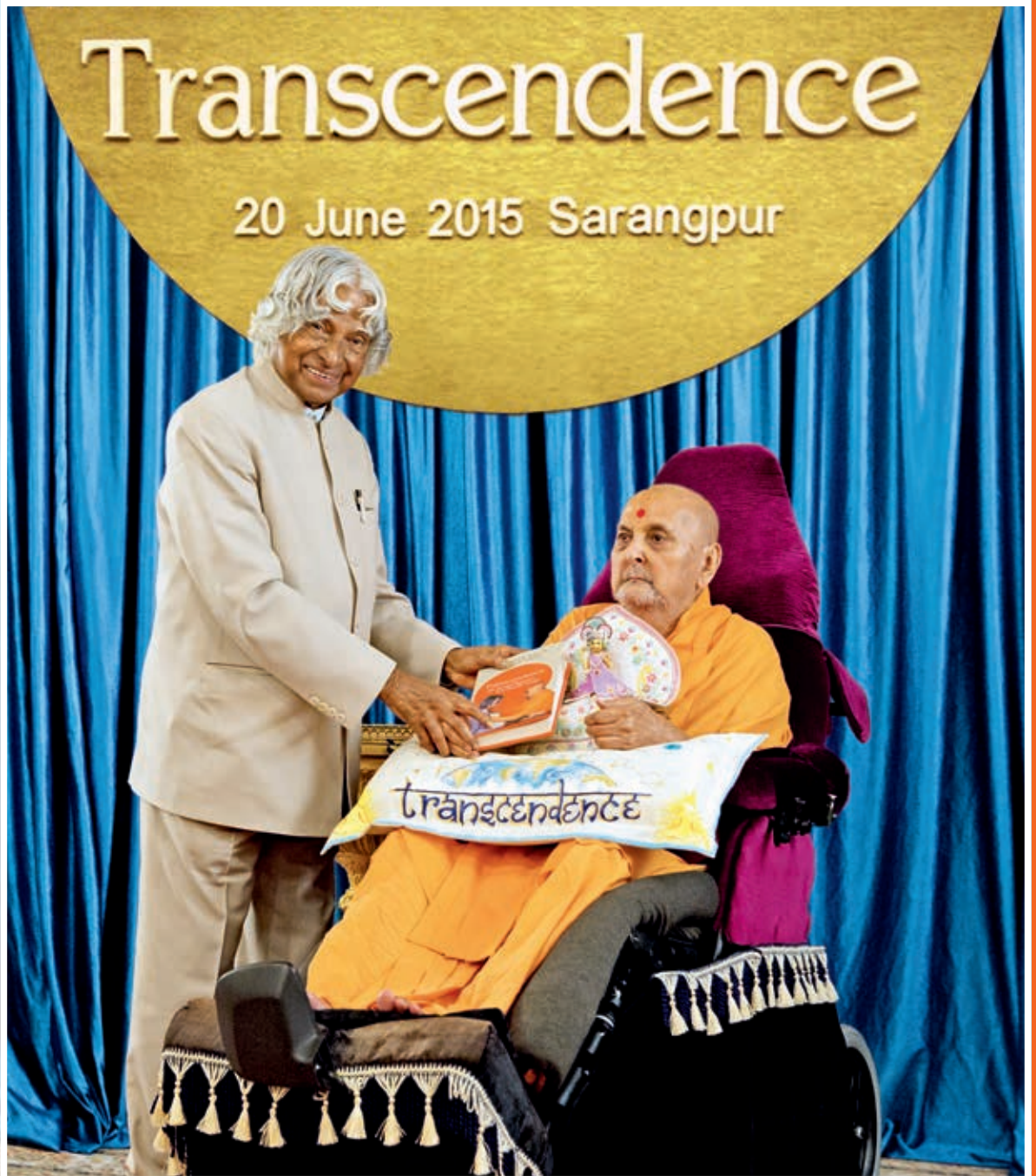
# SWAMINARAYAN BLISS

July-August 2015

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## Transcendence

20 June 2015 Sarangpur

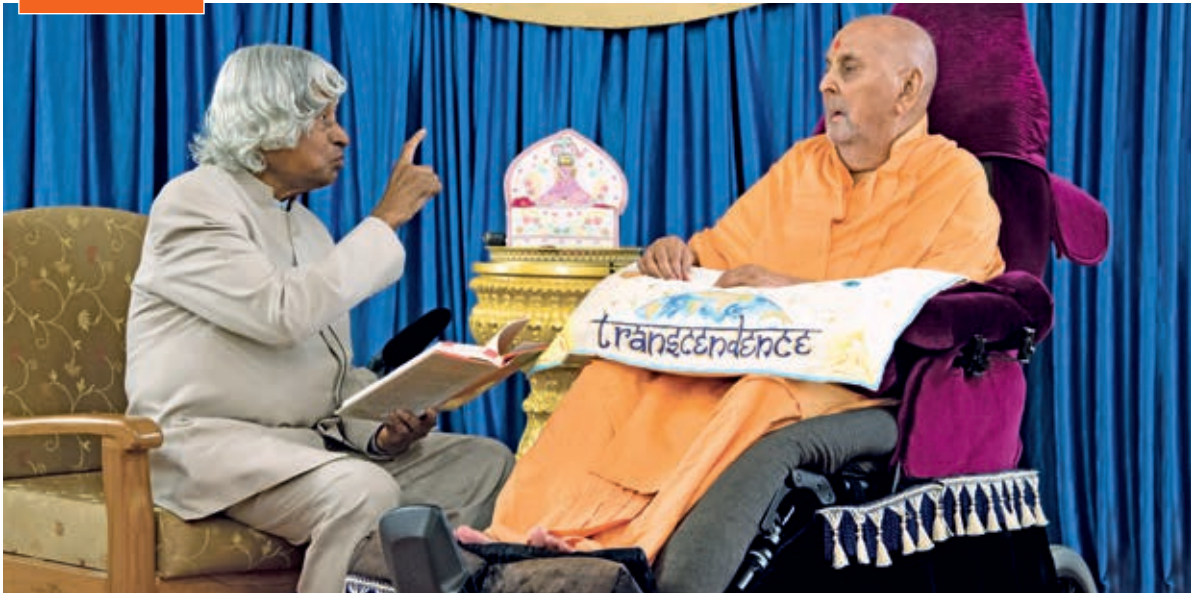


Dr Kalam Presents His Book 'Transcendence' to Pramukh Swami Maharaj  
20 June 2015, Sarangpur



**DR KALAM'S VISIT TO SARANGPUR**  
**20 June 2015**

**Top:** Dr Kalam greets Swamishri prior to presenting his book.  
**Bottom:** Dr Kalam addresses (inset) sadhus and several thousand BAPS youths from throughout Gujarat in the Yagnapurush Sabhagruh.



Dr Abdul Kalam reads an extract from his book 'Transcendence' to Pramukh Swami Maharaj in Sarangpur, 20 June 2015

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## SWAMINARAYAN BLISS

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Akshar-Purushottam Maharaj



In April 1978, Pramukh Swami Maharaj inspired and inaugurated the first issue of *Swaminarayan Bliss* in Ahmedabad, Gujarat. The bi-monthly magazine serves to enlighten BAPS youths, seniors and well-wishers about the glory of Bhagwan Swaminarayan, the Akshar-Purushottam philosophy and the Gunatit guru *parampara*. It also seeks to inspire the universal values and traditions of Hinduism to pursue a happy and peaceful life by serving God and humankind.

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# FIRST WORD

Johannes Gutenberg (c. 1398-1468) was a German blacksmith who invented the first printing press. His epoch-making invention ushered in the printing revolution, which is regarded as one of the most important developments in the Renaissance period. Till the advent of the printing press the dissemination of knowledge had been limited to verbal means and handwritten scrolls.

The interest in books and dailies grew rapidly as writers and publishers mushroomed, catering to the imagination, and thirst for knowledge and information among the masses. But today, there is a burgeoning inclination that reading books has little importance and appeal in life compared to other exciting and lucrative activities. Books are considered to be lifeless and reserved for desks, cupboards, school and university libraries and monasteries. Furthermore, social media and other means of communication have further diluted interest in reading.

But there is evidence, all through human history, of the impact of books on society, for better and for worse. For instance, Hitler's *Mein Kampf* (My Struggle) became the political bible for the German people, expounding that the German race was superior and the strongest in the world, and that it should rule over the the inferior races of the earth. It thus sowed hatred for and triggered war against the Jews and others.

Albert Einstein's paper on relativity in 1905 mentioned the formula  $E=mc^2$ , which led to the invention and deployment of nuclear bombs in 1945. Later, the formula also had its positive applications in harnessing nuclear power for producing energy.

Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, a story about slavery in 18th century America, led to the American Civil War and the subsequent abolishment of slavery.

Henry David Thoreau's work, *Civil Disobedience*, inspired Mohandas K. Gandhi to successfully introduce *satyagrah*, non-cooperation and ahimsa for India's independence from British rule.

The Bhagavad Gita by Veda Vyas has brought solace to millions of restless and depressed souls. Shri Krishna's message of karma yoga, *raj* yoga and bhakti yoga to Arjun forever provides a panacea to a wide range of human issues. Similarly, the Vachanamrut, the spiritual discourses of Bhagwan Swaminarayan, provides inspiration, guidance and solutions to countless spiritual aspirants. It contains the essence of the Upanishads, Gita and Purans, and other principles propagated by Bhagwan Swaminarayan.

Many other books in the fields of philosophy, religion, literature and education have also influenced and shaped the lives of people all over the world.

Dr APJ Abdul Kalam's recent book, *Transcendence*, describes his spiritual experiences with Pramukh Swami Maharaj. The book, published by HarperCollins India, also includes the social and moral contributions of BAPS to society, the co-relation of science and spirituality and creative leadership. The book also discusses higher values, hard work, progress, peace and happiness, which are the urgent needs of humanity today.

This issue of *Swaminarayan Bliss* deals with Dr Kalam's presentation of his book to Pramukh Swami Maharaj and his address to youths in Sarangpur, a brief overview of the contents of the book and the grand celebration in Ahmedabad to commemorate the book's public release on 28 June 2015. ◆



## Vaidyaraj from Vadodara

*While Shri Hari was in Gadhada a royal vaidya from Vadodara arrived. He started narrating about how he had come to the satsang-fold for his blessings...*

In Gadhada Shriji Maharaj expounded about the true understanding of his form and the glory of his ideal Sadhu. The audience of devotees had faith mainly in the non-manifest form of God or his ideal Sadhu, and so they found it difficult to grasp the glory of Maharaj as God and Aksharbrahman Gunatitanand Swami as his ideal devotee. For that, the mind (*man*) and intellect (*buddhi*) thwart one from realizing them. The mind reasons and questions in umpteen ways, whereas the intellect accepts only that which it has decided upon. That was why Bhagwan Shri Krishna exhorted Arjun, “*Sarvadharmān parityajya māmekam sharanam vraja*” – meaning “You give up the dharma of your mind and take refuge in me alone”. Thus, such unwillingness to understand and do is a longstanding hurdle for aspirants and others. Ironically, one has innate faith in the non-manifest form of God, but not so in his manifest form. The principle reason being their manifestation in human form, because when Bhagwan and his Sadhu show human traits the aspirant begins to doubt and question their divinity. But the liberation of one’s soul lies in realizing the knowledge of and association with the manifest form of God. Shri Hari celebrated the Fuldol festival. He

showered the colours sanctified before the *murti* of Vasudev Narayan on all, and played *ras* with the devotees and sadhus. Shri Hari soaked Jiva Khachar, Mulu Khachar, Dada Khachar and other devotees with coloured water and pleased them. In conclusion, everyone proceeded to the river Ghela for a bath. Thereafter Maharaj and his disciples headed towards the *darbar* of Jiva Khachar, singing kirtans along the way. Here, Jiva Khachar and his son, Mulu Khachar, performed *pujan* of Shri Hari and offered him a garland of sugar crystals. Subsequently, Maharaj went to the *darbar* of Dada Khachar.

Dada Khachar and his relatives performed *pujan* of Shri Hari and also offered him garlands made of sugar crystals. Then they offered dates and popcorn to Maharaj. Amariba and Amulaba, the daughters of Jiva Khachar, had also accompanied Maharaj to Dada’s *darbar*. They, too, along with Jivuba, Laduba and others performed *pujan* of Maharaj. Both the sisters, Amariba and Amulaba, had renounced their husbands to dedicate themselves to performing devotion to Maharaj. They were very close to both Jivuba and Laduba.

The following day Dada Khachar sponsored lunch for all. All the female members of Dada Khachar’s family helped in cooking the meals. Everyone wished to host Maharaj in Gadhpur for an indefinite time. Hence, each day, one devotee after another sponsored lunch. Shri Hari accepted their devotion.

## ROYAL VAIDYA OF VADODARA COMES TO GADHPUR

Shriji Maharaj decided to celebrate the Hari Jayanti festival in Gadhpur. One day the royal *vaidya* of Vadodara, Ramchandra, arrived. Since he had never set foot in this region no one knew him or had heard of him before. However, he had an impressive personality. He came to Maharaj, who welcomed him warmly, “Please come. Where have you arrived from in this scorching heat?”

The *vaidyarak* became enamoured of Maharaj’s face, because he felt him to be transcendental. He instantly realized that Maharaj was not like other humans. He humbly introduced himself, “Maharaj, I come from Vadodara. I am the royal *vaidya* of King Gaekwad.” Before he could say anything more Maharaj asked, “Did Gopalanand Swami send you here?”

“No Maharaj. I am unaware of your new *sampradaya*. A few years ago a scriptural debate had taken place in Vadodara, and there had been a lot of fanfare. But since I was disinclined towards any new *sampradaya* by virtue of my faith in Bhagwan Ranchhodrai of Dakor I did not attend or acquaint myself about it. Furthermore, because of my association with the Diwan of Vadodara I had developed an aversion for your *sampradaya*.”

“Then why have you come here all the way from Vadodara in this heat?” asked Maharaj.

The royal *vaidya* could not look straight into Maharaj’s eyes. He looked down and replied abashedly, “My Lord, I regularly visit Dakor for Ranchhodrai’s darshan on every full moon day. This has been my routine for years. I also perform *seva* there according to my means. But during one visit to Dakor I witnessed an immoral act in the mandir premises. Ever since, my mind has remained distraught. I started repenting, thinking that years have flitted by in devotion and my life will soon come to an end, but if I fail to achieve *moksha* in this life then it will be futile.”

Shri Hari avidly listened to his words and pacified him, “One who is genuinely inclined

spiritually can aspire for *moksha* and make one’s birth worthwhile.”

Then Maharaj enquired, “What happened thereafter?”

## MEETING A SWAMINARAYAN SADHU

The *vaidyarak* continued, “My Lord, the possibility of not being able to achieve *moksha* in this lifetime started bugging me. I spent restless nights. But one night I heard a voice, ‘The Swaminarayan sadhus are in Ahmedabad, go to them.’ I looked around, trying to locate the source of the voice. There was no one around, but I still kept hearing the same words again and again. Then I felt it could be the voice of the Divine within me. I felt pacified by the voice and slept well that night. The next day I came to Ahmedabad. Here, I had darshan of your scholarly *paramhansa*, Nityanand Swami. On seeing him I felt inner peace. I candidly revealed everything to him. He replied, ‘Shriji Maharaj has inspired you to come here. Presently, he is in Gadhpur. You should go there.’ Thus I have come here with the resolve to take your spiritual refuge.”

Muktanand Swami and Brahmanand Swami were seated before Shri Hari. Muktanand Swami recalled, “Maharaj, I had heard the name of the *vaidyarak* when I was in Vadodara. People spoke greatly about him as a *vaidya*, but I had not met him.”

The *vaidyarak*, Ramchandrabhai, confessed humbly, “Swami, I may be an expert in matters of ayurveda but I am ignorant in spiritual knowledge. I have spent all these years in vain. You came to Vadodara yet I was not able to come for your darshan. I had also heard about the illustrious personality of Nityanand Swami and Gopalanand Swami, but I was not fortunate enough to come for their darshan either.”

Shriji Maharaj reassured him, “Don’t be dismayed. Gopalanand Swami is coming here for the Hari Jayanti festival.”

## VAIDYARAJ FINDS THE PATH OF MOKSHA

Shri Hari blessed the *vaidyaraj* by placing his hands on his head. The divine touch gave him an inner vision of divine knowledge. He perceived divinity in the form of Shriji Maharaj and realized the truth of the voice he had first heard and the words of Nityanand Swami. He felt immensely fortunate and convinced that he had found the path to *moksha*.

He requested Maharaj, "Please allow me to sponsor a meal tomorrow." Maharaj advised him, "Do so after two days when Gopalanand Swami arrives. Till then stay here and take the benefit of darshan and discourses." The *vaidyaraj* was happy with Maharaj's proposal.

When Gopalanand Swami arrived, the *vaidyaraj* sponsored the meal. Shri Hari called the *vaidyaraj* to sit besides him and have his meal. Maharaj introduced Gopalanand Swami and told the *vaidyaraj* to go to him on a regular basis in Vadodara. Thereafter, Shri Hari permitted him to leave for Vadodara the next day so that he could resume his services to his people. The next day Maharaj sent Bhajananand Swami and Jayanand Varni to accompany him to Vadodara. He also gave the *vaidyaraj* a cloth with the graphic print of Nar-Narayan Dev for daily worship. The *vaidyaraj* felt exhilarated about his association with Maharaj. He prostrated to him and beseeched for his blessings before leaving for Vadodara.

## KATHA OF MOKSHA DHARMA

The next day Maharaj told Pragji Dave to read the Moksha Dharma (a chapter from the Shrimad Bhagvat). During the *katha* Maharaj sometimes elaborated and also revealed its subtle meanings. Both Gopalanand Swami and Nityanand Swami realized that the shastras cannot be fully understood through one's scholarliness alone. For that one requires the association and grace of God or a God-realized Sadhu.

## WHICH IS YOUR UNIQUE VIRTUE

Once, Shriji Maharaj wished to inform the devotees about the uniqueness of his *paramhansas*. He asked the senior *paramhansas* during an assembly, "You are all adept in many aspects of saintliness and in external matters. Reveal your unique talents so that I can engage you in specific tasks whenever required."

The *paramhansas* looked at each other with reluctance and remained silent. In response, Shri Hari stated, "Since I have asked you I expect you to reply. Don't take it to be self-praise when you speak about your virtues."

The first to reveal was Muktanand Swami. He said, "Maharaj, no matter how angry a person may be, but if I were to go to him his anger would subside instantly."

Shri Hari smiled appreciatingly and confirmed, "Swami, your saintliness is such that anyone who has your darshan will become pacified and blissful. I have been witnessing this since the time of Ramanand Swami. That is why everyone in Satsang considers you to be compassionate like a mother. Other than that tell us about another virtue you have."

Muktanand Swami became perplexed. He felt it improper to reveal his virtues before Shri Hari, and thus remained quiet. Shri Hari prodded him, saying, "Swami, go ahead. Once you have revealed your virtues I will enjoin you in a corresponding *seva*. This will enable others to benefit from your virtues."

Muktanand Swami thus looked down and spoke, "Maharaj, no matter how stone-hearted a person may be, but if he listens to my discourses his heart will melt."

Shriji Maharaj endorsed Swami's words, "What you have said is true. And that was how the Jain *baniyas* of Ahmedabad understood the crux of satsang." ◆

(Contd. in next issue)

Translated from Gujarati text of  
Bhagwan Swaminarayan by Shri H.T. Dave