

॥ શ્રી સ્વામિનારાયણો વિજયતેતરામ્ ॥

સત્ શાસ્ત્ર સહુનું છે આ સાર, બુદ્ધિમાંહી મેં કરી વિચાર;
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HARI MANDAP - The abode of Emergence of SHIKSHAPATRI

I have penned desire-fulfilling Shikshapatri, after deriving the essence of
all sacred scriptures and by using My good sense and sagacity!

SAHJANANDswami



sahjANAND

The Eternal Bliss

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PRELUDE

H. H. Acharya Shri Rakeshprasadji Maharaj

Lord Swaminarayan clarifies to the contemporary devotees various points about the way of life of the devotees, the mode of worship of the Lord, the attributes the devotees have to cultivate in the Holy Fellowship etc.

In the Vachnamrut, Shri Hari refers to the followers as Bhakta, Haribhakta, Ekantik Bhakta, Prakrut Bhakta, Uttam Bhakta, Madhyam Bhakta, Kanishth Bhakta; and has elaborated all these adjectives by giving exemplary anecdotes. It is necessary to know Shri Hari's perspective about the devotees and how He deals with it.

Lord Swaminarayan suggests to His beloved devotees that they should not betray the other devotees of God for the sake of jealousy because the devotees suffer from various kinds of ego in Satsang. Sometimes the devotees are afflicted of exterior ailments; sometimes they have the pride of their understanding; sometimes they have the ego of their Bhakti; sometimes they have the sense of superiority of knowledge etc.. As a result of these kind of attitudes, the devotees face many obstacles. The obvious result is the reckless behaviour in Satsang. That is why

Lord Swaminarayan says, "His devotees should desist any kind of irrational behaviour. The devotees should not be jealous of other devotees and should not feel ungratefulness for themselves. Here Lord Swaminarayan gives an anecdote of a seed. As a seed burns itself in the fire, likewise the devotee burns with the seed of any kind of ego! {Some become docile unnecessarily and always confront with feelings such as whether their worship is enough and whether the Lord would be happy with it.} The followers should not dwell with such feelings. Here also Lord Swaminarayan gives an example that a seed would not sprout in salty soil; so the followers should keep themselves away from the feelings of ungratefulness. They should desist such mentality.

Lord Swaminarayan once asked his saints, "Which one is better one - the one who renounces the world and remains sitting in a corner by living an inactive life and never displeases anyone in Satsang and the other who serves the devotees in Satsang by offering food, clothes and flowers along with all kinds of works but sometimes displeases others by harsh words?" Lord Swaminarayan opines that the person who renders his services in

Satsang by food, clothes, flowers and all kinds of work but often criticises others should not be judged by his harsh words; that drawback should be overlooked and always admire such followers for their works.

Lord Swaminarayan says His followers should never be jealous and they should not grudge anything about the other followers. To be a devotee is a difficult task. And to associate oneself with a true devotee is a rarity. Lord Swaminarayan has (eulogised) the importance of the devotee in Satsang.

Lord Swaminarayan has commanded that His satsangi should observe the five Vratmans religiously. Moreover, the devotee should keep his mind desirefree, free from all vices. Lord Swaminarayan talked about all this things two hundred years ago before the devotees of Charotar, Kanam, Kutch, Kaathiyavad, Gujarat and those devotees were not completely affected by such vices. Lord Swaminarayan commanded because He felt the mind of the devotee should be devoid of vices; the mind should be pure and clean. If a follower gets perverted by bad thoughts, who should he consult? One has to consult those who are free from such evil thoughts and can make others free from such evil thoughts. Otherwise, the thing would get (murkier). Lord Swaminarayan here gives an anecdote; it is like dog licking the other dog, the snake visiting another snake or a widow welcoming a married woman saying we are same! Some people consider themselves as Brahmajnani or Brahmishth but they are

disturbed by sinful vices or feelings in their hearts. Now, if we present our difficulties or problems before them, how would they wipe out our vices? It may happen that such people may misuse our inner desires and may put us in a more critical situation. So, all the Satsangis should bring out their senses from the worldly vices and channelise them with the Lord. And that Vrat is called the Vrat of Ekadashi. Lord Swaminarayan advises His followers to observe the Vrat of Ekadashi always. Moreover, the followers should cultivate the feeling that they cannot live without the Lord. They should not obey anyone having the strong craving for respect; {they also should not speak mild / din utterances; that becomes a very big drawback for the followers.} And one should not keep any prejudice in mind. One should not keep bad feeling for anyone.

Epigram

॥ आचार ॥

आचारः परमो धर्मः, आचारः परमं तपः।

आचारः परमं ज्ञानं, आचारात् किं न साध्यते॥

Conduct

Righteous conduct is the supreme Dharma, it is the ultimate penance, it is the absolute knowledge. What is it that cannot be achieved by righteous conduct?

Sahjanand Swami's Swaminarayanism

A new approach to understand the message of Bhagwan Shree Sahjanand Swami

The present-day world has 7 Continents, 202 Countries, 4200 Religions and yet I want to present the bird's-eye view about Sahjanand Swami's Swaminarayanism.

Only because Sahjanand Swami is 'the most remarkable among the modern Teachers in India', opined Manipal C. Parekh (Shri Swaminarayan, page 7).

Mahadev Govind Ranade, a highly intellectual personality, considered Sahjanand Swami as 'the last of the last Hindu reformers' because Sahjanand Swami worked in the last days of Medieval India.

Sahjanand Swami was purely Hindu in His mental and spiritual constitution. He was totally untouched by any light from the Western world. While other reformers like Rama Mohan Roy, Mahadev Govind Ranade, Dayanand Saraswati etc. were influenced by Western world. Eulogizing the life and work of Sahjanand Swami, Manilal C. Parekh wrote, 'We see Hinduism in its purest and most indigenous form in Him'. 'In Him Hinduism approximates to the Perfect Form of Religion. His life, work and the movement He led, have few parallels in the entire range of history. We find in Him one of the noblest examples of the efflorescence of the Hindu genius and spirit. It would seem as if the best in Ancient and Medieval Hinduism had been summed up in Him in a classical form just at the moment when the old order was passing away for ever. (Shri Swaminarayan, page 9).

But, for the followers of Sahjanand Swami, He is an Incarnation of God. He is manifested. For them Sahjanand Swami is a Prophet and only incidentally a Reformer. Manilal C. Parekh cautioned, 'It is very difficult to decide what is strictly historical and what is

superimposed on it by the faith of His followers.'

Sahjanand Swami is Sarvopari in Swaminarayan Sampraday; this is firmly believed by all since the time of Sahjanand Swami. Swaminarayanism starts with Ghanshyam Hariprasad Pande and ends with Sahjanand Swami, the Sarvopari.

Lord Krishna's Messenger :

Shreemad Bhagvat Puran (Canto-11) narrates the story of Uddhavji. Krishna Bhagvan, before returning to His abode, thought of destroying the Yadavas, His own clan and give His knowledge to Uddhav. He taught Uddhav His doctrine and asked him to go to Badrikashram to stay with Badarish. Lord Krishna also gave him His wooden footwear and appointed him as the Acharya of the New Doctrine. As per the wish of the Lord, Uddhavji went to Badrikashram. This happened in the 28th century of Dwapar Yuga.

Now, in Kali Yuga, after 4700 years of Krishna's departure, the residents of Badrikashram faced a curse from Durvasa Rishi. The Supreme Deity thought of incarnating Himself for uprooting all evil elements that had gripped the earth. Narayan asked all the habitants of Badrikashram to take birth as human beings on the earth; Bhakti and Dharma too. Among this, Uddhav was to go first and spread the doctrine and herald the coming of the Deity. Uddhavji incarnated himself as Ramanand Swami.

(Contd.)

Prof. Harendra P. Bhatt
V. V. Nagar

The Mystery Of Life & Death

How horrible would have been the terror of life? Death would have looked safer against it. Death is the root cause and result of material life. Dying is like self-annihilation.

Why does man try hard in the material or spiritual aspect of life? This one is the half-truth as far as continuation of life is concerned. Whole truth is that all these endeavours are meant to save one self from death. Quite clear or hidden fear of death tortures the mind of man. Man lives under the fear of death. The initial and final cause and purpose of man's life is death. Man wants to swim through all mental, physical or financial crisis because he wants to live, and does not want to die. The desire and the plan to complete the life span is nothing but a scheme to forget about death.

The struggle to extend life by means of Yoga, Bhoga (material enjoyment) or medicine results from the efforts to keep death at arm's length. In any sound state of mind man does not want to extinct himself. In spite of having full knowledge of the justice of destiny and inevitability of death not only humans but animals whose consciousness is less developed, too, struggle to sustain life till the final moment. Yudhisthir considers this

instinct of man as the great wonder in the Mahabharat. Strong desire to live functions against the fear of death. Fear breeds the pain, but death does not. There remains neither fear nor pain after death. The ascetic feeling in the graveyard is the culmination (point) of that fear. Living person gets baffled when he imagines himself in place of the dead one.

The condition of 'to be or not to be' is compared with the graveyard related ascetic feeling. After getting a little relief man runs in the opposite direction as fast as he can. Momentary asceticism disappears and man creates a citadel of the fascination for life as to shield himself from death. He tries to overlook the fear of death by enjoying all convenient material objects.

How double fasceted is the phenomenon of death? It, being and happening, is certain but its arrival is guest-like. In this world death is the only guest. As he is confused and crushed between certainty and uncertainty the fear of man increases. The root cause of man's good or bad activities is death. We want to live by any means and at any cost, because we do not want to die.

It is the death awareness of man which proves the existence of God. Prayer, penance, devotion and knowledge - all are meant to get an access to God. All this is meant to get oneself free from death. Would God be there if there was no death? The higher rose man's awareness for death the higher rose the number of forms of

God. Man has accepted and welcomed God as the last resort to care himself from death. God dwells in the conscious and subconscious mind of man because of the fear of death. What does man initially and finally ask for? Take to me from death to immortality. Life means man's effort to be migrated from death to immortality. Man does not realize his attainment of immortality but the desire for immortality leads him to God. This nectarnal awareness does not mean any immortality, but it means freedom from the fear of death.

Religion, country, language etc. may change but desire should remain one - freedom from the fear of death.

Salvation, too, is the desire for freedom from the fear of death. Intense desire for liberation is ultimately the desire for freedom from the fear of death. Who can save from the fear of death?

That one who is eternal and permanent. The permanence of Brahman is the ultimate point in man's journey. Fearlessness means freedom from death. After contemplating and constructing all these schemes, the fear of death has not gone from man's mind. The day when man's fear of death reaches zero level man's life will meet a voluntary end. If this process becomes collective or universal the world will come to its end.

Does an untimely death take place when this action or process is done at the personal level?

- **Jashwant Raval**, Anand



Prof. Harendra P. Bhatt

In the midst of these philanthropic exertions, while his very name was the guerdon of worth in the length and breadth of the province, surrounded by his friends, his family and his followers, and supported by the learner of those who were his constant companions, he digested and published his Code of Instructions. Sahajanand's subsequent life was one of undisturbed pursuit in the furtherance of his cause, occasionally traveling through different parts of the country where any large collection of his disciples resided to instruct and exhort and support them by his personal presence.

- **Henry George Briggs**
(Cities of Guzarastra)

Krupa Vakya

Blissful Sentences in Vachnamrut

Krupa Vakyas are graceful affirmations by Shreeji Maharaj Himself. Since these affirmations are by the Supreme Lord Himself, they are indeed the quintessence of all the scriptures. The underlying theme of Krupa Vakyas is God and God-related subjects. These are the affirmations uttered by Shreeji Maharaj with utmost love and grace to guide His devotees towards eternal liberation. The beauty behind these pure nuggets of wisdom is that Shreeji Maharaj Himself practiced and embodied the qualities of a sincere devotee and then prescribed the same to anyone who desires of attain liberation. This is evident from all His divine sports (leelas) since childhood. He Himself practiced dharma, served His parents and elders of the family, performed worship of the moortis, studied scriptures, lived under the guidance of a spiritual teacher, did seva, respected saints etc. Thus, in many chapters of the Vachnamrut Shreeji Maharaj has used His own example and experience to make His claim more satisfactory. In the Vachnamrut G.M.13, Shreeji Maharaj says, “the subject which I have narrated before you, is the fundamental philosophy of all the scriptures and, is firmly based on My experience. I have narrated to you what I have personally seen and, if I have narrated it to you without direct perception I swear by all the supreme saints”.

Out of 262 Vachnamruts, Shreeji Maharaj delivered Krupa Vakyas in around 110 Vachnamruts and discussed about 150, major or minor subjects through them. He

was kind enough to provide us a summery of His sermons in some Krupa Vakyas delivered in G. M. 23 and G. M. 38 / 39. One Krupa Vakya states, 'I have cautiously listened to all the holy texts written by Vyasji, the texts which lead to spiritual bliss. All the scriptures lay down only one philosophy for the final Beatitude of a person thus: God is the creator and destroyer of all this world and all these scriptures contain Leelas either about God or His saints. They describe religious codes of conduct related to the four castes and four stages of life. The observance of such religious code of conduct leads to Dharma - religious behaviour, Arth - economic activities and Kama - satisfaction of desires but that cannot lead to Moksha - the final Beatitude. The observance of the code of conduct so far as the caste or stage of life is concerned can make one famous in the world and keep a person phonically happy. That is the only outcome of it. For the redemption one has to know God as the creator and destroyer of all. A person knows the glory of the previous incarnations of Bhagvan, like Rama, Krishna and devotees like Narad, Sanak etc. Shukji, Jada Bharat, Hanuman, Uddhav etc., who are not present before eyes. Similarly if he realizes the glory of God and the devoted saints of God, who are present before the eyes, there remains nothing more to be known for him so far as the path of the ultimate good is concerned. You have no other alternative but to understand this truth whether told once or a million times today or after a million years. If you ask about this to Narad, Sanak, Shukji, Brahma, Shiva those who are wise they will through many arguments show to you that the ultimate good is achieved through God

before him or a saint before you. They will show you the glory of God before you or a saint before you as similar to that of the form of God and saints who are physically present. And he who has firm faith about this, would gain the essence of all and at no time they would fall from the path of the ultimate good. For example Brahma, Shiva, Brihaspati and Parashar etc. violated the code of religion and fell because of lust but they did not fall from the path of the ultimate good because they had the same faith in God and the saints before them as they had in God and the saints who had assumed form in the past. So this narration is the secret of all scriptures.' (G. M. 21)

Shreeji Maharaj had a clear vision. Through Krupa Vakyas He wanted to make all the groups of ascetics, the Brahmcharis, the householder Satsangis, the Palas and Ayodhyavasis flawless. He wanted to train them all in such a way that they practice devotion to God by realizing themselves to be the soul which has divine spirit and free from the trace of Maya. (G. M. 45).

The Krupa Vakyas are based on His knowledge of all scriptures; He listened to all of them. He then culled out certain principles of philosophy. Moreover, Shreeji Maharaj moved all over India and saw many perfected human beings. But, He never saw a person who had realized the soul or God and also He realized that there was no such experience as absolute superconscious state. (G.L.36) Thus Krupa Vakyas are the result of scriptural knowledge and experience. Shreeji Maharaj believed that if the satsangis understood His message well, they would achieve the ultimate good. Shreeji Maharaj discussed about God,

ultimate good, and god-related topics for the ultimate good of all in Krupa Vakyas.

Shreeji Maharaj clearly stated His principles through Krupa Vakyas. For example, 'One should be mentally free from desires.' (G. M. 38) 'I propound that God is in the form of Sachchidanandanad i.e. Sat - ever existing, Chid - pure consciousness, Anand - ever blissful and with bliss and all Divine light.' (Loya 18) 'If God is pleased with a person, and if that person has association with the devotee of God he would not be mentally perturbed even though he remains away from God for infinite years. If a person is staying near God and if God is not pleased with him, then I do not consider it good. The essence of all the scriptures is that, "One should act in such a way that God is pleased with him." My motto is: if someone is a true devotee of God I am the devotee of devotee of God through thought, deed and word and to betray the devotee of God is the way to displease God.' (G. M. 28). Shreeji Maharaj, while delivering Krupa Vakyas, also gave commands/directions/orders to all. For example, while explaining about Jnan Yagna, He said, 'I command all the supreme saints and the Satsangis to perform continuously Jnan-Yajna.' (G. M. 8) '...Keep this subject (fresh in mind) day after day and do not forget it through negligence. Keep it fresh tomorrow as it is fresh today and keep it fresh day after day till you breathe your last. And whatever subject you narrate about God now onwards, keep this theme at the centre. This is My command and this subject is so vital and dynamic that it should be reviewed daily.' (G. M. 13).

(Contd.)

Prof. Harendra P. Bhatt

There was a saint called Kaivalyanand who was sincere and devoted to the spread of religion so he went on religious tours. He took religious rounds in towns and villages. His duties forced him to travel through urban and rural areas. Apart from populated places he journeyed through farmland and woodland. Once he travelled through thick forest and then passed through the caves situated in the mountain.

From that hilly area he entered Gujarat State and by taking other five Munis with him entered Kank region. Then Kaivalyanand Swami came to the bank of Sabar river but he did not know that the meeting point of the river and the sea was quite near.

He was extremely anxious to meet Shriji Maharaj and get His Darshan.

Out of great curiosity and anxiousness he entered the river and stepped into water.

As the Muni stepped into river water walked a few steps, reached the middle, there came gushing waves of flood water. In a moment the river was fully flooded because it was directly touched by the sea.

Waves of water came like running

horses. The waves surged high up in the sky. Whirling waters covered him from all sides.

They started drowning, the strong waves carried them fast, they lost their booklet (Gutaka) and quilt in water. They began to lose control, their body dipped in water and salty water went into their stomach.

All the saints thought that death was quite near, “So let us remember God at this crucial time.”

As they thought that the last moment of life had come and as they began silent prayer the Lord rushed to help them.

The Lord brought a small ferry (boat) in the flood water. He caught the saints by their upper arms and

put them safely into the boat. Also he brought the booklet and the quilt back to them.

He brought them safely to the other bank and then asked them to proceed on their journey ahead.

The episode of the miracle witnessed by Kaivalyanand Swami and his companions is a living example of the fact that Shree Hari listens to the sincere prayer and runs to save His devotees in the time of calamity.



Whats & Whys

Answers to the questions of curious seekers

Sayam Prarthana - Part 3

(Evening Prayer)

In Vachnamrit Gadhada Pratham Chap - 22, Shriji Maharaj explains the significance of Kirtan-Bhakti. "If there is no remembrance of God while singing Kirtan accompanied by Mridanga, Sarangi, Saroda, cymbals, etc., that singing become equivalent to not singing. There are people who sing and play musical instruments while forgetting God. Such singing does not bring them mental peace." Kirtan, contemplation or Dhoon done by holding God's idol in the mind can help one attain proximity to the form of God and thus, mental peace follows as a result."

This is a golden piece of advice on the point which is mostly avoided and for that negligence, our devotion becomes seedless i.e. unfruitful. All musical instruments, rhyme and rhythm are meant to make devotion so interesting that it would associate the devotee with the idol of God. If that instrument (means) becomes our goal, we cannot progress towards the idol of Lord Swaminarayan. We cannot be united mentally with the idol.

At the center of our devotional music and singing, we should place the idol of God. We often see that best singers or music players encourage spiritual strength in the listeners and the performer also finds a vital scope for spiritual progress. When there is Rajoguna (luxury and passion seeking attitude) at the center of the entire process, the artist becomes addicted to intoxicants like wine, Charas etc. So the Kirtan-Bhakti which does not keep the form

of Lord Swaminarayan at the center, becomes meaningless.

Now-a-days people set the Kirtans to the tune of popular film songs. Such type of Kirtan-singing produces vibrations of film songs either mix or remix. The music tradition of our Holy Fellowship has accepted rich ragas of Indian classical music. Kirtan based on our traditional classical music, can successfully associate the devotee with the idol of Shriji Maharaj. Kirtan based on film-song tune may sound very enchanting but it can divert us from the goal. The singer may sing the lyric in real tune and mood but the listeners associate their mind with the material on T.V., theatre, drama or T.V. serials. So it is advisable to sing lyrics and Kirtans having any Indian classical raga as the base. If a Kirtan is sung on the tunes of love-song, however beautiful and sweet it may be, it can cause great barrier in the Kirtan devotion. Skandpuran says :

कलिकाल कुसर्पस्य तीक्ष्ण दंष्ट्रस्य माभयम् ।
गोविन्दनामदावेनदग्धो यास्यस्ति भस्मताम् ॥

We should not be afraid of the evil, sharp toothed cobra called Kalikal because he can be burnt to ashes by the fire called Govindanaam (name of Govind). Such Kirtan works like soap which can remove dirt from our souls. If you sit before the idol of Lord Swaminarayan and sing one Kirtan and it will surpass the merits attained from all pilgrimages, donation, religious offering and Yajnas.

In Shikshapatri Verse 63, Lord Swaminarayan

says, “All My followers shall go to the temple of Shree Krishna every evening and chant the name of Lord Shree Krishna loudly.” The devotees in overseas countries and those living a very busy professional life in India may think that at evening time we are often very far from the temple and in this situation how can we visit the temple? This is a practical issue but there is a very important substitute which can solve the problem. There are staunch Muslims who are Namazis. They also have a busy schedule. But, when it is Namaz time, despite of their busy schedule, they put aside all other work and offer their Namaz as and where they are. We often see that they spread mattress on the side of trafficked road and keeping their face to the west, they offer their holy Namaz. Isn't this an example to be accepted and followed by us?

Those who cannot visit temple at evening time should adjust their schedule, spare sometime and remembering the Moorti of Shriji Maharaj, sing Aarti and do some Mantrajaap. It happens that you are attending an important meeting. During the meeting if you receive a call from a very important person. You at once say, “Excuse me!” and you spare

sometime to attend the phone call. In the same way, you should break the tight schedule at evening time and should offer Aarti to Shriji Maharaj. This is a practical solution. Whenever you get scope and time, you should go to the temple after you are relieved from work. All factors in our spiritual progress become strong by going to temple.

It is possible that there is no Swaminarayan temple in the area in which the devotees live or it maybe too far. Devotees living in such remote area should call family members together to perform Aarti, Kirtan and Dhoon. We should stand before the idol in our Ghar Mandir, remember the form of Vadtal based Harikrishna Maharaj and all the deities consecrated by Shriji Maharaj.

By following this process, we will experience the presence of Lord Swaminarayan in our house. In order to get such pleasant realization and sacred experience, evening prayer, evening devotional offering is very important in our daily routine.

- Lalji Bhagat

Jnan Bag, Vadtal

The previous night of the fish eye tale / test, Krishna makes Arjun understand.

Krishna : Climb the weighing scale carefully, keep your legs properly balanced, keep your eyes focused on the fish eye.

Arjun interrupts impatiently : If I have to do everything, what will you do?

Krishna gives an enamoring reply : I will do what you are incapable of doing.

Arjun : What is it that I cannot do?

Krishna : I will keep the water steady!

Essence : We must do our actions wholeheartedly. What is the Lord capable of doing is beyond the comprehension of our mind.

KRISHNA-ARJUN INCIDENT





God is always Good & Perfect

A King had a male servant who, in all circumstances always said to him; “My king, do not be discouraged because everything God does is perfect, no mistakes.”

One day, they went hunting and a wild animal attacked the king, the servant managed to kill the animal but couldn't prevent his majesty from losing a finger. Furious and without showing gratitude, the king said; “If God was good, I would not have been attacked and lost one finger.” The servant replied, “Despite all these things, I can only tell you that God is good and everything He does is perfect, He is never wrong”. Outraged by the response, the king ordered the arrest of his servant. While being taken to prison, he told the king again, “God is Good & Perfect.”

Another day, the king left alone for another hunt and was captured by savages who use human beings for sacrifice. On the altar, the savages found out that the king didn't have one finger in place, he was released because he was considered not "complete" to be offered to the gods.

On his return to the palace, he ordered the release of his servant and said; “My friend, God was really good to me. I was almost killed but for lack of a single finger, I was let go. But I have a question; If God is so good, why did He allow me to put you in prison?” His servant replied; “My king, if I had not been put in prison, I would have gone with you, and would have been sacrificed, because I have no missing finger. Everything God does is perfect, He is never wrong. Often we complain about life, and the negative things that happen to us, forgetting that everything happens for a purpose. God knows why you are reading this message today, please bless someone with it by sharing it. God is good and perfect!!”

My dear friend, a good attitude will determine your altitude. When you look at your life, career, job or family life, what do you say? Do you praise God? Do you blame the Satan? A good attitude towards God makes Him move on your behalf. Just sit down and say, “Today, I am thankful I had a peaceful sleep, I am thankful I am alive with possibilities, I am thankful I have a roof over me, I am thankful I have a job, I am thankful that I have family and friends. Above all, I am thankful that I have God in my life. Be blessed and don't be envious or shocked when others are prospering because you don't know what they have been through to get there (test, trials and tribulation) so thank God for what you have.” Little is much when God is in it. It is well with God's grace. Touch someone's life with this message if God is for us, who can be against us?

Better Health Greater Wealth

YOU DON'T
HAVE TO EAT LESS
you just have to eat
RIGHT

Remember when
your body is hungry, it wants
nutrients not calories.

EATING
IS A **NECESSITY**
but eating healthy
IS AN **ART**

Eating healthy
can cost you **MONEY**.
Eating unhealthy
can cost you your **LIFE**

TRAIN
YOUR BODY
to crave healthy
FOOD

Create healthy habits
not restrictions.

Sugar is the sociopath of foods.
It acts sweet
... but it's really poison.



Eat for the body you want,
not for the body you have.



The six best doctors :
Sunshine, Water, Rest,
Air, Exercise and Diet.



The body achieves
what the mind believes

Vachnamrut

The Nectar of Divine

VICTORY OVER DEATH

THE DEVOTEE WITH
ABSOLUTE LOVE

The Divine Love for God is beyond the duality of Time and Space. Love itself is death (i.e. the disintegration of the self). When the idea of self-consciousness is eliminated, there is vision of God as Supreme. Where is the question of the fear of death, when self-consciousness has been eliminated much before death!

He whose devotion is characterized by the love for God, remains merged at the holy feet of God, like a chaste woman. According to doctrine of Shandilya Sutra, true devotion with love, the identification with the emotions like that of a Gopi is marked by love for God and aversion towards objects of pleasures.

ચૌદ ભુવન લગી ખોળીયું,
એક પુરુષ દીઠા અવિનાશી;
અબળા અબળાને શું પરણું,
માટે બળીયાનું લીધું શરણું.
(બ્રહ્માનંદ સ્વામી)

I searched through all the fourteen worlds and found only one Purusha immortal. Elsewhere I saw groups of women only. What is the point to marry an incompetent person? Therefore, I sought shelter at the feet of the Omnipotent Lord Swaminarayan! the Puissant One, the true man.

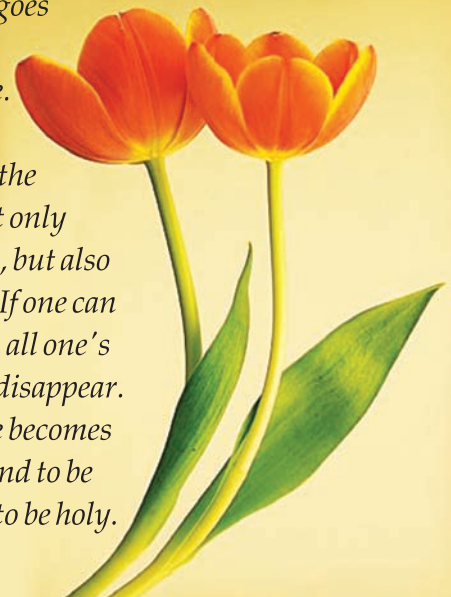
There is no fear at the feet of the Lord. One becomes fearless through selfless love in the visible form of God alone. If the senses and conscience turn towards the world, it would be tolerated, if the Antahkaran - the internal senses (mind, intellect, subconscious mind and the self-consciousness) turn towards the world, it would be tolerated but the soul must be always inclined towards God alone. Such inclination to God leads to fearlessness. All elsewhere fear rules supreme.

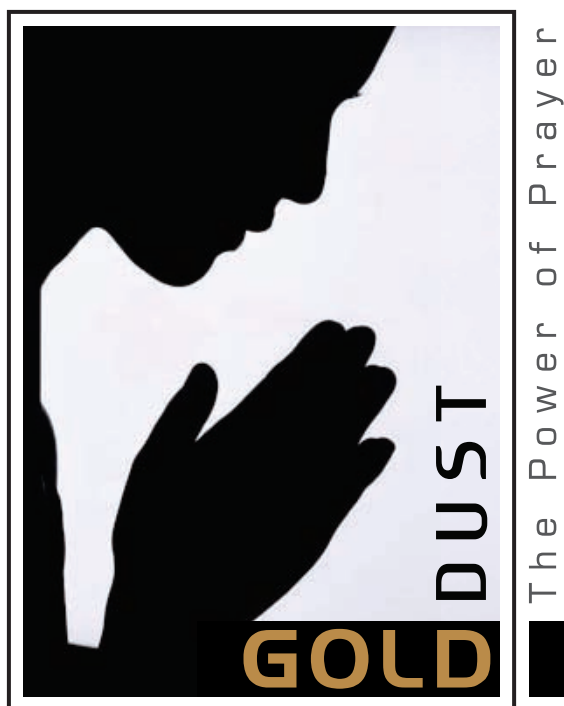
Love for the form of God leads to emotional, eternal integration and to the eternal state of divinity. The divine intoxication of Love removes the fear of death as the rising sun removes the dew.

Selfless love with devotion and realization of the glory of God is the only way for redemption and freedom from the fear of death.

- Lalji Bhagat
Jnan Bag, Vadtal

*Love is the most healing force in the world;
nothing goes
deeper
than love.
It heals
not only the
body, not only
the mind, but also
the soul. If one can
love then all one's
wounds disappear.
Then one becomes
whole - and to be
whole is to be holy.*





Part - 2

हिंसा न करनी जंतु की, परस्त्रीया संग को त्याग;
मांस न खावत मद्य कु, पीवत नहि बडभाग।

1. No Violence

The poet-saint Premanand Swami has forewarned and flagged the ill effects of indulgence in almost eleven dreaded vices. The first of those vices is violence. Violence does not have a narrow meaning, like fight, hurting, physical assault, killing or torching properties. These are the forms of physical violence which could create disturbances, distraction, injuries, termination of someone's life and could cause chaos in society. These are the punishable offences under the provisions of Law. There is another form of violence that cannot be seen but can create equally more horrifying effects on the intended persons. That kind of violence could be categorized as mental violence. In mental violence the weapon is mind and

ill-will. For example, through one's thoughts, if one wishes to cause harm and misery to someone, like impairment in progress of any kind, like prosperities and prestige so on and so forth.

Mental violence could cause more harm to ill-wisher rather than person for whom it is deliberated; as the wiser is constantly engaged in observing whether his wishes have yielded any desired result, and that could make him to suffer from psychosis. Violence of any kind is a product of hatred, jealousy and diseased infected mind. Violence is purely immoral and destructive. It always creates bitterness rather than accord and love. In my opinion violence never ever can create positive result. It is always destructive. It can destroy generations along with culture sustained for ages. Violence can be vulgar and immoral which could create breach of peace in society.

2. Refrain from immoral relations with widow and married woman

Premanand Swami has urged to keep away from immoral relations with a married woman and widow. It is considered to be the lowest sin amongst the other sins. It is unethical, morally corrupt and darkest of sins. It is a lustful desire of immoral sexual urges which leads to such unacceptable disgraceful, scandalous and outrageous indulgence. In our Hindu culture since ages, the wives of others are enjoying status that of a mother. The religious Gujarati poet Narsinh Mehta has defined the qualities and virtues of a gentleman in his famous poetry "Vaishnav jan to tene re kahiye" and said that gentlemen always treat other's wife as a mother.

Is it not that mother, sister, daughter and wife are the holiest relations? It is the gravest

sin to engage in such sinful indulgences for a man if married indulges in such immoral activities. It is unpardonable as at the time of marriage solemn promise is made to the wife to remain faithful and true in relationships and to protect the wife in the present and next births. Hence only a wretched man could stoop to such a sin. Such immoral activities are always followed by miseries and sorrow as it can create such disturbances which would breach the faith and break the unity of the families.

The sin and sorrow cannot be separated. One who indulges in sins will always sink in sorrow.

3. Desist from drinking spirituous Liquors

Swami Premanadji has earnestly prayed to refrain from any kind of intoxication such as alcohol, drugs hookah etc. To consume spirituous liquors is one of the greatest sins believed by the Hindu Religion. Nothing like Bhang, Opium and spirituous drinks of any kind be consumed. Such consumption have dragged innumerable souls to everlasting downfall. Drunkard is ridiculed; loses his precious honour and makes a fool of himself in the society.

Drinking invites indisposition, weakness and insanity, children starve, wife regrets and sighs, which results in endangering family life. Thus drunkenness is devilish, bitter poison and unpleasant sin. His mind is alienated and becomes cloudy and face deformed because the mental faculty is lost. Drunkard strides and jumps like an ape. The Drunkard disturbs and enfeebles his own nervous system, becoming weak, wayward, eccentric and excited which resulting in failure to respond the ordinary calls of duties; and further corrupts and degenerates his

moral faculty. Thus it is a fearful curse. It is for sure that drinking neither provides any power to the head nor the hands are strengthened on the contrary head loses balance and hands becomes numbed. After consumption depression and confusion follows. It never feed the brain. The drunkard is exposed to shame and never even trusted by mistake.

It is difficult to be safe from this vice; but who has got moral force, strong soul and virtuos will can defeat this foe. Wisdom and wine has adverse relation, when wine enters wisdom departs.

So, exert your mind and vow to yourself to touch not and taste not and then better days will come again.

Do drink, but not the liquor, drink Hari-Ras, instead. It is more than nectar, encourage virtues and keeps away from vices and provides impenetrable shield against, corrupt, immoral and unethical approach to behaviour and thoughts.

To Drink Hari Ras means complete devotion and mind fixed upon lord Krishna, experience oneness feel submerged, submissive and dance in religious ecstasy.

Mira and Narsinh Mehta felt and oneness, with the lord and Narsinh Mehta was blessed to witness Ras Leela, the divine Ras of Lord Krishna with the Gopis on sarad Purnima, the full moon day. Thus the difference between drinking liquor and Hari-Ras is that of a devil's hell and Divine Heaven. Do not fall in the water well with a lamp in the hands.

(Contd.)

Advocate

Pradip Jayvadan Maheta
Surat



DON'T QUIT

GET MOTIVATED!

Worthy Tips *for* Elders

Do you know how to become elderly?

Or

have you just aged?

Here are some tips for an ideal elder!

Do you play with your grandchildren?

Do you tell them stories?

Whatever you know, do you help them with their homework?

Instead of giving them endless advices, can you become of their age and talk to them?

Do you take them to nearby temple or garden?

Do you ever buy a chocolate for them?

If so, then you are a sweet elder.

Do you wait for your son for dinner?

Do you take interest in his talks?

If he is ill, do you massage his forehead?

If you can sense his tensed face, then you are a wonderful elder.

Do you help your daughter in law in your capacity with her home or outside work?

If the entire house is going to eat pizza or pav bhaji, if

you are in good health, do you still demand for khichadi or eat joyfully whatever is served?

Without criticizing the modern ways of the world, can you communicate with your daughter in law?

If she wants to go out, can you stay in the house without making a face for two hours?

Then you are a good elder.

Otherwise, there are many aged people residing in innumerable houses. who are always complaining, are full of pride, making endless demands, creating chaos in the house, demanding for specific food etc..

Such aged people are found everywhere.

An elder is one who has acquired increased knowledge.

An elder is one who has acquired increased experience.

An elder is one whose affection has increased,

An elder is one whose love has increased,

An elder is one whose feelings have increased.

It is an art to become an elder.

Aged we ourselves become.

Salute to all elders!



Happiness in Satsang

Mohanbhai Patel, U.S.A.

Last year I was walking on street of my town and suddenly I heard someone calling me by my name from back. I turned around and saw my school classmate after many years. We started talking and in that conversation he passed comment "Tame Swaminarayanya Bahu Sukhia Chho" means you all followers of Swaminarayan are very happy. The same type of opinion also prevailed in the society; I was amazed and happy to hear such positive and respectful compliments for a Satsangi from Non Satsangis and that put me think how it happened? By miracle or mercy of Swaminarayan Bhagwan or something else? I was looking for answer and suddenly it striked to me about Shikshapatri, where we can find the answer.

Shakhspatri contains 212 verses written in very simple language, even common person can also understand them easily and it is considered as the essence, nectar of the Vedas, the Upanishad, the Puranas and other scriptures as well as Shri Hari's own thinking and foresight.

"Any human being who follows nonviolence - Ahimsa, accepted as good behavior by the holy scriptures like Shrimad Bhagwat Puran etc. may become MAHA SUKHIA in this world as well as Parlok-Akshardham" (Verse-8)

"All my male and female followers who follow according to the Shikshapatri shall indeed attain the four Purusharthas - Dharm, Artha, Kama and Moksha. (Verse-206)

Also Shrijee Maharaj asked two boons from Guru Ramanad Swami for Satsangis and he blessed that "if any pain like scorpion-bite happens to Satsangi; that pain in multiple time should come to Me but it should not happen to my Satsangi; also if your Satsangi going to be beggar by destiny, that misfortune should be in My destiny but Your Satsangi may not have problem of FOOD & CLOTHINGS "(Vachanamrut Gadhada Pratham-70)

It is mercy of Bhagwan that we may be happy on this earth as well as after death, provided we may follow the Shikshapatri in its true spirit.

Reading the Shikshapatri, It reminds me of how a computer system works in the present era. A computer wizard may design programs such a way to achieve a goal and purpose. Likewise Shriji Maharaj has designed super system in Shikshapatri so beautifully, that one gets direction to live a better organized life in such a way that one may get happiness on this earth as well as after death. Let us see main core points and highlights of great design of the Shikshapatri.

1. Main focus on Nonviolence principle

"My followers should not kill any living beings knowingly or unknowingly under any circumstances, not even small insects like lice, bed-bugs etc. (Verse -11).

"Do not commit suicide even if you are angry and even something wrong you did, by taking poison, jumping in well or falling from mountain. (Verse -14)

"Also, one should not eat meat under any circumstances even if it be an offering of a sacrifice and shall not ever drink liquor or wine even if it be from offering to deity." (Verse -15)

Shriji Maharaj wants us to be strictly vegetarian; free from all addictions (which includes drinking wine, alcohol, drugs like cocaine, opium etc. and smoking.) By adopting life-style suggested by Swaminarayan Bhagwan we may get spiritual and psychological benefits as well as tangible financial benefits as follows:

By drinking liquor or wine one may suffer from serious liver problems as well as many mental disturbances causing harm to self as well as to one's family. You may come across many persons suffering from intoxication from drinking wine etc. In our Sampraday, our saints have been doing great work for spreading the message of Shri Hari for prohibition of liquor etc. and smoking etc. also known as "Vysan Mukti" Campaign.

As per a survey report in the year 2017, in India, an average smoker spends Rs. 285 per month and yearly around Rs. 3400 for Deshi Bidi. Rs. 1200 per month on smoking cigarette, which sums up to around Rs 14000 annually. Consequently, they become

victims of severe lung diseases as well as psychological disorders which costs big amount for medical treatment. It is big drag on poor person's income and health which causes stress and disturbances in his own whole family.

In our Sampraday especially in Vadtal Diocese, Shree Kanji Bhagat of Jnan Baug deserves my praise and salute for his sincere tremendous work on in this field for last five decades. He initiated thousands of true Satsangis across many villages who gave up bad habits of intoxication and heavy smoking. Presently also Gyan Baug is running rehabilitation program where intoxicated person gets free guidance and treatment. As a result of such programs, many distracted Satsangis have recovered from intoxication and are getting back to normal. This is amazing work they are doing by sincere efforts of Shri Kanu Bhagat.

Also, by refraining from drinking or smoking, one may save thousands of Rs annually; Same way Vegetarian may save money as compared to non-vegetarian since meat products costs more than vegetarian food. In the USA a family of four spends around \$ 1000/- per month for food bill. Since, Also meat product costs more than vegetarian food items, if they do not eat meat product, they may save \$ 200/- per month in expense; which is approximately, \$ 2400/- a year.

Overall Shriji Maharaj has been helping us to be economically and healthwise better off by his design of living better life on this planet earth.

(Contd.)



bottle of THE BRAVE

Part - 4

*The roots of worldly desires,
have gone down deep;
Efforts to uproot them with trick or force,
will hardly succeed.*

(Hriday-Prakash)

The soul is polluted with ignorance from its experiences of the infinite lives in the cycles of births and rebirths. Man-force would not succeed in removing this deep-rooted ignorance. Take an example : You want to see a very important person. There is no access. The board at the gate says : “Beware of the Dog” and there is that dangerous guard dog. If you force your entry the dog will attack. But if you call the V.I.P. and establish communication with him, he would ask the dog to keep quiet and you would succeed in seeing the V.I.P. The dog in this parable is the Maya, created by the Lord.

*ममैवांशो जीवलोके जीवभूत सनातनः।
मनः षष्ठानिन्द्रियाणी प्रकृतिस्थानि कर्षति॥*

A fraction of My own self, having become a living soul, eternal, in the world of life, draws to itself the senses of which the mind is the sixth, that rest in nature. (Geeta 15-7)

The aspect of godhead leads the mind and the five senses towards godhead but the other gross aspect tempts them and leads them towards indulgence. We should cherish that aspect of God in us and remain cheerful and worship the Lord; and curb those senses which create hindrance in our inclination towards God. “The way of knowledge (Jnan Yajna) destroys these baser instincts, and results in brahman – realization” Vachanamrita Gadhada M. 8.

Let the Lord be our centre of life removing darkness of ignorance. In such a pure heart does the Lord Swaminarayan reside!

*“Curb your inward enemies,
that will lead to Light within” (Hriday – Prakash)*

- Lalji Bhagat, Jnan Bag, Vadtal.



SHIKSHAPATRI

THE GOSPEL OF LIFE DIVINE



Swami Bhanuprakashdasji

A Volume of Vedic Canons

What is meant by Smriti?

Our Vedic Sanskrit literature explains Smriti, as a volume based on Vedic Shruti and expressing the body of human laws, or canons or codes of civil conduct. Maharshi Patanjali in his Yogashastra defines Smriti as empirical knowledge or the knowledge based on observation and experience. Our Rishis had attained direct vision of Dharma. These Rishis lended their empirical knowledge to the tradition which descended from them and in this way those visionary Rishis pioneered the tradition (of human law) called Smriti.

In this way Vedas, Shruti and religious scriptures came to be called Smriti Volumes and finally all of them became principal sources of our religion श्रुतिस्तु वेदो विज्ञेयो धर्मशास्त्रं तु वै स्मृतिः। So Smriti has great significance in the social life-style of the practical followers of Hindu religion because the basic system of human life has been initially formulated in the Smriti scriptures. There are six divisions of Vedas :

1. Shiksha (teaching)
2. Chhand (prosody)
3. Vyakaran (grammar)
4. Nirukta (etymology)
5. Jyotish (astrology)
6. Kalpa (ritual)

Among these six divisions Kalpa and Dharma Sutra and Gruhya Sutra within them are the initial sources of Dharma. According to Dharmashastra, Smriti does

not mean the volumes created only by Manu etc. But basically it is a recollection (memory) of the codes of human civil life, retained in memory by great Rishis. The description of such codes of conduct can be found in Kalpa volumes like Shrot Sutra, Grihya Sutra and Dharma Sutra. The references of the same type can be found in the Mahabharat, Puranas and Manu Smriti and in the essays of Nilkanth and Veermitra. According to Maharshi Gautam the main root of religion is the Vedas (वेदोऽखिलो धर्म मूलम) and the people who know them are followers of Smriti, slowly and slowly this profuse material of Dharmashastra assumed a vast form by the name Smriti.

Great minds like Manu Maharaj introduced new changes in these concepts of code as demanded by place, time, culture and civilization. New explanation, interpretations and ideals started taking shape in the map of social history. Among our Vedic creators of Smriti are Manu, Vishnu, Daksha, Angira, Atri, Brihaspati, Ushnas, Apastamb, Gautam, Samvarta, Atreya, Katyayan, Sankh, Likhit, Parashar, Vyas, Shatatap, Pracheta, Yajnyavalkya and Narad. All these have been respectfully mentioned in our literature. Among these some creators of Smriti have been honoured by titles like Laghu Smriti, Vriddha Smriti or Brihad Smriti in brief or in detail.

Though there are many opinions about the date (time) of creation of Smritis it can be said that Smritis had been created between 2nd and 8th century A.D. New Smritis, too, have been created with the changing ages of history. Many Smritis have been given new forms as to suit a Sampraday. The credit of organising and

evaluating the subject of Smriti in keeping with place and time goes to Maharshi Yajnyavalkya. Apart from being a highly profound spiritual philosopher he was a genuine social reformer. His hermitage gave importance to the education for women. He had two wives called Katyayani and Maitreyi who were veteran scholars, one who could offer scholarly interpretation. Maharshi Yajnyavalkya has divided the cannons of Smriti in view of tradition, customs, ways of living, vocations, livelihood, environment, seasons, and has made three divisions called:

1. Achar - conduct
2. Vyavhar - duties and
3. Prayashchit - repentance

Under Achar Dharma, Samanya (common – general) Dharma, Vishesh (special) Dharma, Nitya (routine) Dharma, Naimittik (occasional) Dharma and Apad (imminent – accidental) Dharma have been included. Also here we find the detailed description of four caste divisions and four Ashram (stages of life span) and their related Dharmas (codes of conduct). Among Vyavahar Dharma, Raj Dharma (duties of ruling) and systems of ruling etc. subjects of various disputes and the laws related to it have been discussed. Also these discussions include the penalty for breaking the established law.

Under the title Prayashchit sins, subordinate sins, crimes related with breaking the rules; the observation of Vratas as a part of repentance and penalty have been discussed. Technical words as Mahapap and Anupap have been used here to clarify the type of sin. Vrata, penance and donation are essential part of Smriti scriptures. Apart from this the interrelation

between religion, society, state and individual has been aptly discussed here.

Among all these Smritis the brief treatise on Yajnyavalkya smriti written by Vijnaneshwar has been accepted as very authentic.

When the question of evaluating Shikshapatri arises one should remember that Shikshapatri too is a small volume supported by Vedic principles. And in this respect the fundamental concepts of the founder of Swaminarayan Sampraday too should be clarified very well. Shri Sahajanand Swami gave a new fundamental form to the sampraday which was previously popular as Uddhav Sampraday. On the 13th day of post cremation rite of Ramanand Swami He gave the Mantra 'Swaminarayan' on the 11th day of the dark half of Magshar month of V.S. 1858 i.e. Dt. 31-12-1801 at Farenji (Dist. Rajkot) and from that auspicious day the name Swaminarayan Sampraday became popular.

Shri Sahajanand Swami and His sanctified Paramhans saints and devotees moved from corner to corner in Gujarat and started the movement to uplift people. Though the form of this movement was socio-religious it was based on spiritual foundation. This movement was extended in the permanent form by putting it in Sampradayik structure. The aim and the preaching of Shri Sahajanand Swami was to bring welfare in the material life and spiritual life of people. He organized the fellowship in such system and structure that future generation can get inspiration from it. He counted six factors as main factors for the holy shelter of His Followers : 1. Moorti, 2. Mantra, 3. Shastra, 4. Acharya, 5. Sant and 6. Satsangi (household).

(Contd.)



Health & Spirituality

Dr. Dhanvantari Jha

Vasant Ritucharya

Spring season is marked by longer day time with more exposure to sunlight compared to previous winter months. Sunlight exposure leads to the release of hormone serotonin in the human body, leading to a better mood.

During the long darkness of winter months, the body naturally produces more melatonin. For people prone to seasonal affective disorder, all that melatonin triggers a winter depression. In spring, when melatonin production eases up, so does depression.

- ✿ Environmental changes during Vasant: Increased intensity of sunlight compared to Shishira Ritu.
- ✿ Bodily changes during Vasant : Deranged Kapha dosha accumulated in Shishira Ritu is liquefied in Vasant Ritu leading to reduced digestive fire resulting in many diseases or aggravation of diseases that were there in winter. Moderate strength is present in humans.

Recommended Ahara (diet) during Vasant

- ❖ Old barley, wheat, rice, green gram, and lentils are to be consumed.
- ❖ Food tasting predominantly Tikta (bitter), Katu (pungent) and Kashaya (astringent) which are light for digestion are to be consumed.
- ❖ Drinking liquids like honey mixed with water is recommended.

Recommended Vihara (lifestyle) during Vasant

- > Vamana therapy – Ayurvedic Therapeutic Emesis can be done even for healthy people during this time.
- > Udvartana – rubbing medicated dry powders over the body.
- > Dhumapana – Inhaling and exhaling smoke of specific medicines for a certain time according to the diseases, body type, etc.
- > Kavala Graha – filling the mouth with medicated oil, medicine decoction or hot water till mouth fills with saliva.
- > Anjana (collyrium) – applying a medicated paste from inner edge to outer edge of the lower eyelid.

Things To be avoided during Vasant : Eating sweet, sour, salty and oily food which is heavy for digestion and sleeping in the day time is to be avoided.

HEALING

Touch

Ravi Sabha

Golden Jubilee



It started with just fifty odd Satsangis and on 7 March, 2021 some ten thousand satsangis celebrated its Golden Jubilee Sunday Sabha, popularly known as "Ravisabha" which ultimately became a moral booster for the speaker Dr. Santvallabhdasji Swami, the Assistant Kothari of Vadtal Swaminarayan Mandir.

Acharyashree Rakeshprasadji Maharajshri, the most happy religious leader as He sees every now and then an innovative Sarva jiva hitaavah service, presided over the function and blessed all who support such activities and participate them regularly.

Dr. Balvantbhai Jani, the Chancellor of Sagar Central University in Madhya Pradesh, Shri Jaynarayanbhai Vyas, the renowned Economist, along with many leading saints, celebrated the Golden Jubilee of "Ravisabha" by distributing Fifty Thousand pairs of footwears to the needy.





Ruler Exposed!

The jealous Brahmins of Amdavad poisoned the ears of the ruler by telling, "The luster of your state will be reduced by the Yajna being performed by Swaminarayan." Saying so they planned an intrigue to kill Lord Swaminarayan and with that evil intention they invited Him to their royal fort.

There was an oil tank in the fort premises and they had placed soft and brittle wooden planks on it and prepared a seat by spreading mattresses and cushions. Then the ruler offered Lord Swaminarayan to sit on it. So the Lord said, "This is a royal seat and we ought not to sit on it." By telling this Shree Hari pressed the end of His stick on the corner of the deceptive seat.

Very soon the mattresses and cushions fell into the tank and the fraud of the ruler was exposed. Thereafter the rule of Suba came to end and the British rule started. This fort of Bhadra in Amdavad stands as a witness of this historical event!





॥ Shikshapatri ॥

My Words are equivalent to My Form,
Value and Respect them with Fervour Faith.

Shree Swaminarayan Bhagwan