॥ श्री स्वामिनारायणो विजयतेतराम् ॥

sahajANAND

The Eternal Bliss





God is Light There is no Darkness Where He is!

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On the occasion of the new year V. S. 2075, I extend my greetings with Jay Shree Swaminarayan to all my beloved devotees of Bhagwan Swaminarayan!

Dear Devotees, in our Vedic Hindu Culture we celebrate Dipavali, which is the last day of the year also. The following day is the first day of the year, the Bestu Varsh - the beginning of the year, followed by Bhai Beej i.e. the second day and Labh Pancham, i.e. the fifth day. The fifteenth day is is celebrated as Dev Diwali. All these are the pious days of the New Year Festival.

In our Bharat desh, these are the days of festivity for all. So, on this occasion I pray to Shree Harikrishna Maharaj for healthy and peaceful life to all of you. I also wish that you all enjoy this festival with all gaity and enthusiasm.

I would like to reiterate, like the earlier years, that we are lucky to inherit this divine Satsang. For the salvation of all Jivas, Shreeji Maharaj got constructed six big major temples; and consecrated there in, the icons of Nar Narayan Dev, Laxminarayan Dev, Madan Mohanji Maharaj, Radha Raman Dev, Gopinathji Maharaj - which, in fact, represented His own divinity.

Shreeji Maharaj blessed us with many innovative, religious practises for our Ekantik Bhakti. Our Lord left us with no shortcomings; we are complete in every sense.

On this auspicious Deepavali occasion, it is my earnest prayer at the feet of Shree Harikrishna Maharaj that all the devotees may firmly resolve to strengthen the faith for Lord Swaminaryaan in their hearts and also carry on His tenets with firm determination.

Shreeji Maharaj is Karunasagar, an ocean of kindness. He is also Bhakta Vatsal, always caring and loving. So, we pray at His holy feet that on this pious Parva He fulfils all the cherished and noble desires of His devotees!

We extend our best wishes to all our devotees on this occasion.

Deepavali is a festival of light. It is also a festival of ojas, full of pleasure. We wish that your life too become ojashvi - resplendent and pleasant. We pray to Shree Harikrishna Maharaj to make your life full of auspiciousness in this new year!



SHIKSHAPATRI THE GOSPEL OF LIFE DIVINE



Shantikumar Bhatt

The Royal Road to redemption through Prayer

All My followers shall daily go to the temple of Lord Krishna, in the evening and there shall sing loudly the name of Lord Shri Krishna (the Lord of Radha).

 Bhagwan Swaminarayan (Shikshapatri V. 63)

Hinduism believes in monotheism but allows worship of God in any form of one's choice. This is because when Aryans assimilated different races, classes and communities, they assimilated all their figures, icons and objects of worship also. They also assimilated even all objects to be worshipped by aboriginal-tribes, mountain-tribes and forest-tribes. This is why one finds temples of aquatic animals, insects and even birds. There is a temple of even a rat-god in Rajasthan. However, the fundamental principle that there is only one God remained permanent in Hinduism.

As mankind has made progress, the principle that there is only one God, has gained ground. Bhagwan Shree Swaminarayan is God and He is worshipped as such in a temple.

So Bhagwan Shree Swaminarayan commands all to go to the temple where God is worshipped as Supreme Lord. Only such a temple is known as temple of God. No other temple can be called temple of God in the true sense.

Bhagwan Shree Swaminarayan commands all to go to the temple. All women, all children and people from all different walks of life, without exception must go to the temple, because in Holy Fellowship of Shree Hari, religious practices are not monopolized by certain sections of the society only.

The followers are asked to go to the temple in the evening because in villages and in modern cities most of the people are very busy from the early morning. Only a small section of people can afford to go to the temple in the morning but in the evening all are free. People can go to the temple at ease and they can worship God with full concentration.

The subconscious mind easily receives firm impressions of the religious life at the temple because people get ample time to think before they go to bed.

People are asked to go to the temple of God, not occasionally or casually but daily. Why? Because cultural imprints on the subconscious mind require repeated imprinting. If you empty a water pot at one place, at a time, the water would dry up soon but if you pour water drop by drop, water would flow over a very long period. Second by second we live, second by second time goes on rolling. We live because we take food regularly and not at a time! If you look at Nature, you will find that every phenomenon happens stage by stage. So this is why we should go to the temple and pray God daily.

At the temple of God we are commanded by Bhagwan Shree Swaminarayan to do Nama-Samkirtan. We loudly recite the Mantra of God because it connotes all divine qualities of God. We have also to sing the holy hymns in praise of God.

We are expected to sing in group because such mass-prayers have multiple effect. The divine vibrations of singing inspire divine and noble thoughts within us. Such vibrations keep us immune to diseases and strengthen our will to rise higher and higher in life, till the goal is reached.

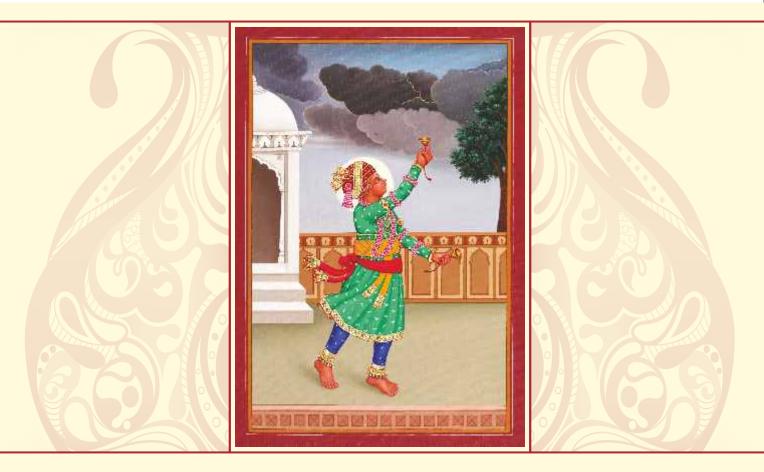
Through such prayerful worship, we worship Shri Hari as Radhika-Pati. Here God is called the husband of Radhika.

Now God was never the husband of Radhika Again, Radhika is never mentioned as a woman in Shrimad Bhagwat Puran.So Radha is the symbol of devotion to God.

The word Pati in its original sense means the protector. Since God protects the devotion of the devotee, He is called RadhikaPati here.

The whole verse is a formula of psychospiritual process suggesting the technique of psycho-somatic and somato-psychic process by which a person can constantly improve physically, mentally, morally and spiritually and be nearer to his dearest God.





Bhagwan Swaminarayan says, "Today I got a dream in sleep at night. In the dream I visited Golok where I saw innumerable divine Parshads there. Many of them were serving God and were found to be steady and some were singing Kirtans about God, and those Kirtans too were composed by Muktanand Swami and Brahmanand Swami. While singing Kirtans they were rocking their bodies as if they had been madly intoxicated by the divine ecstasy of singing Kirtans. I too joined them. While singing, I thought that those persons who give up such spiritual practice full of love and Upasana of God, become Mithya Jnani i.e. pseudo-philosophers and think that they themselves are Gods. They are the most wicked fellows." (Vachanamrut Gadhada Middle - 19)



- Swami Dharma Prakashdasji (Bhumel)

Once, during darshan, I heard a voice singing a kirtan -Janani Jivo re Gopichand ni, putra ne preryo Vairagyaji (Long live the mother of Gopichand, who inspired her son for renunciation.) This is a verse eulogizing Vairagya (renunciation.) and it cannot be sung before the image of the Lord.

I received mother shock. The moment this kirtan came to an end, a devotee started another kirtan: 'Sajani Shreeji mujne sambhare re'. [Horn and desire to remember Shreeji.]

This kirtan conveys the sense of a loss of the dear one, i.e the God.

Both these kirtans express the same tone – the sense of loss, separation and pain.

Can we sing such kirtans before the Lord in the temple?

Certainly not.

It is improper. It is devoid of respect.

The devotee or the singer, should have the knowledge of what he/she sings.

During the darshan or puja, one should sing the kirtans of two types:

- **1.** Kirtans glorifying the murti or narrating the importance of the image.
- 2. Kirtans expressing bhakti.

There are three types of kirtans which can be sung outside the temple. They are:

- 1. Kirtans expressing vairagya (renunciation).
- 2. Kirtans expressing sports of the Lord (Lila na kirtan)
- **3.** Kirtans expressing knowledge (Gyan rus na kirtan)

Moreover, while reciting a Kirtan, the

devotee should see that his singing does not disturb other devotees.

This is a satsang Vivek; a behavior to be observed by the devotee.

There are other Satsang viveks too.

Darshan Vivek
Walking Vivek
Dakshina Vivek
Talking Vivek
Pradakshing Vivek
Greeting Vivek
Discourse Vivek
Bhajan Vivek
Utaara Vivek

One can add to this list.

Satsang Vivek is about our behavior and etiquette. We have to observe these Viveks and by doing so we have to create an atmosphere for peaceful worship and religiosity.

It is wrong to trample upon another's feet.

Our movement should not disturb the other devotee.

It is improper to throw coins before the image.

We should switch off mobiles in the temple.

We should prostrate at a safe space; it should not be a hindrance to others.

Circumambulate at a slow speed; no over taking please.

Greet the saints and the elders by touching their feet, as per our tradition.

Attend the discourse if you are present.

In the dining hall, one should not waste food. As kitchen is the temple, one should help one another.

Cleanliness should be observed in the rooms of the Dharmshala, the residential facility. Same should be observed in the toilet blocks.

After all, temple are the residence of God. So, follow certain Viveks there.

Extraordinary Submission

In the holy land of Saurashtra there is a small village called Samadhiyala where lived a farmer namely Virabhai Sheladiya who was a Patel by caste. He was a great devotee of Bhagawan Swaminarayan. But as it generally goes in the world, this beloved devotee of God was not without enemies. Many people envied him, his devotion to God.

Once this devout devotee went to Gadhada with his family, travelling by his bullock-cart, just to have the Darshan of Shriji Maharaj there. In his absence at his native place some spiteful person set fire to his house turning all household things into ashes.

On returning home after four days, Virabhai found his house completely ruined. All his belongings were no more there. But by the benign grace of God the containers of grains were quite intact, they were safe.

On hearing the news that Virabhai has returned from Gadhada, the headman of the village, namely Hādā Khuman came to see him. Instead of consoling Virabhai, he made a sarcastic remark: "Vira! Your house and belongings are burnt to ashes. What good have you gained by going to Gadhada for your favourite God's Darshan?" Virabhai was not at all disturbed by Hādā Khuman's biting remark. On the contrary he retorted: "Bapu! Bhagwan Swaminarayan has favoured me a lot. Because I went to Gadhada for His Darshan, all my family along with my bullocks and cart have remained safe. I am highly thankful to my beloved God. He further told that his forefathers snatched away trespassers property and built houses with that money. Those houses have been burnt away. Now, he would build new house with righteously earned money. He would live in it. He confidently asserted that his coming generations would attain good thoughts and Sanskars in these houses as they are built with money earned honestly. He was sure Lord Swaminarayan may bless them and they will meet their Kalyan. Lord Swaminarayan always does good to all and there is no harm from his side.

What a wonderful understanding full of conviction shown by Virabhai Sheladiya! Tens of thousands of salutes to him for his inexhaustible faith in Bhagwan Shree Swaminarayan. This Holy Fellowship is full of such ardent devotees whose motto in life is "Let Thy will be done."

- Gordhanbhai M. Patel Bharuch

Lasked God

How to handle life?

God replied: Check your room.

My room gave me all the answers:

Roof said: Aim high.

Fan said: Be cool.

Clock said: Value time.

Calendar said: Be up to date.

Wallet said: Save now for the future.

Mirror said: Always observe yourself.

Lamps said: Light up other's life.

Wall said: Share others' load.

Window said: Expand the vision.

Floor said: Always be down to earth.

Stairs said: Watch each step you take.

And I Said:

Thank You God

Whats & Whys

Answers to the questions of curious seekers

Sashtang Dandvat Pranam

(Eight-fold Prostration)

O Lord and my master,
You are the Emperor of universe;
and the maker of its fate

You are the Protector and Donar, of all auspicious and sacred peace; That's why Your name Karunanidhi is testified, O Lord I prostrate in Your feet with grace.

Cut off bondage of my ignorance, and keep my soul towards Your feet for ever; O omni-scient Lord, the Savior of the devotees, I prostrate my body in total salute.

This hymn is sung while offering Dandvat Pranam - prostration in evening prayer. It explains how should be the state of one's mind at the time of offering Dandvat to Lord Shri Swaminarayan.

In Holy fellowship, 80% of the devotees, while singing, the second tone speak 'data' (donar) instead of 'trata' (saviour) and they reiterate it like a parrot. These lines contain the profound greatness of Lord Swaminarayan. The first line states that Lord Swaminarayan, my chief God, is the emperor and master of endless universes. The second line states "O Lord! You are the saviour from pains and You are the donar of sacred peace. The third line emphasizes that Your name 'Ocean of grace (Karunanidhi) is true because You have showered Your mercy selflessly upon countless souls and taken them into relation with Your Form and ultimately gave them the bliss of imperishable abode. To such ocean of grace, Lord Swaminarayan, I prostrate.

In the next line, it is clarified that I am bound

by the bondage of ignorance and Maya. Please cut off those bondage and bless me with Your divine knowledge so that I can tune myself with Your idol. This is the process to purify our consciousness.

In the sixth line, the devotee urges God to keep his consciousness stable at His feet. Grace me with the boon that my conscience remains fixed and attached with Your lotusfeet. The seventh line runs "O God, protect Your devotees because You are heart-scient. Please protect the devotees who follow Your preaching and who have fixed their consciousness in Your worship. O Ocean of welfare! I offer You total salute in the form of Dandvat Pranam. I utter the prayer and stretch myself like a stick in front of Your lotus-feet.

Some people are confused about counting the number of Dandvat Pranam. In fact our mental state and awareness are very important rather than the numbers. Now let us see the ritual process of Dandvat Pranam.

Sashtang Dandvat Pranam - Prostration means bowing before the idol of Lord Swaminarayan using all eight parts of our body viz. hands, legs, knees, chest, head, speech, eyes and mind, and all these eight parts should touch the ground when we offer the Dandvat Pranam. Generally, animals or reptiles live parallel with the element of earth. Only man lives and walks at 90 degree angle (perpendicular). When we do Dandvat Pranam, touching the earth with all eight parts of our body, it is done parallel with the earth and we get the energy from earthly physical

element. This body is made up of five basic material elements and it comes in contact with the element of earth.

And when we offer Dandvat Pranam, Lord Swaminarayan appears in the standing posture to offer blessing of fearlessness and we offer the Dandvat Pranam with sincere emotion. When we bow down, we should cross our hands so as to touch the right foot of the Lord with right hand and the left foot of the Lord with our left hand. We should touch the ground with our hands, legs, knees, chest, and forehead and fix our eyes on the idol, hold in mind the same idol and then sing the previously discussed hymn or prayer.

In this way, all the activities in Holy Fellowship have deep significance. Any process done without mental awareness does not get us closer to the idol of God. We are lost in the material or physical part of the process, but if we lose the aim or main purpose, the process does not become fruitful.

In fact this is one type of spiritual science which teaches us to stabilize our senses, mind and soul in the idol of Lord Swaminarayan while offering Dandvat Pranam which is done in 180° horizontal posture. We should hold in mind that Lord Swaminarayan stands at different sacred spots and different postures to shower His blessing with His eyes full of love. Dandvat Pranam offered with such awareness becomes as precious as meditation. Nine-fold worship of Lord Swaminarayan has been recommended in which 'Vandan' has been included and Dandvat Pranam falls into the category of Vandan Bhakti.

In the same way Panchang Pranam (five-fold-salute) has been stated for female devotees in the Holy Fellowship. The female devotee should squat on the ground (floor) and place her hands on the floor in Pranam position and then place the head on those folded hands. While singing stuti (hymn),

verses try to join your mind, senses and speech with the idol of Lord Swaminarayan. Thus the Pranam offered with five (hands, head, mind, eyes and speech) parts pleases Shriji Maharaj.

In this way Ashtang and Panchang Pranam (bowing-bending to the ground) is a Yogik process of joining our mind, body and soul with Lord Swaminarayan and its pioneer was Lord Swaminarayan Himself, and He practised it for the welfare of His devotees and its reference can be found in Vachanamrit. The process of Shashtang or Panchang Pranam can help us to break the ego of body consciousness.

Some devotees hesitate to do it because it can spoil the get-up of their dress. The worship cannot enter the heart through the senses until body-consciousness continues. So Shashtang Pranam is a process to communicate our devotion through our mind and senses and to send it to the soul. Therefore, devotees are advised to practise Shashtang or Panchang Pranam as a part of routine worship to consolidate their relation with the idol of Shriji Maharaj.





Saint and the hunter

In a forest a Saint lived in his hut. A hunter, whenever passed by the hut, he would greet the Saint and do "Pranam" (bow down at him).

One day hunter asked the Saint, "Baba, I hunt deer, why are you sitting in the forest to hunt what?"

Saint said, "I am looking for Shri Krishna", saying so, the saint started howling."

Hunter said, "Oh baba! Why are you crying? Just tell me how he looks like? I will catch hold of him and bring him to you. Saint described the attractive beauty of the Lord, that he is dark and handsome, wears peacock feather, and plays flute.

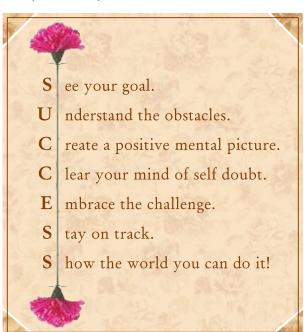
Hunter said, "Baba, till I fetch you the desired man, I will not drink a drop of water. Then he spread his net and sat at some place in the jungle. Three days passed by and merciful Lord had pity on the hunter. Well Lord is not that far off. He just walked playing his flute and got caught in the net.

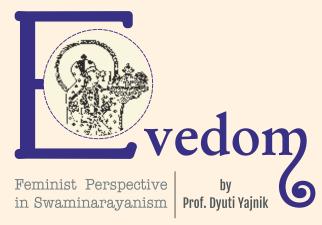
Hunter looking at Lord's attractive, beautiful image, on the contrary he got caught in the net of Shyamsundar - Krishna and started crying. When the hunter gained consciousness he remembered Baba and started shouting, "Found the hunt, got the hunt, found the hunt." Then looking at the Lord said, "So you kept me hungry and thirsty for three days, you have met me now and trying

to do magic on me?" Lord Krishna was appreciating his innocence and was smiling as he looked at the hunter. Hunter lifted Lord Krishna as if he was his hunt on the shoulder, and went to Baba. Hunter said, "I have caught, got your hunt." When the Saint looked Shri Krishna was caught in the net smiling and was on the shoulder of the hunter. Saint was completely baffled; fell down on hunter's feet, then in a sarcastic tone said, "Oh Lord, since childhood I tried umpteen numbers of times, to meet you and to come close to you I left my family and worldly pleasures, worshipped you, but you never met me and met the hunter in three days?"

Lord said, "I saw innocent love, conviction, and total belief in him and whatever he told you. So I could not remain away from him."

Lord is dependent on Saints for his devotees. On whoever Saints shower blessings Lord provides happy shelter to his devotees. The hunter was ignorant, unaware about Lord but he used to greet and bow to the Saint and do "Pranam". Greeting the Saint and looking and meeting him, the hunter found Lord in three days. This is the result of companionship of the Saint.





A thought provoking article

Swaminarayanist Literature by His Direct Disciples

There are other sacred books not written by Lord Swaminarayan Himself, but are written by other saints in the tradition of Swaminarayanism. Of these, Bhaktachintamani of Nishkulananda Swami and Satigita of Muktananda Swami are worth mentioning.

In Bhaktachintamani, Nishkulananda Swami had given the names of the followers of Swaminarayana sect. This includes the names of Saints, Devotees, Nuns, Female – devotees without any discrimination of sex bias.

We have seen that Swaminarayanist literature regards women as equal to men. With the recognition of this equality, the specific needs of women disciples is not neglected. Just as there are specific duties prescribed to wives of householders and Sadhvis in the Shikshapatri, the literature created by Swaminarayanist Saint also takes care of this requirement. The 'Satigita' of Muktananda Swami describes the highest ideal of religious life to be realized by women in grihasthashrama.

Similarly, Nishkulanand Swami has depicted the dangers of association with men, which the women in Tyagashrama should try to avoid. Nishkulanand Swami had boldly asserted that if association of a woman is said to be 'entrance to hell' for a male Sadhaka, then, for female Sadhaka, the association with man is even more dangerous than 'entrance to hell'. He called it 'Narak no kund' and 'ukarado ati gandhya'. What Lacanean feminism says about the language, is reflected here. No other theological literature had provided such a feminist language which can be compared to this.

The aims of third wave feminism also seen in Swaminarayanism because the followers of Swaminiarayan came not only from the higher castes, but also from the lower castes, such as masons, carpenters, blacksmiths, shoe makers and even the so-called untouchables. (Yajnik J. A. op.cit. pp. 3-4) It is historical fact that not only female, but males of downtrodden were the disciples of him. In that, females of that class also exercised the same rights as other women in the sect.

Thus, we see that both the theory and practice of Swaminarayan religion not only gives equal status to men and women but also takes very great care to see that distinctive characteristics of female sadhakas are also developed and dignity of women – fold is maintained, and thereby fulfills the dream of second and third wave feminism well before this movement started. This way, aims of all the three waves of feminism are practically fulfilled in this sect very naturally, without any conscious attempt and very much prior to the establishment of feminist movement.

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Manhood and womanhood are both priceless gifts from God. Both hold their own intrinsic glory and can't be compared to each other. Neither of the two should hence become an object of pride. The purpose of the very existence of the two is to facilitate the smooth functioning of the society and also this cosmos. They both depict certain abilities and qualities which are the very essence of the ecological balance. Thus understood, a soul can rise above the earth element and progress and connect to the Ultimate in the midst of performing all the tasks in the society.

Due to misfortune such education is not provided in school and hence, we have built a society comprising of all sorts of inequality (gender, religion etc.) which give birth to crimes. Over the course of time many social reformers have campaigned to restore equality under the name of humanity. However; without the above mentioned spiritual knowledge, these reforms lacked a concrete foundation and hence, even today a large population is a victim of such inequality.

Lord Swaminarayan put an end to many ill practices (drowning a girl child in the bucket of milk etc.) of the society with the seed of spirituality. We are familiar to various examples, where Shreeji Maharaj uplifted souls of many women beyond their material existence showering the knowledge of His form. Kadvibai, Rajbai, Ladhiba, Jeevuba, Laduba, Meenba are few amongst those mighty souls that raised their being beyond earth element and connected with the Divine by the grace of the Divine.

Thus, it can be concluded that, both men and women should use the power and qualities explicit to their gross existence to serve God and at the same time respect each other as the power of God.

- Mallika Ravani, Usa



Whatever happened for the first time during the lifetime of Lord Shree Swaminarayan or in the Swaminarayan Holy Fellowship, is mentioned in "the First" series. Topics covered in this series are of two types: one, related to Lord Shree Swaminarayan and second, related to Swaminarayan Holy Fellowship. Yet, everything is centred around Lord Shree Swaminarayan. The topics, having religious as well as sociological impact, are historical milestones of the Swaminarayan Holy Fellowship. Like them, this is also the first attempt of the author.

12. Mulji Lawano : the first martyr of Swaminarayan Sampraday.

Parshad Mulji lavano sacrificed his life at Meghapur in Saurashtra. He became the martyr of the Swaminarayan Sampraday.

Once Sahajanand Swami visited Meghpur and stayed at the residence of Amarsinh Bhat, the ruler of the village. His daughter, Ladkibai, served Sahajanand Swami religiously as she was a Muktatma. But, the arrival of Sahajanand swami was disliked by other sadhus and bavas of various sampradayas. They never lost a chance to harass a Swaminarayan sant. Here also some Vairagis were planning to attack Sahajanand Swami and his retinue. The ruler of Meghpur, Amarsinh Bhat, came to know about this vicious plan of the vairagis but hoodwinked about it.

One morning the Parshad Mulji Lavano went for bathing. While he was returning, a Vairagi intercepted him and abused a lot. Parshad Mulji did not uttar a word. This infuriated that vairagi bava more, and along with Mulji he started abusing Sahajanad Swami also. Mulji lost his patience and ran towards the residence. He took his sword and shield and attacked the bava. Mulji started running out of the village. But he thought he should not leave Maharaj and so he returned.

On the way the other Vairagi bava shot him from a distance and killed Mulji. Sahajanand Swami, unhappy with the killing of his Parshad, left the village immediately and cursed the village.

13. Nar-Narayan Dev Temple (Kalupur – Ahmedabad) : the first temple of the Samparaday.

Shreeji Maharaj performed the consecration ceremony of the Nar-Narayan Dev Temple at Kalupur, Ahmedabad on 24th February, 1822 and it became the first temple of Swaminarayan Sampradaya.

The First collectors of Ahmadabad of the British regime played a pivotal role in the allotment of the land for the temple on permanent basis and that deed was inscribed on to a copper plate by the British administration. It is also said the administration gave a salute by firing 200 tanks on this occasion.

Anandanand Swami designed the structure of the temple. Around 50,000 people mostly from Gujarat attended the inauguration ceremony.

14. Ayodhyaprasadji Maharajshri & Raghuveerji Maharajshri : the first Acharyas of the Holy Fellowship.

Acharya Ayodhya Prasadji Maharajshri of

Ahmadabad diocese and Raghuvirji Maharajshri of Vadtal Diocese Ayodhyaprasaji Maharajashri (1809-1868 AD), the first Acharya of Ahmadabad diocese, was the son of Rampratapji Pandey of Chhapaiya Village in UP. Rampratapbhai Pandey was the elder brother of Sahajanand Swami.

Raghuvirji Maharajshri (1812-1863 AD) the first Acharya of Vadtal Diocese was the son of Ichharambhai Pandey the younger brother of Sahajanad swami.. He was born in Amalia Village in Uttar Pradesh.

Sahajanand Swami adopted these two sons of his two brothers as his sons and appointed them as the Acharya of two dioceses of Sampradaya in AD 1826 at Vadtal. Sahajanand Swami clarified the duties of these two Acharyas in the 'Desh Vibhagno Lekh, the constitution of the fellowship.

Ayodhyaprasadji Maharajshri was a highly learned personality and had a passion for knowlwdge. He was also gifted with poetic excellence. His kirtans are sung even today. He wrote 'Tatvarth Deepika' in Sanskrit, a commentary on Satsangi Jivan. He started a Pathshala, a Sanskrit teaching school at Ahmadabad. He consecrated temples at Jetalpur, Dungarpur, Bamroli, Idar, Siddhpur, Manvi-Kutch, Chhapaiya etc. He served the Ahmadabad diocese for 42 years.

Raghuvirji Maharajshri was a humble man. He liked to be in the holy company of sants and even served them. Once, at a late night, he prepared a rotlo for a sick saint. Sahajanand Swami complimented him for this kind of act and said, an Acharya should be like him. He encouraged publication of the religious scriptures. Shikshpatri Bhashyam is an example of his profound knowledge in Sanskrit. He installed the idols of Shree Harekrishna Maharaj at Dholera, Junagadh and Gadhada. He served the Vadtal diocese for 37 years. (Contd.)



As Victor Turner suggests, all human acts and institutions are enveloped in webs of interpritive words. This material includes everything from long philosophical treatises of the Vachanamrut to the short "Jay Swaminarayan" which is the customary greeting of members, from the ancient Vedas chanted by the Brahmins to modern devotional songs sung in the style of film music and sold in the form of cassette tape or CD-ROMs. The material can take a wide range of forms - songs, narratives of varying length, proverbs, poems, legal injunctions, commentaries, even genealogies. Most of the traditions of the Swaminarayan religion are now in written form, and many were written down during the career of the founder. The contemporary focus on writing should not blind us, however, to the fact that even in modern, literate societies much of what one learns, especially about religion, comes in oral form rather than in books. In the Swaminarayan religion, as in Hinduism in general, oral transmission and written transmission go together - guru and scripture - and one is a check on the other.

- Raymond Bradley Williams

An Introduction to Swaminarayan Hinduism, page 184

Give Priority To Divinity

See Divinity All Around



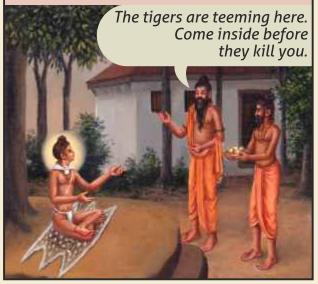
TRYST WITH TIGER

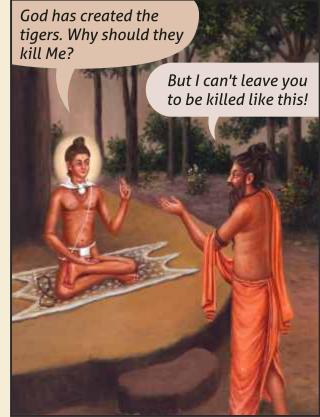


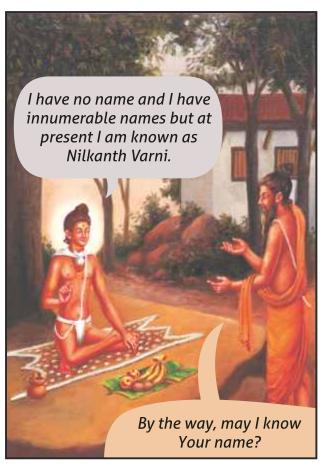
The sun was preparing to take the final deep on the western horizon. The head priest, Mahant approached the main gate of the rampart. It was now time to close the gate to keep away the entry of ferocious animals into the compound.

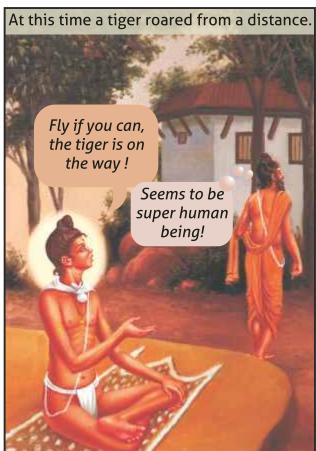


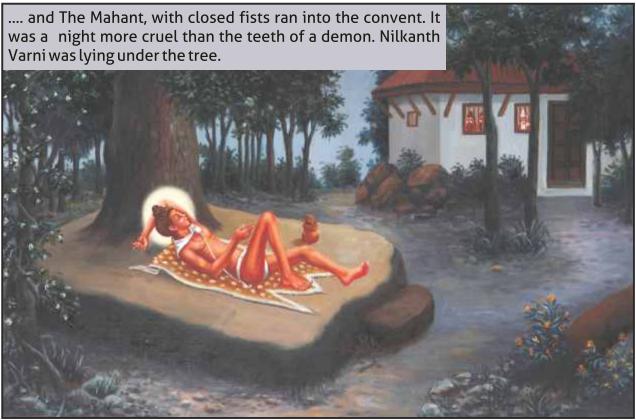
A youth was sitting on deer-hyde under the tree. The fury of the winter-wind had silenced all the sounds. The Mahant said:



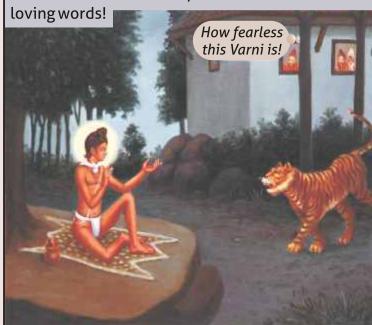




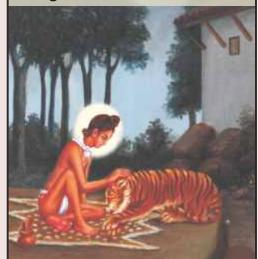




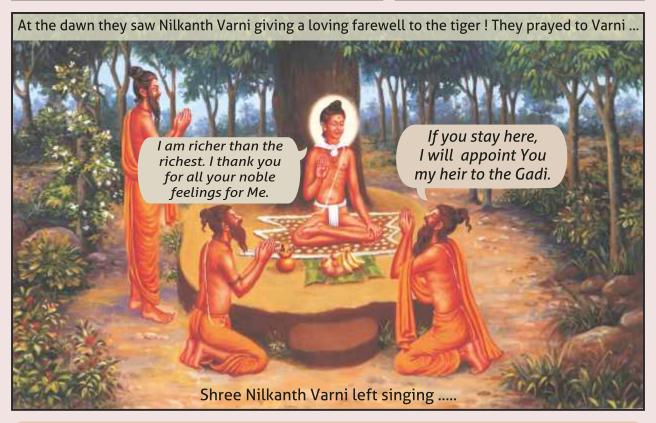
Night was sleepless for the Mahant. From the window just opposite the tree, he saw that a tiger came near Nilkanth Varni, Who welcomed him with



The tiger came near Varni and rolled at His feet. He moved His loving hands on his back!



Then Nilkanth Varni kept His head on the tiger's back and slept.



My knigdom has no horizons, My power has no bars. My entry has no fence around, My home is above the stars.



He knows Me who worships Me, With actions, thoughts and speech. I love such persons as My dearest, Who are in virtues rich.



Health Q,

Spirituality

Vaidyaraj Harinath Jha - Anand

Stress and Ayurveda

Mind and mental health have always remained the central focus of Ayurveda. Manas is the integral part of Human life. And thus, mental phenomenon is the hall mark of all considerations of life, health and disease. Hence, Ayurveda has rich possibilities of providing tools for mental health care even today when mental diseases and stress disorders have assumed the shape of no.1 health hazard.

We are living in the society in which worries, stress and strain are too much. Worries about security, economic difficulties, and emotions are becoming more common and affect our health and longevity of life.

WHO defines mental health as a state of wellbeing in which the individual realizes his own abilities, can cope with normal stress of life, can work productively and fruitfully and is able to make a contribution to his community.

Ayurveda defines Mental health as a state of quality wellbeing i.e. "Prasnnatmendriya manah" with the ability to maintain a positive continuum with the Nature i.e. Loka-Purusa Samya.

Ayurvedic texts consider a range of negative emotions as primary mental illness warranting mental health care and intervention. These negative emotions (Manas Dosha Vikaras) are: Kama, Krodha, Lobha, Moha, Harsha, Vishada, Mana Chinta, Udvega etc.

The causative factors of stress are broadly divided into two types:

1. External stressors: These include adverse physical conditions (such as pain or hot or cold temperatures) or stressful psychological environments (such as poor working conditions or abusive relationships), rules, regulations, "red tape," deadlines. It also includes major life events: death of a relative,

lost job, promotion, insults, being ignored etc.

2. Internal stressors: can also be physical (infections) or psychological. Lifestyle choices: like caffeine, not enough sleep, overloaded schedule. Negative Thinking: Pessimism, self-criticism, over-analyzing. Mind traps: unrealistic expectations, taking things personally, exaggerating, rigid thinking. Stressful personality traits: perfectionist, workoholic, pleaser.

Herbs like Brahmi, Jatamamsi, Ashwagandha etc. and treatments like shirodhara, Shiroabhyanga, Nasya etc. can be used to treat various types of stress but it differs from patient to patient and also the stage and condition of the patient's disease.

Yogasanas like: Ushtrasana, Paschimotanasana, Shashankasana, Parvatasana, Shavasana, Makarasana etc. can also be used to cope with stress and Anxiety. Pranayama up to a certain extent can also be very useful in stress management. Meditation again helps in balancing the mind and helps one control the mind which keeps on going here and there.

The basics of stress management still remains self control, will power and positive thinking; all of which can be achieved by Mantra japa, Meditation, a good Guru and being spiritual. So, if you want to be stressfree, always follow the path of righteousness and lead a happy life.



The Purpose

Prof. Madhusudan Vyas Vadodara

TIGERS TURNED MEAK

This is the story about the miracle experienced by a saint called Akhandanand he was free from anger and physical desires. By nature he loved penance and asceticism, He would remain stable and firm though he had to face insult, dishonor, hatred and rebuke. He was a man of perfect and an unwavering understanding for Shree Hari and his principles.

Once he set out on sermon telling tour without taking any other companion with him. He travelled a long distance in the scorching heat and by chance he entered a forest it was a barren area, inhabited by man-eating wild animals and no human being could be seen in that forest land.

As Akhandanand entered the central part of the forest four tigers came and covered him from all four sides the saint could see living death standing before him and ready to kill him at that moment he thought the sooner or later the body was going to meet the end, "my body may have been made to satisfy the hunger of the tiger so let me go near the tiger and offer my body." "Have ved na karvi kai, javu vahelo wagh pase dhai."

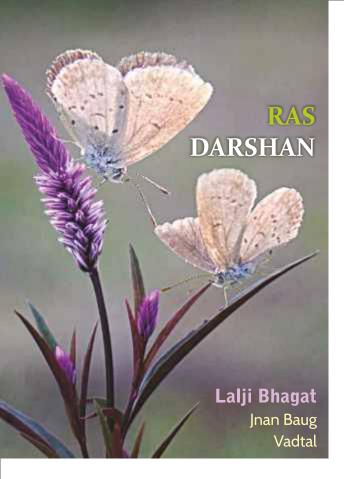
As Akhandanandji made up his mind to go near the tiger Shree Hari decided to save him. He thought that the tiger will kill this saint and he will undergo great suffering before he meets his death. How can I see him suffering and if I remain inactive at such moment who will call me 'Saviour, graceful and merciful?"

At this moment, Akhandanand came near the tiger and stood right before him. He put himself right before the mouth of the tiger and indirectly invited him forcefully to eat him up.

As Akhandanand went close to the tiger and fearlessly invited him to devour him the tiger raised his paw Akhandanand remained fearless and unmoved so the tiger withdrew his paw.

The tigers were inspired by the Lord, so they underwent a change of heart. They took four rounds around the saint and disappeared in the forest.

The episode of the miracle experienced and witnessed by Akhandanandji carries very deep and wide meaning. It suggests about the rainbow personality and kaleidoscopic empathy. The saint decided to offer himself as oblation but the Lord decided to save the saint so he brought a psychological change in the tigers. The raised paw turned into a salute. The tigers lowered their heads to touch the ground. Then they took four rounds encircling the saint, and whispered silent prayers before running into the forest. This is the lining proof of the fact that Shree Hari could bring a change of heart even in the wild and ferocious animals.



Deepmala madhya Shri Hari birajat, Deepmala madhya kaan. 1 Udugan Madhya tadit ghan shashi sam; Sohat Shri Bhagwan. 2 Rang rang kiye deepak ke taru,

Nirkhat Shyam sujaan. 3
Ben bajayke Narad nachat,
Torat nautam taan. 4

Muktanand ko Nath chatur var, Govind gunn ke nidhan. 5

On the day of Diwali, we should try to brighten our soul more and more. Such is the significance of this festival. It is the festival of lamps (Diyas). When Lord Swaminarayan came to Vadtal in Jnan Baug, under the Tamarind tree, amongst the beautiful decoration of Diyas, the saints would request Lord Swaminarayan to sit in the centre of the resplendent arrangement and on all four sides, they would celebrate joyfully while dancing. Such description is given in our holy

scriptures. This lyric reflects the echoes of the same.

Deepmala madhya Shri Hari birajat, Deepmala madhya kaan.

It is the reference of lamps, the Diya and its light. If we see the formation of Diya, it has a small earthern bowl (Kodiya), oil, wick and fire. When it forms communion of these four, then the bowl gives light. The earthen bowl-like our body, made up of the five elements - earth, water, wind, space and light. Within this dull body, like in the Kodiya, there is oil, likewise, in the form of such oil filled is our bulky body. Within our inner conscience, there is mind, intellect, selfconsciousness and the 'wick', in its place is our soul. When it forms connection with fire, light, then illuminates, likewise, within our inner being, when we experience the light of the Supreme Lord, then through our body in the form of Kodiya, bears light, and within that light, we attain the Darshan of Lord Swaminarayan. This is an analogy of a Diya. Diyas have a strong connection with Diwali. In this lyric, vivid description of lamps is done.

The saints used to arrange Deepmala. They used to make the stem and then make its various branches, and within those branches, Diyas were kept. These Diyas were lit up and around all four sides of the Diyas, decoration was done. And in the midst of that decoration, Lord Swaminarayan would be seated. And saints and devotees would have the fortune of the Darshan of Shree hari.

Udugan Madhya tadit ghan shashi sama, Sohat Shri Bhagwan.

'Udugan' meaning stars, here stars means devotees. As the moon shines in the midst of dark clouds surrounded by stars, the Moon looks beautiful. Likewise, in the midst of several great saints like Gopalanand Swami, Muktanand Swami, Brahmanand Swami, Premanand Swami, Devanand Swami, Gunatitanand Swami, Lord Swaminarayan looked graciously divine. We should ponder upon this lyric and enlighten our soul and within that light, we should meditate the Lord's Moorti. In the midst of devotees, Lord Swaminarayan is seated. And by attaining Darshan of such a Moorti, we should experience true

joy of the Moorti within our heart.

Rang rang kiye Deepak ke taru, Nirkhat Shyam sujaan.

Lots of decoration is done and over it rangoli is drawn, Diyas are kept over it, the atmosphere is filled with beautiful decoration. Lord Swaminarayan is seated amongst it. In this lyric, we are advised to do such meditation.

Ben bajaaye ke Narad nachat, Torat nautam taan.

"Ben" means 'veena'. Narad Muni would play the musical instruments and dance. Like wise, Premanand Swami, Muktanand Swami, Brahmanand Swami, Devanand Swami - these great saints would sing and dance joyfully before Lord Swaminarayan. "Torat nautam taan", Playing different kind of instruments they would please the Lord with it, they would sing these tunes and please Lord Swaminarayan. Then which tune should we sing? We are devotees of Lord Swaminarayan. We have to take his shelter with our mind, action, speech. This 'tune' should stay within us. Then our Satsang is true.



Lord Swaminarayan adores Deepmala

And 'Ben bajayke Narad nachat' within our inner conscience, we should bear strong loving connection with the Lord. From within the musical instruments great tunes emerge, likewise from our inner conscience, great resolve should emerge that how would the Lord get pleased? Such feeling should be borne within us. Our inner conscience from within should keep such eager desire for the Lord, and after attaining Darshan of the Lord, feeling inner joy, we should bear such strong feeling within our heart. This is what Muktanand Swami explains through this lyric!

Muktanand ko Nath chatur var, Govind gunn ke nidhan.

Lord Swaminarayan is the Supreme Lord of Muktanand Swami. He is clever and Supreme most. We have the good fortune to attain Supreme Lord Swaminarayan. How is He? He has innumerable supreme qualities. "Govind gunn ke nidhan". Such Lord Swaminarayan, when we attain his divine Darshan, we do his bhajan, we have attained our cherished deity.

I am
the light
of the world.
Whoever
follows Me
will never
walk in darkness,
but will have
the light of life.



Sunder Pichai-Cockroach Theory

A beautiful speech by Sundar Pichai - an IIT-MIT Alumnus and Global Head Google Chrome:

The cockroach theory for self development

At a restaurant, a cockroach suddenly flew from somewhere and sat on a lady. She started screaming out of fear. With a panic stricken face and trembling voice, she started jumping, with both her hands desperately trying to get rid of the cockroach. Her reaction was contagious, as everyone in her group also got panicky.

The lady finally managed to push the cockroach away but ... it landed on another lady in the group.

Now, it was the turn of the other lady in the group to continue the drama.

The waiter rushed forward to their rescue. In the relay of throwing, the cockroach next fell upon the waiter. The waiter stood firm, composed himself and observed the behavior of the cockroach on his shirt. When he was confident enough, he grabbed it with his fingers and threw it out of the restaurant.

Sipping my coffee and watching the amusement, the antenna of my mind picked up a few thoughts and started wondering, was the cockroach responsible for their histrionic behavior?

If so, then why was the waiter not disturbed? He handled it near to perfection, without any chaos. It is not the cockroach, but the inability of those people to handle the disturbance caused by the cockroach, that disturbed the ladies.

I realized that, it is not the shouting of my father or my boss or my wife that disturbs me, but it's my inability to handle the disturbances caused by their shouting that disturbs me.

It's not the traffic jams on the road that disturbs me, but my inability to handle the disturbance caused by the traffic jam that disturbs me. More than the problem, it's my reaction to the problem that creates chaos in my life.

Lessons learnt from the story:

I understood, I should not react in life.

I should always respond.

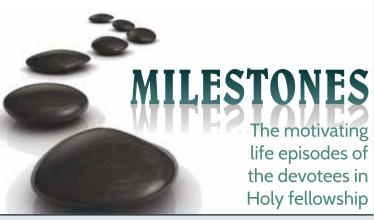
The women reacted, whereas the waiter responded.

Reactions are always instinctive whereas Responses are always well thought of.



A beautiful way to understand LIFE.

Person who is HAPPY is not because Everything is RIGHT in his Life.. He is HAPPY because his Attitude towards Everything in his Life is Right.



Purshottambhai Kacha - Dhoraji

There are so many words in the only holiest language on the earth which have no synonyms in any other world language and that is our "Sanskrit"; the language of gods. One such word is 'Vairagya'. And like synonym forms, there are no human instances that can explain the inner meaning of the word 'Vairagya' excluding in Swaminarayan Fellowship. As soon as the word 'Vairagya' strikes on our ears the images of Hindu Sadhus, Sanyasis, Saints, Sankhya Yogi and saffron coloured cloth wearing persons appear before our eyes. Search on net search engines are full of definitions regarding 'Vairagya'. But our one and only Lord Swaminarayan's definition is unique, second to none and very easy to understand by any illiterate one too. In the 104th stanza of Shikshapatri, Shriji Maharaj has written in Shikshapatri, "Having no love, attachment, affection for anything other than Lord Shri Krishna is Vairagya." (Verse-104)

As a person has innate attachment for the outcomes of Maya, such kind of attachment rising at heart for God is 'Vairagya'. When there ends affection for any worldly things and any human being, it is the beginning of 'Vairagya' in one's mind. The definition proves that God is the only Character on the earth worth to be loved by everyone. Only he is a true ascetic who has all his love for God only; otherwise not.

It is the characteristic of 'Vairagya' that one has natural feeling of dislike for worldly matters. And that feeling too would not let him be tied in anything other than God. It is the climax of 'Vairagya' Even Shriji Maharaj has said in the 2nd Vachanamrut of the first chapter of Gadhada, "One (a devotee) with excellent type of 'Vairagya' would engage himself in worldly dealings obeying the desire of God or due to his destiny but would not be trapped in it like Janak Raja. He would enjoy five kinds of objects of word, touch, beauty, taste and smell according to his fate but sadly; without any affection. And even the five kind of sensual objects would not be able to defeat him. His sense of abandonment would not get loosened. He would always find faults with them. He would look upon them to be his enemies and would always keep communion, rendering service to saints, holy scriptures and God. Even during unfavourable time and place there would be no slackness in his understanding."

Let us have a look at only one inspiring example in Swaminarayan Holy Fellowship to understand what 'Vairagya' is? Sadguru Nishkulanand Swami has written in the 139th chapter of Bhakta Chintamani:

Ek Panavi name chhe gaam, kshatri Bhakta Punjo Bhai naam;

Ati vairagyavan vishek, beejo samje nahi vivek.

Punja Bhakta had extraordinary love for Shriji Maharaj. He was never contented with the Darshan of the Murti of Shriji Maharaj. He had already informed the devotees surrounding his village Panavi, i.e. Gadhapur, Kariyani, Sarangpur, Botad etc. to inform him as soon as Shriji Maharaj arrived at their villages from touring anywhere. No sooner did he receive the news of Shriji Maharaj's arrival than he used to give up any task to go to the village for Darshan.

Once, Vasta Khachar of Kariyani conveyed a message of Shriji Maharaj's arrival at Kariyani;

through a Brahmin Gangaram Dave of village Jhamarala. Right from there Gangaram Dave reached Panavi and conveyed the news to Punja Bhakta who was busy tilling the land at the farm. Just on hearing the news Punja Bhakta let the bullocks loose with the plough to the village and ran to Kariyani. There he came to know that Maharaj had left for Sarangpur. There and then Punja Bhakta ran on to the path to Sarangpur. On the other hand Shriji Maharaj was seated under a Shami tree and telling repeatedly to Naja Jogiya, "Naja, my thirst is not quenched." Naja Bhakta had already offered water three-four times. Then Shriji Maharaj climbed on the Shami tree and found Punja Dodiya running towards Him on the way to Kariyani. Shriji Maharaj took the leather bag of water and moved ahead to Punja Bhakta. Punja Bhakta reached to Maharaj and prostrated before Him. Shriji Maharaj got him up and embraced and then offered cool water and then said to Naja Jogiya, "Now my thirst is quenched Such divine oneness Shriji Maharaj had for His unique Vairagyanishtha (firm in Vairagya) devotee Punja Dodiya.

Punja Bhakta had his unbroken inclination of mind in the Murti of Shriji Maharaj because he had no love or affection for anything or any person other than Shriji Maharaj. When on the tenth day of the bright half of the month of Jyeshtha of V.S. 1886 Shriji Maharaj left for His abode, Bhaguji happened to pass through the outskirts of Punja Bhakta observed a rule to go for darshan at Gadhapur so he had set out to reach Gadhapur. Bhaguji met him in the outskirts of Panavi. Bhaguji conveyed the news, "Pujnabhai! Today Shriji Maharaj has left at noon for His abode." Hardly had Punja Bhakta heard the news when he fell fainted on the ground. His body turned black. After getting to consciousness he reached Gadhapur. He abandoned taking food and water and served there a lot up to the 13th day of Shriji Maharaj's leaving for the abode. On the 13th day Punja Bhakta also left for Akshardham to offer permanent service to Shriji Maharai.

The only reason of having such unbroken inclination of mind was Punja Bhakta's intense 'Vairagya and perfect dislike for the worldly things.

The benefits of lighting a Diya

If you are not in the habit of lighting a diya in front of the Lord, please do so today onwards. It has plentiful benefits.

According to the Hindu tradition, there is a belief of lighting diya during Puja. Diya is a character in which a cotton wick is immersed into oil, the flame is lit. Traditionally, only earthern diyas were lit.

If you light a ghee/mustard oil diya, then the smoke that immerses from the light of the diya acts like an air purifier. The smell of ghee/oil kills the harmful germs prevailing in the house.

The ripples of lamp drive away sadness from the house. It is believed

that the effect of oil diya is felt in the atmosphere half an hour after it is extinguished.

Asthma patients derive immense benefits from it. It drives away illness from the house. Especially when a clove is lit along with the diya, it gives double impact.

Ghee has qualities to treat skin related ailments. It also keeps pollution away. Entire house gets the benefit from lighting ghee diya, immaterial of the fact whether the person has been part of the Puja or not. Actually when the ghee put in the diya comes in contact with fire, it makes the atmosphere sanctified.



Dr. Froylan Alvarado Guemez Pierre Teilhard de Chardin of the Jesuit order. Born in Orcines, on May 1, 1881 and died in New York on April 10, 1995. It was the French theologian, philosopher and paleontologist who built an integrated vision of science and mysticism with his thought; of the evolution of spirit and thought.

- Religion is not just one, there are hundreds.
- Spirituality is one.
- Religion is for those who need someone to tell them what to do and want to be guided.
- Spirituality is for those who pay attention to their inner voice.
- Religion has a set of dogmatic rules.
- Spirituality invites us to reason about everything, to question everything.
- Religion threatens and frightens.
- Spirituality gives inner peace.
- Religion represses everything and in some cases it is false.
- Spirituality transcends everything, it brings you closer to your truth!
- Religion invents.
- Spirituality finds.
- Religion does not tolerate any question.
- Spirituality questions everything.
- Religion is human, it is an organization with men's rules.
- Spirituality is Divine, without human rules.
- Religion is the cause of divisions.

- The spirituality unites.
- Religion follows the precepts of a sacred book.
- Spirituality seeks the sacred in all books.
- Religion feeds on fear.
- Spirituality feeds on trust and faith.
- Religion lives in thought.
- Spirituality lives in Consciousness.
- Religion feeds the ego.
- Spirituality drives to transcend.
- Religion makes us renounce the world to follow a god.
- Spirituality makes us live in God, without renouncing us.
- Religion fills us with dreams of glory in paradise.
- Spirituality makes us live the glory and paradise here and now.
- Religion lives in the past and in the future.
- Spirituality lives in the present.
- Religion creates cloisters in our memory.
- Spirituality liberates our Consciousness.
- Religion makes us believe in eternal life.
- Spirituality makes us aware of Eternal Life.
- Religion promises life after death.
- Spirituality is to find God in our interior during life and death.

We are not human beings who go through a spiritual experience.

We are spiritual beings that we go through a human experience.



He looks after him who seeks His refuge!

Hard were the times when Shreeji Maharaj spread Satasang. In those turbulent times joining Satsang invited beating by the brutes. They were ex-comminicated and they had to stick to their faith in Shreeji Maharaj even at the cost of their lives. If a devotee cultivates strong faith in God and remains steady like a rock and then practises devotion, Shreeji Maharaj certainly protects such devotee. Many such incidents are on record in our Satsang.

There was a city ruled by a Muslim ruler. Where a Bania officiated as a minister. Once that Bania was found to be at fault. After a few days the ruler ordered: "Pay one crore of rupees within a month or be converted to Islam in lieu thereof."

Against such judgment he was released on bail (surety) given by a prominent trader of the city. The Bania sold his house and household things, he secured money by way of loans but how to pay such a huge fine?

The Bania lost all hope. At last being exhausted he came to a Shiva temple. Here he determined to end his life. With heavy heart he tried to utter aloud:

"Alas! I'll lose my religion and my life would all be hell." Uttering such words loudly he kept on circumambulating the Linga. Who would save him from such suffering!

While he was praying thus and as luck would have it, Swami Vyapakanand, a powerful saint of Shreeji Maharaj happened to arrive there. Seeing the Bania in tribulation, Swami's heart melted extremely. With tears in his eyes he cried out: "Swami, to pay off the whole fine I sold out all my property, but how can I clear such a huge fine? If I can't pay the fine, the ruler will forcibly convert me to Islam."

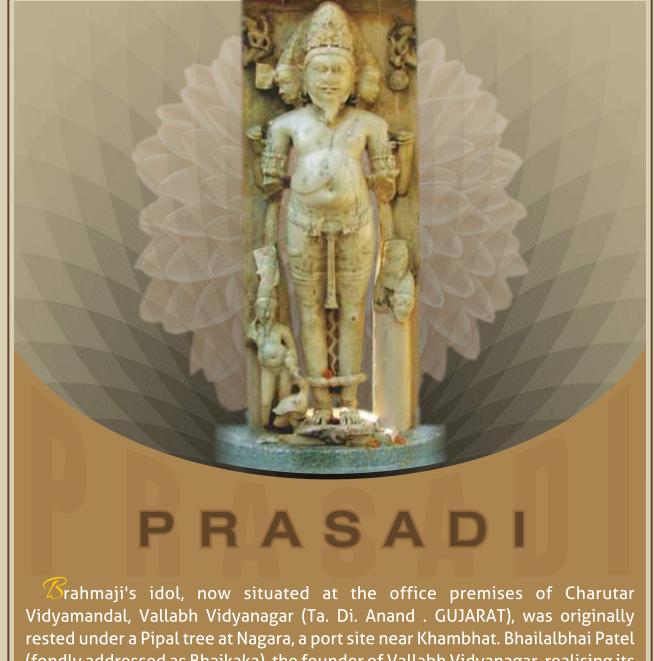
Consoling the Bania Swami said: "Have no fear. Swaminarayan Bhagwan will do good to you. From today have absolute refuge, together with your family, under Shree Swaminarayan Bhagwan and practise devotion by constantly chanting the great Mantra'Swaminarayan' and all will be well."

Saying this Swami initiated him and made him a Satsangi. The Bania did exactly what Swami had asked him to do. Omniscient Shreeji Maharaj moved by the intense devotion of the Bania and his family. In order to translate the words of Vyapakanand Swami into action Shreeji Maharaj dressed Himself as a Bania. Adopting typical twittering speech of a Bania, He went to the mansion of the trader who had stood as a surety and told that "Here is your money. Take it and return that document of surety." Thus Shree Hari set free the Bania by paying the hugh amount. The Bania became a staunch follower of Shree Hari.

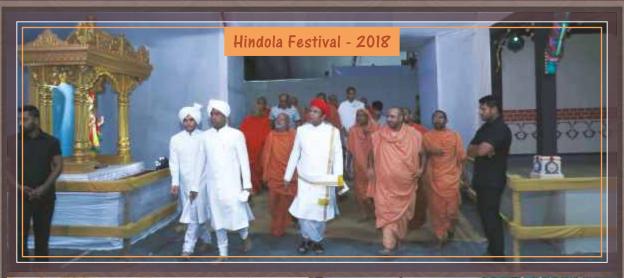
Thus in difficulties and crises a person is saved by praying with intense feeling. That is why Shreeji Maharaj has declared: "He who desires his ultimate bliss should dedicate his body, wealth, family, and all - in the service of God." (Vachanamrita G.M. 62)

In this life, which is like an ocean of afflictions, the Murti of God is like a boat. By resorting to him the afflictions of worldly life are removed. The misery may be as great as a mountain but if Shree Swaminarayan Bhagwan graces one, one would be free from that misery. Such is His prowess. The only requirement is to join one's family to the Murti of Shreeji Maharaj.

- Prof. Rajnikant Pancholi Vadodara



Brahmaji's idol, now situated at the office premises of Charutar Vidyamandal, Vallabh Vidyanagar (Ta. Di. Anand . GUJARAT), was originally rested under a Pipal tree at Nagara, a port site near Khambhat. Bhailalbhai Patel (fondly addressed as Bhaikaka), the founder of Vallabh Vidyanagar, realising its archaeological importance, brought it to Vallabh Vidyanagar. He, in his Samsmarno (memoirs p. 409), also notes that, during one of His visits Lord Swaminarayan was taken to Nagara by the devotees for the Darshan of Brahmaji's idol. Pleased with the grandeur of the idol, Lord Swaminarayan immediately embraced the idol and sanctified it. Since then, the six feet tall marble idol, became a site of Darshan for the devotees of Lord Swaminarayan. Brahmaji's idol, now resting under a mango tree at Vallabh Vidyanagar, is a rare monument of its kind and now possesses religious overtones too.









Some two hundred years back Nishkulanand Swami designed a twelve door Hindola, to celebrate the Fuldolotsav festival at Vadtal. On this Hindola, Lord Swaminarayan not only swung Himself but assumed twelve forms on twelve doors at a same time! This year, The Swaminarayan Temple Vadtal recreated this history to commemorate the bi-centenary year of the event. Almost four lac people, including all leading saints of the Holy Fellowship, visited the exhibition to have a Darshan of the Hindola! Blessed by H. H. Acharyashri Rakeshprasadji Maharajshri, the event was executed successfully by Santvallabhdasji Swami and Shyam Swami. Around eight hundred volunteers from thirty villages looked after the management and made the event memorable.