

## Ch.1

## Swāminārāyaṇism

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Śrī Swāminārāyaṇism is a part of a Hinduism. The faith is based on personal theism of the Supreme Deity, identified with Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa (1781-1830 CE) as the perfect personality with divine corporeality, termed *Parabrahman* that is always accompanied by *Akṣarabrahman*. It is termed “the greatest of the reforming sects of Gujarāta” by the well-known historian R.C. Majumdar.<sup>1</sup>

This *Bhakti Sampradāya* is well accepted in place of its origin, i.e., Gujarāta, by all almost all sections of Hinduism. Here the term ‘Hinduism’, as explained in great details earlier in the chapter of background is used not as one monolithic religion but a group of distinct Indian religions, each with a distinctive character. Śrī Swāminārāyaṇism is getting well established wherever Gujarātis migrate i.e. East and South Africa, U.K., U.S.A., Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

It will be interesting to note briefly about the early and the late history of the faith, scriptures and its founder from common men represented by journalists, reporters and the specialists represented by both the scholars and the priests before we study its theology and philosophy with reference to HVSS. It is, therefore, surprising that they have given dubious opinions and fallacious views about them.

Let us go through the opinions expressed, in writing in the nineteenth, twentieth and twenty first centuries, by well known practising Christian

scholars-teachers-priests of England and America who were also the teachers. They had taken great pains to study life and work of Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa as well as his pupillary tradition. The first opinion indicates the personality of the founder given in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the second expresses the view on the foundational text the Vacānamṛtam in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the third presents the status of the Swāminārāyaṇa faith at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The first two suggest how the founder and the scripture contributed to the growth of the faith at present.

1. **Reginald Heber** : He was the Bishop of Calcutta, an Anglican Christian priest, appointed by the East India Company having his diocese extending from Calcutta to Bombay. He met Śrī Sahajānanda Swāmī (Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa) at the small town of Nariad (Nadiad) on 26 March 1825.<sup>2</sup> He has prefaced his narrative with these words: ‘Some good had been done, Mr. Williamson had said, among many of these wild people, by the preaching and popularity of the Hindu reformer Swamee Narian, who had been mentioned to me at Baroda. His morality was said to be far better than any which could be learned from the Shastras. He preached a great degree of purity, forbidding his disciples (celibates) so much as not to look on any woman whom they passed. He condemned theft and bloodshed; and in the provinces those villages and districts, which had received him, changed from being among the worst were now among the best and most orderly in the provinces, Nor was this all, insomuch as he was said to have made considerable approaches to the truth, that I could not but hope he might be an appointed instrument to prepare the way for the Gospel.’<sup>3</sup>

He was impressed by the large retinue accompanying Śrī Sahajānanda Swāmī. He wondered ‘but how long a time must elapse before any Christian teacher in India can hope to be thus loved and honoured!’ After a conversation about Swāminārāyaṇa teachings which it appears that Heber largely misunderstood, Heber extended an invitation for

Swāminārāyaṇa to accompany him to Bombay for he hoped to introduce him to the 'Scriptures and the Church Missionary Society' and thereby 'do him more good than I could otherwise hope to do.' But, Swāminārāyaṇa replied that for the moment he had 5,000 disciples awaiting his preaching in the neighbouring villages and some 50,000 others elsewhere in Gujarat. The conversation soon came to a close, with the Bishop feeling that 'on the whole it was plain that his advances towards truth had not yet been so great as I have been told, but it was also apparent that he had obtained a great power over a wild people, which he used at present to a good purpose.'

2. **Prof. John B. Carman** was the Professor of Comparative Religion Department, Harvard University, U.S.A. He wrote about the *Vacanāmṛtam* (VAC) in 1981: "I should also like to comment on a few things that struck me in the book itself. One is so familiar to you that you may be surprised I mention it. Yet students of Indian religious history are constantly faced with the difficulty of the lack of firm and definite dates in the history. *In this book (VAC), however, every discourse is precisely dated.* This is a chapter of religious history, which one might say is in the full light of day as far as our knowledge of history is concerned. It is a common western misunderstanding of India that there is no sense of history in India. I think that in what you hold dear as a community and what is called the *guruparamparā*, the succession of the gurus, one sees that special sense of history which is important for the religious people of India."<sup>4</sup>
3. **Prof. Raymond Brady Williams** who was Director, and Professor of Religion at Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion at Wabash College, Indiana, has written very important work, 'An Introduction to Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa Hinduism', published by Cambridge University Press in 2001. He states in the preface, 'at the

beginning of the twenty-first century, Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa Hindus are experiencing steady expansion in India and abroad as part of a successful transnational religion.’<sup>5</sup> The Swāminārāyaṇa belief system is the transmission of a religions tradition.

John Carman points out that the English word ‘tradition’ is a noun and that both its religious and its cultural use frequently suggest a deposit from the past. That noun comes from the Latin verb ‘*tradere*’ which mean both ‘to give away’ and ‘to transmit’. Transmit literally means ‘to send across’.

Hence he suggests that we might paraphrase both ‘tradition’ and ‘transmission’ with two verbal nouns: (1) ‘handing down’ and (2) ‘reaching across’ (Williams 1992 : 8, citing Carman).

To understand what Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa and his scholar-saints handed down, and in what manners, the teachings of the founder, and how they reached across the world, one must approach the basic texts of the faith which are generally acknowledged to be two:

- (1) The Vacanāmṛtam (VAC)
- (2) The Śikṣāpatrī (SP)

Śikṣāpatrī is a small work of 212 verses in Sanskrita stating the rules for socio-religious conduct for all the followers of Śrī Swāminārāyaṇism. It is said to have been written by Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa Himself. It forms a part of the Satsangijīvanam, which is Purāṇa like scripture comprising of about 18000 verses. It is composed by Śrī Śātānanda Muni. He is also the author of HVSS.

### **The Vacanāmṛtam – an Introduction**

The Vacanāmṛtam, or the nectarine discourses of Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa, is the most sacred and foundational scripture of the Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa sampradāya. It contains the profound wisdom of the Vedas, the Upaniṣads, the Brahmasūtras, the Bhagavadgītā, the Bhāgavatapurāṇa, the Dharma

Śāstras like the Yajñavalkyasmṛti, the Viduranīti, epics like the Rāmāyāna and the Mahābhārata. It also gives essence of the Sāṅkhya, Yoga, the Vedānta and the Pāñcarātra systems.'

ग्रन्थास्त्वभीष्टा अष्टौ हि भवन्त्युद्धववर्त्मनि।  
वेदाश्च व्याससूत्राणि श्रीमद्भागवतं तथा ॥ १० ॥

HVSS : 218 / 10

ग्रन्थाइति। ग्रन्थास्तु। उद्धववर्त्मनि। अष्टौ। अभीष्टाः। भवन्ति। हि। तान्नाम्ना निर्दिशति। सार्द्धद्वाभ्याम्। वेदाश्चत्वारोऽपि निगमाः। तथा। व्याससूत्राणि। श्रीमद्भागवतं पुराणं च ॥ २१८-१० ॥

विष्णुनामसहस्राख्यं स्तोत्रं भगवतोदिता।  
गीता विदुरनीतिश्च भारतस्थमिदं त्रयम् ॥ ११ ॥

HVSS : 218 / 11

विष्ण्विति। विष्णुनामसहस्राख्याम्। स्तोत्रम्। भगवता श्रीकृष्णेन। उदिताऽर्जुनं प्रति कथिता। गीता। विदुरनीतिश्च। इदं विष्णुसरस्वनामस्तोत्रादि। त्रयम्। महाभारतस्थम्। ज्ञेयम् ॥ २१८-११ ॥

श्रीवासुदेवमाहात्म्यं तथा स्कन्दपुराणम्।  
याज्ञवल्क्यस्मृतिश्चेति ग्रन्था अष्टौ प्रकीर्तिताः ॥ १२ ॥

HVSS : 218 / 12

श्रीवासुदेवेति। तथा। स्कन्दपुराणम्। श्रीवासुदेवमाहात्म्यम्। याज्ञवल्क्यस्मृतिश्च। इत्येते। अष्टौग्रन्थाः। प्रकीर्तिताः ॥ २१८-१२ ॥

त्यागिनां च गृहस्थानां धर्मा ये ते पृथक् पृथक्।  
श्रीवासुदेवमाहात्म्याद्विज्ञातव्या अशेषतः ॥ १३ ॥<sup>6</sup>

HVSS : 218 / 13

त्यागिनामिति। त्यागिनां साधूनाम्। गृहस्थानां च। ये। धर्माः। ते तु। श्रीवासुदेव-माहात्म्यात्। पृथक् पृथक्। अशेषतः। विज्ञातव्याः ॥ २१८-१३ ॥

In (our) Uddhava Sampradāya there are eight authoritative scriptures. [1.] The Vedas [2.] The Vyāsa Sūtra [3.] The Śrīmad Bhāgavat Purāṇa [4.] The Viṣṇusahasranāma stotra [5.] The Gītā [6.] The Viduranīti, occurring in the Mahābhārata epic [7.] Śrī Vāsudevamāhātmyam of the Śkandapurāṇa and [8.] The Yajñavalkyasmṛti. The different rules for the householders and ascetics should be known fully from Sri Vāsudevamāhātmyam.

In short the Vacanāmṛtam is the essence of ancient Indian wisdom given orally by ŚrīŚwāminārāyaṇa and compiled by his four contemporary scholar-sādhus, (according to the Vadatāla diocese) namely Muktaṇanda Swāmī, Gopālānanda Swāmī, Nityānanda Swāmī, Śukānanda Swāmī),

five according to the Vacanāmṛtam and the HVSS edition of the Ahmedābāda diocese (They add the name of Brahmānanda Swāmī as an editor). They were known for their asceticism, scholarship in Sanskr̥ta and Gujarātī, besides deep devotion to Him.

In fact every statement of the Master is packed with and based on His in-depth religious knowledge, spiritual insight and experience. It contains practical and philosophical answers to the sincere enquiries of all types of aspirants regarding life in this world and the life hereafter.

अनुभूतं मयैतद्धि सर्वशास्त्रानुगामि च।  
रहस्यमप्यतिप्रीत्या संसदीह प्रकाश्यते ॥ ८ ॥<sup>7</sup>

HVSS : 146 / 8

अनुभूतमिति। एतद्दृश्यमाणम्। मया। अनुभूतम्। अस्ति। सर्वशास्त्रानुगामि सर्वशास्त्राणि  
यत्प्रमाणयति तथाभूतं च। अस्ति। रहस्यं सुगोप्यमपि। अतिप्रीत्या भक्तसु स्नेहेन हेतुना।  
इहास्याम्। संसदि सभायाम्। प्रकाश्यते विव्रियते ॥ १४६-८ ॥

I have experienced what secret I reveal here enthusiastically in the assembly. It follows all the scriptures.

The Vacanāmṛtam is not only the most sacred Śāstra in the Sampradāya, but is also the Śāstra of every day study. All the literate followers read it daily and the illiterate listen to, at least a page, everyday at home. It is read and elaborated upon daily in the Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa temples the world over. Thus, it is a landmark Śāstra, philosophically and religiously in Śrī Swāminārāyaṇism.

It is a compilation of 262 spiritual discourses, (273 according to Ahmedābāda diocese and is divided into 10 sections following the places of their deliverance. Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa Himself delivered these discourses in Gujarātī in the last decade of His life i.e., between 1819 and 1829 CE. Its simplicity of diction and style invariably reminds one of our ancient Upaniṣads. They were mostly delivered in the Āśrama-like ambience in secluded places and small villages like Gadhadā (number of discourses delivered 184), Sārangapura (no.18), Kārayāṇī (no.12), Loyā (no.18), Pancālā (no.7) and Vadatāla (no.20). There are only three number of discourses that took place in a city namely Ahmedābāda, indicating His

preference for far off rural places for giving discourses. The first discourse was given on the fourth night of Mārgaśīrṣa month of Āṣādhī Saṁvat 1876, corresponding to November 26, 1819 at Gaḍhadā and the last one on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of Vaiśākha, Āṣādhī Saṁvat 1885 corresponding to May 17, 1829 also at Gaḍhadā.

The book records the discourses, dialogues and conversation between the Master and his disciples in such a way that even the most abstruse and esoteric problems of philosophy and religion are answered, doctrines explained, terminology formulated and concepts cleared, both from the theoretical and practical points of view, concerning daily life and spiritual sādhanā, in as simple a language as possible so that generally all in the audience can understand.

### **The Master : Introduction of His Mantra, Mūrti and Ārātikyam**

The founder of the faith, the preacher of the Śāstra, and the administrator of the sermons, Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa, was born on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1781 – Saṁvat 1837. It was the 9<sup>th</sup> day of Caitra month and the place was Chhapaiyā, near Ayodhyā. His parents were a respectable Brahmaṇa couple, Hari Prasāda Pāṇḍe and Mūrti Devī. They are known as Dharma Pitā and Bhakti Mātā in the sampradāya. His childhood name was Ghanaśyāma. He mastered all-important Hindu scriptures under the guidance of his father at an early age and renounced his home at the age of eleven. As Nīlakaṇṭha Varṇī, he embarked upon a pilgrimage of sacred places in the country. He walked barefooted wearing only a pair of clothes on his body even when he was in the Himalayas. He gained mastery over *Aṣṭāṅga-Yoga* at the age of 14. It was a memorable event in the religious history of the faith when this unknown teenager from Northern part of India, a total stranger to Gujarāta's culture and language, arrived at Lojapura in Junāgadha district of Saurāṣṭra on 21<sup>st</sup> August 1799, was initiated by his guru, Śrī Rāmānanda Swāmī, on 20<sup>th</sup> October 1800 and was named Sahajānanda and Nārāyaṇa Muni. Śrī Rāmānanda Swāmī revealed the supreme divinity of Śrī Sahajānanda Swāmī and appointed Him as the

head of the fellowship at Jetapura when He was only twenty years and six months old.

In December 1801, Śrī Rāmānanda Swāmī passed away. Fourteen days after that Śrī Sahajānanda Swāmī introduced to the disciples the new 'Swāminārāyaṇa Mantra'. Very shortly people identified 'Sahajānanda' with 'Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa Mantra' and He thus became popularly known as 'Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa'. **The preacher became the message and the highest object of worship**, for both the householder and ascetic disciples who had been the followers of Śrī Rāmānanda Swāmī till then.

This is the first very important event in the history of the fellowship. If he would not have given his new 'Mantra' Himself, namely Swāminārāyaṇa (i.e. the holy name) to be uttered and chanted at all time, right from early morning to late night, the whole fellowship and every member of it would have been chanting names of the either Kṛṣṇa, or Rāma, or Nārāyaṇa. Consequently Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa would have been identified not with these Highest Gods of Hinduism but with some demigod, as was the case with Śrī Rāmānuja, Śrī Madhva and Śrī Nimbārka. They are known as Ananta, Vāyu and Sudarśana respectively in their faiths. Or He would have been known as a Bāpu (Head Priest or Chief) of Gadhadā, Bhūja, Vadatāla or Ahmedābāda temple, not as God. But because of this Mantra He became the Highest God of worship not only as the undisputed leader of the 'Satsanga' (fellowship).

The second important event is description of Him as God in the first written work of the faith, called the Yamadanda, written in 1804 CE,<sup>8</sup> by Śrī Lāljī Suthāra (later Śrī Niṣkuḷānanda Swāmī) who was initially a staunch follower of Śrī Rāmānanda Swāmī and a renowned poet. In this book he described Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa as the 'God'. These two momentous events speak volumes of greatness and glory of Him.

The third important event was the installation of His own image i.e., mūrti in the Vadatāla temple on the 12<sup>th</sup> day of Kārtika month in Śaṁvat 1881 corresponding to 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1824. This Mūrti was consecrated

along with the Mūrtis of Śrī Lakṣmī Nārāyaṇa and Śrī Rādhā Kṛṣṇa. If He Himself had not established the tradition of setting up His own image, at that time, in the Swāminārāyaṇa temple, perhaps no body would have dared to do the same at a later stage. As a result, Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa temples would have the images of Śrī Lakṣmī Nārāyaṇa or Śrī Nara Nārāyaṇa or Śrī Gopīnāthaji or Śrī Vāsudeva Nārāyaṇa but not of Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa.

The fourth important event was the composition and performance of Ārātikyam or Ārti (the ceremonial waving of the tiny flame). It is a kind of prayer composed by Śrī Mukṭānanda Swāmī, a senior disciple of Śrī Rāmānanda Swāmī. It runs as follows :

Hail to Śrī Sahajānanda Swāmī who is an eminent preceptor and who is omniscient. Śrī Sahajānanda is gracious and compassionate. He has great divine powers and many names.

I offer my humble respects at your lotus feet with folded hands, bowing at your feet; you have dissolved all my miseries.

You, O Nārāyaṇa ! Were born in a Brāhmaṇa family, and have redeemed innumerable fallen souls (Jīvas).

You perform divine sport anew every day, and you are eternal. The sixty-eight holy pilgrimage places rest at your feet. Service to you results in merits greater than visiting holy Kāśī (Vārāṇasī) and Gayā millions of times.

Those who would have darśana of the manifest Puruṣottama (yourself) will be freed from the clutches of Time involving deaths and rebirths, and they will be redeemed along with their entire families.

Now you are very gracious and the source of grace. You have shown us an easy path to emancipation.”<sup>9</sup>

Thus Śrī Mukṭānanda Swāmī turns Śrī Sahajānanda Swāmī from an eminent preceptor to the manifest form of God, Śrījī Mahārāja.

From the time of his dikṣā in 1800 to the departure from this world in 1830, He initiated 3000 Sādhus, 500 of them were Paramahansa, i.e.

ascetics of the highest spiritual order. During the last ten years of his life Śrī Śahajānanda Swāmī supervised the construction of six huge beautiful temples in Ahmedābāda, Bhūja, Vaḍatāla, Junāgaḍha, Dholerā and Gaḍhadā where there is continuous chanting of Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa Mantra and performing of Ārātikyam take place daily. With the help of His hundreds of ascetics, He ushered a social, moral and spiritual renaissance in the lives of people in the first three decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century in Gujarat.

To understand the depth, significance and immediate impact of Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa's teachings, it is also necessary to know about his personality and work from people who were not his followers.

An unknown English contributor to the reputed 'Asiatic Journal' of England has written an article named 'Indian Sect: Memorandum, respecting a sect, lately introduced by a person calling himself Swamee Naraen.' In this article he concludes: "Most intelligent people in the country believed his preaching and produced great effect in improving morals of the people. My own dialogues with natives lead me to form the same opinion. *People of all castes and persuasions resort to Swamee Naraen.* The number of his followers is very great, estimated by the most intelligent natives at about one hundred thousand."<sup>10</sup>

Behind the exponential growth of the Saṁpradāya are the universal teaching of the master exemplified by the Vacanāmṛtam and the Śikṣāpatrī. His band of three thousand Sādhus and innumerable householder-devotees, who listened and imbibed these discourses and teachings which were delivered from such diverse places as mandiras, farms, dining rooms, centers of festivals, homes and houses of followers helped in spreading his message.

The discourses were written and edited not by a single editor, but by four contemporary scholarly Sādhus (five according to Ahmedābāda Vacanāmṛt edition) while they were being delivered. These editors were:

1. **Śrī Mukṭānanda Swāmī** : He was the senior most sādhu of Śrī Rāmānanda Swāmī. He was twenty-three years senior to

Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa. He was a great poet physician, musician and dancer. Śrī Mukṭānanda Swāmī is the author of Brahmsūtrabhāṣyaratnam, a commentary on the Vedāntasūtra of Bādarāyaṇa Vyāsa.

2. **Śrī Gopālānanda Swāmī** : He had mastered aṣṭāṅga-yoga, wrote commentaries on the Daśopaniṣad, Bhagavadgītā and Brahmasūtra.
3. **Śrī Nityānanda Swāmī** : He was a profound scholar authored the Haridigvijayakāvyaṃ and wrote a commentary on Śāṅḍilyabhaktisūtra in Sanskr̥ta.
4. **Śrī Śukānanda Swāmī** was a well-known Sanskr̥ta scholar from Dabhāṇa and the personal secretary of Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa. He has written a commentary called 'Hetu' on the Satsangijīvanam.

It is interesting to note that the name of Śrī Brahmānanda Swāmī is added in the Harivākyasudhāsindhu (HVSS), the subject of the present thesis, as the editor along with the above four. The name is found in all four editions of the HVSS, viz., the two Vārāṇasī editions and those of Bhūja and Ahmedābāda.

Thus, the editors of the Vacanāmṛtam were highly competent scholars and deeply spiritual. We, as readers or listeners, can understand how these editors must have listened, written and edited the discourses of Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa with their high level of understanding. This makes the contents of the Vacanāmṛtam all the more valuable and significant for all aspirants and scholars.

In one of the Vacanāmṛtams, viz., VLS : 7, corresponding to HVSS Taranga 114, Śrī Nityānanda Swāmī presents 114 discourses to Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa for his approval that was edited with the efforts of all the editors. The Master appreciated and authenticated it.

The quality of devotion, dedication, scholarship and above all, the transparency and honesty of the editors is unique. When an answer given by the editor/editors to the question was not correct or complete the Master rejected it. The editors clearly mention their ignorance and

inability to give an answer with their specific names in the collection of discourses namely the *Vacanāmṛtam*.

Not only the rejection by the Master is truthfully recorded even the criticism of their answers and their lack of knowledge, as pointed out by the Teacher are put down in the writing. For example in describing the company and qualities of worthy and unworthy ascetics, the Master states, “A Sādhu may be strictly observing religious vows with firm faith in God. But if he does not sharply rebuke those disciples who don’t observe the rules and regulations of ascetics and instead pampers them, then in spite of his being a greatly honoured Sādhu like Śrī Mukṭānanda Swāmī, his company must be given up.” This statement was made because Śrī Mukṭānanda Swāmī was, known in the *satsang* (fellowship) to be very kind and behaved like a mother to all new and old ascetics.

Similarly in another discourse Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa says that Śrī Gopālānanda Swāmī and others have at present profound love for God. But, if they were to encounter hostile circumstances, their mind would be adversely affected. It means their foundation appears to be weak and if they were to face an extremely unfavourable situation, their love for God would not remain stable at all.

But the most trenchant criticism of all the four editors comes in a discourse where the Teacher after praising the four editors, (Śrī Mukṭānanda Swāmī, Śrī Gopālānanda Swāmī, Śrī Nityānanda Swāmī, Śrī Śukānanda Swāmī) and other disciples, states: “All of you presently behave very well. However, if factors like *deśa* (place), *kāla* (time), *saṅga* (association) and *kriyā* (activity) were to become unfavourable, then there is no doubt at all that your enthusiasm would not remain as it is now.” And, then, He adds: “it is precisely for the purpose of somehow instilling this *jñāna* (knowledge) in your minds that I continuously deliver discourses.” HVSS 247 : 29-31.

An equally important quality of the editors of the *Vacanāmṛtam* is the keen sense of history and documentation. Disproving the common

Western complaint that Indian religious history lacks firm and definite historical chronology.

Every Vacanāmṛtam mentions the year, the month, the day, the time, the speaker, the dress, and the seat of the Master and the names of the questioner and his caste as also some details of the audience. Thus as mentioned above John Carman says : 'In this book, every discourse is precisely dated.' Simultaneously, it is clear that the purpose of writing down such minute details are for history. It was to create almost a three-dimensional perspective of the whole situation with the object to facilitate the perception and meditation upon Him.

### **Authenticity**

As already mentioned the Master approved at least 114 of these discourses in His own lifetime, unlike many discourses and scriptures of India's main religions. This prevented any chance of major interpolation in the form of additions. Not only the main work in Gujarātī belongs to the time of Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa, even the Sanskr̥ta translation of the Vacanāmṛtam namely the Harivākyasudhāsindhu that has almost the same subject matter, the same number of discourses and the same chronological order belong to the same period. There is also a translation of the Vacanāmṛtam in the Vraja-Bhāṣā by Śrī Brahmānanda Swāmī, a favorite saint-poet of Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa. Thus we have the Vacanāmṛtam in Gujarātī, in Sanskr̥ta and in Vraja languages and the chances of interpolation are few.

### **The Method**

Ādi Śaṅkarācārya made a very valid statement while commenting upon the first mantra of the Kenopaniṣad: (I/1) 'The exposition of a subtle theme becomes easy to understand by means of dialogues in the form of questions and answers between the teacher and the disciples.'

This dialogue and question - answer method was used in the Upaniṣads. In the Vacanāmṛtam it is employed extensively and in a truly participatory manner. In the entire Vacanāmṛtam, there are 456 questions

out of which the Master Himself has asked only 138 questions. Simply speaking 70 % of the questions are from the audience and only 30 % from the Master.

### **The Audience**

A pertinent question would be who were the questioners or the members of the audience. They were mainly His sādhus who were philosophers, poets, scholars, mystics and musicians. There were also the questioners who were householders. By profession they were rulers, farmers, merchants. There were people from lower castes also.

Obviously their levels of formal education, knowledge of the śruti and smṛti texts, epics and traditional history or purāṇas, differed in various degrees, yet all of them were true aspirants, mumukṣus, having firm faith in Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa. In VLS : 3 and HVSS 111 : 6 Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa mentions the names and resolute faith of eighteen such staunch followers, viz., ascetics, householders, men and women rulers and farmers who were ready to do, and had actually done, everything for the sake of the Master.

### **The Subject Matter**

He explains the purpose of His discourses: 'O Paramahaṃsa ! The seniors and the wise ones please come to the front and listen attentively. What I am about to say is not said out of any pretence, self-conceit or to spread my greatness. It is because I feel that amongst all of you, ascetics and householder devotees, if someone can understand my message, it will benefit him tremendously.' (HVSS-146 : 7-8)

He explains the concepts like *Jiva*, *Īsvara*, *Māyā*, Brahman, Parabrahman, *Dharma*, *Jñāna*, *Vairāgya*, *Bhakti*, *Ekāntika-dharma*, importance of God, scriptures, satsaṅg and deep attachment to the *Guṇātīta* Guru (God-realised-*Satpuruṣa*).

### **Conclusion**

The spiritual knowledge and revelations in the *Vacanāmṛtam* are of eternal value to the members of the faith. Its teachings were relevant in

the time of Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa when He uttered them. They are relevant even today in our modern age and would also be so in the future. The Vacanāmṛtam is the literature of faith in the manifest human form of God. The purpose of this scripture is to understand, and to take refuge in that human form of God. The Master or His followers have no interest in impersonal God or in speculative philosophical problems or in debate and rhetoric on the similar topics.

But to understand and take refuge in the human form of God is extremely difficult because most of the time He suppresses His divinity and behaves like an ordinary human being. That is why Śrī Kṛṣṇa says.

अवजानन्ति मां मूढा मानुषीं तनुमाश्रितम्।  
परं भावमजानन्तो मम भूतमहेश्वरम् ॥ (९-११) <sup>11</sup>

Fools disregard Me, dwelling in a human form, not knowing My higher nature, as the Supreme Lord of all beings.

Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa is very clear on this issue. He empathetically states: “The divine form of God in Akṣaradhāma and human form in front of you are identical. He says even though God assumes a human body, He is still divine.” Then He adds: Realise that the form amidst the divine light is this Mahārāja, visible before you.”

“If you can’t accept that the Highest Godhead in the Akṣaradhāma is the same as one who is in front of you, then at least realise that Mahārāja sees that form. Even if you understand this much you will have affection for me and that will result in your ultimate liberation. And, after giving this guarantee to His devotees, He promised to remain ever present on this earth through a succession of God-realised gurus.” HVSS 146 : 64-65

Discussing the same topic Professor Carman quoting the Vacanāmṛtam writes, “He similarly assumes human form out of great commiseration for the ultimate redemption of *Jivas* and suppresses His infinite greatness and profundity of powers. He thus becomes accessible to all human beings who desire to offer Him worship. One who was so far noumenon became phenomenon in the form of the human God, an insignificant form as

compared to His vast and infinite greatness. The assumption of the insignificant human form by Lord Puruṣottama is for easy assimilation with human beings who desire to seek His contact and feel congenial with Him.”

‘Just as a small ant requires only a small means (few grains of sugar) for its subsistence, as bigger means (a big piece of sweetmeat like a *ladoo*) would spell its death rather than growth, similarly Lord Puruṣottama assumes human form for fostering spiritual growth in the *Jivas*. Just as when the God of Fire is invoked, he appears before human beings in a serene human form subduing all his fiery flames, similarly Lord Puruṣottama also suppresses His infinite powers, greatness, divinity, etc., and assumes human form with great commiseration for the ultimate redemption of the *Jivas*. However, those devoid of intelligence who do not have the requisite knowledge of the attributes and working of God callously ask: ‘Why does not the Lord exhibit His powers?’ But they cannot realise that the suppression of His divine powers is for the ultimate redemption of the *Jivas*. If, however, He exhibits all His powers and manifests His full-fledged divinity, even millions of macrocosms would pale into insignificance before such greatness of His. How can the *Jivas* stand such greatness? One, who has so realised the knowledge of the infinite greatness, divinity and glory of God in human form, is beyond the influence of *Kāla*, *Karma* and *Māyā*. For him there remains nothing more to attain.’<sup>12</sup>

‘The assumption, I repeat, of the insignificant human form by Lord Puruṣottama is for easy assimilation by human beings who desire to seek His contact and feel congenial with Him. The Lord is the Lord of cosmic powers and those powers have been manifested and will be manifested again, but for the redemption of human beings it is essential that the Lord come, we may say, in human disguise, so that we should not be overwhelmed by His power but should be attracted by His love.’<sup>13</sup>

### **Śrī Harivākyasudhāsindhu**

Śrī Harivākyasudhāsindhu (HVSS) is the Sanskrit translation of the Gujarātī Vacanāmṛtam, the most authoritative and important scripture of

the fellowship, consisting of the questions and answers as well as self-statements (kṛpā-vākyas) of Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa, given in the open assembly of the ascetics and householders.

It is interesting to note that though both the author, Śrī Śātānanda Muni and the editor/publisher, Sādhu Hariprakāśadāsa belong to the Vadatāla Gādī (Diocese), this text mentions that there was a group of five distinguished scholar-saints who compiled it. HVSS text at the end states on page 301.

मुक्तानन्दश्च गोपालानन्दः सर्वसदग्रणीः ।  
 नित्यानन्दः शास्त्रिवरो ब्रह्मानन्दो महाकविः ॥ ५ ॥  
 पञ्चमश्च शुकानन्द एतैः सङ्गत्य तत्त्वतः ।  
 संस्मृत्यैतानि लिखितान्यभवन् दुर्गपत्तने ॥ ६ ॥

The Gujarātī Vacanāmṛta of Vadatāla Gādī (Diocese) mentions only four editors. So the HVSS text agrees with the Ahmedābāda diocese in this matter. But as far as actual number of discourses or chapters is concerned, the HVSS text agrees with the Vadatāla tradition and therefore here there are only 262 chapters (not 273 as per the Ahmedābāda diocese) called Taraṅgas. They correspond to 262 Gujarātī Vacanāmṛtas as given in all the editions of Vadatāla diocese. On the other end all the editions of Ahmedābāda Gādī as well as the editions of Maṇinagara Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa Gādī, have 273 discourses-chapters in their editions of Gujarātī Vacanāmṛta and their Sanskr̥ta Harivākyasudhāsindhu editions. Śrī Bochāsaṇawāsī Akṣara Puruṣottama Sansthā (BAPS) in their Gujarātī Vacanāmṛtam editions gives these additional eleven chapters in the addenda only.

The text HVSS follows the Vacanāmṛtam, in general, faithfully and accurately. It tries to represent the basic principles of the Swāminārāyaṇa philosophy, psychology, religion and ethics truthfully as given in the Vacanāmṛtam. In short, for all the followers of the Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa faith, belonging to different groups and divisions, branches and sections, it is almost the Śābda-prāmaṇa. It is the verbal testimony. Like the Vacanāmṛtam, it is the highest, the most authoritative and the independent

means of valid knowledge as it is delivered by God (Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa) Himself.

One of the most learned and reputed scholar-saints of Śrī Swāminārāyaṇism, Śrī Kṛṣṇavallabhācārya states in the introduction of the Vārāṇasī text: 'Indeed the entire Sudhāsindhu (Harivākyasudhāsindhu) is the independent means of knowledge, the nectar that has come out from the mouth of God (Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa), from Parabrahma Himself in the human form, for the salvation of people, describing the ways of obtaining the highest goal of human life. <sup>14</sup>

Ādi ācārya Raghuvīrajī Mahārāja in his Setumālāṭikā on this work calls it 'The best among all the scriptures' as it has come from the mouth Śrī Hari and compares it with the Veda among the genuine scriptures. <sup>15</sup>

हरिवाक्यसुधासिन्धुः                      सर्वग्रन्थशिरोमणिः ।  
विराजतेऽयं                      सकलसच्छास्त्रोपरि                      सर्वथा ॥ १ ॥  
सच्छास्त्राणां                      यथा वेदः प्रमाणमधिकं                      तथा ।  
ग्रन्थोऽयं                      सर्वथैवास्ति                      हरेरास्योद्भवत्वतः ॥ २ ॥

Thus, even among the scriptures of the Swāminārāyaṇa fellowship, this is the most valuable book in Sanskrit and among all it is next only to the Gujarātī Vacanāmṛtam in importance and authority.

**Epilogue :** Śrī Harivākyasudhāsindhu has 262 chapters called Taraṅgas, (there being originally 262 Vacanāmṛtas in Gujarātī) and 7974 ślokas almost all in Aṇuṣṭubha meter. This being the translation, there are some lapses of omission and commission. Some examples are given below :

1. In many places in the Vacanāmṛtam, Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa swears in the name of his teacher Rāmānanda Swāmī, his paramahaṁsas, his devotees, his ascetics, etc. This is to add great emphasis to his statement. Most of them are omitted in the HVSS e.g.

‘अने अमे जे कोर्ने डेते करीने बोलावीअे छीअे ते तो तेना जवना रुडा सारु बोलावीअे छीअे अथवा कोर्ने डेते करीने सामुं जोर्छे छीअे अथवा कोर् सारां लोजन करावे छे तेने जमीअे छीअे अथवा ढोलीओ बिछावी दे छे ते उपर बेसीअे छीअे अथवा कोर् वस्त्र-आलूषण तथा पुष्पना डार

ઈત્યાદિક જે જે પદાર્થ લાવે છે તેને અંગીકાર કરીએ છીએ તે તો તેના જીવના રૂડા વાસ્તે કરીએ છીએ પણ અમારા સુખને વાસ્તે કરતા નથી. અને જો અમારા સુખને વાસ્તે કરતા હોઈએ તો અમને શ્રીરામાનંદસ્વામીના સમ છે.’ (વચનામૃત ગ.પ્ર.૧૮)

‘In fact, I swear by the name of Śrī Rāmānanda Swāmī that I do not accept the objects for my pleasure but for the betterment of the disciples. (VGFS, 18 last paragraph)

‘અને આ જે અમે તમને વાત કહી તે સર્વે શાસ્ત્રનો સિદ્ધાંત છે ને અનુભવમાં પણ એમ જ દેઢ છે અને અમે પ્રત્યક્ષ નજરે જોઈને તમને આ વાત કહી છે. અને જો પ્રત્યક્ષ જોઈને ન કહી હોય તો અમને સર્વે પરમહંસના સમ છે.’ (વચનામૃત ગ.મ.૧૩)

‘Indeed this principle which I have revealed before you is the very essence of all of the scriptures, and It is My own firm experience; I have talked to you having seen It with My own eyes. In fact, I swear by all of you *paramhansas* that I have seen these facts with My own eyes.’ (VGMS 13 last paragraph)

These very important statements of Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa are not found at the end of corresponding HVSS 18 and 146 at all.’

2. A very important historical event namely presentation of the Vacanāmṛtam, by one of the editors namely Śrī Nityānanda Swāmī, to Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa which is mentioned in the VLS 7, is not at all mentioned in the corresponding HVSS Taraṅga 115.
3. A very important statement in VGMS 35 given below in original Gujarati text એવી રીતે ધર્મમાં રહેવું તથા ભગવાનના સ્વરૂપની ઉપાસના કરવી તથા ભગવાનના અવતાર ચરિત્રનું શ્રવણ-કિર્તન કરવું તથા ભગવાનનું નામસ્મરણ કરવું, એ ચાર વાનાં જ જીવના અતિશય કલ્યાણને અર્થે છે અને આ તમે સર્વે છો તે મને ભગવાન જાણો છો. This is translated in the corresponding HVSS Taraṅga 168 : 23 in the following Sanskr̥ta words. સામ્પ્રતં ત્વિહ સર્વેષાં ભવતાં સુદૃઢા મતિઃ । મય્યેવ કૃષ્ણોઽમિતિ સા સત્યૈવાસ્તિ સર્વથા ॥ It means ‘At present all of you have firm conviction that I am Kṛṣṇa. This conviction of yours is perfectly true’. In the original Gujarātī Vacanāmṛtam, VGMS 35 no where Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa is identified with Śrī Kṛṣṇa as is done here In HVSS 168 : 33.

4. An important concept Śarīra-Śarīrī-Bhāva is explained by Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa with the help of the term 'Antaryāmiśakti', through which God is immanent in each one of the (spiritual) and (material) substance and yet He is independent and above them. Unlike Rāmānujācārya's Īsvara, the Parabrahman of Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa does not absolutely and necessarily depends on matter and soul. They are only pervaded by the Antaryāmiśakti of God. God is present everywhere by this Śakti, which is described as 'Brahmarūpā' in Vacanāmṛta Gadhadā middle section no.10. Just as the Ātman or the Self controls the entire body and pervades it, so also God pervades the universe through it. Just as the Ātman is not identical with the body, the God is not identical with the universe. This very important philosophical relation between Paramātman and four other metaphysical realities, so well explained in the VGFS 41 and VGFS 64 is not explained well in HVSS Taraṅga 41,64.
5. In some places special phrases are translated differently. In the very first Vacanāmṛtam the words धर्मकुलाश्रित-भगवत्भक्त goes to भगवद्धाम in Gujarātī becomes ते यान्ति गोलोकधाम। in HVSS 1:15. Thus, the word Dharmakulāśrita is dropped and Bhagavaddhāma is translated as Golokadhāma. The gold coins worth thousand rupees in the Vacanāmṛtam Gadhadā VGFS 10 is translated as thousand gold coins in HVSS Taraṅga 10 : 8.
6. The translator has condensed many Vacanāmṛtas to a great extent. He has reduced or totally dropped the dialogues and historical references. See VGFS 36, 37, 51, 61, 78, VGMS 11 and corresponding HVSS Taraṅga 36, 37, 51, 61, 78, 143.
7. In HVSS instead of the words like God/Almighty of Vacanāmṛtam, the pronouns I, my, by me, myself etc are used to indicate that the God/Almighty of the Vacanāmṛtam is Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa Himself. Similarly in place of words like devotees, followers, worshippers, the pronouns you, yours, yourself, yourselves are used to indicate that the

devotees mention in the Vacanāmṛtam are the followers present in front of Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa in His assembly.

8. The description of Akṣarabrahman in the VGFS 63 is translated in far better way and in greater details in HVSS Taraṅga 63.
9. There is an error of commission or addition which is serious nature. No where in the whole Vacanāmṛtam there is the reference to the appointment of two ācāryas of two dioceses. However, the author of HVSS mentions this appointment and adoption these two ācāryas as His sons.

मयाऽयोद्याप्रसादे च रघुवीरे सुते स्विका ।  
धर्मवंश्येऽस्ति निहिता गुरुतेति गुरुक्रमः ॥ ९ ॥  
H VSS 218 : 9

I have established the pupillary tradition - sampradāya - by appointing Ayodhāyāprasāda and Raghuvīra both, in the family of Dharmadeva (by adopting them as my sons) as the ācāryas - gurus.

Thus, a lot of dialogue portion is removed while translating the Gujarātī Vacanāmṛtam into the Sanskr̥ta HVSS. Yet the major portion of the original work is retained. Thus HVSS is, therefore, of great historical and textual importance. A lot of interpolations in later Vacanāmṛtam editions can be detected with the help of this text. The most interesting fact is that there is an exhaustive commentary on HVSS namely Setumālātīkā by Śrī Raghuvīrajī Mahārāja which is of utmost importance for this thesis. This tīkā is quoted in this work frequently because it shows development of Śrī Swāminārāyaṇism.

### **Śrī Harivākyasudhāsindhu as a work of Transalation of the Gujarātī Vacānāmṛtam**

Translation is both an objective and a subjective act. It is central for understanding a work of a different language than one is familiar with. Be it Gujarātī, Vraja, or Sanskr̥ta but it is also an act of transmitting ideas, to perpetuate and propagate concepts, principles and philosophy of the belief system.

There are, generally, three types of translation :

1	Inter-lingual. It is translation from one language to another i.e. from Gujarātī to Sanskr̥ta. It is called 'translation proper'.	1	The translation of the Gujarātī Vacanāmṛtam in the Sanskr̥ta Harivākyasudhāsindhu is inter-lingual i.e. "Translation Proper".
2	Intra-lingual. It is more of an explanation of ideas/works in the same language using synonyms or equivalent phrases etc. It is rewording within a language.	2	The Sanskr̥ta Setumālā Tīkā on the Sanskr̥ta HVSS is intra-lingual where the same matter is explained further by use of synonyms. It is explanation in details of Sanskr̥ta verses in Sanskr̥ta prose.
3	Inter semeiotic translation. It is transmutation. It is replacing verbal signs by nonverbal ones. The example of semeiotic translation is the ancient Egyptian literature, which is in hieroglyphic script, where pictures represent words.	3	The translation of Egyptian Hieroglyphic writings in English or French is inter semeiotic translation. We are not concerned here with inter semeiotic translation.

Here, we are concerned with inter-lingual and intra-lingual translations because Śrī Śātānanda Muni translates the Vacanāmṛtam, which is originally in Gujarātī language, in Sanskr̥ta. It is called Śrī Harivākyasudhāsindhu (HVSS). Again this work is explained further in the gloss or the Tīkā known as Setumālā by Śrī Raghuvīrajī Mahārāja.

In translation, exact transmission of ideas or equivalence in all respects is almost unattainable. Language may differ and vary in sound

system. The powerful accent and emphasis in one (Gujarātī) may not have the same expressive verbal strength in the other (Sanskṛta) language.

For example in the Vacanāmṛtam it is stated....

1	અને જેમ પૂંછલેલ ઢોર હોય તેને માણસ બળાત્કારે કરીને જ્યાં સુધી ઊંચું ઝાલી રાખે ત્યાં સુધી રહે ને જ્યારે મૂકી દે ત્યારે ધબ લઈને પડી જાય; અને જેમ કોઈક પુરુષ સૂઝે એટલો બળિયો હોય ને દાંતે આખી સોપારી ભાંગી નાંખતો હોય અને તે પુરુષને દસ-વીસ કાગદી લીંબું ચુસાવ્યાં હોય પછી તે શેકેલા ચણા પણ માંડ માંડ ચાવે; તેમ વિષય સન્મુખ બળાત્કારે વૃત્તિને જોડીએ છીએ તો માંડ માંડ જોડાય છે. (VGMS.13)	1	HVSS Taranga 146 does not give this example and so no translation of the above passage is there in HVSS.
2	જેમ કાચનું મંદિર હોય તેમાં એક દિશે દીવો કર્યો હોય તો અનેક દીવા દેખાઈ આવે; (VGMS.21)	2	HVSS Taranga 154 does not quote this example and so no translation of the above passage is found in HVSS.
3	જેમ ઝાઝો દારૂનો ઢગલો હોય ને તેમાં એક અગ્નિનો તણખો પડ્યો હોય તો તે દારૂ સર્વે ભસ્મ થઈ જાય છે; (VPS. 3)	3	HVSS Taranga 129 does not give the translation of the above passage.

The expression in Sanskr̥ta may not have even the similar expression, connotation, or denotation. How can a translator do justice to phrases and concepts like these !

But despite the theoretical difficulty, Śrī Śatānanda Muni has done an adequate and satisfactory job of translating the Gujarātī Vacanāmṛtam into the Sanskr̥ta Harivākyasudhāsindhu.

Finally, by giving an approximate equivalence, that is more or less sufficiently exact, for the purpose of conveying the main points and principles of the Vacanāmṛtam. Thus the Sanskr̥ta translation i.e. HVSS is functionally acceptable.

Secondly, the genuine effort has been undertaken for bringing in the HVSS as much exactness or equivalence and awareness of subtle concepts of philosophy discussed in the text of the Vacanāmṛtam.

At the end, in the epilogue of HVSS (Vārāṇasī Edition, Page 301) Śrī Śātānanda Muni states that it is by the order of Śrīhari, Śrī Swāmīnārāyaṇa, that he has translated the Gujarātī Vacanāmṛtam text in Sanskr̥ta, in Anuṣṭubha meter as per his own understanding.

श्रीहरेराज्ञयैतानि मया तत्सत्प्रसक्तये।  
पद्यैरानुष्टुभैः स्पष्टं ग्रथितानि यथामति ॥ ७ ॥<sup>16</sup>

So the translator, it seems, is aware that something has been 'lost' in the translation at places. So he writes that I have translated 'यथामति' That there is a reason to believe about unattained equivalence. But overall the translation merits attention of all interested scholars connected with development of this bhakti faith of Gujarāta.

We must know what is lost and what is added while translating the VAC in to HVSS. For this we must go through the available printed versions and the MSS of Śrī Harivākyasudhāsindhu.

There are three printed versions of HVSS. There is a Magnum Opus on HVSS called Brahmaraśāyaṇabhāṣya by Śrī Kṛṣṇavallabhācārya and there is a MSS bearing No. 900-901 of Śrī Harivākyasudhāsindhu in archives of AARSH.

1. The first printed version of HVSS was published in 1969 C.E. by Śāstrī Śrī Hariprakāśadāsa from Śrī Swāmīnārāyaṇa Temple Vārāṇasī. It was a part of Śrī Yogānanda Muni Granthamālā. It was the third book in that series and has a detailed introduction by Śrī Kṛṣṇavallabhācārya.

It has 262 Taraṅgas corresponding to 262 Vacanāmṛtas-discourses of the Gujarātī Vacanāmṛtam of the Vadatāla diocese. It was the first printed HVSS text. But it did not contain the very important Setumālā Tikā.

2. The second printed version of HVSS with Setumālā Tikā was published by Purāṇi Hariswarūpadāsa, the chief (mahanta) of Bhūja Swāmīnārāyaṇa Temple. Purāṇi Patitapāvanadāsa edited the work, in 1992. It is in the traditional 'Pothi' form (loose unbound horizontal pages) and has the blessings of Ācārya Tejendraprasāda Pāṇḍe of Ahmedābāda diocese. It follows Gujarātī Vacanāmṛtam text of the

Ahmedābāda diocese, which has 273 discourses. Thus, it has additional eleven discourses compared to that of Vadatāla diocese comprising of five additional of Ahmedābāda section, five of Jetalpura section and one of Aślālī section.

The Setumālā Tīkā of Śrī Raghuvīrajī Mahārāja is very important commentary on HVSS. He was the first ācārya of the Vadatāla diocese. The Tīkā clearly shows the development of Śrī Swāminārāyaṇism. In many places of Vacanāmṛtam discourse where Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa mentions God or 'Prabhu' or 'Bhagavān' or 'Hari', the author of the commentary explains the word to mean 'Bhagavān Swāminārāyaṇa'. In many places he gives new and innovative explanations of key concepts that occur in the original text. We will discuss them later.

Throughout the Bhūja *Pothī* version of HVSS, there is this running Setumālā commentary of Śrī Raghuvīrajī Mahārāja except on the additional eleven discourses mentioned above. On these eleven discourses there are two commentaries! One by Śrī Ayodhāyāprasādājī Mahārāja, the first ācārya of the Ahmedābāda diocese and second by his son Śrī Keśavaprasādājī Mahārāja the second ācārya of the same diocese. But the name of both the commentaries remains the same! It is called Anvayadīpikā Tīkā. The colophon on each of the three sections (Ahmedābāda-5 Taraṅgas, Jetalpura-5 Taraṅgas and Aślālī-1 Taraṅgas) differs! It indicates that perhaps the additional eleven Taraṅgas and the tīkā on them were added later on.

The strangest edition of HVSS is of the Ahmedābāda diocese. Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa Temple, Kālupura, and Ahmedābāda published it in 1992 when it celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> birthday of Ācārya Tejendraprasāda Pāṇde, when he completed 25 years as the head of the diocese. The work contains the following :

1. The Sanskr̥ta text of HVSS of Śrī Śātānanda Muni (here he is called Mahar̥ṣi Sadguru) containing 273 Taraṅgas corresponding to the 273 discourses given in the Gujarātī Vacanāmṛtam of the Ahmedābāda diocese.

2. The Vyākhyākāra of this work is late Ācārya Śrī Keśavaprasādajī Mahārāja. He was the second ācārya of Ahmedābāda diocese but in this whole text of separate Vyākhyā in Sanskr̥ta is given.
3. It has the Gujarātī translation of HVSS, which is itself the Sanskr̥ta translation of the original Gujarātī Vacānamṛtam!
4. This Gujarātī translation is by a scholar saint of Ahmedābāda Swāminārāyaṇa diocese named Śāstrī Devacaraṇadāsajī. He is the scholar of Sanskr̥ta Grammar and Vedānta. (Vyākaraṇa-Vedāntācārya). This edition originally contained the introduction, called Śrī Harivākyasudhāsindhāvupodghātaprakaraṇam. It is identical with that of the Vārāṇasī HVSS version, in which the śloka number five clearly mentions that there are 262 discourses in the text.

शतद्वयं सर्वहिताय वर्णेः स्पष्टैस्तु तेषामधिकं द्विषष्ट्या।

यथाश्रुतं सद्भिर्लेखि मुक्तानन्दादिभिः साधु यथामनीषम् ॥ ५ ॥

But this text of Ahmedābāda had 273 chapters. When the discrepancy was found out the entire introductory section (Upodghāta Prakaraṇam mentioned above) of three hundred and thirty one ślokas was removed. But by this time many copies of this edition were already sold out and landed in the hands of devotees and scholars.

Moreover here there is many an inconsistency about the places of deliverance of discourses of the Vacānamṛtam. In all editions of HVSS, except this one, there are thirty-nine discourses of Gadhadā Last Section. Out of this thirty-two discourses are removed and then included in the Ahmedābāda section, in this editions, indicating that they were delivered in Ahmedābāda not in Gadhadā.

No body knows what is the aim or purpose of changing the venue of thirty-two discourses from Gadhadā to Ahmedābāda. Perhaps because the former is affiliated to the Vadatāla diocese, while the latter is of course the head quarter of the Ahmedābāda dioceses.

But the worst mistake perhaps is the change of words and phrases of the original HVSS text on a large scale. For example we give below in

the first column the examples of the original text of HVSS as given in the Vārāṇasī and Bhūja editions and the changes effected by the Ahmedābāda edition. All the examples are from the very first section of the book.

The most glaring change is with reference to the founder. Wherever there are references to Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa as God or as Kṛṣṇa, the Ahmedābāda edition replaces them with the words like Ramāpati, Viṣṇu, Hari etc to indicate that Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa himself is not indicated or mention therein.

Vārāṇasī & Bhūja Edition		Ahmedābāda HVSS Edition	
1.	HVSS 1 : 11 या प्रोक्ता <u>कृष्ण</u> ते माया	1.	HVSS 1 : 11 (This śloka in not there)
2.	HVSS 1 : 14 <u>तव परं पदम्</u>	2.	HVSS 1 : 12 कथं यान्ति परं पदम्
3.	HVSS 12 : 46 <u>कृष्ण</u> ते धाम कीदृशम्	3.	HVSS 12 : 46 भगवद्भाम कीदृशम्
4.	HVSS 20 : 11 <u>त्वद्भवतो</u> भुवि	4.	HVSS 20 : 11 मुमुक्षुर्भुवि किंत्वस्य
5.	HVSS 29 : 10 किं वास्ति <u>ते कृपा</u>	5.	HVSS 29 : 11 कृपा हरेः
6.	HVSS 30 : 8 भक्तस्य <u>तव कृष्णस्य</u>	6.	HVSS 30 : 8 भक्तस्य राधिकाभर्तुः
7.	HVSS 31 : 4 <u>साक्षादीशस्य</u> ते भक्तौ	7.	HVSS 31 : 4 साक्षाद्भगवतो भक्तौ
8.	HVSS 32 : 19 <u>चित्ते हरेस्ते</u> स्मृतिरञ्जसा	8.	HVSS 32 : 19 हरेः स्मरणम्
9.	HVSS 33 : 4 <u>प्रीत्यै</u> ते साधनानीश	9.	HVSS 33 : 4 कृष्णप्रीत्यै साधनानि
10.	HVSS 34 : 27 <u>हरे त्वं पुरुषोत्तमः</u>	10.	HVSS 34 : 27 भगवान् पुरुषोत्तमः
11.	HVSS 34 : 28 <u>साक्षात्तवैव सम्प्राप्तिर्दुर्लभा</u>	11.	HVSS 34 : 28 साक्षात्तस्यैव सम्प्राप्तिर्दुर्लभा
12.	HVSS 34 : 29 <u>स्वयमेव</u> भवांस्तदा	12.	HVSS 34 : 29 प्राप्तः स्वयमेव
13.	HVSS 34 : 30 <u>यतः सर्वानन्दनिधिस्त्वमेव</u>	13.	HVSS 34 : 30 तदीयाऽऽनन्दतश्च

### Śrī Śatānanda Muni : The author of Śrī Harivākyasudhāsindhu

Śrī Śatānanda Muni, also known as Śrī Śatānanda Swāmī and Mahāmuni, and as the Vedavyāsa of Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa Sampradāya, wrote all works in Sanskr̥ta only. His magnum opus, the Satsaṅgijīvanam is in five volumes mostly in the Anuṣṭubha metre has 319 chapters (adhyāyas) and 17627 verses (ślokaḥ). It contains the entire Śikṣāpatrī just as the Bhagavadgītā is contained in the Mahābhārata.

The work has extensive commentary called 'Hetu' by Śrī Śukānanda Swāmī and the shorter one called 'Bhāvaprabodhini' by Ācārya Śrī Vihārīlālajī Mahārāja. It is highly eulogised in another work called Satsaṅgijīvana-Māhātmya by Śrī Muktānanda Swāmī.

His second important work is the Arthadīpikā a voluminous commentary on the Śikṣāpatrī of Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa, the basic regulatory, moral, short text of the faith meant for all the devotees. He also wrote a short tīkā called Anvayadīpikā on it. His third very important work is Śrī Harivākyasudhāsindhu. It is free Sanskr̥ta translation of the Gujarātī Vacanāmṛtam, the foundational philosophical text of the faith.

In addition to these, he has also written other important works namely Sarvamaṅgala-stotra (1008 names of Śrī Hari), Janamaṅgala-stotra (108 names of Śrī Hari), Vāsudeva-nāma-mālā (108 names of Śrī Vāsudeva), Dharmadeva-stotra (couplets in praise of Śrī Dharmadeva, the father of Śrī Hari) Bhaktidevī-stotra (couplets in praise of Bhaktimātā, the mother of Śrī Hari) Uddhava-siddhānta text on the basic principles and concepts of the faith and Śrī-Hari-jayanti-vrata-vidhi (A book prescribing the methods of celebrating the festival of Śrī Hari's birth).

**The Author :** The life story of Śrī Śatānanda Muni is told in various ways in his own works i.e. Satsaṅgijīvanam and Arthadīpikā-tīkā by the Śāstrī Harijīvanadāsa (SSJ: 119-124). It is told in great details but it is very difficult to state what is purely historical and what is not. In his life story like that of Śrī Rāmānanda Swāmī, it is stated that he hailed from Mithilā town of Bihar and was born in a Brahmaṇa family. His father, Śrī Viṣṇudatta, was a learned holy man.

Śrī Śatānanda was very intelligent since his childhood and mastered the sacred scriptures in no time. He was a great devotee of Śrī Nara Nārāyaṇa. He wanted to worship him in Badarikāśrama, but did not know the way to reach there. Fortunately, some people from Mithilā had formed a group and were about to go to Badarinātha pilgrimage. Young Śatānanda took the permission of the parents and undertook the pilgrimage to the sacred shrine along with the people of his region. Finally, he arrived at the Badari Temple in the summer in the Himalayas. All the pilgrims were happy to have the darśana of the presiding deity of Bhārata Varṣa – Bhārata country. When every pilgrim had left, he decided to find a solitary place to meditate upon Śrī Nara-Nārāyaṇa.

In order to please Lord Badari Nārāyaṇa, he followed a strict discipline of getting up very early in the morning, eating only once a day and that too only easily available seasonal fruit and then to focus on the image of God, to chant His name continuously and to study silently but attentively, the ślokas of tenth section (Skandha) of Śrīmad Bhāgavatapurāṇam. He continued this practice for six months. At the end of six months, as soon as he started reciting these ślokas, he had the divine vision of Śrī Nara-Nārāyaṇa.

He prostrated and said : ‘Oh God today you have fulfilled my long cherished wish to have your ‘darśana’. I wish to compose, write, and sing your great acts of life. Please fulfill my wish, please keep me near you.’ Śrī Nara Nārāyaṇa said : ‘Śatānanda ! I am born as a human being on the earth and am known as Swāminārāyaṇa. At present I move in Saurāṣṭra and Gujarāta. Go there. I will meet you there only. I shall happily keep you with me and you can compose literature on my life and work.’ Giving this boon, God disappeared. Śrī Śatānanda travelled from the North to the Western part of India. He came to Ahmedābāda. Some of the followers of Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa were going to a town called Dabhāṇa. He also accompanied them.

For the first time Śrī Śatānanda Muni met Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa at

Dabhāna. It was a soul-satisfying meeting. Śrī Hari initiated him in the Uddhava Sampradāya, allowed him to stay with Him. He had Kṛpā-samādhi due to great mercy and love of Śrī Hari and had the vision of Śrī Nara Nārāyaṇa of Badrikāśrama, Śrī Viṣṇu in Vaikunṭha and of Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa residing in Akṣaradhāma. He was in trance and had both the self-realisation and the God-realisation. He asked Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa to give him permission and blessings to write an extensive work i.e. Mahākāvya in Sanskr̥ta describing His life, work and teachings. The latter agreed.

He told Śrī Śātānanda to accompany Him to Durgapura (Gadhada) and compose the work there. So he went there and whenever had any doubts or problems about the biographical history or the systems of philosophy like *Yoga*, He consulted Śrī Hari who solved his problems and removed his doubts. When all his difficulties were over he asked for His blessings again for starting the big work.

Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa said: “You have listened to my life, work and views. Now write, as you know them. You understand me thoroughly, have sharp intelligence, when I leave this world, your work describing my life, history, detailing all episodes, will be the solace of the devotees in life and death. Accordingly, the poet wrote his Mahākāvya—*Satsaṅgijīvanam*, remaining alone, in a small room, in the Gopinātha temple<sup>at Gadhadā</sup> of Durgapura (Gadhada) where Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa had spent most of his thirty years stay in Gujarāta and where he had given 184 sermons out of 262, that were collected and edited and named as the *Vacanāmṛtam*.

The *Vacanāmṛtam* became the main philosophical text of the faith and Śrī Śātānanda Muni translated this Gujarātī work in Sanskr̥ta for the non-Gujarātī, traditional scholars, pandits of India. For them he also wrote an in depth commentary *Arthadīpikā* and a short one *Anvayadīpikā*, on the *Śikṣāpatrī*.

In this Śikṣāpatrī, śloka 132, there is a clear instruction for both the ācāryas to establish a school for studies of traditional subjects like Sanskr̥ta Grammar, Logic (Nyāya), Sāṃkhya, Yoga, Vedānta, and Pāñcarātra etc

and to appoint good faculty to spread the holy knowledge and wisdom.

संस्थाय विप्रं विद्वांसं पाठशालां विधाप्य च।

प्रवर्तनीया सद्विद्या भुवि यत्सुकृतं महत्॥(१३२) SP 2132

Consequently, a big Sanskr̥ta Pāṭhaśālā was established at Vadatāla and prominent pandits of Śrī Vaiṣṇavism from Tamilnadu were invited to teach so as to train the student - sādhus of Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa sampradāya. These teachers were staunch followers of Śrī Vaiṣṇavism and the Viśiṣṭadvaita philosophy. Two of them became the principals of the Vadatāla Pāṭhaśālā. Śrī P. B. Aṅṅarācārya had specialised in logic (*nyāya*), grammar (*vyākaraṇa*) and Viśiṣṭadvaita (*vedānta*) hailed from Thirunāngūra. He wrote the prologue or *prastāvanā* of 56 pages on the commentary *Pradīpa* of Śrī Gopālānanda Swāmī. The second principal of the same Pāṭhaśālā, Embār Kṛṣṇamācārya, was from Śrīrangam. He wrote the introduction on the Bhāṣya of Śrī Mukṭānanda Swāmī called *Brahma-Mīmāṃsā*.

These two scholar-teachers, it seems, moulded the philosophical attitude and the outlook of their students namely the Swāminārāyaṇa Sādhus to such an extent that most of them came to believe that the philosophy of Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa is nothing but simple version of the Viśiṣṭadvaita of Śrī Rāmānujācārya. Thus the ground was being slowly prepared to subsume Śrī Swāminārāyaṇism into Śrī Vaiṣṇavism or to make it an appendix of the Viśiṣṭadvaita.

The desire to absorb the former into the latter became very acute when one of the fellow Sādhus at Vadatāla diocese namely Śāstrī Yajñapurūṣadāsa was going to help in consecration of the images of Śrī Akṣara and Śrī Puruṣottama as Swāmī and Nārāyaṇa at Vaḍhavāṇa city by identifying Swāmī or Akṣara with Guṇātītānanda and Puruṣottama Nārāyaṇa with Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa or Śrī Sahajānanda Swāmī.

It seems, that it was something totally unacceptable to the old ascetics and administrative authorities also, headed by the householder families having the kinship with the founder and hereditary authority based on the so-called 'Lekha', an apparent legal document empowering them eter-

nally. They felt that once the ascetic like Śrī Guṇātītānanda Swāmī becomes the 'Guru' or the spiritual head of the whole Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa Sampradāya, their entire authority would be weakened.

They were supported by the group of the scholar sādhus of the Vedānta Sanskr̥ta Pāṭhaśālā, mainly Śāstri Śrī Harijivandāsa, Purāṇi Dharmaswarūpadāsa and Śāstri Kṛṣṇaswarūpadāsa who were greatly influenced by the south Indian teachers of Vaiṣṇavism, Śrī P. B. Aṅṅarācārya and Śrī Embār Kṛṣṇmācārya mentioned above. They perhaps felt how could an uneducated ascetic like Guṇātītānanda Swāmī be equated with 'Akṣara' or 'Brahman', the terms denoting the ontological reality next only to Parabrahman in importance.

They, therefore, thought that the easiest and technically correct way was to reduce the *Tattva-Pañcaka* of Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa into the *Tattva-Traya* of Śrī Rāmānujācārya by including both the ontological reality of Brahman and Īśvara into one single reality of 'Īśvara' of Śrī Rāmānuja and by equating Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa with either Śrī Nārāyaṇa, Viṣṇu or Kṛṣṇa. They were very careful not to call or describe, in the real sense, Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa as *Sarvāvatārī* (the Source of all incarnation) and *Sarvopari* (the Highest). But this is how exactly Śrī Śātānanda Muni describes Him in HVSS 142 : 14-15.

हेतुः सर्वावताराणां सोऽवतार्येव वर्तते ।  
इति ज्ञेयो न चैवान्यैरवतारैः समो हरिः । १५  
तस्मिन्नैव ततः प्रीतिः कर्तव्या सुदृढा सदा ।  
तथैव संसृतेर्मोक्षः सर्वेषामस्ति नान्यथा ॥ १५

It appears that this was totally unacceptable to both the contemporary ācāryas and the scholar-sādhus headed by Śrī Harijivanadāsa Śāstri and others. They staunchly believed that Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa was at best Śrī Kṛṣṇa or an avatāra of Viṣṇu or Nārāyaṇa. This view was not totally wrong in the history of this Sampradāya or faith and also in case of history of other faiths. There are at least two stages of development.

1. In the initial stage the founder or the ācārya generally takes the help of the prevailing spiritual and religious traditions. Either he accepts a

well-established teacher as his Guru or his works as his main scriptures. For example Śrī Vallabhācārya had accepted Śrī Viṣṇu Swāmī and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu had accepted Śrī Madhvācārya as their respective Gurus. This is necessary to attract the aspirants to the new faith.

2. When the faith becomes mature and fully developed the founder or his immediate successors can bring in new concepts, innovative ideas, and necessary changes. These become slowly acceptable to the followers. If we study the philosophy of Śrī Viṣṇu Swāmī and Śrī Vallabhācārya as well as that of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Śrī Madhvācārya, it become very clear that the basic views of the initial period and the developed <sup>period</sup> are very different.

The similar thing happened, it seems, in Śrī Swāminārāyaṇism. Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa describes Himself as a spiritual master, advisor, guide, teacher and an ācārya of the devotees etc. (VAC : 18) While in the HVSS 168 : 23 he clearly states, 'Indeed all of you realise me to be God - Śrī Kṛṣṇa'.

साम्प्रतं त्विह सर्वेषां भवतां सुदृढा मतिः।  
मय्येव कृष्णोऽयमिति सा सत्यैवास्ति सर्वथा ॥ २४ ॥

Then he makes the most powerful statement in HVSS 168 : 24-26. The Setumālā Tikā makes this point absolutely clear.

अहमक्षरधामेश      ईशेशः      पुरुषोत्तमः।  
सर्वावितारहेतुश्च      सदा      सर्वोपरि      स्थितः ॥ २४ ॥

HVSS : 168 / 24

एतदेव स्पष्टमाह द्वाभ्याम्। अहमिति। अहम्। अक्षरधामेशः सर्वपरात्युत्कृष्टाक्षर-  
धामाधिपतिः। ईशेशो महापुरुषादीश्वरेश्वरः। पुरुषोत्तमः। सर्वावितारहेतुः  
रामकृष्णादिक-सकलावताराणां कारणम्। सदा सर्वकालम्। सर्वोपरि। स्थितश्च।  
मत्तः परतरः कोऽप्यधिको नास्तीत्यर्थः ॥ १६८-२४ ॥

महापुरुषमायादेर्नियन्ता      दिव्यविग्रहः।  
आविर्भूतोऽस्मि      कृपया      तत्कार्या      मदुपासना ॥ २५ ॥

HVSS : 168 / 25

महेति। महापुरुषमायादेर्महापुरुषमहामायाकालादीनामित्यर्थः। नियन्ता नियामकः।  
दिव्यविग्रहः सदैवातिरमणीयमूर्तिः। कृपया स्वाभाविकनिष्कारणापारकरुणया। आविर्भूतः  
युष्मन्नयनगोचरतां प्राप्तः। अस्मि। तत्ततोहेतोः। मदुपासना धर्मसहिता मद्भक्तिः। कार्या। इति  
द्वयोरैकान्वयः ॥ १६८-२५ ॥

मच्चरित्राणि गेयानि श्रोतव्यानि च सादरम्।

मम ध्यानं विधातव्यं स्मर्तव्या मत्कृतोत्सवाः ॥ २६ ॥

HVSS : 168 / 26

स्वभक्तिविधानप्रकारमाह द्वाभ्याम्। मदिति। मच्चरित्राणि दृष्टश्रुता मल्लीलाः। सादरम्। गेयानि कीर्तनीयानि। भवद्भिरिति। भवद्भिरितिशेषः। सादरम्। श्रोतव्यानि च। मम। ध्यानं समग्रतथैकैकाव्यवतया च मन्मूर्तिर्विन्तनम्। सादरम्। विधातव्यम्। मत्कृतोत्सवाः मया तत्र तत्र पुरग्रामादिषु कृता जन्माष्टम्यन्नकूटपुष्पदोलादयो महाः। सादरम्। स्मर्तव्याश्चिन्तनीयाः ॥ १६८-२६ ॥

Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa, who mostly resided in Gaḍhadā, used to move a lot. During his journey and stay he used to have discourses with his ascetic and householder followers on important religious, ethical, philosophical and psychological topics. He freely offered His views and opinions on *Dharma* (an umbrella term that covers religion, duty, morality etc.), *Jñāna* (knowledge especially of *Jiva*, *Īśvara*, *Māyā*, *Brahman* and *Parabrahman*), *Vairāgya*, (detachment from everything except God) and *Bhakti* (devotion, both as a means <sup>and</sup> as the end-in-itself). He had internalised these virtues. The purpose of this entire exercise was not to parade his knowledge but to satisfy and to give bliss of understanding to his single-minded devotees. The entire idea is summarised in the following at the end of HVSS: śloka 14 page no 203 works (Varanasi edition)

ग्रन्थोज्यं सकलार्थसाधनकरो दुस्तर्कमूलापहृद् भक्तिज्ञानविरागधर्मभगवन्माहात्म्यरत्नाकरः।  
अत्र श्रीहरिणात्मनो ह्यनुभवः सच्छास्त्रसम्मानितः प्रोक्तोऽस्तीति भजन्निमं प्रतिदिनं स्यात्पूर्णकामो नरः ॥ १४ ॥

He states that this HVSS is the means of fulfilling all the objectives of life; it is the cause of uprooting all the baseless doubts and is the ocean full of pearls in the form of glory of God. It has explanations on *Dharma*, *Jñāna*, *Vairāgya* and *Bhakti*. Here is declared the experience of Śrī Hari Himself, which is in consonance with all the sacred righteous scriptures.

In the language of philosophy we can say that it contains discussion of ontological, epistemological, ethical and moral topics of fundamental importance. It has *Pramāṇa-mīmāṃsā*, *Tattva-mīmāṃsā*, *Jñāna-mīmāṃsā*, *Nīti-mīmāṃsā*, focusing on the basic truth, which He had realised Himself. The work is, therefore the absolute and independently self-illuminating scripture. Here in 146.78 śloka no. 7-8 Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa says :

मयाद्य प्रोच्यते यत्तन्न स्वमाहात्म्यवृद्धये।  
न दम्भेन न मानेन किन्तु युष्मद्विधाय हि ॥ ७ ॥

HVSS : 146 / 7

मयेति। हे सन्तः। अद्यास्मिन्दिने मया। यद्वचः। प्रोच्यते। तत्। स्वमाहात्म्यवृद्धये। न प्रोच्यते। दम्भेन। न प्रोच्यते। किन्तु। युष्मद्विधाय सर्वेषां युष्माकं हितविधानाय। प्रोच्यते। हि ॥ १४६-७ ॥

अनुभूतं मयैतद्वि सर्वशास्त्रानुगामि च।  
रहस्यमप्यतिप्रीत्या संसदीह प्रकाश्यते ॥ ८ ॥

HVSS : 146 / 8

अनुभूतमिति। एतद्वक्ष्यमाणम्। मया। अनुभूतम्। अस्ति। सर्वशास्त्रानुगामि सर्वशास्त्राणि यत्प्रमाणयति तथाभूतं च। अस्ति। रहस्यं सुगोप्यमपि। अतिप्रीत्या भवत्सु स्नेहेन हेतुना। इहास्याम्। संसदि सभायाम्। प्रकाश्यते विव्रियते ॥ १४६-८ ॥

‘Whatever I state is not out of self-enhancement, hypocrisy, ego etc., but is for your betterment. Whatever is taught by me, is indeed, experienced by me. More over this teaching of mine is the basic principle of all genuine scriptures which I myself, have realised.’<sup>17</sup>

Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa says that His teaching is not the product of His imagination or his fancy. He again repeats the same purport. ‘I speak what I saw (realised).’ This is neither out of my imagination nor for self-fame. My thesis is not based only on scriptures but I have experienced what I teach. Therefore my followers should consider it to be based on valid means of knowledge and so totally acceptable.

स्वबुद्धिकल्पिता नेयं स्वप्रौढिख्यापनाय वा।  
केवलं शास्त्रदृष्ट्या या वार्ता न कथिता मया ॥ ६१ ॥

HVSS : 262 / 61

स्वेति। मया। इयम्। वार्ता। स्वबुद्धिकल्पिता। न कथिता। यथा वैतण्डितानामिवेति भावः। अथवा। स्वप्रौढिख्यापनाय स्वोत्कर्षज्ञापयितुमित्यर्थः। न कथिता। अथवा। केवलम्। शास्त्रदृष्ट्या। न कथिता यथा पण्डितैरिवेतिभावः ॥ २६२-६१ ॥

किन्तु स्वकीयानुभवसिद्धैवोक्ता यथातथम्।  
अतोऽस्ति सप्रमाणेति धार्या मनसि मामकैः ॥ ६२ ॥

HVSS : 262 / 62

किन्त्विति। किन्तु। स्वकीयानुभवसिद्धैव। यथातथं यथार्थतया। उक्ता। अतो हेतोः। सप्रमाणाऽनुभवप्रमाणसहिता। अस्ति। इति हेतोः। मामकैर्मैदाश्रितैर्भवद्भिः। मनसि धार्या। इति द्वयोरैकसम्बन्धः ॥ २६२-६२ ॥

In this book Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa Himself describes His spiritual status and height. He had complete control over His mind; He speaks to His

mind thus: 'I am indeed your controller, therefore, I am not afraid of you', Similarly He is the master of intellect, consciousness and ego; He controls all of them. <sup>18</sup> He states that no object of sense or sense pleasure ever defeats Him and that He is eternally free and independent and has realized His own Self. <sup>19</sup> As a matter of fact He never had any desire to enjoy the pleasures of sense objects. If worldly objects like good clothes, food perfume etc. were thrust upon Him, He would donate or discard them, soon after their receipt.

Since His birth, He never had even in the dream desires to have wealth or woman. <sup>20</sup> He had perfect equilibrium of mind, in all conditions, whether ruling over the world or begging in the street. Between honour and insult, gold and lump of clay, riding an elephant or walking on foot, receiving garlands or brickbats, he had perfect equipoise, He further states: "The knowledge that I am a Brahmana dose not make me elated (by that position or that knowledge.)"

राजा रङ्गश्च मे तुल्यौ राज्यभिक्षाटने तथा।  
मानापमानौ च समे वर्तते लोष्ट काञ्चने ॥ ११ ॥

HVSS : 146 / 11

राजेति। राजा चक्रवर्तिनृपतिः। रङ्गोऽतिवराकश्च। मे मम। तुल्यौ समानौ।  
तथा। राज्यभिक्षाटने चक्रवर्तिपदे स्थित्वा सर्वप्रशास्तृत्वं करधृतकपालतया भिक्षाचरणं  
चेत्युभे। समे। मानापमानौ सत्कारप्रतीकारौ च। तुल्यौ। लोष्टकाञ्चने सुवर्णमृत्पिण्डौ च।  
समे। वर्तते ॥ १४६-११ ॥

चन्द्रनाशुका

हस्त्यारोहणपद्गत्वे वर्तते च समे मम।  
स्रज्चन्दनांशुकाकल्पैः पूजकश्च रजःक्षिपः ॥ १२ ॥

HVSS : 146 / 12

हस्तीति। हस्त्यारोहणपद्गत्वे हस्त्यम्बालिकायामुपविश्य यानं पद्भ्यां यानं चेत्युभे।  
मम। समे। वर्तते। स्रजः सत्पुष्पहाराश्च चन्दनान्यगुर्वादिगन्धाश्च अंशुकानि महार्हाणि  
महावसनादीनि वासांसि च आकल्पा रत्ननिचिताः कटककटिसूत्रकेयूरादयः सौवर्णा  
अलङ्काराश्च तैः। पूजको ममार्चनकर्ता जनः। रजःक्षिपो धूलिप्रक्षेपकश्च जनः। तौ। समौ।  
वर्तते ॥ १४६-१२ ॥

भक्तेष्वपि न सर्वेषु महदल्पत्वमस्ति मे।  
सर्वत्र समदृष्टिर्हि स्वभावादेव वर्तते ॥ १३ ॥

HVSS : 146 / 13

भक्तेष्विति। सर्वेष्वपि। भक्तेषु महदल्पत्वम्। मे मम। नास्ति। सर्वत्र सर्वेष्वपि भक्तेषु।  
स्वभावादेव सहजतयैव। समदृष्टिर्मम समतामतिः। वर्तते अस्यायं भावः। या इयं भक्तेषु

महदल्पत्वनिषेधपूर्वं समतोक्तिः सा च स्वमाहात्म्यविचारे युक्तैव यथा चक्रवालगिरिमहत्त्वविचारे  
सदपि मेर्वादिगिरिमहदल्पत्वं तुल्यमेवास्ति न तेनाविवेकित्वं भगवतः स्वस्य महिम्नो  
निरवधिकातिशयत्वादिति ॥ १४६-१३ ॥

A similar idea is expressed in the HVSS 102 : 27-32, HVSS 188 : 7-22,  
HVSS 262 : 63.

He speaks of His self-realisation, of how He saw the external world of the sun, the moon, the polar stars and the same whole cosmos within His own body; how within His own Self He saw the Supreme God-head, the Pūruṣottama. 'Puruṣottama' is both a divine name and a metaphysical definition of God (Carman 1974/1981 : 159). In that magnificent charm He was totally engulfed.<sup>21</sup> He declares, 'I had the self-realisation even before I met Śrī Rāmānanda Swāmī. He could see His self as the self-luminous sun. He submits that He could never forget, even for a moment, in all the activities, that He is the Ātman. (HVSS 168 : 6-7)<sup>22</sup>

रामानन्दस्वामि - पार्श्वगमनात्पूर्वमप्यहम्।

साक्षादपश्यं स्वात्मानं पश्याम्यद्य च सूर्यवत् ॥ ६ ॥

HVSS : 168 / 6

आद्यश्रेयसोऽतिदुष्करत्वमेव स्वभक्तशिक्षार्थं स्वोदाहरणकथनपूर्वं द्रढयति पद्भिः।  
रामानन्देति। अहम्। रामानन्दस्वामिपार्श्वगमनात्। पूर्वमपि। स्वात्मानम्। सूर्यवदकमि  
प्रकाशमयम्। साक्षात्। अपश्यम्। अद्येदानींतनकालेऽपि। साक्षात्पश्यामि ॥ १६८-६ ॥

इन्द्रियाणां च सर्वासु क्रियास्वपि तमेव हि।

पश्याम्यहं क्षणमपि नास्ति तद्विस्मृतिः क्वचित् ॥ ७ ॥

HVSS : 168 / 7

इन्द्रियाणामिति। किञ्च। अहम्। इन्द्रियाणाम्। सर्वासु दर्शनश्रवणादिकासु। क्रियास्वपि।  
तं स्वात्मानमेव। पश्यामि। क्षणमणुमात्रकालमपि। तद्विस्मृतिः स्वात्मस्वरूपविस्मरणम्।  
क्वचित्कदाचिदपि। नास्ति ॥ १६८-७ ॥

The same idea is repeated in. (HVSS 183: 4,5)<sup>23</sup>

At the time when other towering personalities of the 19th Century were unable or unwilling to call themselves anything more than a preacher or a teacher, as for instance, Śrī Dayānanda Saraswatī said, 'I preach Vedic truth, I am thus a preacher and do not wish to be anything more than this,'<sup>24</sup> Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa (Śrījī Mahārāja) calls Himself variously, a person having direct vision of God, a teacher and God Himself, depending on the mental and spiritual level of the devotees.

In HVSS 146 : 61-64 He asserts; “The God with the divine body who is in the midst of great effulgence, is myself, standing in front of you, assuming divine human form. All the incarnations, including that of *Rāma*, *Kṛṣṇa* and others have emanated from Me, the *Puruṣottama*. This is the Truth, I am telling you”.

Similarly He calls Himself the Supreme Godhead, the source of all the incarnations, the *Lord of Akṣaradhāma*, the God of the gods and the Ultimate Reality (*Puruṣottama*) in HVSS 168 : 24-26. In the same place He proclaims himself as the Controller of *Mahāpuruṣa* (the Primordial *Puruṣa*) and *Māyā*, etc. “Devotees should sing and listen to the songs, describing My divine episodes, should meditate upon Me, should recollect discourses given by Me.”

मच्चरित्राणि गेयानि श्रोतव्यानि च सादरम्।

मम ध्यानं विधातव्यं स्मर्तव्या मत्कृतोत्सवाः ॥ २६ ॥

HVSS : 168 / 26

स्वभक्तिविधानप्रकारमाह द्वाभ्याम्। मदिति। मच्चरित्राणि दृष्टश्रुता मल्लीलाः। सादरम्। गेयानि कीर्तनीयानि। भवद्भिरिति। भवद्भिरितिशेषः। सादरम्। श्रोतव्यानि च। मम। ध्यानं समग्रतथैकैकावयवतया च मन्मूर्तिर्चिन्तनम्। सादरम्। विधातव्यम्। मत्कृतोत्सवाः मया तत्र तत्र पुरग्रामादिषु कृता जन्माष्टम्यन्नकूटपुष्पदोलादयो महाः। सादरम्। स्मर्तव्याश्चिन्तनीयाः ॥ १६८-२६ ॥ See page 76.

Thus this book delineates extraordinary personality of Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa. For all the followers of the faith, the *Vacanāmṛtam* and its translation Śrī *Harivākyasudhāsindhu* are as important as the *Vedas* or *Śruti*, showing the correct pathway to *Mokṣa* or salvation and giving true philosophical insight into the *Swāminārāyaṇa* Philosophy.

### **A Brief Account of Ontological Realities of Śrī Rāmānuja and Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa**

Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa gives great importance to correct knowledge of metaphysical entities. He, therefore, declares that when a person knows the real nature of them, i.e. of *Puruṣa* (primordial male principle of creation), *Prakṛti* (the ultimate cause of the world of objects), *Kāla* or time, and the evolutees or *Tattvas*, he is released from the influence of

*Māyā*. (HVSS 12 : 3, 233 : 29)<sup>25</sup> The same idea is expanded to include the knowledge of greatness and glory of God in human form, present before the devotees physically. It is the understanding of the corporeal form of God, currently before them, which is the cause or means of the final emancipation. He says : “Those who desire salvation should have the correct comprehension of God as the cause or means of final emancipation (HVSS 115 : 46-48). In short it is the Concrete Monism. The word ‘concrete’ means ‘anything’ that is specific or individual.’ God or Ultimate self-existent reality of Śrī Swāmīnārāyaṇa is (one and) specific one it refers to Him only. As Muktaṇanda Swāmī states in HVSS 34 : 27

निःश्रेयसाय जीवानां हरे त्वं पुरुषोत्तमः।  
क्षोण्यां नृषु प्रजातोऽसि स्वभावमजहत्स्वकम् ॥ २७ ॥

HVSS : 34 / 27

निःश्रेयसायेति । हे हरे ! भगवन् ! । पुरुषोत्तमः । त्वम् । स्वकं निजम् । स्वभाव-  
मपारकारुण्यसौशील्यवात्सल्यौदार्यैश्वर्यादिमहोदधित्वरूपम् । अजहदत्यजन्सन्नेव ।  
जीवानाम् । निःश्रेयसाय । क्षोण्यां भूमौ । नृषु । प्रजात आविर्भूतोऽसि ॥ ३४-२७ ॥

Therefore, every aspirant of Mokṣa must have correct knowledge of five basic, ultimate, metaphysical realities which are eternal. (HVSS 7 : 17).

जीवेशब्रह्मकृष्णानां मायायाश्चापि वास्तवः।  
अस्त्यनादिरयं भेद इति जानीहि निश्चितम् ॥ १७ ॥

HVSS : 7 / 17

जीवेति । जीवा असुभृतश्च ईशा वैराजादयश्च ब्रह्माक्षरब्रह्म च कृष्णः श्रीकृष्णपरमात्मा  
च तेषाम् । मायाया द्विविधायाः प्रकृतेश्च । अयं पूर्वोक्तः । भेदः स्वरूपतः परस्परभिन्नत्वम् ।  
वास्तवः सत्यः । अनादनिर्णयश्च । अस्ति । इतीत्यम् । निश्चितमेव । जानीहि । अत्र  
जीवाद्यन्वयव्यतिरेकभावेन लक्षणोक्तौ मायायास्तदनुक्तत्वेऽपि एषां पारमार्थिक भेदोक्तौ  
मायाया गणनादनुक्तमपि अस्याः कार्यकारणरूपेणान्वयव्यतिरेकभावतो लक्षणं  
ज्ञातव्यम् ॥ ७-१७ ॥

As a matter of fact the difference between *Jīva*, *Īsvara*, *Māyā*, (*Akṣara*) Brahman and Śrī Kṛṣṇa (identified with Śrī Swāmīnārāyaṇa) is eternal and real. This is the basic tenet the Auddhava as mentioned above. This fact is repeated in. (HVSS 164 : 45)<sup>26</sup>

The relation between Parabrahman (Paramātmā) and the remaining four metaphysical entities (viz., *Jīva*, *Īsvara*, *Māyā* and *Akṣarabrahman*) is similar to that between Śarīra and Śarīrī (HVSS 7 : 14). Śrī Swāmīnārāyaṇa

being the Śarīrī or the Ātman of all the four. The remaining four are His Śarīra or Body. This is similar to the relation of *Cit* (soul) and *Acit* (matter) to *Īsvara* (Parabrahman) in Rāmānuja's philosophy.

However, it is different in both these philosophies as far as the concept of *Śarīra* is concerned. According to Śrī Rāmānuja epistemologically *Śarīra* is 'any substance that a sentient soul can control and support for his own use and benefit and which is entirely subordinate to it.' In this way, all the sentient souls together with all non-sentient matter constitute the body of the supreme God known as *Īsvara* in Rāmānuja's philosophy because all of them are completely controlled and supported by Him for His own purpose, and are absolutely subordinate to Him. Similarly, God uses Matter (or *Acit*) or souls (*Cit*) for His own ends. <sup>27</sup>

Śrī Rādhākrishnan writes: 'Rāmānuja uses the analogy of the soul and body to indicate that the body cannot exist apart from the soul embodied in it.' सर्वात्मत्वात्प्रत्यगात्मनोऽप्यात्मा परमात्मा। When soul ~~the~~ departs the body perishes. The final cause of the body is the soul. But if the analogy is pressed (further) it will mean that God is all, and the souls and the body are merely instrumental to the pleasure of God (Rādhākrishnan 1995, Vol. II : 716-718).

Thus *Cit* and *Acit*, the soul and the matter are nothing but the means of pleasure for God, making God dependent on them for his pleasure and unable to transcend them, as he is always associated with them. When (the) Brahman is in its causal condition (or *kāraṇa-avasthā*), these *Cit* and *Acit*, sentient and non-sentient beings are in their subtle (*sukṣma*) state. When (the) Brahman is in its effected state (*kārya-avasthā*) *Cit* and *Acit* are in their gross form or manifest state. The clear implication is that the ultimate reality or *Īsvara* of Rāmānuja, absolutely and necessarily requires *Cit* and *Acit* for His very being. Thus, God is not really independent.

Secondly, if individual souls are absolutely subordinate to God, they can't have any distinctive purpose of their own. Śrī Śatānanda Muni, the writer of this book, expressing the opinion of Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa, gives

different definition of *Śarīra* and *Śarīrī* in the HVSS 64 : 10-12. He states that *Jīva*, *Īśvara*, *Māyā* and *Akṣarabrahman* is the *Śarīra* or the body of God in the sense that they are pervaded by Him, are dependent on Him and are incapable of doing anything on their own except through the *Antaryāmī-śakti* of Him. Both *Jīva* and *Brahma* are termed as *Śarīra* due to their permeability and dependence with reference to the *Śarīrī* or God. *Śarīra* is powerless without *Śarīrī*; the *Śarīrī* is independent and all-powerful. Thus God, according to this text, pervades all four metaphysical realities i.e., *Akṣarabrahman*, *Māyā*, *Īśvara* and *Jīva* through His *Antaryāmī-śakti* or divine power (HVSS 12 : 34).

अन्तर्यामितया कृष्णाविष्टान्येतानि सर्वशः।  
संहृत्य जीवेशतनूः स्वस्वांशैः ससृजुस्ततः ॥ ३४ ॥

HVSS : 12 / 34

अन्तरिति। सर्वशः सर्वाणि। एतानि तत्त्वानि। अन्तर्यामितयान्तर्यामिरूपेण।  
कृष्णाविष्टानि श्रीकृष्णेन कृतप्रवेशानि। अभूवन्निति शेषः ततो हेतोः। संहृत्येतानि परस्परं  
मिलित्वा। स्वस्वांशैः स्वकीयैः स्वकीयैः कार्यैः। जीवा असुभृतश्च ईशो वैराजाख्येश्वरश्च  
तेषां तनूर्देहान्। ससृजुरुत्पादयामासुः ॥ १२-३४ ॥

He controls them, just as soul controls and pervades body.

Therefore, He is called the *Śarīrī* of the *Śarīra* (consisting of *Akṣarabrahma*, *Māyā*, *Īśvara* and *Jīva*). Thus, the transcendence, independence, and perfection of God remain unimpaired. God, moreover, does not use or support matter and souls for His own end as instruments of pleasure. On the contrary, the entire cosmos is created basically for the benefit of the individual souls.

निःश्रेयसाय जीवानां हरे त्वं पुरुषोत्तमः।  
क्षोण्यां नृषु प्रजातोऽसि स्वभावमजहत्स्वकम् ॥ २७ ॥

HVSS : 34 / 27

निःश्रेयसायेति। हे हरे ! भगवन् !। पुरुषोत्तमः। त्वम्। स्वकं निजम्। स्वभाव-  
मपारकारुण्यसौशील्यवात्सल्यौदार्यैश्चयादिमहोदधित्वरूपम्। अजहदत्यजन्सन्नेव।  
जीवानाम्। निःश्रेयसाय। क्षोण्यां भूमौ। नृषु। प्रजात आविर्भूतोऽसि ॥ ३४-२७ ॥

The text mentions that God creates, governs and destroys the world for only the well being of *Jīvas* or individual souls (HVSS 97 : 33-36)

बुद्धिन्द्रियमनःप्राणान् जनानामसृजत्प्रभुः।  
मात्रार्थं च भवार्थं च ह्यात्मने कल्पनाय च ॥ ३३ ॥

HVSS : 97 / 33

बुद्धीति। प्रभुः। जनानाम्। बुद्धीन्द्रियमनःप्राणान्। मात्रार्थं मीयन्ते जीवैः  
करणद्वारानुभूयन्ते इति मात्रा विषयास्तदर्थम्। भवार्थं भूयते सत्कर्मभिर्देवादियोनिषु प्रादुर्भूयते  
इति भवो जन्म तदर्थम्। आत्मने परमात्मप्राप्तिलक्षणमोक्षार्थम्। कल्प्यते धर्मादिसम्पादनार्थं  
समर्थी भूयतेऽनेनेति कल्पनमर्थस्तदर्थम्। कामधर्ममोक्षार्थाख्यपुरुषार्थसिद्ध्यर्थमित्यर्थः। असृजत्  
(भा.पु. ६/८/३०) ॥ १७-३३ ॥

इति भागवतश्लोके पुरुषार्थचतुष्टयम्।  
जीवान्प्रापयितुं सृष्टिं करोतीश इतीरितम् ॥ ३४ ॥

HVSS : 97 / 34

इतीति। इत्येवंविधे। भागवतश्लोके। पुरुषार्थचतुष्टयम्। जीवान् प्रापयितुम्। ईशः  
परमेश्वरः। सृष्टिम्। करोति। प्रलयकाले स्वस्वकर्माण्युपादाय मायायां लीनान् जीवान्  
सृष्टिकाले यथाकर्म देहेन्द्रियादीन्प्रापयतीत्यर्थः। इतीत्यम्। ईरितं कथितम् ॥ १७-३४ ॥

सृष्टिः सुखाय जीवानां स्थितिश्चाऽप्यस्ति तादृशी।  
लयोऽपि सृतिखिन्नानां विश्रामायाऽस्ति तत्कृतः ॥ ३५ ॥

HVSS : 97 / 35

पुनरपि स्फुटबोधायोक्तार्थमनुवदति। सृष्टिरिति। तत्कृता सृष्टिः। जीवानाम्। सुखाय।  
अस्ति। तत्कृता स्थितिश्चापि। तादृशी जीवसुखार्था। अस्ति। तत्कृतो भगवता विहितः।  
लयः प्रलयोऽपि। सृतिखिन्नानां जन्ममरणप्रवाहलक्षणसंसारखेदयुक्तानां जीवानाम्। विश्रामाय  
दिवाकार्यभारखिन्नानां रात्रिरिव श्रमापहतायेत्यर्थः। अस्ति ॥ १७-३५ ॥

एवं हिताय जीवानां प्रवृत्तोऽस्ति सदा प्रभुः।  
कल्याणायैव तेषां च महत्या कृपया स तु ॥ ३६ ॥

HVSS : 97 / 36

एवमिति। एवममुना प्रकारेण। प्रभुः। जीवानाम्। हिताय। सदा। प्रवृत्तः। अस्ति। स तु  
स एव भगवान्। तेषां जीवानाम्। कल्याणायैव। महत्या। कृपया ॥ १७-३६ ॥

God does not have any self-interest in this process per se. To strengthen this argument, Śrī Śwāminārāyaṇa in the Vacanāmṛtam quotes a śloka from the Bhāgavatapurāṇa (X 87.2) that asserts that God created the *buddhi* (intellect), the *indriyas* (sense organs) the *manas* (Mind) for the *Jivas* to help them, (A) to enjoy the sense-objects (as prescribed by the scriptures), (B) to take birth in higher levels, and (C) to attain salvation. Thus, God always works for the betterment of the *Jivas*. Out of great compassion, He helps them to attain salvation (HVSS 97: 36). Thus unlike the theory of Śrī Rāmānujācārya, Śarīra and Śarīrī are not mutually dependent on each other in the philosophy of Śrī Śwāminārāyaṇa, nor are

the worlds of matter and souls meant for merely the enjoyment of God.

Professor Yajnik very lucidly explains thus: 'We see that Rāmānujācārya's conception of *Śarīra* fails to preserve, of course, in spite of Rāmānujācārya, the dignity either of God, or of the finite self. Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa's conception of *Śarīra* is not involved in these difficulties. For Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa has said that God is the soul or *Śarīrī*, of Akṣarabrahman, Īśvara, Jīva and Māyā in the sense that these realities are (i) pervaded by God, (ii) absolutely dependent upon God; and (iii) incapable of doing anything except through the Śakti of God. Thus, God of Swāminārāyaṇism does not support the finite realities for any purpose of His own. He rather enables these realities to realise their own purposes. This saves both the perfection of God, and the value of the finite self.' (Yajnik 1972 : 25)

### A brief note on four metaphysical realities and their relation with Parabrahman

As stated above Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa has accepted five metaphysical realities or Tattvas in place of three of Śrī Rāmānujācārya. (HVSS 7 : 17) <sup>28</sup> Page-81  
The first among these is *Jīva* or individual soul or ātman. It is of the nature of consciousness, possessor of knowledge, eternal, unchanging, blissful, steady, always having the same form, self-luminous, spotlessly clean, non-attached, pervading (the whole body), seer, divine, unpierceable, without the gross body, non-materialist in nature and immortal. (HVSS 82 : 12-13) <sup>29</sup>

चिद्रूपो ज्ञानवान्नित्यो निर्विकारः सुखात्मकः । इति १०-१३  
स्थिरः सदैकरूपश्च स्वप्रकाशोऽतिनिर्मलः ॥ १२ ॥ इति १२-१३

HVSS : 82 / 12

आत्मपर्यायस्य जीवस्य स्वरूपलक्षणमाह द्वाभ्याम् । चिदिति । चिद्रूप आनखादाशिखं  
शरीरव्यापनेन तच्चेतयितृत्वाच्चिद्रूपः । 'आशिखादानखाग्रं प्रविष्ट' इति श्रुतेः । ज्ञानवान् कठ ५. १०-१३  
ज्ञातृरूपः । 'ज्ञोऽत एवेति न्यायात् । नित्यः सनातनः । 'नित्योऽनित्यानामिति श्रुतेः । निर्विकारो योऽनित्योऽनित्यानामिति श्रुतेः । निर्विकारो योऽनित्योऽनित्यानामिति श्रुतेः ।  
जन्मादिषड्विकारवर्जितत्वाच्छुद्धः । सुखात्मकः सुखस्वरूपः । स्थिरोऽपरिणामिस्वरूपः । यद्वा योऽनित्योऽनित्यानामिति श्रुतेः ।  
कालाकलनीयस्वरूपः । सदैकरूप उत्पत्यादिकालत्रयेऽपि सर्वदैकरूपः । स्वप्रकाश  
इन्द्रियादिकृतस्वरूपप्रकाशवर्जितत्वास्वतःप्रकाशरूपः । अतिनिर्मलो मलमूत्रादिविकारमय-  
देहावस्थितोऽपि तन्मलानां स्वस्वरूपेऽविद्यमानत्वादत्यन्तनिर्मलश्च ॥ ८२-१२ ॥

असङ्गी व्यापको द्रष्टा दिव्योऽच्छेद्यादिलक्षणः।

अनङ्गोऽमायिकोऽमृत्युः आत्माऽस्तीत्यवधार्यताम् ॥ १३ ॥

HVSS : 82 / 13

असङ्गीति। असङ्ग्यनेकदेहविधृतौ सत्यामपि तत्सङ्गवर्जितः। व्यापको व्याप्ये देहे व्यापनशीलः। इष्टा देहेन्द्रियादिसाक्षी। दिव्य आश्चर्यमयस्वरूपः। अच्छेद्यादीनि लक्षणानि यस्य सः। 'नैनं छिन्दन्ति शस्त्राणी' त्यादिभगवद्गीतोक्तेः। अनङ्गः प्रकृतित्रयत्वबोधकाङ्गवर्जितः। अमायिकोऽप्रकृतिकार्यरूपः। अमृत्युर्मरणधर्मवर्जितः। 'देहवत्त्वं न नक्ष्यसी'ति श्रीभागवतोक्तेः। इतीत्थंभूतलक्षणः। आत्मा जीवः। अस्ति। इति। अवधार्यतां त्वया बुध्यताम् ॥ ८२-१३ ॥

*Jīva* and *Śarīra*, the self and body have not only different but opposite characteristics. While *Jīva* is basically subtle, conscious, immortal, and pure, body is gross, unconscious (without the Self) mortal and impure. *Jīva* pervades the entire body with its natural power, but by its special power it resides in the cavity of the heart. (HVSS 227 : 20-21)<sup>30</sup> There are innumerable souls. They are neither male nor female, neither *Brāhmaṇas*, nor *Kṣatrīyas*, nor *Vaiśyas* nor *Śūdras*. *Jīva* is neither a father nor a son of any one. (HVSS 262 : 12)<sup>31</sup>

The authorship (*kartrtva*) and the enjoyership (*bhoktrtva*) of the Self are due to the *Kriyāśakti* and *Īchhāśakti* of God. (HVSS 65 : 29-30)<sup>32</sup>

*Jīva* is enveloped by the causal body or *kāraṇa-śarīra*. It is the *Māyā* attached to the *Jīva* due to which it remains ignorant of its true nature. *Kāraṇa-śarīra* is like the skin on the seed of tamarind. This *kāraṇa-śarīra* is so strongly attached to *Jīva*, that it is almost impossible to separate it from the Self. But if a person attaches himself to a truly brahmanised saint, considers him to be a genuine exponent of the knowledge of God and then knows God through him, meditates upon that divine form and obeys His various instructions, he gets rid of *kāraṇa-śarīra* of causal body, just as a tamarind seed which is never separated from its skin, will be free from it, if it is roasted. There is no other way to separate *kāraṇa-śarīra* or *Māyā* from the self. As long as *kāraṇa-śarīra* is bound with *Jīva*, there will be cycles of births and death. So sincere attachment (*satsaṅg*) to a brahmanised saint to get true of knowledge of the self, Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman is a must for the removal of causal body and attainment of salvation. (HVSS 108 : 6-11)<sup>33</sup>

यदा मुमुक्षुः सत्सङ्गं कृत्वा साक्षाद्धरिं हृदि।  
दृढं निश्चित्य रहसि प्रेम्णा ध्यायति निश्चलः ॥ ८ ॥

HVSS : 108 / 8

एवं कारणशरीरस्वरूपमुक्त्वा साम्प्रतं जीवस्य ततः पृथग्भवनसाधनान्याह द्वाभ्याम्।  
यदेति। यदा। मुमुक्षुः पुमान्। सत्सङ्गं साक्षाद्भगवदेकान्तिकसाधुसमागमम्। कृत्वा।  
साक्षाद्धरिम्। हृदि। दृढम्। निश्चित्य। अयमेव साक्षादक्षरधामाधिपतिः पुरुषोत्तमः  
स्ववियोगासहैकान्तिकस्वभक्तोपरि कृपया कृतमनुष्यानुकरणो विराजते इति  
निर्णीयेत्यर्थः। निश्चलस्तत्स्वरूपैकस्थिरमनाः सन्। रहसि एकान्तस्थले। प्रेम्णा गाढानुरागेण।  
ध्यायति चिन्तयति ॥ १०८-८ ॥

हृदि तस्य च वाक्यानि धत्ते तं चानुवर्तते।

तदा तु तत्प्रतापेन(तत्प्रसादेन) भवत्यात्मा ततः पृथक् ॥ ९ ॥

HVSS : 108 / 9

हृदिति। तस्य श्रीहरेः। वाक्यान्वेकान्तिकधर्मसम्बन्धिवचनानि। हृदि स्वमनसि।  
धत्ते। मयैतदनुसारेणैव वृत्त्यमिति निश्चित्य तथैवोत्तरोत्तराधिकतया वर्तते इत्यर्थः। तं  
श्रीहरिम्। अनुवर्तते छन्दानुसारेण सेवते। तदा। तत्प्रतापेनालौकिकातिशयिततन्महिम्ना।  
तत्प्रसादेनेति पाठे तु तदनुग्रहेणेत्यर्थः। आत्मा मुमुक्षुभगवद्भक्तजीवः। ततः कारणदेहात्।  
पृथक्। भवति। ततो ब्रह्मात्मना हरिं भजते इति भावः इति द्वयोरैकसम्बन्धः ॥ १०८-९ ॥

Thus when *kāraṇa-śarīra* is removed Jīvas reach salvation. In the state of salvation innumerable released souls, becoming the *Akṣara Muktas*, servants of God, live in *Akṣaradhāma*, the divine abode of the Supreme God-head namely *Puruṣottama*. (HVSS 233 : 37)

*Īśvara*: The concept of *Īśvara* as given in HVSS by Śrī Śātānanda Muni following the *Vaṇanāmṛtam* of Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa is quite different. It is placed between *Jīva* and individual self, on one hand, and Brahman and Parabrahman, on the other hand.

Śrī Śaṅkarācārya considers *Saguṇa-brahman* (Brahman associated with *Māyā*) to be *Īśvara*. Śrī Rāmānuja's *Īśvara* is *Citacidviśiṣṭah* - the Supreme Being - is qualified by sentient and non-sentient beings. His *Īśvara* is different from and superior to a category of *Īśvaras* of Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa. Madhva calls *Īśvara* an *Uttāma Jīva*. Like most of the *Ācāryas*, Swāminārāyaṇa's category of *Īśvara* is similar to that of *Jīva*; both are spiritual entities, both exist only in and through Parabrahman, both are knower, doers and enjoyers. Both act through their bodies, constituted of twenty four elements. (HVSS 164 : 12) <sup>34</sup>

वैराजस्यापि देहस्तु तत्त्वैर्हि महदादिभिः।  
स्वस्वांशैरेव रचितो भवतीश्वरनोदितैः ॥ १२ ॥

HVSS : 164 / 12

वैराजस्येति। वैराजस्यापि। देहो विराट्शरीरं तु। ईश्वरनोदितैः परमेश्वरेणान्तर्यामिशक्त्या  
प्रेरितैः। महदादिभिः तत्त्वैः। स्वस्वांशैरेव। रचितः। भवति ॥ १६४-१२ ॥

But there are basic differences between the *Jīva* and *Īśvara* too. In the HVSS 125 : 21-25, the author enumerates them. The five basic elements or *Pañcabhūtas* that constitute the body of the *Jīva* are inferior; those that form the body of the *Īśvara* are superior, called *Mahābhūtas*. Therefore, the experience of the *Jīva* is limited to its own body while that of the *Īśvara* is coextensive with the entire living universe under his control. So the knowledge of the *Jīva* is limited but that of the *Īśvara* is all pervading as far as the universe under him is concerned. Every *Īśvara* is the creator, the governor and the destroyer of his own universe. Therefore, right from the *Pradhāna Puruṣa* down to Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśa, every one is called *Īśvara*. In case of both, *Jīva* and *Īśvara*, *Paramśvara* is the *Upāsya* and *Jīvas* and *Īśvaras* are the *Upāsakas*. *Paramātmā* is the object of worship and the *Jīvas* and *Īśvaras* are the worshippers. The *Īśvaras* are super *Jīvas* yet ensnared by *Māyā*, though to a lesser extent. (HVSS 164 : 20-26)<sup>35</sup> Both the *Jīva* and *Īśvara* obtain Mokṣa only through the *Upāsanā* of the Supreme God असावपि (ईश्वरः) न कुर्वीत वासुदेवस्य सर्वथा। उपासनां द्रढां यावत्तावन्नैव विमुच्यते ॥ एवं हि साम्यमुदितमस्ति वैराजजीवयोः। तद्वदित्वा कृष्ण एव सेव्यो निःश्रेयसाय तु ॥ (HVSS 164 : 27)<sup>36</sup> i.e., even Virāja *Puruṣa*, if he does not perform *Upāsanā* of the Supreme God Vāsudeva, will not be free from the cycle of birth and death. Only through the *Upāsanā* of Supreme God, will the *Jīva* and *Īśvara* attain emancipation.

**Māyā** : It is one of the five basic metaphysical realities of the *Swāmīnārāyaṇa* philosophy. It is described as 'नित्या' permanent, 'भगवत् शक्ति' power of God, 'त्रिगुणात्मिका' having three *Guṇas*, 'चिज्जडात्मिका' absolutely unconscious but having sentient *Jīvas* and *Īśvaras* in it womb, 'निर्विशेषा' unmanifest, 'जीवमहत्तत्त्वादिक्षेत्रम्', field or ground for all evolutes including *Mahattatva*, *Jīva* etc. (HVSS 12 : 8)<sup>37</sup>

It is interesting that *Māyā* or *Prakṛti* here is similar to that of Sāṅkhya rather than that of Śrī Rāmānujācārya. As it is called and described as *Guṇasāmya*. It means that *Māyā* or *Prakṛti* is not a substance having three *Guṇas* or attributes or constituents or parts; but it is the condition or state of equilibrium of the three *Guṇas*, simply because there cannot be any distinction of the substance and attributes in a reality which is 'निर्विशेष'. It is not independent. But it is the power of God and it depends on Him, Who controls it through His Antaryāmiśakti. It is with this Antaryāmiśakti that *Māyā* is enabled to create. Even during the 'Pralaya' or dissolution, when every evolute is dissolved in *Māyā*, the God sustains her through this Śakti : (तिरोभावे)मायां प्रकाशयति। (HVSS 97 : 30) <sup>38</sup>

The creation of the world is the realisation of the potentiality of *Māyā* and the dissolution is its latent state. Therefore there is no beginning or end of the saṁsāra.

**Brahman / Akṣara Brahman** : The concept of Brahman or *Akṣara* Brahma as distinct and different from that of Parabrahman / Paramātman or the Supreme God is an innovative interpretation of Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa. Śrī Śātānanda Muni calls it the Illuminator of all the sources of light, the Cause of all the causes, higher than the (*Mula* or *Mahā*) *Puruṣa* and is existence-knowledge-bliss. In short, like the greatness of Supreme God, the greatness of *Akṣarabrahman* cannot be known even by the *Vedas*, *Purāṇas*, *Mahābhārata* (history), etc.

प्रकाशकानां सर्वेषां तदेवास्ति प्रकाशकम्।  
कारणानां कारणं च सच्चिदानंदमव्ययम्॥  
अतस्तस्य महत्तां तु शक्ता वर्णयितुं न वै।  
वैदाः शास्त्रपुराणेतिहासादय इयत्तया ॥ <sup>39</sup>

*Akṣarabrahman* is the support of all except that of *Parabrahman*. सर्वकारणता सर्वाधारता ब्रह्मणोऽस्ति हि।<sup>40</sup> He is beyond *Prakṛti* and *Puruṣa* प्रकृतेः पुरुषाच्चापि परं यद् ब्रह्म निर्गुणम् and is free from the three *Guṇas* of *Māyā*. (HVSS 63 : 29-32, 43-49)

It has two forms. The personal and the impersonal.

द्वेधोक्तमक्षरं ब्रह्म मूर्त्तं चामूर्त्तमित्यऽदः।  
मूर्त्तं तत्रास्ति कृष्णस्य सेवायां दिव्यविग्रहम् ॥ २२ ॥<sup>41</sup>

HVSS : 21 / 22

द्वेधेति। अद एकान्तिकप्राप्यम्। अक्षरं ब्रह्माक्षरब्रह्माख्यं धाम। मूर्त्तं दिव्यावय-  
विशिष्टत्वान्मूर्त्तिमत्। अमूर्त्तं कृष्णधामत्वादनन्तमुक्ताधारत्वाच्च साकारं सदपि  
निरवयवत्वेनामूर्त्तवत्प्रतीयमानं च। इत्यमुना प्रकारेण द्वेधा द्विविधम्। उक्तम्। तत्र  
तयोर्मूर्त्तामूर्त्तयोर्मध्ये। मूर्त्तं तु। दिव्यविग्रहं रूपानुरूपकरचरणाद्यवयवविशिष्टत्वेनाति-  
सुन्दरपुरुषाकारमूर्त्तिमत्। कृष्णस्य ततोऽप्यतिनिरतिशयशरीरशोभावतः स्वेष्टदेवस्य  
श्रीकृष्णभगवतः। सेवायाम्। अस्ति दासवत्सदा वर्तते ॥ २१-२२ ॥

In the personal form, the *Akṣarabrahman* is the ideal devotee who serves *Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa* in His abode assuming the divine body similar to His. In its impersonal form the *Akṣarabrahman* is the very abode of the Master. It is known as *Akṣaradhāma* and *Brahmamahola*. This abode is infinitely vast, immense mass of cool light and divine. It is called नित्यम्, अप्राकृतम्, दिव्यम्।<sup>42</sup> (HVSS 12 : 47-50)

Whenever Parabrahman as *Paramātmā*, the Supreme God decides to incarnate Himself on the earth, He brings along His abode, *Akṣara* in the human form as His ideal devotee along with His retinue.

यदा प्रादुर्भवत्यत्र कृपया श्रेयसे नृणाम्।  
तदा सह स्वधाम्ना च परिवारेण जायते ॥ २९ ॥<sup>43</sup>

HVSS 71: 29

**Mukti or salvation:** Every devotee has to realise that only that person who believes that the Brahman who transcends both *Prakṛti* and *Puruṣa* is the ultimate truth and everything else is transient, achieves the status of Brahmanhood, and devotes himself to the *Parabrahman-Kṛṣṇa-Harikṛṣṇa*, becomes free from the shackles of wealth and woman, *maya* and achieves salvation.

प्रकृतेः पुरुषाच्चापि परं यद्ब्रह्म निर्गुणम्।  
तदेवैकं विदित्वा सत्तद्रूपं स्वं विभावयन् ॥ ९ ॥

HVSS : 163 / 9

प्रकृतेरिति। यः। पुमान् भक्तः। प्रकृतेर्मूलमायायाः। पुरुषात्तदधिष्ठातुर्महापुरुषाच्चापि।  
परम्। यत्। निर्गुणम्। ब्रह्माक्षरम्। इति। तदक्षरं ब्रह्मैव। एकं केवलम्।  
सदर्वाचीनप्रकृतिपुरुषापेक्षया सत्यरूपम्। विदित्वा। स्वं स्वकीयमात्मानम्। तद्रूपमक्षरब्रह्मणा  
सम्प्राप्तैकीभावम्। विभावयन्मानयन् मन् ॥ १६३-९ ॥

उपासीत परं ब्रह्म कृष्णं चानन्यभावतः।  
अवरं ब्रह्मणो यत्तत्सर्वं विद्याच्च नश्वरम् ॥ १० ॥<sup>44</sup>

HVSS : 163 / 10

उपासीतेति। परमक्षरब्रह्मणोऽपि स्वरूपस्वभावादिभिरतिश्रेष्ठम्। ब्रह्म परब्रह्मसञ्ज्ञम्।  
कृष्णं प्रत्यक्षं श्रीहरिम्। अनन्यभावत एकान्तिकभावेन। उपासीत सेवेत। ब्रह्मणोऽक्षरब्रह्मणः।  
अवरमर्वाचीनम्। यत् प्रकृतिपुरुषादिकम्। तत्सर्वम्। नश्वरम्। विद्यात् ॥ १६३-१० ॥

ब्रह्माऽहं कृष्णदासोऽस्मीत्येवं यद्दृश्यं निश्चयः।  
सुदृढो जायते तर्हि मुक्तसञ्ज्ञामुपैति हि ॥ २० ॥<sup>45</sup>

HVSS : 164 / 20

ब्रह्मेति। यर्हि। अस्य जीवस्य। अहम्। ब्रह्म। कृष्णदासो ब्रह्मणः परस्य  
श्रीहरेरेकान्तिकसेवकः। अस्मि। इत्येवमेवंविधः। निश्चयः। सुदृढः। जायते। तर्हि। स मुक्तसञ्ज्ञाम्।  
उपैति। हि ॥ १६४-२० ॥

Every one who resolutely consider himself to be *Brahman* and the servant of *Śrī Kṛṣṇa* and worship the God, he becomes a *Mukta*.

Thus the unique *Akṣara or Brahman* is described as beyond and above *Puruṣa* and *Prakṛti*, as well as all the cosmic evolutes evolved from *Māyā*. In its '*Anvaya*' form it is the all pervading space (*Cidākāśa*) that remains untainted but in its '*Vyatireka*' form i.e., in its independent identity, he is the ideal follower / devotee of the *Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa*.

सर्वत्र व्यापकत्वेपि व्योमवत्तदसङ्गिता।  
कृष्णस्यानुगधामत्वं व्यतिरेकोऽस्य गद्यते ॥ १३ ॥<sup>46</sup>

HVSS : 7 / 13

सर्वत्रेति। सर्वत्र मूलप्रकृतिपुरुषतत्कार्येषु। व्यापकत्वेऽपि प्रशास्तृतया वर्तमानत्वेऽपि।  
व्योमवदाकाशवत्। तदसङ्गिता। आकाशो यथा वाय्वादिपृथिव्यन्तभूतेष्वस्थितोऽपि  
तत्सङ्गवर्जित एव तिष्ठति। तथा मूलप्रकृतिपुरुषतत्कार्येष्ववस्थितत्वेऽपि  
तत्सङ्गवर्जितत्वमित्यर्थः। कृष्णपरमात्मनः। अनुगधामत्वं सेवकभावेन धामभावेन  
चावस्थानत्वं च। अस्याक्षरब्रह्मणः। व्यतिरेको व्यतिरेकभावेन लक्षणम्। गद्यते  
कथ्यते ॥ ७-१३ ॥

In many respects the power and attributes of *Brahman* (*Akṣarabrahman*) and *Parabrahman* are similar but it is very clear that the *Brahman* in its *Saguṇa* and *Vyatireka* form is the *dāsa* or the ideal devotee of *Parabrahman* in the *Swāminārāyaṇa* philosophy. The goal of every *Jiva* or individual self is to achieve the status similar to that of *Akṣarabrahman* and to go to *Akṣaradhāma* for enjoying the eternal company of the personal God *Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa* as His ideal attendant and to serve Him.

An in-depth study of Śrī Harivākyasudhāsindhu seems to suggest that the word '*Brahman*' is used both for *Akṣarabrahman* or Parabrahman, depending upon the context.

It is interesting to note here that in the Bochāsaṇawāsī Śrī Akṣara Puruṣottama Swāmīnārāyaṇa Sansthā (BAPS), the personal form of the *Akṣarabrāman* is identified with the current spiritual head (*Pratyakṣa Guruhari*) of the organisation. He is the ideal devotee of Śrī Swāmīnārāyaṇa and the ideal teacher for all the followers of the Sansthā.

**Parabrahman :** Parabrahman - Paramātman or *Puruṣottama* is the fifth and the highest ontological entity of the Śrī Swāmīnārāyaṇa philosophy. He is described in HVSS 121: 31-37 as capable of doing anything (कर्तुं समर्थोऽकर्तुं चाऽन्यथा कर्तुमपि स्वयम्) controller of all, omnipotent, (सर्वकर्तृ) source of everything (सर्वकारणम्).<sup>47</sup> He can subsume every one unto Himself, including the *Akṣarabrahman* (स्वावासमक्षरमपि प्रत्याकृष्यात्मनि स्वयम्। निजशक्त्यैव तान् धर्तुं स्वतंत्रः क्षमतेऽखिलान् ॥) He can support and hold them independently by His own power.<sup>47</sup> (HVSS 121 : 31-32,34) Those who consider *Akṣara* and the released souls to be equal to *Parabrahman*, are ignorant and sinners (HVSS 121: 36). *Akṣarabrahman* and *Īśvara* are called God only because God is immanently present in them, without Him even *Akṣara* will not have God-Like power.

..... ।  
तं विना त्वऽक्षरस्यापि भगवत्त्वं न विद्यते।<sup>48</sup>

HVSS 121 : 39

The divine form of this all-powerful God who resides in *Akṣaradhāma* and His worldly human form when He incarnates Himself on this earth, are identical. Śrī Swāmīnārāyaṇa has not accepted '*Para-Svarūpa*' (the highest form of *God* in His abode) as different from His worldly human form.<sup>49</sup> And He Himself does not assume the '*Vyuha-Svarūpa*' or the incarnations.

The author HVSS declares that *Parabrahman Nārāyaṇa* is the same as *Swāmīnārāyaṇa*. He is the source of all the incarnations :

..... ।  
 यमाहुरक्षरं ब्रह्मानन्तं कृष्णस्य धाम च ॥ ६ ॥  
 अस्ति तत्र स्वयं साक्षाद्भगवान् पुरुषोत्तमः ।  
 अवतारा भवन्त्यत्र तस्मादेवाखिला अपि ॥ ७ ॥  
 क्षराक्षरपरः सोऽस्ति सर्वकारणकारणम् ।  
 अक्षरात्मक - मुक्तौघसंसेवित - पदाम्बुजः ॥ ८ ॥  
 स एव भगवान् साक्षाद्युष्मद्ग्विषयोऽद्य तु ।  
 वर्ततेऽअत्यंतकारुण्यान्नृणां निःश्रेयसाय वै ॥ ९ ॥  
 अक्षरे धाम्नि या मूर्तिर्वर्त्तति परमात्मनः ।  
 तस्याः साक्षात्तु कृष्णस्य मूर्तेश्चास्ति सद्भक्ता ॥ १० ॥<sup>50</sup>  
 HVSS 254 : 6-10

The first line of *śloka* no. 9 clearly state: ‘the very same God is in front of you (He is the object of your vision i.e., He is before your very eyes).

भूरितेजसि यः प्रोक्तो भगवान् दिव्यविग्रहः ।  
 सोऽहमेव भवाम्यत्र स्थितो दिव्यनराकृतिः ॥ ६२ ॥  
 HVSS : 146 / 62

भूरीति। भूरितेजसि अत्र पूर्वमभिहितेऽक्षरब्रह्मरूपप्राज्यतेजसि। दिव्यविग्रहः। यः। भगवान्। प्रोक्तः। स भगवान्। अत्र लोके। स्थितः। दिव्यनराकृतिः। अहमेव। भवामि ॥ १४६-६२ ॥

रामकृष्णादयः सर्वेऽवताराः संत्यतो हि मे ।  
 पुरुषोत्तमस्य वित्तेत्येतत् सत्यं ब्रवीमि वः ॥ ६३ ॥<sup>51</sup>  
 HVSS : 146 / 63

रामेति। अतो हेतोः। रामकृष्णादयः। सर्वे। अवताराः। पुरुषोत्तमस्य। मे मम। सन्ति। हि। इतीत्थम्। वित्त यूयं जानित। अहम्। वो युष्मभ्यम् एतत् सत्यं यथार्थमेव। ब्रवीमि ॥ १४६-६३ ॥

It is still more explicit here in the above two *ślokas* as He declares, “The Supreme God-Head who is stated to be in the great effulgence, that very same God has assumed the divine (but) human form (and is in front of you). All incarnations like that of Rāma and Kṛṣṇa have emanated from Me. Know me to be the Supreme God-Head. This is the truth I declare to you.”

This declaration is necessary because God cannot be known either through the sense organs or through the mind because both these are the evolutes or products of *Māyā* while *Parabrahman-Paramātmā* is beyond *Māyā* : मायिकैः करणैर्ग्राह्यो भगवान्नास्ति कर्हिचित् ।<sup>52</sup> (HVSS 51 : 7) He can be realised

only by the knowledge inspired by Him or by His grace and direct statement not through the indriyas and *Antahkaraṇa* evolved out of *Māyā*:

स यदा कृपया जीवकल्याणाय धरातले।  
प्रत्यक्षो जायते नृणां धृतदिव्यनराकृतिः ॥ २४ ॥

HVSS : 51 / 24

स इति। स एवंभूतः श्रीकृष्णः। यदा। कृपया। जीवकल्याणार्थम्। धरातले।  
धृतदिव्यनराकृतिः सन्। नृणाम्। प्रत्यक्षः। जायते साक्षाद्दृश्यो भवतीत्यर्थः ॥ ५१-२४ ॥

तदा कृत्वा सतां सङ्गं तस्य माहात्म्यमीदृशम्।  
अवगत्याश्रय सम्यग्ये कुर्वन्ति नरा इह ॥ २५ ॥

HVSS : 51 / 25

तदेति। तदा। इह लोके। ये। नराः। सतां साक्षाद्भगवन्तं समाहात्म्यज्ञानं प्राप्तानां  
तदेकान्तिक-साधूनाम्। सङ्गम्। कृत्वा। तस्य साक्षाद्भगवतः। ईदृशमुक्तविधम्। माहात्म्यम्।  
सम्यक्। अवगत्य ज्ञात्वा। आश्रयं तदीयैकशरणम्। कुर्वन्ति ॥ ५१-२५ ॥

तेषां बाह्यान्यांतराणि करणान्यखिलान्यपि।  
तादात्म्यं प्राप्य तं साक्षात्कुर्वतीत्यवगम्यताम् ॥ २६ ॥<sup>53</sup>

HVSS 51 : 24-26

Out of compassion, when He (*Śrīhari*), incarnates Himself in the world, assuming the divine human body, His greatness is to be known through the intimate association of great (brahmanised) saints. Then the aspirant should resort to Him. He then elevates and transforms the sense organs and the minds (of such a devotee) to the divine level and brahmanises them to experience Him. As the existence and experience of God can be obtained intuitively and subjectively only through His grace and through the mercy of His brahmanised saint. It must be noted that *Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa* has not endeavored much to prove the existence of God.

### Navya-Viśiṣṭādvaita

As can be seen from above the *Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa* philosophy is a distinct from Bhakti-Vedānta system of *Śrī Rāmānujācārya*. Like other schools (of) Bhedābheda, Dvaita, Śuddhādvaita and Acintyabhedābheda referred to above, *Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa* philosophy also has distinct concepts of *Īsvara*, *Māyā* and particularly those of *Akṣarabrahman* and *Parabrahman*. Even the concept of *Mukti* is unlike that of *Viśiṣṭādvaita* and other preceding schools. Yet, there are a lot of modern philosophers

who choose to call this system of Bhakti Vedanta as neo (or *Navya*) *Viśiṣṭādvaita*. Our problem is: why call this system *Navya-Viśiṣṭādvaita*? The fact is the ontological realities including the concept of *Akṣarabrahman* or *Parabrahman* and the means attaining the *Mukti* in Śrī Swāminārāyaṇism are different from that of the *Viśiṣṭādvaita* of Śrī Rāmānujācārya. Therefore why should it be called *Navya-Viśiṣṭādvaita*? Why an add-on name? Why not an appropriate, nomenclature describing its central distinctive features like *Akṣarabrahman* or *Parabrahman* or their relation? Why not call it *Akṣarabrahma-Parabrahman-Darśana* or *Akṣarādvaita* or simply *Swāminārāyaṇa Darśana*.

The present thesis tries to present the tenets of Śrī Swāminārāyaṇism in their proper perspective as explained in HVSS which elaborate the concepts as explained by Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa in the *Vacānamṛtam*. They are further clarified in the enlightening commentary 'Setumālā' of Śrī Raghuvirājī Mahārāja. Therefore, I have quoted 'Setumālā' frequently. The present work shows that this system of Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa deserves an independent nomenclature and not an add-on Name.

### Footnotes :

1. R.C. Majumdar 1997-716
2. R. Heber 1846 ii : 106-115
3. R. Heber 1846 ii : 101-115 (*The Swāminārāyaṇa Sect and its Leaders*, 1887,13.)
4. Carman 1981 : 204-20
5. Williams 2001 : iX
6. HVSS 218 : 6-8 and 10-12
7. HVSS 146 : 8
8. Williams 2001 : 17
9. Williams 2001 : 76
10. N.a. 1823 : 348-49
11. B.G. 9 : 11
12. VGFS : 1-63
13. Carnan John B. 1981. *Vacanamṛtam; a note. In New Dimension in Vedānta Philosophy*, Part I, pp : 204-209
14. VSS : 2-3
15. See i.2., page no. 303 of *Setumālā* in AARSH library
16. Concluding portion of HVSS śloka no.7, pp.301
17. HVSS 146 : 68
18. HVSS 155 : 25-27
19. HVSS 18 : 55
20. HVSS 166 : 8-9
21. HVSS 134 : 9-14
22. HVSS 168 : 6-7
23. HVSS 183 : 4-5
24. *Autobiography of Dayānanda* ed. By K.C. Yadav, Manohar Press, New Delhi, ii Edition 1978, pg.69)

25. HVSS 12 : 3
26. HVSS 233 : 29
27. Śrībhāṣya on the Brahmśūtra ii 1.9
28. HVSS 7 : 17
29. HVSS 82 : 12-13
30. HVSS 227 : 20-21
31. HVSS 262 : 12
32. HVSS 65 : 29-30
33. HVSS 108 : 6-11
34. HVSS 164 : 12
35. HVSS 164 : 20-27
36. HVSS 164 : 27
37. HVSS 12 : 8
38. HVSS 97 : 30
39. HVSS 63 : 30-32
40. HVSS 13 : 33
41. HVSS 21 : 22
42. HVSS 12 : 47-50
43. HVSS 71 : 29
44. HVSS 163 : 9-10
45. HVSS 164 : 20
46. HVSS 7 : 12-13
47. HVSS 121 : 31,32,34
48. HVSS 121 : 39
49. HVSS 261 : 9-10
50. HVSS 254 : 6-10
51. HVSS 146 : 62-63
52. HVSS 51 : 7
53. HVSS 51 : 24-26

