

## Session 11 – Stage 4 & 3, and on Women

March 30th, 2014

Jai Swaminarayan! Sahajanand Swami Maharajni jai, Bapashreeni jai, Sadguruoshreeni jai, Swaminarayan Bhagwanani jai, tatha anant anadi muktoni jai!

A humble prayer in their lotus-feet and our Guru AMPP NarayanMamaand AMPP LeelaMasi's lotus-feet to augment this assembly with their divinity and grace, and to enhance our knowledge and guide us towards them.

I want to apologize upfront if I am not as organized in my thoughts today. I have been suffering with fever this week, and am still on antibiotics. I wanted to cancel today, but Lord Swaminarayan gave me the strength to make it. So please pardon me if I am low energy and disoriented.

We have come a long ways in the knowledge sharing journey that we embarked upon 10-11 weeks ago. In the first phase, we spent 4 weeks understanding Soul, Body and Mind. During those conversations we mapped belief system in other religions as well as scientific studies around Soul, Body and Mind, to the Hindu and Swaminarayan philosophy and also understood in depth the concept of 24 elements. In the second phase, we looked at many different religions and belief systems – ancient and the new world, drew some family trees of Gods, mapped them to Hindu God family trees, and walked to the level of Vairat Purush. Beyond Vairat Purush, there were not very many references except for Hinduism and Shreemad Bhagwat. We also mapped astronomical discoveries as well as the concept of universe being a living organism. We realized with all this mapping and study that there is a huge hierarchical world up there from the perspective of spirituality, biology, physics and mathematics. In the end we tried to map the dimensions mentioned in Vachanamrutam & Shreemad Bhagwat to present day knowledge wherein we mapped 14 worlds to solar system and Pradhan Purush to a galaxy. We did that based on a Yojan is equal to 8 miles. There is a suggestion from a very knowledgeable person that a Yojan could be equal to half-a-mile and in one of the future sessions we will talk about that. This brings us almost to the end of second phase of our journey.

As we end the second phase, one question that needs to be answered is why so many levels? Why not have one Pradhan Purush manage a galaxy and be done with that? Why have a hierarchical structure that is complicated to grasp? Why does each level screen the souls from their superiors? Why? Why? Why? To explain this, let's go back to our corporate world example. We had mapped Engineers and team leads. Let's map Vairat Purush level to a manager, and Pradhan Purush to a Director. In a corporation, a manager is responsible to manage the projects assigned to him/her as well as the team. Director is responsible for the entire budget, all the product and projects in the division, and the final delivery of the product. With large enterprise corporations, over a period of time, due to growth aspirations, many hierarchical levels get formed. I once worked for a company where a VP reported into a VP, who in turn reported into another VP. I have also seen people at VP and SVP levels as individual contributors, with no one reporting to them. When too much of this gets in, corporations start defining



something called a span of control. Span of control is nothing but the number of direct reports or the team size underneath each level that is mandatory. Ideal number of direct reports based on organizational behavioral studies is 8-9. In the real world, this number varies from 5-12 people. Based on this, when span of control is brought in, typically, a manager ends up having anywhere between 5-12 reports and a Director ends up having a team of 40-60 people, with 8-9 direct reports. Any number higher than this calls for additional management people. Any number lower than this calls for merger of teams under unified management. Just as for humans it is difficult to effectively manage more than 8-9, at the best 12 direct reports, so it is with all other beings within the perishable world. There is a limit to which one entity can manage and it calls for additional layers of management. Since all the levels that we have talked about, are within MulMaya, they are limited by the physics and mathematics and the boundaries of those, and therefore the entities within are also limited in how much they can manage. They cannot manage it all, and they need more management levels to take care of lower level stuff. This explains why the hierarchy. In fact similar to corporate political behaviors, there are three types of galaxy interactions that have been identified – namely collisions, cannibalism, and harassment. We see all these three behaviors in the corporate political world as well. Interesting how there is mapping in terminology.

Now, each level wants to maintain its command and influence over the levels underneath. For example, once my sister's manager's manager asked her to join for lunch with a very big client. This made my sister's manager upset and insecure. The insecurity comes in because of the attachment and fear of losing what one has. Similar thing exists at higher strata as well for everything that is underneath MulMaya. The obscuring of higher level is to maintain one's own influence. During the lunch meeting with the client, my sister got a glimpse of the personality of her manager's manager. With a few such instances, my sister can start putting together a profile of her manager's manager, but since the interaction is limited, the profile will not be accurate. So if she describes her manager's manager to people who work for her, the description will not be complete. She may also not always distinguish between her manager's manager and her manager – she may simply say “my management” or “my executives”. That is exactly what has happened to the spiritual world and the spiritual scriptures. This explains why each level screens the level above and why isn't there a clear explanation for each level that is known to everyone.

There is a related question on why the creation? Why go through this process? Why not liberate all the souls without going through the process? We will talk more about it, when we discuss the theory of creation next week.

Last week we talked about 8 veils all the way from Earth element to Mul Maya. Based on what we know today by way of science and astronomy, we mapped MulMaya to the all-pervasive, omni-present dark matter. We also talked about the dual nature of MulMaya – Jad or lifeless and dark and Chidatmak or with life and brilliance in the past. Now, the most common and widely accepted theory of creation is that there was a big bang, and from a spec of light through some mysterious forces and reasons, the universe expanded and energy to matter conversion happened. When we hear the word big bang, we tend to relate it to sound – a sound of a big explosion, but it actually relates to rapid explosive



expansion, not to a sound. The universe was 4880F hot, and then started cooling down for form matter. It is believed that in its early stages, universe expanded at a speed greater than light. This generated massive gravity waves which have recently been detected by a team, working at South Pole, called BICEP2. There have been heat maps generated through infra-red cameras which also support this theory of rapid expansion, and then cooling to form matter.

Based on the big bang theory, the tiny spec of extremely high energy, smaller than the size of atom is from where the entire universe emerged. Think of the immenseness of that spec of energy! How great it must be that it expanded into this entire universe. It is said that there are more stars in the universe, than the grains of sand on the earth. When one star goes super nova, it releases energy of a few octillion nuclear warheads – that is 10 followed by 27 zeroes. And this is just one star that is blowing up. There is one such star blowing up in the universe every second. And these super nova, and stars plus any other visible matter in terms of gases, nebulas, planets, etc. forms only 4.5% of the total mass-energy combined. All this was compressed and included in something as small as an atom! Imagine what would happen if we were exposed to that energy directly all of a sudden? We are unable to tolerate direct rays from Sun for more than 5-10 minutes and Sun is just a small yellow dwarf. Our body definitely cannot sustain such an onslaught of energy. Even if we were identified with the soul, how can we tolerate the energy of trillions and trillions of Suns packed in a tiny spec? We will be totally blinded and burnt by it. Now think of a place that is entirely filled with such brilliance – not just a tiny spec, but the entire space is filled with such brilliance. Now think of the source of this brilliance! In Bhagwad Gita, Arjun has to ask Lord Krishna to take away his vishwaroop, since he could not tolerate its immenseness and brilliance. There was a devotee of Lord Swaminarayan Ladbhai, who started screaming “I am burning” when she got exposed to the brilliance of Lord Swaminarayan all of a sudden. Lord Swaminarayan then immediately made her capable of tolerating that brilliance and she was able to enjoy the bliss.

So if we wanted to see what is beyond big bang? What is the cause of big bang? What created big bang? Do we have the ability to do that? Science says no, but does speculate about what could be there. Some spiritual thought streams say yes, some are very confused about it. Of the few belief systems that say Yes, there are a few who are able to say that there are levels of brilliance beyond the darkness of Maya. Hardly one or two believe that the brilliance has a source – a definite divine embodiment of God. But that’s where most spiritual paths end. Spirituality described by Lord Swaminarayan, says a definite glaring YES! A soul, through advanced meditation can generate the ability to sustain that tremendous energy. Not only that, the soul is able to enjoy the bliss and the pleasure of that tremendous energy. Swaminarayan philosophy also clearly describes multiple levels of the brilliance, and says that each level of brilliance or the immanent form has a definite divinely embodied source – the transcendent form associated with it. Since there is not much knowledge available elsewhere, we will stay very close to our home of Swaminarayan Philosophy.

As we enter this third and the final phase of our journey, we need to understand that the description of this phase is not found in any other scripture all over the world, except for Swaminarayan Philosophy. Bhagvad Geeta talks a little bit about it. Shreemad Bhagwat makes fleeting and clouded references to it. But that’s it! So the hope is that by this time, we have established enough credibility to trust the knowledge imparted by Lord Swaminarayan, Shree Abaji Bapashree and Anant Anadi Mukta, and our



Guru AMPP NarayanMama. So let's delve right into our phase 3. As part of that we will walk through the stages 4 & 3 of hierarchy today.

On Webex, we have a picture of these 2 stages. Just as Pradhan Purush is associated with Pradhan Prakruti, the Purush is associated with MulMaya that we have been talking about in last couple of weeks, is MulPurush. The fact that there are two levels – the Pradhan level and Mul level of Purush and Prakruti, is not well understood through any scriptures available, except Lord Swaminarayan's philosophy. MulPurush is also known as MahaPurush, Ishwar and Prakruti Purush. MulPurush advented on this Earth as Lord Krishna, and by far is the most superior Avatar. So lets pause a little bit and understand the distinction of Avatar and Avatari. The superior hierarchical entity is called the Avatari of the lower strata. For example, Matsya, Kurma, etc. are all Avatars of Avatari Lord Vishnu. So Lord Vishnu is the Avatari. From that perspective, all the manifestation on Earth of any and all spiritual strata are the Avatar of Purna Purushottam Avatari Lord Swaminarayan. Of the Avatars that manifested on Earth, MulPurush is the superior Avatar. For clarity, we will call the spiritual stratum entity as MulPurush and the manifestation on Earth as Lord Krishna. The divine abode of MulPurush is called Golok. At the time of creation, MulMaya is created from the body of MulPurush, the abode of Golok is also created and from there begins the process creation of the universe. Once the separation of Maya happens and the divine abode is created, infinite number of Pradhan Purush are born through unification of MulPurush and MulMaya. Just as Vairat Purush and Mahattattva are born from Pradhan Purush and the feminine counter-part Pradhan Prakruti, Pradhan Purush are born from MulPurush and the feminine counterpart MulMaya or Mul Prakruti. At the time of destruction, everything merges back into MulMaya and MulMaya, Golok are merge back into MulPurush, and MulPurush remains in his divine embodied form. It is for this reason that the world underneath MulPurush is called perishable and MulPurush and above is not perishable. Also, since the process of expansion and conversion of energy to mass and matter starts with MulPurush and below, MulPurush and below are said to have the states of expansion and contraction. We will talk more of process of creation and destruction next week. This week we will stay focused on status quo.

Since Bhagwad Geeta is preached by Lord Krishna, it pertains to the level of MulPurush, or knowledge to the level of MulPurush. Bhagwat Geeta and Shreemad Bhagwat are both written by Vyas Muni as a live recording of the world and reality as he saw it. The Ramkrishna mission has done some research and have found that in Uddhav Geeta, also written by Vyas Muni, Arjun requests Lord Krishna to impart that same knowledge in Geeta again and Lord Krishna says, "At that time, the supreme Godhead manifested through me and imparted the knowledge. It may not be possible to do the same again." So there is someone beyond the level of MulPurush. Raman Maharishi, Ramakrishna Paranhauns, Gautam Buddha, and such spiritually elevated ones have said that do not stop at Krishna consciousness, there is more beyond that. However, they are unable to explain what is beyond that. That understanding comes from the Rahasyarth Vachanamrutam. We will understand this further in detail, but lets for a short while, understand that there is brilliance beyond MulMaya, and there are levels of the brilliance and each level has a definite divinely embodied source associated with it.

Let's spend a little more time on MulPurush and MulMaya. One thing common to the entities of the perishable world is the distinction of body and soul. This distinction goes away with MulPurush.



MulPurush and up it is only the divine embodiment and no distinction of body and soul. This divine embodiment does not have a gender. Interestingly, there is genetic research going on showing that the Y chromosome is deteriorating in quality. Because if a piece of it is bad, there is no other Y chromosome for replacement, whereas with X chromosome, there are multiple available for replacement. So the Y chromosome is deteriorating in quality and a few million years down the road, it will be hard to tell the gender distinction.

During my life, Lord Swaminarayan has bestowed upon me the opportunity to explain Lord Swaminarayan's philosophy to some people – some Satsangis, some non-Satsangis. During those conversations, when we reach this level and I mention about no gender distinction, almost all say, "That finally makes sense. Since soul does not have a gender." For non-Satsangis, this arouses their interest in knowing more about our religion and belief system. But as they start delving deep, they get confused with some things that they see and read. Most of the time the first question that comes in is, why are women not allowed in inner temple premise during Arti? That is not fair to women. I tell them that the perspective needs to be turned around. The saints have renounced the world in order to pursue spiritual progress, and have devoted all their activities to spread of religion and knowledge and to help us become better human beings. They have given up all the comforts of home, they eat tasteless food, they wear only cotton, they do not hoard worldly things, and they observe celibacy which is a must for spiritual progress. Women, the great hearted human beings that they are, readily make it possible for these saints to attend Arti, while also maintaining their celibate ways of life. For that matter, along the same lines, men are not allowed in "Baiyonu mandir" or women's temple. The great hearted men that they are, they help women who have renounced the world, to maintain their celibate ways of life. In fact, show me one religion on Earth that has built in its infrastructure, the right for women to have a temple of their own – a temple of the women, for the women, by the women.

In fact pro-woman principal started with Lord Swaminarayan's parents. Those who have intently read the life of Lord Swaminarayan, would know that different from the norm of the society of bride going to live with the groom and the in-laws, Dharmapita, father of Lord Swaminarayan, came to live with Bhaktimata and her parents after marriage. As a social reformer, Lord Swaminarayan stopped the ritual of "Sati". He also stopped the trend of killing the female child, which has now again crept in devastating quantity in the Indian society.

After almost 2 thousand years, Christianity gave Mother Teresa sainthood. No woman before her got sainthood in Christianity. The same goes with most religions in the world. In Swaminarayan religion from the very beginning, Lord Swaminarayan has made arrangements for spiritual progress of women. He brought His Anadi Mukta as women in form of Jivuba, Laduba, Rajba, even when they did not want to, due to how gender discrimination works in our world. The discrimination does not affect them, but our world is affected and infected by it. AMPP NarayanMama used to say that Rajba was so powerful, that once she said "Badyu aa ghar" in frustration, and the house actually started burning! She then prayed to Lord Swaminarayan to take away her Vachan-sidhhi or the power to convert words to reality. AMPP NarayanMama also frequently used to tell the incident of how Shreeji Maharaj sent Ladudan Ghadavi to impart knowledge to Jivuba and Laduba, so that they would agree to marry someone. Instead, Jivuba and Laduba preached Ladudan Gadhavi about renouncing worldly things. Following this Ladudan



Ghadavi transformed into Brahmanand Swami. The kirtan “Manakiye chadya re mohan vanamali” clearly states that Jivuba did not let the Manaki ghodi leave the darbar, till Shreeji Maharaj promised to come back soon. Think of that power! And not only during life and times of Lord Swaminarayan, but during the life of Abaji Bapashree we had Surajba, Sadaba, Dhanba Faiba, who were very powerful Anadi Mukta embodied in a woman’s body. During the life of AMPP Somchandbapa, we had his sister AMPP Diwaliba. My grandfather PP Anantraibhai Dave, was once suffering with fever for many weeks. AMPP Diwaliba was kind enough to visit our home and could not bear his suffering. She said she was going to sit by the door of my grandfather’s room and see how fever dared get in. That day, my grandfather did not get any fever, and then gradually his fever went away. This is something that I witnessed as a kid. And what words to describe our dearest AMPP Leelamasi. We have all been drenched in her divine affection and bliss. In fact, AMPP NarayanMama did not become a saint, and stayed in gruhasthaashram, so that the entire society can be bestowed with his blessings. Through all these incidents we can easily infer that, Lord Swaminarayan has given women equal ability and avenues for spiritual progress.

So after this kind of conversation, the next questions that arise in people’s mind, especially for newcomers are around some of the verses in Shikshapatri. The Shikshapatri is written for all – not just a select few. So while these may not raise concerns in our minds, it may in minds of some newcomers. There are some verses around the duties of married women. In many societies, women do not have independence to pursue spiritual progress even if they want to. So Lord Swaminarayan has shown a path to these souls by saying that if you genuinely follow the verses in Shikshapatri that align with the societal rules, I (Lord Swaminarayan) will liberate you. He has made liberation possible even for them. As for the verses for a widow – once again, in many societies widows are treated differently. It is an unfortunate reality. It is again a promise to those souls that if you genuinely follow the verses, even if you are not able to do many spiritual endeavors due to societal bindings, I will liberate you. The verse on “Not listening to knowledge talks from women” – if we look at it closely, it has an underlying assumption that women will be talking about knowledge. Secondly, there are kirtan from Brahmanand Swami like “Balakne janani sam bijun nahi jagman hitkari re...” - meaning no one thinks of the welfare and well-being of a child more than the mother. Muktanand swami was called the “Mother of the Satsang”. So it is accepted that mother will provide guidance to her children. Mother will provide protection to her children. So the verse does not apply to Satsangi brothers who are younger. For Satsangi brothers who are of same age or for the elders, it depends on the time, era and the society. If a mutual respectful interaction can happen without breaking any moral codes of conduct, its ok. For those whom the mind is not cooperative, the best is to follow the verse of Shikshapatri.

Those were some thoughts on Women in Swaminarayan religion. Since we are now going past the gender distinction in our journey, I thought it was good place to talk a little bit about it. So MulPurush and above, the gender discrimination or distinction goes away. Now let’s look at the hierarchy as explained by Lord Swaminarayan, Shree Abaji Bapashree and AMPP NarayanMama. The MulMaya that emanates from MulPurush has three attributes – Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, and they are in a perfect balance in MulMaya. That is why MulMaya is called Guna-saamya. The state associated with MulMaya in the path of meditation is called Samyaavastha. We have talked about the characteristic of each attribute in the past, the chart on Webex shows those again. Since we have already talked about them we will not





spend much time there. As we talked earlier today, at the time of creation, MulMaya emerges from the body of MulPurush, the divine abode of Golok is created and the devotees of MulPurush reside in Golok with MulPurush for the existence of the creation. MulPurush worships Vasudev Brahman. Infinite MulPurush reside in the divine brilliance of one Vasudev Brahman. The brilliance of Lord Vasudev Brahman is the sustainer of MulPurush as well as the soulful god head of MulPurush. At the time of destruction, once everything merges back into him, MulPurush goes and sits in the assembly of Vasudev Brahman in the brilliance of Vasudev Brahman. At that point, the devotees of MulPurush only see MulPurush and do not see Vasudev Brahman or other devotees of Vasudev Brahman.

MulPurush is tasked with creation, since MulPurush has the desire to create. Apart from the desire-ful MulPurush devotees, there are desire-less devotees of Vasudev Brahman in the form of Nar-Narayan dev. Nar-Narayan dev visit Badrikashram and also live there sometimes to help the devotees and disciples in Badrikashram attain Vasudev Brahman and move to Brahmanpur which is the divine abode of Vasudev Brahman. Nar-Narayan Dev do not have the devotees in Bradrikashram worship them, but their Lord Vasudev Brahman. This Badrikashram is within the 8 veils, and is therefore in the perishable world. Similarly, Vasudev Brahman visits and at times lives in Shwetadweep, to help the devotees there attain him. The devotees of Shwetadweep work hard to remove the effects of great causal body which is formed with the desires of creating the universe. Since MulPurush are with desire to create universe and they are not trying to eliminate their desire, and NarNarayan have overcome that desire, the Shwetadweep and the devotees residing there are in between these two strata. The third devotee of Vasudev Brahman is tasked with destruction of the worlds and universes created by MulPurush – his name is Mahakaal. If I were to map Mahakaal to anything that we know scientifically, I would probably map it to dark energy, which is pulling apart everything that is brought together by the gravity of dark matter or MulMaya. But that is just a speculation. Mahakaal does not have devotees of his own and resides in the assembly of Lord Vasudev Brahman.

So while MulPurush, Mahakaal, Devotees of Shwetadweep and NarNarayan, all worship Lord Vasudev Brahman, there is a distinction in their levels. Desire-free NarNarayan Dev are the best devotees, followed by devotees in Shwetadweep trying to eliminate the desire for creation, followed by Mahakaal who destroys the works of MulPurush, followed by MulPurush driven by desire to create. The divine abode of Vasudev Brahman is called Brahmapur. Vasudev Brahman, his devotees, his divine abode, all remains as is irrespective of whether any and all MulPurush are creating and sustaining a universe or not. Vasudev Brahman is also called Divine Pradyumna, since he liberates the souls from Maya. Mahakaal is also called Divine Sankarshan since he destroys the works of MulPurush.

Many Vasudev Brahman reside in the divine brilliance of one MulAkshar, the next level in the hierarchy. Vasudev Brahman do not see the transcendent form of MulAkshar – only the immanent form. That completes our walkthrough of Stage 4 & 3 Ishwar Koti and Brahman Koti of the hierarchy. Next week, we will talk about theory of creation and destruction and map it to the scientific discoveries. We will also talk about what happens to a soul in its journey in spiritual progress as it goes beyond the veil of Maya. Time permitting we will also touch upon Akshar Koti. The week after that we will spend with Lord Swaminarayan, His Anadi Mukta, and the path of meditation and liberation shown to us by them.



With that, lets pause here for today.

Sahajanand Swami Maharajni jai, and humble prayer to Him and Shree Abaji Bapashree for “Sabhani mayano kshay” – or prayer to diminish the power of Maya on this sabha, since now we have started talking about things beyond Maya. Thank you to the Satsang sabha for the time and please be kind to overlook any shortcomings that I may have. Jai Swaminarayan! Vishalbhai, over to you.

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