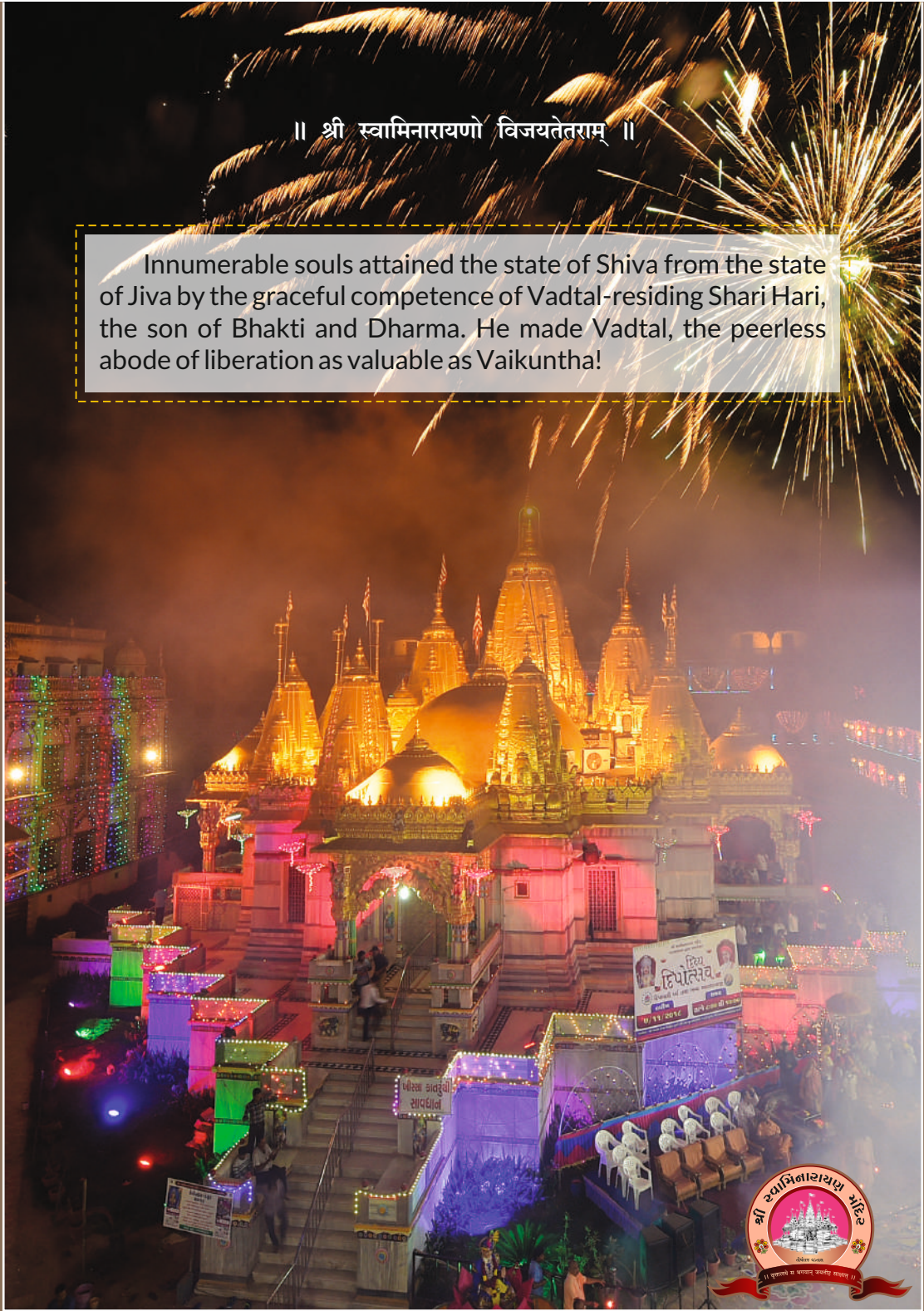


॥ श्री स्वामिनारायणो विजयतेतराम् ॥

Innumerable souls attained the state of Shiva from the state of Jiva by the graceful competence of Vadtal-residing Shari Hari, the son of Bhakti and Dharma. He made Vadtal, the peerless abode of liberation as valuable as Vaikuntha!



sahajANAND

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Prelude

Dear Devotees, as the new year of Vikram Savant 2077 begins, I pray from the bottom of my heart at the lotus-feet of Vadtal Vihari Pragat Purushottam Shri Harikrishna Maharaj and Shri Laxminarayan Dev, that the new year may be auspicious for your entire family and remain prosperous in health, wealth and may lead you towards progress in your spiritual path in all respects.

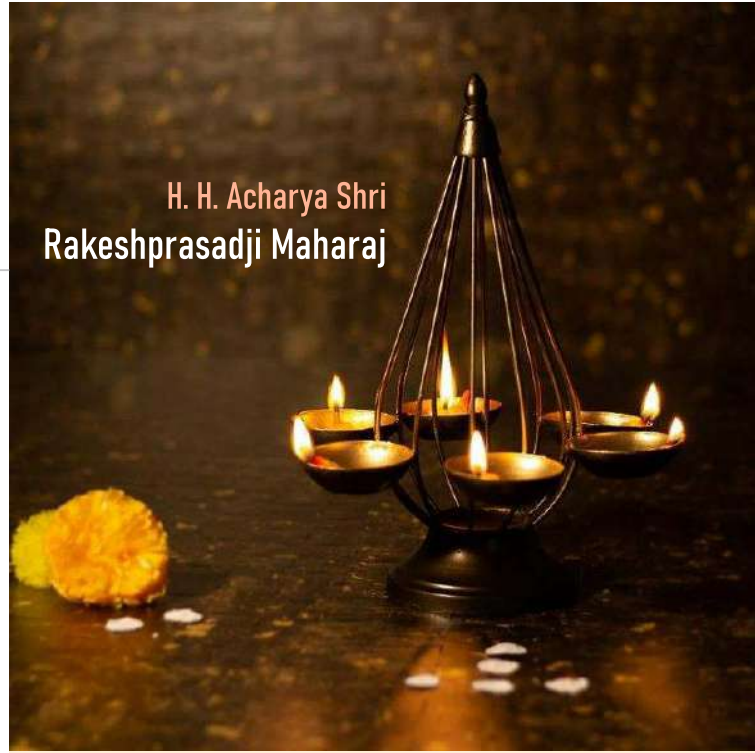
In difficult times and circumstances (the Corona Pandemic), many may have attained firmness in self-awareness, singular devotion to God and humbleness in Satsang. Our true understanding is strengthened only when we face crisis. Lord Shri Swaminarayan's reply to the question asked by His two nephews Shri Ayodhyaprasadji as well as Shri Raghuvirji in Vachanamrut are worth holding in our hearts.

The questions are about how to attain Moksha. This principle should be understood by all the Satsangis in the present time.

Ayodhyaprasadji : There may be a person involved in complexities of the world all the time. During the day he may behave right (as per the commands of Shri Hari) or may behave wrong (against Shri Hari's commands.) And he may be worshipping God hardly for one or two ghadis (48 minutes). Would this be able to wash off all his sins committed during the whole day?"

Then Shriji Maharaj replied, "A person may have engaged himself in activities for the whole day, but when he sits for worship, all his senses, Antahkaran and Jiva should be totally engaged in devotion then his sins would be completely turned to ashes. But if that does not happen, he will not be free from sins. He would meet his final Beatitude only because of the might of God."

H. H. Acharya Shri
Rakeshprasadji Maharaj



Shri Raghuvirji: "O Maharaj, which Karmas can redeem the self?"

He who desires the ultimate good, should dedicate his body, wealth, house, kith and kin - all to the service of God and he should give up the objects that may not be useful in the service of God. He who behaves with such dedication to God may be even a householder but upon death he attains the status of Narad, Sanak etc. in Akshardham and attains final beatitude.

According to Shri Hari, there are three elements in the path of spiritual liberation. which are the giver of happiness. They are : 1. Extreme self-awareness, 2. Chastity and 3. Dasatva i.e. humbleness. Without these three elements the welfare is not possible.

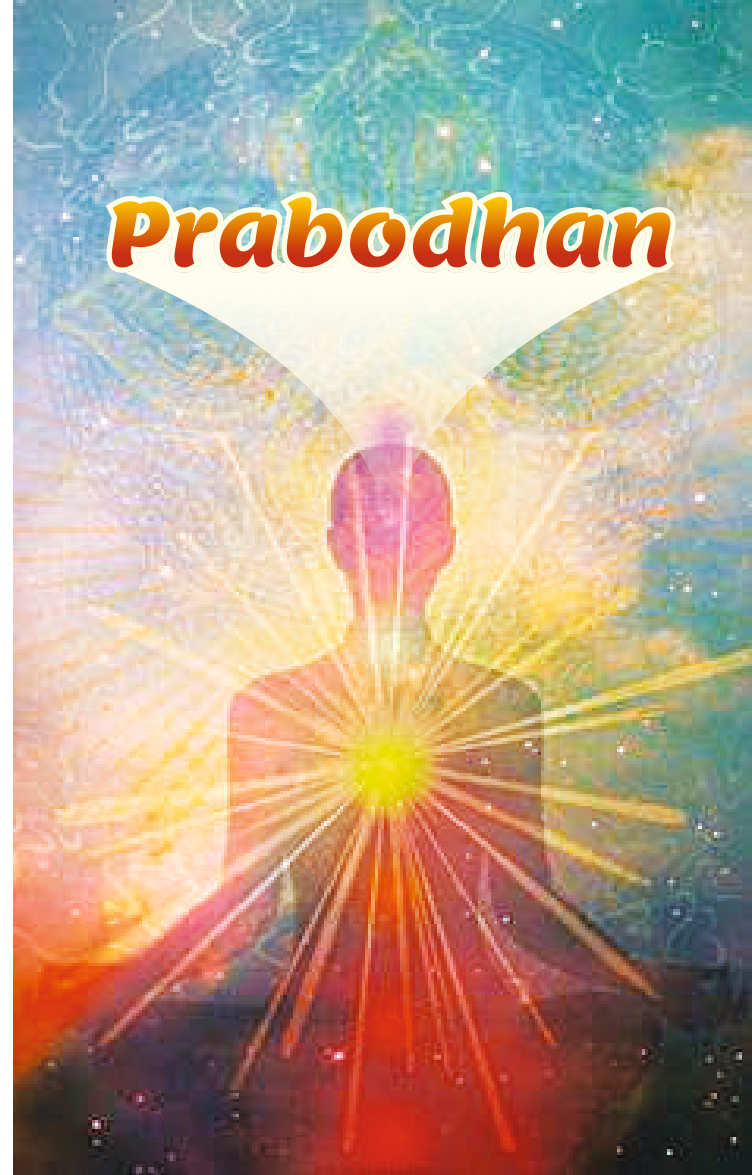
Dear devotees, we are fortunate that in this deadly age, we have attained the nectarlike dictums of Shri Hari, through which we also experience the bliss of blissful Paramatma. No matter how the time is adverse, but if we cultivate the firm conviction that Lord Shri Hari is the only doer of the world. And if we serve our parents, gurus, and a sick person as much as we can, then we will be able to attain bliss and we will cross the ocean of life and death.



Kartak Sud Ekadashi is also known as Prabodhini Ekadashi or Dev uthi Ekadashi. On that day Lord Shri Narayan, reclining on Sheshshaiya, wakes up from a long slumber of almost four months. The Lord, going on a long slumber and waking up from it, is really the fancy (Manorath) of the devotees. The devotees feel - their Lord takes rest after the creation of universes. In fact, the Lord residing in us gets up. The Rishis bade the Lord to sleep just to make the devotees understand their duties. In fact, to wake up the Lord means to wake up ourselves. God helps those who help themselves. The confidenceless devotees fail to keep faith in the Lord. **ऋते श्रान्तस्य न सख्याय देवाः।** The Lord does not help the idle ones. The Indian culture that provided this Mantra of Rig Veda makes us indestructible. Our Indian heritage is the most inspiring one. It makes the sleeping one wake up and sit, the seated one to Walk and makes the walker to run and so on.

The life of the man is like drop of a water on the lotus petal. The man should not waste it by living an idle life and make the best use of it cautiously. The morning in real sense does not happen with the dawning sound of cock or rising of the sun but with the waking up of the man. Socrates says, "knowledge is virtue". Nobody spoils his life willingly. The only need is to make him understand the reality. But, the succeeding wide people opposed Socrates. They said that Socrates was an honest person, he practiced what he knew or thought. But people of the world are not like him. They practiced wrong even after knowing the truth. Their role model Duryodhan said **जानामि धर्मं न च मे प्रवृत्तिः, जानाम्यधर्मं न च मे निवृत्तिः ॥**

What is righteousness I know it but I



can't follow it and also I know what is unrighteousness, but I can't give it up. Socrates believed that unless you practice what you have known, it is not knowledge in true sense. Today, it seems that every man is sleeping means he is unaware. It is a pretense that he is awake. We want to put it in another way, the man is hypocrite. We can say, Hypocrisy thy name is civilization. Thus, Prabodhini Ekadashi wakes the man from the deep sleep of idleness, ignorance and captivating world.

- Shastri Swami
Bhanuprakashdasji
Porbandar.

Krupa Vakya

Blissful Sentences in Vachnamrut

Shreeji Maharaj regularly held holy meeting (Satsang Sabha) at any place, at any time and on any day. The audience was comprised of His sants and Satsangis. The format of His Satsang Sabha was unique. Nothing was predecided or fixed. Whatever Shreeji Maharaj wished, took place. Kirtans, discourses and question-answer were the main features of His Satsang Sabha. Mostly it began with Bhajan-bhakti; and sometimes ended with it. Shreeji Maharaj, on His arrival, would ask to discontinue the Kirtan-Bhakti and would either deliver a discourse or ask questions or answer the questions. Vachnamrut is a collection of such holy discourses. Krupa Vakya is an important feature of these discourses.

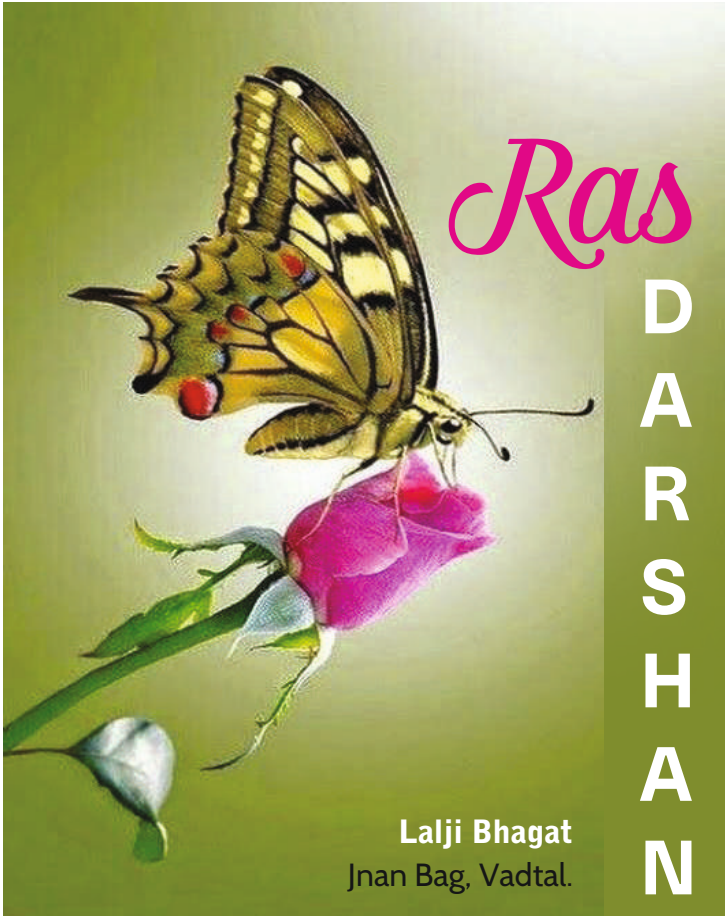
Shreeji Maharaj unequivocally accepted and propagated the Vedic Sanatan Dharma. He followed the traditional scriptures like Vedas, the Purans, the Mahabharat, the Ramayan, the Gita, the Bhagvat and asked all to follow them. He considered Vyasji as the acknowledged Acharya and expected that religious arguments should be supported by Vyasji's comments. He declared Vishishtadwait as His principle doctrine on philosophy. Yet, Shreeji Maharaj felt that 'very few can grasp the real meaning of the philosophical subject and one becomes confused'. (G. P. 7) So, He correctly interpreted the meaning of the philosophical concepts of the scriptures of Sanatan Dharma in Vachnamrut. Krupa Vakyas are His such interpretations. Krupa Vakya is a Sampradayik term which suggests that it is a kind favour of Shreeji Maharaj. Here the Vakya gives explanation, interpretation and correct meaning of the Sanatan Dharma scriptures' concepts and traditions. Such Vakyas are 'krupa' (favour,

kind gesture) of Bhagwan Sahjanand Swami. He willingly gave or provided Krupa Vakyas to His saints and Satsangis. All of them were impromptu, delivered as per His wishes.

Shreeji Maharaj explains the purpose of His endeavour to all: 'In this Holy Fellowship, so far as the devotee desiring ultimate bliss is concerned, mere Atmanishtha - soul awareness cannot fulfil the purpose of ultimate bliss, mere Bhakti i.e. nine types of devotional practises with love, cannot alone fulfil the purpose. Renunciation alone cannot serve the purpose. Merely following the code of one's religious code of conduct cannot serve the purpose. Therefore all the four types of practice including awareness of the soul should be measured. Why? Because all those four types of practice are inter-related.' (G.F.19) Shreeji Maharaj preached a comprehensive method through His Krupa Vakyas. Shreeji Maharaj believed 'In Holy Fellowship even an ordinary person is redeemed.' (G.F.27) Shreeji Maharaj also asserts that such explanation and clear understanding could be attained from the real gurus only. Weighing the merits and demerits of Yoga Philosophy and Samkhya Philosophy, Shreeji Maharaj stated that, 'These two types of thinking can be learnt only from someone enlightened like Me.' Shreeji Maharaj also clarified that 'but otherwise it cannot be grasped even by studying scriptures or listening to them.' (Panchala 2). 'And such a subject related to God cannot be easily understood by a person himself from the scriptures directly. This subject may be in holy scriptures but when there is a holy person, the subject can be understood only from their speech but cannot be understood from holy scriptures by one's own intellect.' (G. M. 13)

(Contd.)

Prof. Harendra P. Bhatt



Gopinath Piya Ghar Aaye...

Aaj din dhanya dhanya more bhag
To day I am so fortunate
Gopinath piya ghar aaye
The Lord of Gopis adored my heart

These are the expressions of Premanand swami. Here, Gopinath means the Lord of the Gopis. The one who is the Lord of the devotees. Lord Swaminarayan is referred to as Gopinath. "Gopinath Piya ghar aaye"- When we hear the word house, we soon visualize walls made of cement and concrete. But house here represents our consciousness, our soul, our intellect, our mind and our vital force (Prana). Within all these elements when association with the Supreme soul happens, then a feeling of "being fortunate" should arise within one's self. But very few people have this kind of experience. After we finish Puja, we should have an experience of fresh burst of energy circulating within us. We should feel the most intimate feelings that give us goose bumps.

Unfortunately, those feelings don't arise. Why? This is because, the projection of the devotional practices like Kirtan, Dhun, meditation, Mansi Puja - that we perform do not enter from the mind to the intellect, from the intellect to subconsciousness and from the subconsciousness to Prana, the vital force.

"Dhanya dhanya more bhaag!" - means it is our utmost fortune that our tongue had the association of the Swaminarayan Mantra. We do Mansi so our mind had association of Lord Swaminarayan. We must thank our intellect because it made a determination of the significance of Akshardham, the divine form of God as well as the pleasure derived from worldly objects. The intellect made such discrimination. Likewise, we must take a daily account of the activities performed by each of our faculties for which they can be thanked. E.g.: throughout the day what did we see through our eyes that made our eyes fortunate? What did our ears hear that made them fortunate? If all the senses of our body have association of Lord Swaminarayan, then they shall become fortunate.

We bow down to holy people. Why? This is because the senses and the conscience of those holy people have become one with Lord Swaminarayan. Every organ of such people has become one with Lord Swaminarayan. For this reason, we invite such people to our homes, offer them decorated seats and gift them the best things. Likewise, we too in our life, should become like them. We should remember these lines of Premanand swami-" Aaj din dhanya dhanya more bhaag, Gopinath piya ghar aaye". **Lord Swaminarayan has entered my consciousness. That is why I am the most fortunate person on earth.** Such should be our experience from within. Then only we can advance Godward.

Whatever it is that we give our attention to, that thing becomes active within our

conscience. If you focus on sorrow, then you would remain sad. Some people are such that no matter how much money they earn; after coming home, they are still unhappy. They will complain that, “I went to work, I am tired, I was so bored” etc. But, they will not rejoice the pleasure of earning money at the end of the work day. Why? We have developed an ideology of dwelling in sadness. These thought patterns occur unknowingly. Whatever you focus upon, the contemplation of the same begins in your conscience. Muktanand swami says, “Jyu kidi subha mahal mein, chhidra hi khodan jaat”. If you take the example of an ant; In a palace there is jewelry, pearls, treasures etc. but an ant always looks for holes. It does not find anything else. Just like that, some people are like ant. They only focus on bad habits of other people. A person may have good qualities or virtues like Bhakti, faith in God etc. But the people who are ant like; they do not recognize these good qualities or virtues. If you focus on someone’s bad habits, then those bad habits will start flowing within you. And, if you focus on blissful things than the bliss will flow within you. If you go to a perfume store, even if you don’t buy the perfume, still you will have fragrant smell of various perfumes. Why? Because that is the ambience of the store. You will return with a good smell from there. Likewise, no matter whatever your past deeds are but if you keep association with the holy persons who have close association of Lord Swaminarayan then the good qualities and thoughts will enter your conscience.

Therefore, if you focus on virtues like honesty, selfless service, devotion, Satsang etc. then those qualities will start flowing in your life. In short, whatever you focus upon that thing reflects in your conscience. We should make a list of all the positive as well as all the negative things that we focused on from the time we wake up to the time we go to bed. Thus you should learn to do the self-analysis of the

same. Then you will be able to derive an account of what is happening within the flow of your thoughts. Once you learn to do such self-analysis then; slowly; as you increase positivity, you will advance more and more Godward.

Throughout the day we must be able to recollect the moments that we can say thank you to. Which were such fortunate moments. If we haven’t lived any such moments then, the following day we should make an effort to live such moments. When our body, mind and spirit gets associated with Lord Swaminarayan, such are the fortunate moments for us. We should learn to rejoice such divine moments daily. As a result of this daily practice, the bundle of negativities like agony, pain, frustration, rejection, dejection etc. will start to diminish and positivity will increase within our soul and conscience. As positivity increases, the virtues to attain proximity of God will also become firm within our soul and conscience.



Honesty



A CEO of a very successful company was about to retire. It was time for him to leave his seat and choose a successor. But he didn't want his children to take his position. He decided that he would choose a young executive from the company for the job. So, he called all the young executives to a meeting. "I have decided to choose one of you," the CEO said to the employees. Everyone was shocked by the decision. The CEO continued, "I am going to give a seed to each one of you today. This seed is very special. Every seed is of different plants. I want you to plant the seed and water it. After 1 year, on the same date, I will see what you have grown from the seed. I will choose the next CEO of the company that day after judging the plants that you're gonna bring to me." There was an employee named Bill. Just like everyone else, Bill was super excited. He went home with the seed and told his wife everything. The couple started watering the seed in a pot. Days went by. Everyone in the office was bragging about how their plants have grown. But Bill was silent. His seeds were not growing. But Bill didn't stop watering the seeds. While everyone else's plants grew tall and beautiful, Bill's seed was dead. Bill was embarrassed by the result. After 1 year, the day arrived... When the next CEO of the company would be chosen, Bill didn't want to bring his empty pot to the office. But his wife insisted him to be honest and take the empty pot to the office. When Bill arrived at the office, everyone had beautiful and colorful trees on their desks. Bill entered the room with the empty pot. His colleagues started laughing at him and mocking him. When the CEO

Epigram

॥ कुक्कुटात् ॥

युद्धं च प्रातरुत्थानं

भोजनं सह बन्धुभिः ।

स्त्रियमापद्रतां रक्षेत्

चतुःशिक्षेत कुक्कुटात् ॥

II Learn from Cock II

A human has lessons to learn even from a cock - fierce fighting with the adversary, wakefulness early in the morning, eating in company and unhesitant protection to the female in adversity.

entered the room, everyone presented their trees. But Bill was standing at the back with the empty pot. He was feeling devastated. The CEO noticed the empty pot in Bill's hand and asked him to come forward. He asked Bill why his pot was empty. Bill told everything honestly. All the other employees started laughing upon hearing the story. Bill was terrified. He thought he was about to be fired. The CEO said, "Ladies & Gentlemen, I present you the next CEO of our company. His name is Bill." Everyone was shocked. One employee shouted, "But he couldn't even grow the plant!" The CEO continued, "Exactly 1 year ago, on this day, I had given you all boiled seeds which couldn't be planted. Everyone of you changed the seeds and replaced with another just to show that you were successful. Only Bill was the honest one who stayed true." The whole room went quiet. Bill was not embarrassed anymore. But his colleagues were. The CEO taught the executives an important lesson. "If you plant honesty, you will reap trust."



Health & Spirituality

Dr. Dhanwantari Jha

(M.B.B.S., B.A.M.S., M.D. (Kayachikitsa))

Ph.D (Ayurveda)

Hemanta Ritucharya

(Winter Regime)

During Hemanta Ritu, the people are strong; their digestive fire becomes powerful, because it gets obstructed from flowing outward due to external winter. Like fuel consumes the things that it comes into contact, digestive fire may cause emaciation of body tissues. Hence, in this period, one should consume food predominant with Sweet, Sour and Salty tastes. As the nights are longer, person feels hungry early in the morning. So, after attending to ablutions, one should resort to Abhaynga (oil massage) with oils like Sesame Oil, which have Vata balancing properties. Massage should be done especially to scalp and forehead. Mild massaging, wrestling till one's half strength and trampling of the body are recommended. After this, oil is washed off with astringent powders and bathing. Then fine powder of Saffron and kasthuri (musk) maybe applied. The body is exposed to the fumes of Aguru (Aquilaria agallocha). Since the digestion power is high, heavy-to-digest food such as food prepared with wheat flour, black gram products of sugarcane and of milk, food prepared from freshly harvested corn, muscles, fat and edible oils should be partaken as food. Warm water should be used

for bathing etc., thick sheet made of cotton, leather, silk, wool or bark of trees that are light in weight should be used during sleep. Exposure to sunlight and fire should be resorted to judiciously. One must be careful of diseases due to cold and dryness. Overall, in Hemantha Ritu, the strength and digestion power are more. Hence one can exercise, undergo oil massage and eat heavy foods.





inspiration

the inner BEAUTY

loyalty

truth

WHO ARE YOU?

During one of his travels, Kalidas felt very thirsty and looked around for water. He saw a woman drawing water from a well.

He went up to her and asked her for water. She agreed to give him water, but asked him, “Who are you? Introduce yourself.”

Now Kalidas thought that an ordinary village woman was not worthy of knowing who Kalidas was. So he said, “I am a traveller.”

But this lady replied, “In this world there are only 2 travellers – the Sun and the Moon. Both Rise and Set every day and keep travelling perpetually.”

Then Kalidas said, “Alright then, I am a guest.” The lady promptly replied, “In this world there are only 2 guests – Youth and Wealth ... both are temporary and hence can only be called as guests.”

Intrigued Kalidas said, “I am a

Tolerant person (sahansheel vyakti).” Now the lady replied, “In this world only 2 truly know the meaning of Tolerance – Bhoomi (Earth) and Tree. How much ever you stamp the earth or throw stones at the tree (for the fruits), both continue to nurture us.”

Now Kalidas was completely perplexed. He said, “Fine. I am a stubborn person (hatavaadi).” The lady smiled and said, “There are only 2 truly stubborn personalities – our nails and our hair. We keep cutting them non-stop, but they continue to grow.”

Kalidas had been patient so far, but now in anger he said, “I am a fool”. Now the lady gave a wide smile and said, “There are only 2 kinds of fools in this world – a King who rules without having any capability or knowledge & a Minister who is a sycophant to such a King and lavishes praises on such a useless king.”

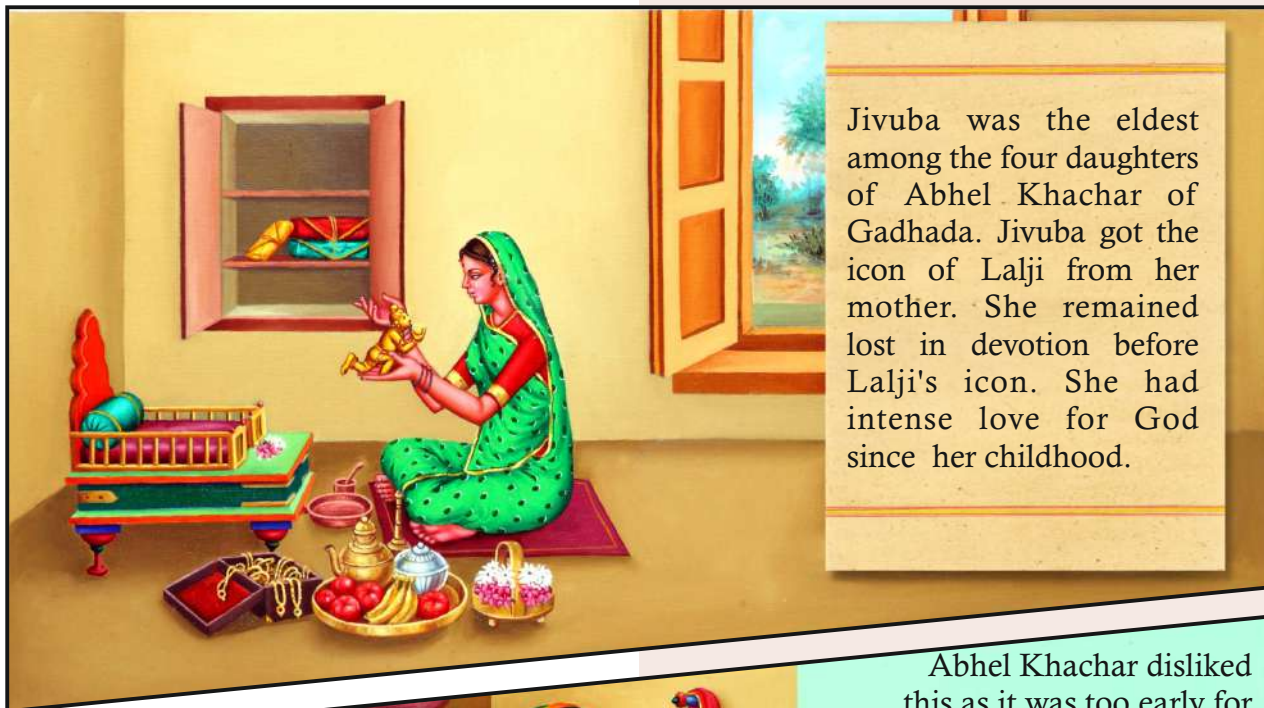
Kalidas realised that he had been outsmarted. He fell at the feet of the lady and when he touched her feet and then got up, whom did he see?

Mata Saraswati – the Goddess of Learning and Wisdom. She said, “Kalidas, you are wise. But only if you know yourself you do become a Manushya (human being). A person without any awareness of self has not reached the pinnacle of being a Human.”



JIVUBA

Lajji Consumed Milk!



Jivuba was the eldest among the four daughters of Abhel Khachar of Gadhada. Jivuba got the icon of Lalji from her mother. She remained lost in devotion before Lalji's icon. She had intense love for God since her childhood.



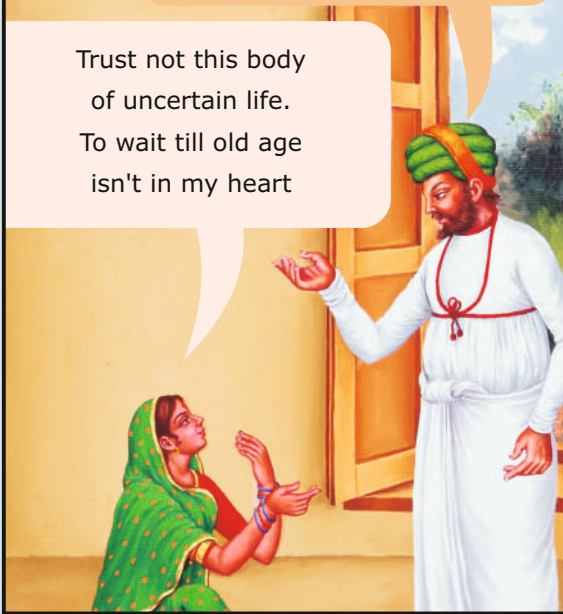
Abhel Khachar disliked this as it was too early for her budding age. One day

What's all this non-sense, Jivuba?

Father, my Lalji and the icon are same

Jivuba, are you in your senses?
Is God a wonderer, Whom you
can encase in the icon?
Grow up and then
go for devotion.

Trust not this body
of uncertain life.
To wait till old age
isn't in my heart



But Abhel Khachar was not convinced.
Stopping him from throwing away the icon
of Lalji, Jivuba cried and spoke.....

Father, this icon is
the body of my God.
At my word He comes
to me, sits here. Why
don't you believe me?

Jivuba,
let not your craze
enter my heart!
Prove that your
Lalji is the soul of
your icon!

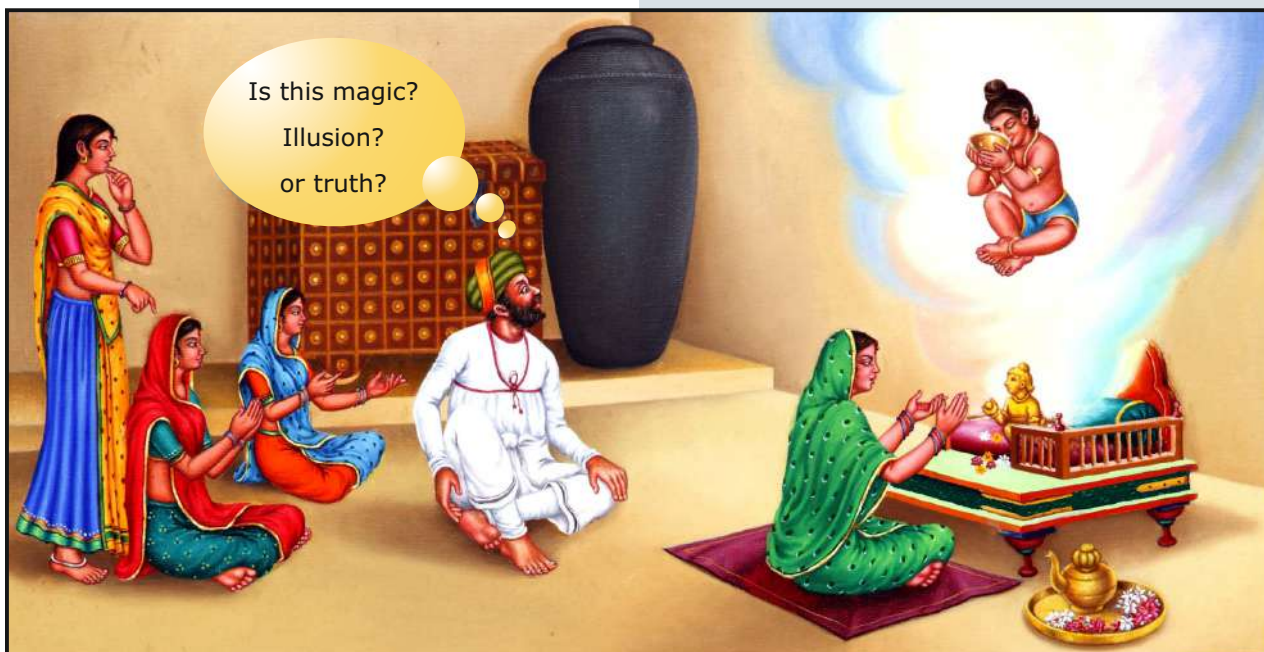


In the evening...

My dear, be quick
for drinking milk.
Father is getting
hotter and hotter!

Pausing for a while, Jivuba said: This is the
time for mid-day nap for my Lalji. Return in
the evening when I offer milk to my Lalji.





To the surprise of all, Lalji assumed human form then drank milk and threw away the empty bowl!

Hail to your devotion
I was a fool,
not to know it.



Lord Swaminarayan is omnipresent. He protects and fulfills all desires of His devotee, if he has true love for Him. As Jivuba had rock-like faith in Shri Hari, He drank milk through the icon of Lalji. Thus Jivuba became victorious before her father. With the grace of Shriji Maharaj, Jivuba could see all the sports of Shri Hari if He was hundreds of miles away from her! Such was the unparalleled devotion and faith of Jivuba.

*S*aint Vyapakanand was most popular among people. He was Omni-amorous saint, beloved and coveted by all. He was above the level of ordinary attachments. Such supreme saint Vyapakanandji was very dear to Shri Hari as he was very chaste and knowledgeable. He had achieved the state of Samadhi and had realized in his soul the competence of Maharaj as the master of all abodes. Thus he had forsaken all awareness of body and always remained beyond the level of material pleasures.

Once this pious saint Vyapakanand was on his Satsang tour and unwillingly crossed a woodland. From there he went further and came to a town which was ruled by a non-Hindu king. He had a Baniya as his secretary who had served there for a long period. But one day by misfortune he came into fault and the king, considering his serious crime put him behind the bars. He had to remain locked in the prison for many days and then his case was taken for prosecution. At the end, he was punished to pay fine in cash. A big amount of rupees was decided to be taken from him as fine. If he failed to pay the fine in one month, he had to accept Muslim way of life and become a Muslim. On this hard condition he was released on bail. After getting another big merchant as bail and witness this

Baniya got released from the jail.

He had to sell off all his property and household articles in order to pay the fine to the state. Apart from selling off the property, he had to borrow money, take loan and take big amount on high interest. Even then the amount was not enough to pay the entire fine and he had to suffer the consequences of his insolvency. He thought of committing suicide and came to the Shiva temple outside the border of the state. He started

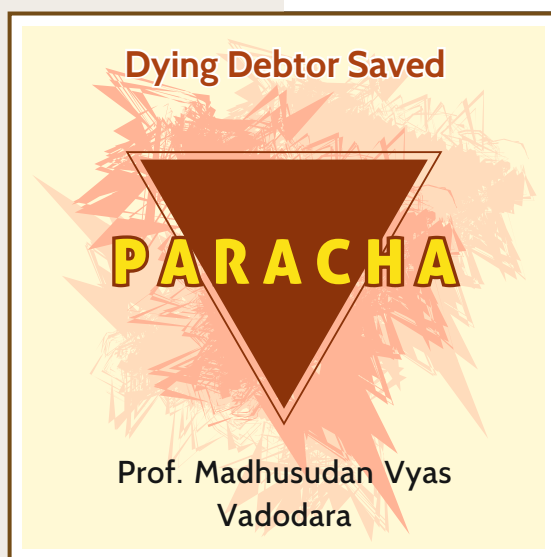
taking circles around the Shivlingam and gave out pathetic cry “O God! I will have to give up my Hindu culture. My birth will go invain!” He was moving around the Shivlinga, while crying, sobbing, lamenting out of fear to lose Hindu religion, he saw two saints coming near him. Vyapakanand Swami looked senior

one, therefore the Baniya was delighted to see him. He bowed to him and started to wash Swami’s feet with his tears. The saint Vyapakanand, purified him and asked him, “what is wrong with you? What happened? Tell me your agony.”

The Baniya narrated his agony and the calamity which he had undergone with folded hands and in trembling voice he told the story of his great suffering.

Then the Baniya obeyed him and accepted Swaminarayan as his chief God and his wife and son also did the same.

When the Baniya took shelter of the saint of Shriji Maharaj, the great shelter



of the shelter less, thought “Now I will have to do his welfare”. Then He got ready and assumed the form of a money-lending (shroff) Baniya, tied a special turban on his head, and wore a tunic with long sleeves with two laces hanging on both the sides. Also he tied a golden laced cloth around his waist. Also he carried a stylus and inkpot and other writing materials. Dimples appeared on his cheeks when he smiled. His forehead shone out bright and he appeared to be a millionaire. He spoke a stammering speech. He also carried with him some bags filled with rupees (coins). After taking four assistants with him he came to the town where the saints had met the unhappy Baniya. After coming there he inquired about the residence of the king.

He said, “Take from Me the money demanded by you in the judgement. Now take your fine and return that bond to Me. We will not take food or water unless I return this silly bond to My devotee.”

The Lord insisted him to receive money on the spot and took away the real bond from him. Then He handed over the bond to the Baniya. After doing this miraculous act (deed) the kind Lord set out from there. He took the form of an eminent banker (shroff) paid the heavy debts of the Baniya in order to keep the name of Vyapakanandji shining in bright colours. By coming there to pay the debts and by saving the life of Baniya, he indirectly brought a special honour to the dearest saint. He appeared there in order to make the words of Vyapakanandji true and real by saving the Baniya the Lord proved that the words of his saint were not less important than his own words. The lord

believes that his saints are as competent as Himself. By following this sacred principle the Lord took a form of a banker to prove that the blessings of Vyapakanandji included the blessings of Lord Swaminarayan!



What is the difference
between “I like you” and
“I love you” ?
Beautifully answered
by Buddha :

*When you like a flower, you
just pluck it. But when
you love a flower,
you water it daily.
One who understand this,
understands life.*

Whats & Whys

Answers to the questions of curious seekers

Sayam Prarthana - Part 2

(Evening Prayer)

In Satyuga, a person had to do penance till his body was covered by ant-hill, then he could get the Darshan of God. Saubhari Rishi sat in penance for 60,000 years. God could see that the instability of his mind still persisted, so He could not do any favour to him. So Saubhari had to turn back to the world. In Tretayuga, one had to perform great Yajnas in order to please god. He had to sacrifice everything which belonged to him, and this was very hard for the practising individual. In Dwaparyuga, God could be pleased by offering humble services and the same can be achieved in Kaliyuga by Kirtan based devotion.

For this reason, Shriji Maharaj has commanded His devotees to go to the temple at evening time and join Kirtan singing over there.

While explaining the process of Namsankirtan, Shriji Maharaj says in Vachnamritam Loya-6 : "When negative and evil thoughts rise in mind like the waves in the sea, at that time use your tongue to sing Bhajan in loud voice, clapping your hands without any inhibition. Pray to God calling out: **O friend of the poor! Ocean of mercy!** Keep up your prayer and all your depressions will disappear and this is the best remedy for it."

There are three important points here: (1) clapping hands, (2) singing with loud voice and (3) without shame (bashfulness). (1) When clapping is done unanimously by the group of

devotees, there creates a unified rhythm that charges the atmosphere. The muscles become tension free and the body becomes vibrant.

In our worldly ways we see that in order to protect standing crop of jowar, bajri or maize; the guard of the farm rattles a tin box to scare away the birds. Likewise, our devotion is as green and valuable as the rich crop. We have planted the devotion in the farm of faith and awareness for Shree Hari's idol which will bring a rich harvest. Like the rattling tin, we should clap our hands to scare away the birds which are robbing us in the form of desire, anger and greed.

Now we realize that with complete awareness, we have to divert our passions and instincts for inward progress. Loud clapping is the process which brings awareness to associate our instincts with the idol of Lord Swaminarayan. Clapping is a physical (exercise) gesture to achieve spiritual goal. When we speak aloud, we dissociate our self from surrounding atmosphere. When we do Mantrajaap with loud chanting, we separate our self from the external happenings around us. We dissociate material body from the subtle, inner existence.

Third point is being 'shameless' while singing and clapping. Our ego of practical material life confirms to us : **I hold such high position, I possess such great wealth, I am so powerful and strong, I**

am a learned person, I am an artist, I am a noble person. – We carry on our shoulder bundles of such egos. Shriji Maharaj has advised us to forget all our titles and have child-like attitude and start innocent and loud clapping.

This type of selfless gesture will take us into quality-less status to associate ourself with the idol of God. Our soul is influenced by three elements – material body, subtle body and causal body. Praying, singing and clapping is a three-fold process which can destroy the three material elements. If we perform Kirtan and Dhoon in the temple with such sacred mental

status it will lead us towards the realization of the idol of Lord Swaminarayan. If we can attend and sing such Dhoon at least for ten minutes per day, it can strengthen all aspects of our life, and this minute command Shriji Maharaj can cause upward progress on the path of spiritual world.

For this reason, Bhajan, Kirtan based devotion is regarded as best in Kaliyuga. Kirtan pleases God who is ready to excuse our faults and sins.

- Lalji Bhagat

Jnan Bag, Vadtal



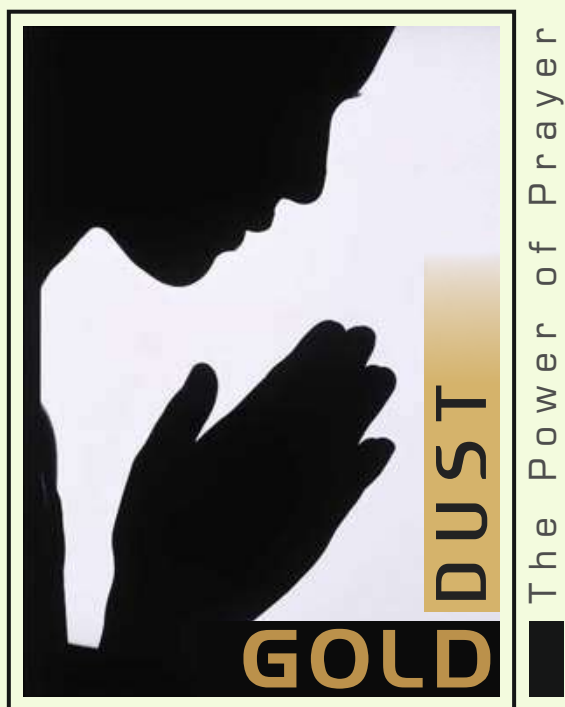
Prof. Harendra P. Bhatt

As Victor Turner suggests, all human acts and institutions are enveloped in webs of interpretive 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 on 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)



It is a general belief and also understood that prayers are made to the God either for favour to be done to the prayer maker to pull out from distress troubles, sickness or adverse circumstances; but this is a false criterion, as prayer is also made to praise the God. To pray is not limited to the God. One can even pray to friends, authorities or anyone for the purpose for special favour. Simple meaning of the prayer is earnest request but when it is addressed or made to the Almighty God, it takes a religious form and it becomes a prayer in real sense. I believe that humble form of request is a prayer. Prayer to the God may be expressed or silent; that is without using words or by speech. Thus, prayer can be made mentally. True and effective prayer requires concentration, and co-ordination of mind, heart and faith. These elements make the prayer genuine, sincere, and not superficial. Heart is the chief feature in it.

Prayer was not invented but it was

uncovered and revealed with first suffering, sorrow and sigh of the human heart. Prayer simply means longing of heart and wish desired. It should be from heart, only lip-devotion will be devoid of emotional element and under values the very purpose of the prayer. I believe that prayer has no geometrical definition as it changes as per the needs, wishes and circumstances of an individual involved in the prayer.

Prayer has wings. It is I believe faster than the wind and rays. It is never ever complicated but articulated emotions more often straight from the heart. In Prayer, heart is the main feature.

The God always answer and grant our prayers not exactly accordingly to our wishes but after evaluating our genuine wants, as our wishes are boundless, and lengthening like a shadow in the evening.

The prayer is the only and exclusive media by which we come into contact with the almighty God. Prayer means you trust and put faith in God.

Prayer, being a religious hymn, normally sings the praises of the God. It elevates and lifts the religious stature of the worshipper.

What the prayer is, Its elements, effect and purpose are elaborated here in above: Now the prayer in question which is regularly made in the temple of Swaminarayan Bhagwan at Sayankal - evening time and also made by the devotees at their homes is in my hands which I have thoroughly and explicitly studied. It is worded by Shri Premanandji the poet saint of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. It is in a form of a prayer. The prayer in question is very much synonymous with one woven by the famous Gujarati poet Bhakta of Lord Krishna. It is in a form of poetry and not prayers. The poet Narsinh Mehta has described and defined the "Vaishnava Jan"

(Gentleman-worshiper of Lord Krishna) in the poetry incorporating, the virtues of the highest order could be adorned by a human. The Work in the hands is in a form of prayer in which the poet has prayed for the virtues especially for the Swaminarayan Bhaktas to be followed and observed.

This prayer is completely different in nature. The worshiper has not prayed anything to his benefits nor for his self-interest like progress, prosperity, good health or wealth and so on. Clearly, the intention of the prayer is to restore moral virtues and eradicate the vices from the human society. What is the first duty of human being? The answer is very short and simple. To be human. The God has blessed humans with body, mind and intellect, so each and all means to utilise to behave like humans.

The poet must have seen and witnessed down ward trend and deterioration in the acceptable standard of norms becoming dark and murkier. So he gave thoughts to his worries; contemplated over the prevailing crises of ethics and morality in the society and shaped his thoughts into words and created this prayer. The prayer is worded in such a way that it could influence and inspire the vast gathering of devotees makes prayer every evening in the temple. There is a purpose behind the contents and character of the prayer and that is why the prayer is not limited to the praises of the God.

Now for the reasons we have to assess and estimate the purpose and its importance in context to moral, religious and social values. In the prayer the saint poet Premanandji is earnestly praying to preserve and perpetuate the moral and ethical values and to render free from the vices from which the society is required to be freed and immunized from its infection and keep it clean, ethical, sinless and righteous. So if the prayer is evaluated

and analysed for its purpose, it is made to crystallised the texture of the society, thus it has a character of reforming social and moral fabrics of the society. The vices, which can pull down, deteriorate and destruct, the moral standards of society are mentioned in the prayer, are immoral sexual indulgence, eating non-veg, drinking liquor, theft and criticise the God, so on and so forth. Doubtlessly, these are prima-facie dangerous vices, which if not clamped could destroy the ideals essential for the human society.

Virtues are moral and ethical values, which cannot be planted. Virtues are imbedded in human like a texture of the skin, virtues could be awakened by the association of noble persons; by engaging in religious activities, like singing Kirtans. Without devotion virtues could not be attained.

The conscious intend of the prayer and the poet is to pursue the people to renounce vices like slander, envy of others, lust, wrath, pride, covetousness and sins of any kind. The poet has ideally found out a way for the restitution of moral society through the prayer which is a most trusted promise made to the God by every soul.

The echos of the prayer create waves and vibration in the atmosphere in form of clouds of holy environment and canopy of virtues like morality, nobility and righteousness etc. Ultimately, these floating echos will settle on the society morally and socially which will generate positive influence, which will make it perfect ideally.

This prayer has immense reformative values in promoting the stature of the society morally and socially which would make it pure and blameless.

Advocate

Pradip Jayvadan Maheta
Surat

Vachanamrut

The Nectar of Divine

VICTORY OVER DEATH

THE BRAVE DEVOTEE

સાચા શૂરા રે, જેના વેરી ઘાવ વખાણે;
જીવતર જૂઠું રે, મરવું તે મંગળ જાણે.
(બ્રહ્માનંદ સ્વામી)

They are really brave whose blows are admired even by the enemies. They consider life to be an illusion and look upon such heroic death as auspicious. Similarly true devotees of God are those who keep up courage in the heart.

હરિનો મારગ છે શૂરાનો, નહિ કાયરનું કામ જો.

“The way to God is for the brave, the coward can't tread the path.”

Only brave soldiers fight on the battlefield. Cowards are worthless for such heroism. Similarly the path to reach God is for the brave. The brave soldier challenges the enemy on the battlefield. His only aim is to defeat the enemy. He sticks to the motto “DO OR DIE” and fights to the finish but he isn't overcome by the fear of death.

Similarly the devotee who is brave, fights against the senses and the Antahakaran (mind, intellect, subconscious mind, and self-consciousness). As a result of this, he becomes steady towards the form of God, but he doesn't deviate by mental aberrations and doesn't deviate from worship and devotion to God, nor does he violate the commands of God. The devotee becomes fearless as God resides in his soul. If some person passes through a lonely place at night and if he has a gun, he is not afraid that someone would kill him. Similarly those who wander in the wilderness of wordly life and who have established close intimacy with God

and who remain intoxicated with divine joy, become free from the fear of death.

શૂરા જગમે સંત હૈ, ઓર સબ લાજ મજૂર;
મન કો કૃત માને નહિ, તન ધન જાનત ધૂર.

(બ્રહ્માનંદ સ્વામી)

The saints are real brave persons in the world, all else are like hired labourers. They are not satisfied with the mind and don't care for the body and wealth. They are attached only to God and they don't have wordly life in their hearts. Swami Brahmanand says : “Such devotees lay down their lives upon the very word of their preceptor.”

The brave devotee who is attached only to the form of God looks upon the body, the wealth and the very life-span as mere trifling. The soldiers in the army await the order of their military officer and when they receive the order, they march on with the full preparation of martyrdom and they even embrace death so as to achieve their goal. In the same way a brave devotee of Bhagwan Shree Swaminarayan would lay down his life upon the word of Him. He lives in the holy association with the firm conviction that he has to go to the divine residence of God even by becoming a martyr by dying even while fighting with the senses and Antahkarana.

Two Kathi brothers of the town of Gundali took the sides of the saints of Shreeji Maharaj, fought with the fanatic exterminers of the dispensation and had laid down their lives. The four brave persons : Rano, Raghav, Bhima and Vashram — of the town of Golida had fought even with the agents of Death. This shows the bravery of the devotees. Because of their firm faith in Shreeji Maharaj, they were free from the fear of death as in this very life they were blessed and had achieved their goal. Many such anecdotes of the bravery of the devotees are recorded in the history of the holy association of Swaminarayan Dispensation.

(Contd.)

- Lalji Bhagat
Jnan Bag, Vadtal



DON'T QUIT

GET MOTIVATED!

Gram of Sudama

A huge doubt-raising incident questioning Sudama's character by narrators is making rounds.

Sudama was a learned Brahmin. How could he hide chana (chickpeas) from his childhood friend Krishna and eat them all by himself?

Discussing the Bhagwat, a lecturer cleared this doubt, throwing light on this, which everyone must understand. The right understanding of Sudama's poverty will thus be clear. The misconceptions will be cleared.

Behind Sudama's poverty, there is an interesting and sacrificial story. A poor and old lady led her livelihood by begging. Once, for five days, she did not get any alms. She would drink water and taking the Lord's name, she would sleep. Sixth day, she got two fists of chana (chickpeas) as alms. It was night by the time she reached her hut.

The lady thought, she'd offer the chana (chickpeas) to Lord in the morning, then eat it. Thinking so, she tied chana by the cloth and reciting Lord Vasudev's name, she fell asleep.

A thief entered her hut after a while. Seeing the cloth tied with chana, he presumed it had gold coins, thus took it away. Hearing his footsteps, the old lady woke up and started screaming. Hearing her yelling, people from close vicinity gathered. They ran to catch the thief. The thief, fearing that he'd get caught, entered Sandipani Muni's Ashram. In this Ashram, Krishna and Sudama were attaining knowledge. Hearing the footsteps, Guru Mata thought someone had entered. Guru Mata called

out aloud, "Who is it?" Seeing Guru Mata walk towards him, the thief left the cloth there and fled away.

When the lady got to know that the thief had taken the cloth with chana, she gave him a curse, "Whoever eats this chana of a helpless, poor lady will become a pauper."

While sweeping the Ashram, Guru Mata found the cloth of chana. She opened and saw what was inside. Shri Krishna and Sudama were going to the forest to collect logs of wood. Guru Mata giving the cloth to Sudama said, "When you get hungry, eat this chana, both of you." Sudama, since birth was gifted with divine knowledge. The moment he picked up the cloth in his hand, he got to know the secret behind it. Sudama thought, Guru Mata has said, "Both of you distribute this chana equally amongst yourselves, but this chana is cursed. If I let my Lord, Tribhuvanpati Shri Krishna eat it, along with my kind Lord, all 3 lok (worlds) will become poor. No, I will never let this happen. My Lord becoming poor! I will never let this happen till I am alive! I will eat this chana but not let Krishna eat it ever. And hiding from Krishna, Sudama ate all chana.

Eating the cursed chana, Sudama accepted poverty willingly. But saved his friend Krishna from it. This is the unparalleled sacrifice of Sudama; he also tolerated the disgrace of eating chana alone!

This truth behind the story throws light upon the misconception conceived about Sudama.

what vedic WATCH teaches us!

12 O'clock

Aditya means Sun. There are twelve types of Sun. 1. Anshumaan, 2. Aryamaan, 3. Indra, 4. Twashtaa, 5. Dhatu, 6. Parjanya, 7. pusha, 8. Bhaga, 9. Mitra, 10. Varun, 11. Vivaswaan, and 12. Vishnu.

1 O'clock

Brahman means Brahman is the only one. एको ब्रह्म द्वितीयो नास्ति । One without second.

2 O'clock

Ashwinikumar - The twin



physicians of the gods.

3 O'clock

Tri Guna - There are three types of attributes - Sattva (purity), Rajas (activities) and Tamas (darkness)

4 O'clock

Chaturveda - there are four Vedas - 1. Rig Veda, 2. Yajur Veda, 3. Saam Veda and 4. Atharv Veda.

5 O'clock

Panch Prana - there are five types of vital force in our body. 1. Apaana - governs below naval region, 2. Samaana - governs between naval and heart region, 3. Pran - vital flow of energy, 4. Udaana - governs the neck and head, and 5. Vyana - pervades the whole body.

VEDIC WATCH

6 O'clock

Shad Rasa - there are six types of tastes - 1. Madhur (sweet), 2. Amal

(sour), 3. Lavan (salty), 4. Katu (pungent), 5. Tikta (bitter) and 6. Kasay (Astringent).

7 O'clock

Saptarshayah - there are seven great rishis - 1. Kashyap, 2. Atri, 3. Bhaaradwaj, 4. Vishvamisra, 5. Gautam, 6. Jamadagni and 7. Vashishta. The constellation of seven stars represents these seven sages.

8 O'clock

Ashta Siddhiyah - there are eight types of achievements - 1. Anima - The ability to become smallest in size, 2. Mahima - The ability to expand one's body to an infinite large size, 3. Ladhima - The power to become weightless i.e. lighter than air, 4. Garima - The ability to become infinite heavy, 5. Prapti - The ability to construct anything, 6. Praakaamya - The ability to become whatever one desires, 7. Ishitva - Knowing all powers and getting control over them and 8. Vashitva - The ability to obtain control over all kinds of living and non-living

beings.

9 O'clock

Nav Dravyani, Nav Nidhi - Nidhi is a treasure, constituted of 9 treasures belonging to Kubera - 1. Padma, 2. Maha Padma, 3. Neel, 4. Shankh, 5. Kumud, 6. Kund, 7. Makar, 8. Kachchhap, and 9. Kharva

10 O'clock

Dash Dishah - there are ten directions - 1. Purva (East), 2. Paschim (West), 3. Uttar (North), 4. Dakshin (South), 5. Ishan (North-east), 6. Agni (South-east), 7. Nairutya (South-west), 8. Vayavya (North-west), 9. Akash (sky) and 10. Patal (Netherland).

11 O'clock

Rudra - there are 11 types of Rudra - 1. Kapali, 2. Pingal, 3. Bhim, 4. Viruoaksha, 5. Vilohit, 6. Shasta, 7. Ajapaad, 8. Ahirbudhnya, 9. Shambhu, 10. Chanda and 11. Bhava.

Sanatana Hindu Sanskriti - the ancient Hindu culture always teaches something fundamental.

- Vaidraj Dr. Harishankar Sharma

Does any of us ever thought why we worship Lord Ganesh at the beginning of every auspicious occasion? What is the purpose of it? We will understand this through the family tree of Lord Ganesh.

Lord Ganesh was married, and he had two wives, Riddhi & Siddhi. He had two kids from the two wives, Shubh and Labh. Shubh and Labh also got married and their wives are Tushti and Pushti, who gave birth to grandsons of Lord Ganesh, Anand and

LORD GANESH

The Epitome
of Auspiciousness

Pramod.

If you do want to become a master, then Lord Ganesh is helpful in that. When we worship Lord Ganesh, he removes obstacles from our lives, when we imbibe the qualities of Lord Ganesh, we get 2 partners, Riddhi and Siddhi, wives of Lord Ganesh. Riddhi means success and Siddhi means skillful, meaning that when you remove obstacles from your lives, you become skillful and successful.

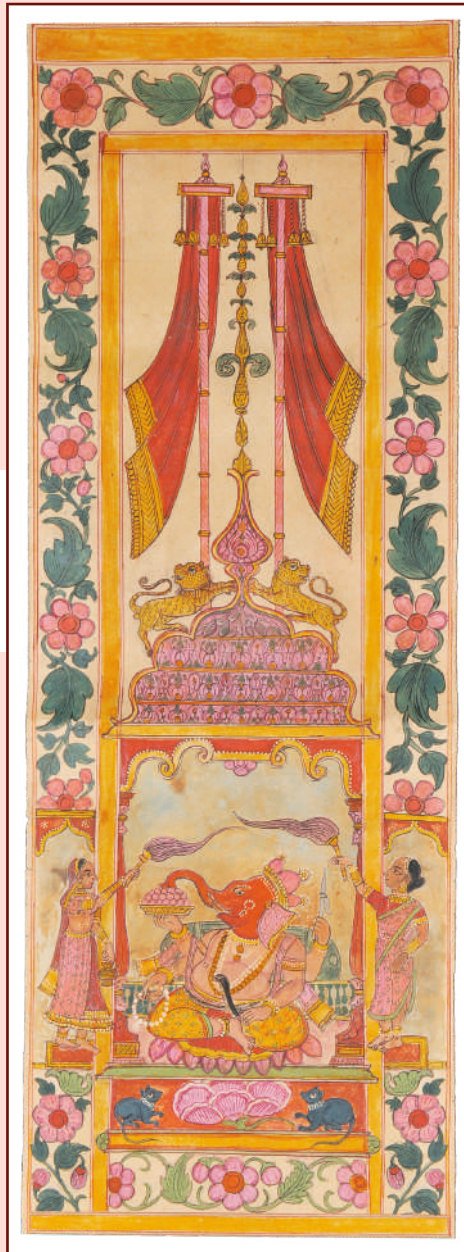
When we achieve these 3 things, we get two new by-products which are Shubh and Labh, when you are skillful and successful, you will achieve Shubh that is auspiciousness and Labh as well that is gain.

So, when you will achieve Shubh and Labh, you will get two more partners which are Tushti and Pushti, the wives of Shubh and Labh. Tushti means satisfaction, when we

have gain, we are so satisfied. Pushti means health, who provides us good health. What sense does it make to have success without good health. So Pushti means re-affirming and also means the healthy one. Now, that you are healthy and satisfied, you receive the end result in the form of Anand and Pramod. Anand means always happy, blissful, happy without any reason, and Pramod means joy, we become cheerful.

So how all this is connected to Lord Ganesh. So when you learn to remove obstacles and problems from your lives, you become skillful and successful. When you are skillful and successful, means you achieve Riddhi and Siddhi. You find Shubh and Labh. Everything good starts happening in your life, and you start to gain. When this happens, you

become satisfied and healthy and when it's all done, you stay happy without any reason, always blissful and cheerful. Thus one can understand why Lord Ganesh is worshiped in every occasion. May the Lord bring to you lot of happiness and you progress in your life. May you become a better version of yourself.





Gods and demons, sages and men
Are all under the spell of sensuous delights,
No one can be free and safe
Who has not sought the shelter of Lord
Sahajanand. (Hriday Prakash)

Our Lord Shree Hari in his Vachanamrit has praised those who have sharp intelligence and who can stabilize their intellect and inclinations in the contemplation of the Lord. The lure of the five senses is so powerful that even gods or powerful demons, great sages as well as ordinary men cannot escape from falling into their clutches, if they do not seek the divine protection of the Lord.

The inner self is related to the subtle body and the objects to be enjoyed by five senses belong to the gross body. These two bodies are separate. Then how does one fall prey to the senses ?

Swami Nishkulanand explains it in this way in Hriday Prakash :

All that the Mind plans, the Intellect approves
And Intellect can take the Mind on various tours,
To lands known and unknown.
These two are born
From the five gross elements
impregnated with divine spark
They don't think of results of indulgence
It is only the Sentience that worries
About them day and night

The five sense organs: ears, skin, eyes, tongue and nose crave for their respective objects of indulgence, word as sound, touch, forms of beauty, various tastes, and pleasant smells. This experience enters the inner self. Then as the Mind directs the sense to confront the objects of its desire. Then the Intellect confirms the enjoyment. The man may be in India and he may talk of Japan and experience the delights in his

imagination. The mind has powers to go wherever it wants in the split of a second. All this process goes on for a long time and it results in the experience of the Ego as an enjoyer of those delights of senses.

On the topic ego as the enjoyer, Shreeji Maharaj states in Vachanmrita Gadhada First 70 :

The moment he comes to know the world around, his parents tell him : This is your mother, father, this man is your uncle; these are your brothers, this is your cow, horse, this house is yours; this farm belongs to you, these are your ornaments - these words are accepted by the man's Intelligence. As women put a piece of mirror in embroidery and the embroidery holds the glass as binding force so does Intelligence the soul binds - The soul is like that piece of mirror!"

The four bad elements attack with the weapons of five senses of indulgence and come to conquer man to make him fall into temptation. But when the soul comes in contact with a Saint he realizes that those worldly delights are illusory and God only is true. This fight constantly goes on with all. When four bad elements have the upper hand the individual falls prey to the pleasures of senses and is ruined. When the power of the saint succeeds, the individual is oriented towards the divine, spiritual life and achieves salvation.

Who wins this war ? Only that one who seeks the shelter of the Lord.

'Where Krishna, the Master Yogi and where Arjun, the bowman stand - No doubt there is Victory, Morality and Prosperity, I think."

One who surrenders himself like Arjun to the Lord is sure to succeed in this struggle. Only a perfect devotee can be assured success in this struggle.

"Whatever he plans, he dedicates to Shyam, the Lord, that Image leads the project to success". (Nishkulanand Swami)

In the old days Satyayug and Tretayug eons age the Lord used to protect His devotees with the great discus, Sudarshan, that killed demons, the enemies of the gods and men. Those demons now have come to reside in the inner self of man. It is difficult to fight with them. The prayer to the Lord is the weapon that will destroy these inward enemies, and led the soul to the godhead.

This battle needs great skill as we have to fight with mind itself. The mind fights with mind and leads to the better self. For that one must recall the sports of God in mind. There should be contemplation on the Moorti of God in mind. The Intellect should be persuaded to believe that God alone can bring our Final Beatitude. There should be continuous meditation of the Moorti of God in our conscience and the Ahamkara must think about a spark of the great Brahman - the Divine Element. Only then the inner self can be vanquished. This is a life-long struggle.

(Contd.)

- **Lalji Bhagat**
Jnan Baug, Vadtal.

Asan vasan bhushan, vahan vasan jeh;
Purushottam ne sparshatan, thayan shuddh sahu e punit.

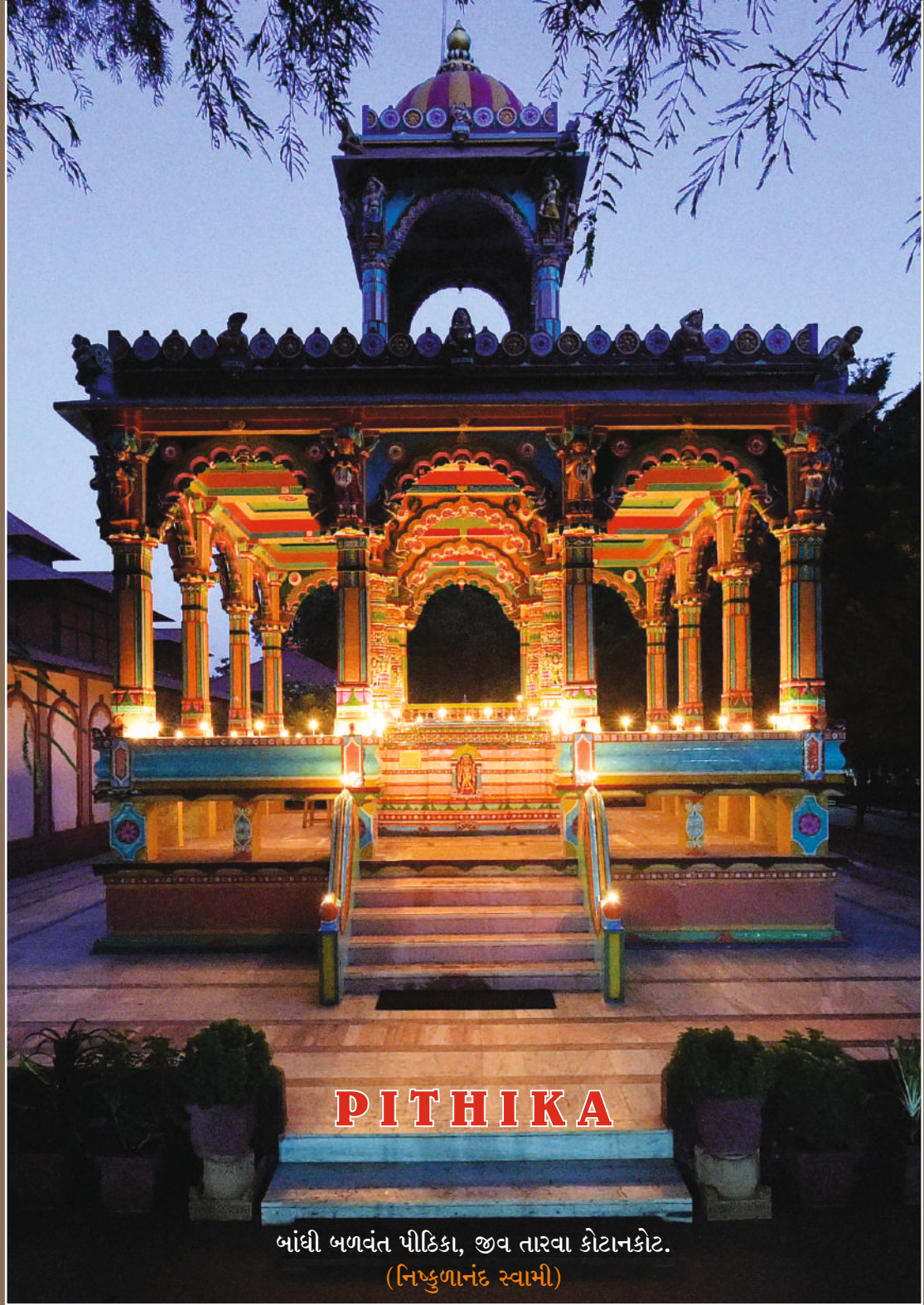
(Nishkulanand Swami)

The seat, garment, ornament, vehicle, utensil – all became sanctified by getting the divine touch of Lord Purushottam. All the material objects changed into divine by coming in contact with the supreme Lord Shri Hari!

This is the same mango-seed (kernal), sucked by Lord Shree Swaminarayan nearly 225 years ago! Surprisingly enough, it has retained its form without undergoing any deterioration or contamination! Devotees may get the touch of divinity by getting the Darshan of this celestial mango-seed!

Mango seed





PITHIKA

બાંધી બળવંત પીઠિકા, જીવ તારવા કોટાનકોટ.
(નિષ્કુળાનંદ સ્વામી)

Photography : Sunil Adesara V. V. Nagar

The competent Lord got erected the Otto, in order to uplift crores of souls.

Shriji Maharaj made the Ganga of knowledge flow by delivering multiple soul-uplifting nectarine speeches from this Otto in Vadtal, Jnan Baug. This Otto occupies the significance as a spiritual elevator because it has received direct vibrations of the nectarnal voice of Shri Hari. This iconic Otto is a silent witness of many grand celebrations of grate festivals at Vadtal.