

# Swaminarayan Sampradaya

March 16, 2021

**In news :** Around hundred saints got the Covid-19 jab at Swaminarayan temple in Gujarat

## About Swaminarayan Sampradaya/Uddhav Sampraday

- It is a part of Hindu sampradaya
- Propagated by: Swaminarayan (or Sahajanand Swami)
- Year: 1800s
- Birth of the founder: Swaminarayan was born on 3 April 1781 in the village of Chhapaiya in present-day Uttar Pradesh,
- **Guru of Swaminarayan:** Ramanand Swami initiated him as Sahajanand Swami on 28 October 1800 and appointed him to be his successor and the leader of the sampradaya in 1801. At the time of initiation, Ramanand Swami also gave him the second name, Narayan Muni
- Under Swaminarayan's leadership the sampradaya grew to more than 100,000 followers and 3,000 swamis (monks) by the time of his death in 1830.
- He directed his devotees to chant the Swaminarayan mantra, which is a compound of two Sanskrit words: Swami and Narayan
- As devotees began to chant this new Swaminarayan mantra, society began to identify them by the mantra they chanted, thus referring to the group as the Swaminarayan Sampradaya and Sahajanand Swami as Swaminarayan.
- **Goal of life:** According to Swaminarayan the ultimate goal of life is moksha (mokṣa), a spiritual state of ultimate liberation from the cycle of births and deaths that is characterized by eternal bliss and devotion to God.

- **Metaphysics & Five entities:** In the Vachanamrut, the principal theological text of the sampradaya, Swaminarayan identifies five eternal and distinct entities: Parabrahman, Aksharbrahman, maya (māyā), ishwar (iśvara), and jiva (jīva)
- Before Swaminarayan died, he split the administration of the Swaminarayan Sampradaya into two *gadi* (seats) for his two adopted sons:
  - the Nar Narayan Dev Gadi is headquartered in Ahmedabad and
  - the Laxmi Narayan Dev Gadi is headquartered in Vadtal.
- **Six temples:** During his lifetime, Swaminarayan constructed six mandirs: Ahmedabad (1822), Bhuj (1823), Vadtal (1824), Dholera (1826), Junagadh (1828), and Gadhada (1828).
- **Even Akshardham temple of New Delhi** is associated by this sect and it is Inspired by Yogiji Maharaj and created by Pramukh Swami Maharaj, it was constructed by **Bochasanwasi Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha (BAPS)** is a **Hindu denomination within the Swaminarayan Sampradaya**
- **On castism:** Socially, Swaminarayan's doctrine that everyone's true self is the atman within which God resides, led him to reject caste-based discrimination within the religious community. He also inspired followers to engage in humanitarian service activities
- **Important literary works :** The most important are the Shikshapatri and the Vachanamrut (both written by Swaminarayan). The Shikshapatri, a book of social principles, was written by Swaminarayan in 1826

## **Vachanamrut**

Swaminarayan's teachings are found in the Vachanamrut, the principal theological text of the Swaminarayan Sampradaya. As

followers believe Swaminarayan to be Parabrahman (*Parabrahman*, or Purushottam, *Puruṣottama*), his teachings are considered a direct revelation of God

## **Philosophy**

Swaminarayan engaged with the Vedanta philosophical tradition, particularly the Vaishnava Vedanta of Ramanuja, Madhva, Vallabha, and Chaitanya. While Swaminarayan's theology has many similarities and differences with those that came before it, some scholars highlight particular similarities of Swaminarayan's philosophy with Ramanuja's Vishishtadvaita, along with his stated affinity for it to suggest that it served as foundational for Swaminarayan's philosophy.