



sahajANAND

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PRELUDE H. H. Acharya Shri Rakeshprasadji Maharaj

In today's age and time the man is successful, happy and wealthy too. Being so, as a result of ego, there takes place bitter relationship in the Satsang or family. That is why Lord Swaminarayan has advised us to be humane and gentle in the Satsang. The follower who remains gentle as a result of the grace of the Lord, never misuses his power of money, position and prosperity and never tries to make others follow him. In that follower resides numerous good qualities. For this, Lord Swaminarayan gives one example: Suppose there is a mason digging a well in a rocky layer of earth. While he tries to cut the rock, if the rock sounds hollow. Then he says that ample water would be available here. However, if the rock makes a tinkling sound while he cuts the rock, and while there are sparks he would declare that there would be nearly no water in the well; it would hardly fill half or a guarter of the leather bucket each time but no more.

Thus a person who remains adamant in his pride of spiritual knowledge, renunciation and devotion, may be called great but he would be only as great as that water container of leather, filled half or quarter with water; but he would not develop great qualities as achieved by a humble devotee. Therefore, one who wants to please God, should not be puffed up with pride of knowledge, renunciation, devotion or any other great qualities. Only then Shri Krishnanarayan would dwell in the heart of that person.

The sum of this anecdote is that - people are very happy, wealthy and capable of helping others. Yet their nature is such that it creates conflicts with others; that is why having all good qualities, they fail to make any good impression. Contrarily, a follower is humble and is ever ready help others. As a result ample good qualities happily reside in him.

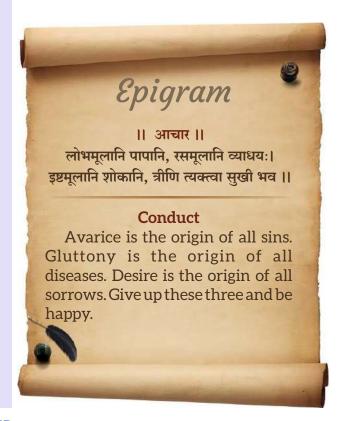
Thus, Lord Swaminarayan, in all the Vachnamruts, advises all the followers abundantly. He says, if a follower takes pride of his Premlkshana Bhakti, it is a pitfall for him. The followers have a pride of religion, knowledge, renunciation; likewise, they have a pride of Premlkshana Bhakti. Yet, the followers who observe the five Vartmans and see no fault in them, and do not have any other thought about them throughout the life, those followers are the best and they never face any hurdle. Thus, if we live like this, we always live happily. The

followers of the Lord should always keep faith in the image of the Lord, which is like the Chintamani! The follower would achieve all the Siddhis, is a guarantee.

Moreover, in the chapters of Vachnamrut Antya, Shree Hari says, "All the great devotees like Naradji, Prahladji, Hanumaanji have prayed to the Lord that they should be saved from the illusion of the body and body related pride. Just like that, all My devotees, should ask Lord for the same. That would make you all happy." And those mighty devotees having the desire to please the Lord should observe the rules of Ekantik Dharma like Janak Raja and they should keep themselves different from life activities becoming Brahmrup and worship the Lord. If the Lord is worshipped thus, the devotee is called Ekantik Bhakta. The Ekantik Bhakt has Atmnishtha, Vairagya and observes his religion firmly; such a devotee when breathes his last, merges himself in the Lord. And if he is not Ekantik he enters in Brahma or similar demi gods. Without becoming Ekantik, it is not possible for him to enter into Shri Krishnanarayan. When a person is greedy he enters into wealth, a licentious person enters into his beloved woman, the wealthy childless person getting a son after a long time enters into his son; likewise giving innumerable examples Lord Swaminarayan has merged His Satsangis into His Satsang. Then, this kind of devotees live happily in this life as well as in celestial worlds. Thus, we should live like that in Satsang, we

should worship the Lord sincerely. We should follow the guidelines given in the Vachnamrut and understand the Lord and cultivate servitude. We should cultivate gentleness. Lord Swaminarayan says explicitly that the biggest hurdle in the path of a devotee is his vices and they should not be overlooked. And those who get themselves estranged from the Lord and His devotees, they become irresponsible. The biggest problem of this world is that the person does not look at himself and his own vices. If a person begins to recognize his own vices and neglects the vices of the others, then such a devotee makes a progress day by day in the Satsang. We should make a progress likewise.

Wishing you all everything good in life, Jay Shree Swaminarayan.



Sahjanand Swami's

Swaminarayanism

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

Part - 2

Ghanshyam Pande alias Nilkanth Varni : The successor.

His successor, Ghanshyam Hariprasad Pande, was born on the ninth night of the bright half of the month of Chaitra in the year Vikram Samvat 1837 (1781 A.D.), in a Brahmin family of Hariprasad and Bhaktidevi in Chappaiya of North India. He left His home on the tenth day of the bright half of the month of Ashadh in the Samvat year 1849, when He was eleven years, three months and one day old, in search of a Guru and God. For seven years Ghanshyam, then after known as Nilkanth Varni moved about the country as a young ascetic visiting many places of pilgrimage across the country and reached Loj in Kathiavad on the sixth day of the dark half of the month of Shravan in Samvat 1856 (1800 A. D.) Manilal C. Parekh termed this wanderings as training in the school of spiritual vagrancy. (Shri Swaminarayan, P. 5).

The Himalayas: The godly abode

Ghanshyam straightaway headed towards the Himalayas. The Himalayas have always remained sacred abode of gods and goddesses and everything on Himalaya soothes the body, mind and spirit. He visited Naimisharanya first and stayed there for four days. He visited Shripur, Haridwar, Gupta Ganga, Jyotirmath and Badrikedar. After some further roaming Ghanshyam came to Pulhashram and offered worship to Muktanath. From here He went to Nepal.

Nepal: learnt Yoga

Nepal then was the land of dark superstition. He reached Butol and stayed there for some time. After that He entered a big forest. While wandering in the forest He met an ascetic called Gopal Yogi. Ghanshyam lived with him and

learnt some lessons of Yoga. Thus, here Ghanshyam learnt the lessons of Yoga from Gopal Yogi. He lived with Gopal Yogi for over a year and left his place after the Yogi passed away.

East India: The land of Tantric practices.

From Nepal Nilkanth Varni went to the eastern part of India. In this part of India, religion was replete with superstitions and Tantric practices. He stayed for over a year in Jagannath Puri. Here, one day, a sadhu asked him to bring some green vegetables from the fields. Nilkanth Varni told, "There is life in green vegetables so, I can't pluck it." Thus He refused. Whereupon the sadhu treated Him cruelly and other sadhus took His side. As a result a big quarrel took place among the sadhus and many got hurt seriously. The religious leaders of that area disapproved the simple, pure and austere life of Nilkanth Varni.

South India: Religious excursion.

From Puri Nilkanth Varni headed towards South India and visited Shiv Kanchi, Vishnu Kanchi, Shri Ranga, Rameshvar, Dhanushkoti etc., which covered all the important places of pilgrimage.

Later on, Nilkanth Varni narrated an incident that took place on the way to Rameshvar, in Vachnamrut Gadhada Pratham 10. It is about an ungrateful saint called Sevakram. But the incident illustrate the character of Nilkanth Varni. He suffered from a saint like Sevakram but He never gave up His spirit. This incident shows His willingness to serve the ill men and especially sadhus.

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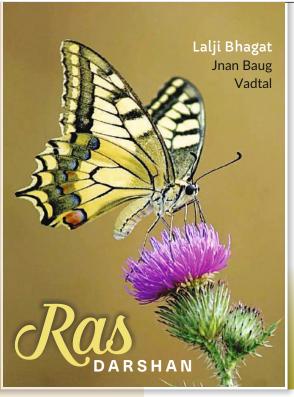
Prof. Harendra P. Bhatt

V. V. Nagar

Where does

Swaminarayan

Reside



જ્યાં જ્ઞાનનો થાય અખંડ યજ્ઞ, ધ્યાની રહે ધ્યાન વિષે નિમગ્ન; જ્યાં દોષરૂપી સમિધો દહે છે, શ્રી સ્વામિનારાયણ ત્યાં રહે છે.

હરિલીલામૃત

Where the Yajna of knowledge is performed, where meditators remain engrossed in meditation, where foibles are burnt in holy fire as oblation, Lord Swaminarayan resides overthere.

view 1

This is the unique couplet in which the address of God and the location of His residence are given. The question is where does God reside? And we imagine about different places as His residence. We imagine that God lives only in the idol, in the temple and such other places like pilgrim spots. But here Harililamrit explains a different aspect.

There are three points here. First is knowledge, then meditation and the third one is the point of offering foibles as oblation in holy fire. Lord Swaminarayan resides at that place where these three activities are carried on.

So let us understand the topic of knowledge which comes first, "where absolute Yajna of knowledge is being performed." In the Bhagwad Gita four types of devotees have been described, say Arta (very unhappy), Jijnasu (anxious), Artharthi (expectant) and Jnani (enlightened).

The first type of devotee goes to God when he is unhappy. He goes to God when two ends in his budget do not meet each other and request God to make it smoother, such a devotee is called Aarta or unhappy. The second type of devotee is called Jijnasu because he is always anxious to know something new. He is eager to know how is this? How is that? How is the paradise? How is the abode of God? One who has deep curiosity inside him is called Jijnasu devotee. The third one is called

Artharthi or expectant of material things. He goes to God to ask for material. The fourth one is called Jnani, the enlightened devotee.

Among these four God has considered the Jnani as the best devotee. In the Gita, God says, "The Jnani devotee is my heart." Now think how nice and great the heart of God is? And that shows the features of Jnani devotee. It means "Where absolute Yajna of knowledge is performed."

Knowledge means to understand our own body and to understand the activities within our body. The soul resides in the body and one should try to understand how the super soul resides in our soul? Knowledge means to understand this point thoroughly. There are different definitions of knowledge. Knowledge may mean data collection. When knowledge takes you from material object to eternal then it can be called real knowledge. When you attain the knowledge and then utilize the same on the path of God then it becomes Vijnan - the science of spirituality.

The point where you start your journey on the path of enlightenment, Lord Swaminarayan starts residing in your conscience at that point. If we look at the life of Shriji Maharaj, we can see that He used to hold five holy meetings in a day. For this reason, Shatanand Swami in his 'Jan Mangal Stotra' prays to Shriji Maharaj by chanting 'Om Jnani ne namah'

means I bow to the most knowledgeable supreme Lord Swaminarayan who has great interest in the acquisition of true knowledge. God likes knowledge because it is His heart. When we proceed towards knowledge God does reside in us.

There are many types of Yajnas. When Brahma created this universe, he asked all the humans to perform Yajnas. Welfare is never possible without Yajnas. When the word Yajna is spoken one image springs out before our mental eyes - a flame of fire and many oblations being offered in that flame. Here the reference is made to a different kind of Yajna. In Vachnamrit Gadhada Middle chapter 8, Shriji Maharaj talks about different types of Yajnas. When Brahma created this universe, he asked all to perform three types of Yajnas – Sattvik, Rajasik and Tamsik. Those who are dealing with activity were suggested for Rajasi and Tamsik Yajnas. Those who walked on the path of non-activity were suggested to perform Sattvik Yajnas.

Now there are two types of Sattvik Yajnas - 1. Yoga Yajna and 2. Jnan Yajana. We have hardly heard about these Yajnas and have never cared to look at them. Let us first understand Jnan Yajna. Shriji Maharaj tells in Vachanamrit, "When a devotee of God behaves while turning his inclinations inward, that is called Jnan Yajna." First we have to understand our body. If we understand our body first, then we will be able to understand its internal actions and reactions. Then try to understand who is behind all these actions and reactions? These types of questions will inspire us to proceed towards God and that is called Antar Drashti - the internal insight. If you practice this type of Antar Drashti, you will be able to attain real knowledge.

Let us check, "What is the meaning of this inward insight?" Generally, we close our eyes and start being inward but if our thoughts are running to market and other social tasks, that cannot be called inward insight. When you turn your inclinations inward and proceed towards eternal then it is called Antar Drashti. When you are in the condition of here and now and experience the inward vibration in that present moment then it is called realization of knowledge. So here God has shown the meaning of Antar Drashti in this Vachanamrit.

When you are in here and now state of the mind and do Darshan of God with body and mind, it is Antar Drashti. It is called Antar Drashti because we have to leave everything which we see by our material eyes and God who resides in us will be with us everywhere. So, the Darshan of the Moorti of God, sermon-telling and listening, Kirtan-singing, worship - these external aspects lead to Antar Drashti, and all these put together constitute Jnan Yajna. We consider the volumes of Vedas, Upanishadas and their verses and their secret as knowledge. When one implements these ideas and proceeds towards God that is called real knowledge. You associate your eyes with the Moorti of Lord Swaminarayan in order to get Darshan. Then you get your mind and intellect associated with the Moorti. But how can you join your intellect? Just imagine 'the figure and form which I see before my eyes is the form of Lord Swaminarayan, who is the master of the imperishable abode, who is the cause of all incarnations and the cause of all the causes. When you look at the Moorti with your eyes with such fixed concept in your mind, your Jnan Yajna begins at that moment. Generally, we deal with Mansi Puja more, but we believe the lesser in real i.e., external worship and Darshan. But when you offer garland, Prasadi plate to God or wave fan with this concept in mind it will be called Antar Drashti and it will be equal to Jnan Yajna. When you join sermon-listening or kirtan of God with the same concept you should understand that you have cultivated inward vision. Why is it called inward vision? If you listen the sermons of God and sings His Kirtans it will dissociate you from the physical material world and will lead you towards God. So that is called the path of inward vision. When, during the span of our life we happen to listen to the sermons of God and sing His Kirtans and get the Darshan of God's Moorti and worship God, we should understand that God resides in the Moorti and He accepts my worship through these ritualistic activities. This is quite simple and direct approach.

So, where does Lord Swaminarayan reside? He resides where absolute Jnan Yajna is performed, and if you perform Jnan Yajna as previously shown, Lord Swaminarayan will certainly reside in your soul.

(Contd.)

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

Once he set out on sermon telling tour without taking any other companion with him.

He travelled a long distance in the scorching heat and by chance he entered a forest it was a barren area, inhabited by man-eating wild animals and no human being could be seen in that forest land.

As Akhandanandji entered the central part of the forest four tigers came and covered him from all four sides. The saint encountered death in its eyes. At that

moment, he thought that "sooner or later the body is going to meet its end. My body may have been made to satisfy the hunger of the tiger. So, let me go near the tiger and offer my body."

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

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

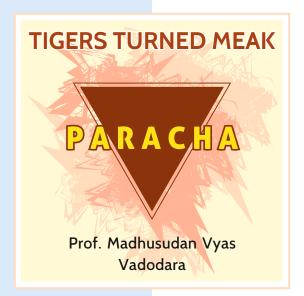
As Akhandanand went close to the tiger and fearlessly invited the tiger to devour him, the tiger raised his paw. Akhandanand Swami remained fearless and unmoved so the tiger withdrew his paw.

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

and disappeared in the forest.

The episode of the miracle experienced and witnessed by Akhandanandji carries very deep and wide meaning. It suggests about the rainbow personality and kaleidoscopic empathy. The saint decided to offer

himself as an oblation but the Lord decided to save the saint. So, he brought a psychological change in the tigers. The raised paw turned into a salute. The tigers lowered their heads to touch the ground. Then, they took four rounds encircling the saint, and whispered silent prayers before running into the forest. This is the living proof of the fact that Shree Hari could bring a change of heart even in the wild and ferocious animals.





rotten POTATOES

A professor asked students to get potatoes. He told his students, "Get as many potatoes tomorrow as the number of people you hate." Name each potato with the name of the person you hate. The next day, students brought potatoes. Some had one potato, while others carried two. Some carried 5-7 potatoes while others had a bag full of potatoes. All students showed the professortheir respective bags.

Professor said, "Good! Now you'll have to do one thing. For a month, you'll have to carry this bag along with you everyday." All students agreed. It went off well for 2-3 days, but later, the potatoes started getting rotten. Everyday carrying the heavy burden was troublesome for students. Slowly, the potatoes got rotten and started stinking. Eventually students said, "We cannot bear the stink of the potatoes. Please allow us to throw it away."

Professor smiled and said, "You all have gathered such potatoes within your mind, do

you even realize that? Rotten potatoes in the form of negative emotions like hatred, anger, sorrow, resentment, revenge and several others; you all have been carrying all of these in your heart. They are rotten. They stink. Still you carry them along with you. Do you realize why people stay away from you? Simply because, you do not get rid of those rotten potatoes! Go throw away these potatoes and along with these, also abandon the potatoes that you have been carrying within you all this while!"

To stay happy, you have to get rid of all the negativity that you cling onto. Bothersome stuff that you have stayed engulfed in; it is time you set yourself free from it.

Every person is good, all you need to do is get rid of all the past, worthless incidents and talks off your mind and see the virtues in every man!



At a time that the horrifying impact of the pandemic is hovering over mankind, and shaking everyone's' lives in most petrifying ways than ever, the one thing that occurs to our mind is 'how to stay away and how to be saved from this deadly virus?' More than the virus itself, it is the fear of death that has engulfed each individual's mind, which is more worrisome. It is more important to get rid of this fear by way of strengthening our mind and thought process. While it is relatively easy to save ourselves from

the virus, the terror of death that is looming large across the globe is something that is difficult to overcome.

More than the disease itself, people are dying more of the fear that the disease will attack them and kill them. There is no virus deadlier and horrendous than fear. Understand this fear. Else before

death, you will become a living corpse!

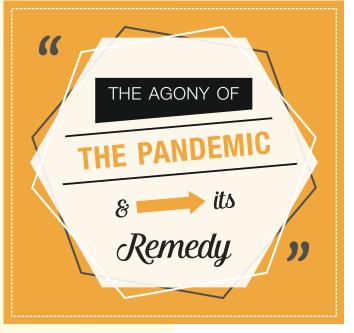
The petrifying conditions under which we are surviving now has got very little to do with the virus. Such fear engulfs the world and humanity at a particular time; it has been happening since decades. The reasons are different every time. This is one kind of community madness. At times it is political instability, at other times it is price hike of consumer commodities; sometimes it is unrest

or war between nations, while at other times testing of biological weapons - there are several reasons as these! This fear is either individual, communal, state level, on a national scale or larger still, worldwide as well. At this time, it is worldwide. At such times, many people either become insane or die. This isn't the first occurrence on this earth. Earlier too, many a time, such occurrences have engulfed the earth. For a foolish person, such an occurrence becomes fearsome, while for an intellectual

being; he sees it as an opportunity.

During this time of the pandemic, stay at home, read good books, exercise well, watch inspirational videos, do Pranayam and yoga regularly and reduce your body weight. Your face should glow with the innocence and freshness as a child. Such a

pandemic engulfs mankind every 25-30 years. Earn at this time by doing the above stated tasks. Don't waste your time talking about the pandemic and thinking about it. This fear is beyond the comprehension of common mind. Don't watch any video or news that arises fear within you. Thinking the same negative thoughts over and over again changes the chemical constitution of the body and this may become poisonous at times, which could become fatal.



Besides the pandemic, there are many occurrences in this world; divert your attention to them. Spend more time doing meditation, bhajan and reminiscence of the Lord, which will give rise to a positive energy around you, and won't let the outer negative energy to enter your mind, body, soul. Majority of humankind is engulfed in this negativity as of now. Like the black hole absorbs the light of countless Sun, likewise, several souls become prey to the negativity of this pandemic. Only by attaining knowledge of the Almighty and taking shelter in His divine Moorti like boat, can one cross this sea of suffering, this violent storm. At such a time, read religious scriptures as much as you can. Be in the company of holy saints, read the supreme knowledge bearing books written by them, and pay close attention to the food you consume.

To sum up the above said, keep patience, everything will get back to normal, as it was earlier. Until death comes, why should you fear it? There is no need to worry or fear. Death is inevitable. What is the sense of fearing it? Fear is foolishness. You may not die of the virus now, yet one day, you will die and that day can be anytime! Instead of living in the fear of death, it is better you spend time doing Lord's 'Namsmaran', recitation and meditation and by keeping our conscience alive, to live a joyful life makes more sense. Isn't it? Live life like a great knowledgeable man, not just any insignificant being in the crowd.

Jay Swaminarayan!

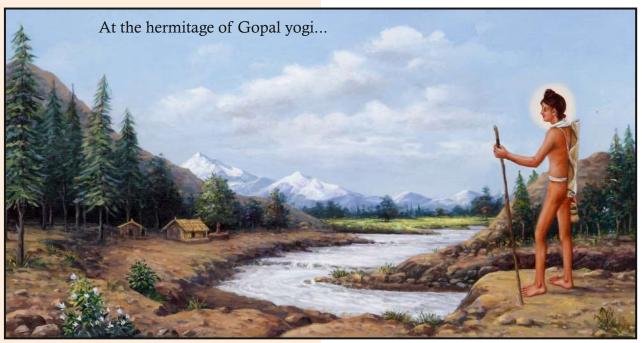
Lalji Bhagat Jnan Baug, Vadtal.

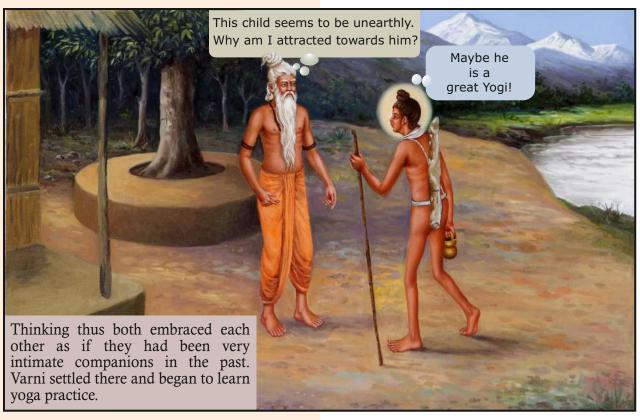


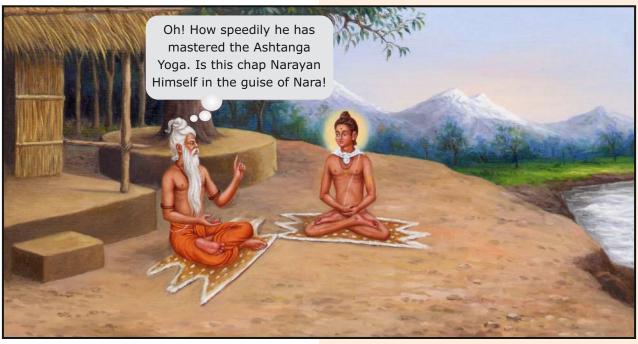
Sahjanand Swami was a yogi even before he came to the Satsang. During the two years that he lived in it under Ramanand Swami, or rather soon after his accession to the post of Acharya he seems to have developed his powers of yoga to such an extent as to induce a Samadhi in almost anyone. This was nothing less than a wonder, a miracle for Samadhi is one of the most difficult of attainments in yoga. All the great wonder, therefore, that we have here a series of such miracles lasting over a long period, and there is no doubt that they changed the entire character of the Satsang and created a new and higher moral and spiritual order therein.

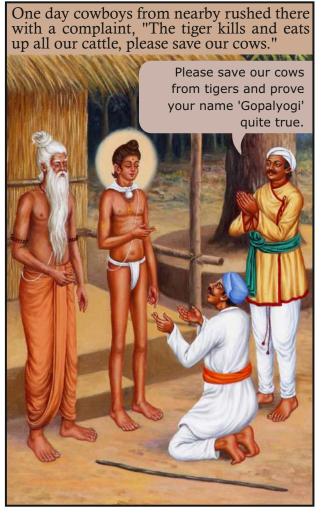
Shri Swaminarayan, page 40) Manilal C. Parekh,

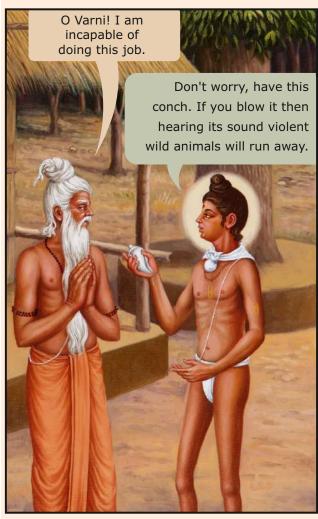


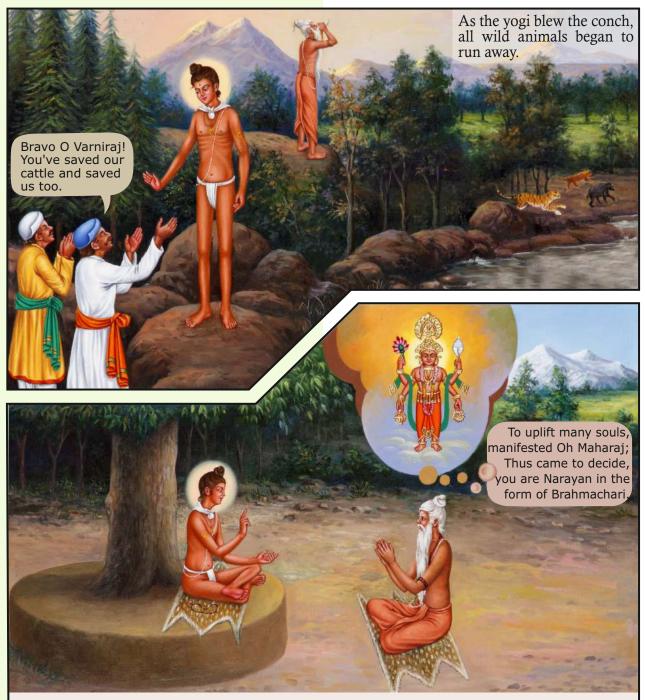












Seedless was the Ashtang Yoga of Gopal Yogi. Nilkanth Harikrishna made him realize the form of his soul and offering him the vision of His Parabrahma form, taught him Sabij Yoga!

Nilkanth Varni stayed with Gopal Yogi for one complete year. Though He was God Himself, He studied Ashtang Yoga under the guidance of Gopal Yogi. Ashtang Yoga is a means not the end. Upliftment of the soul is not possible without practicing Yoga and meditation. Meditation without a goal is purposeless. To have the vision of the form of God is the fruit of Ashtang Yoga. Having proved this fact, Shri Hari set out from there.



Health

Spirituality

Dr. Dhanvantari Jha

The Process of Breathing & Prana Vayu

Respiration is an important physiological process which is necessary for the existence of life. In Ayurveda, the process of

respiration in human body is a function of Prana Vayu (which is one of the five sub-types of Vata Dosha). The channels (Srotas) through which *Pranavayu* flows are collectively known as Pranavaha Srotas(This includes the complete respiratory system including Lungs). The Ancient Ayurveda Gurus described the process of Respiration in accordance with the Doshas of the body and explained the most important role of Vata dosha especially the Prana Vayu in the process. The facts described by ayurvedic scholars in ancient texts of Ayurved, depict a clear resemblance with the features mentioned in the process of respiration in modern medical studies.

Prana Vayu is primarily located in the head or brain. It is bound to control the functions of the brain or nerves, or it could be put in other way and said that the brain and nerve functions can be compared to those of Prana Vayu. Vagbhata in Ashtanga Hridaya also tells that Prana Vayu commands Buddhi (intellect), Hridaya (mind, in this context), Indriya (sense organs and their functions) and Chitta (brain). This shows that the higher functions including perception of sense objects, the motor signals in response to the sensory signals, the thought processes, the intelligence and application of

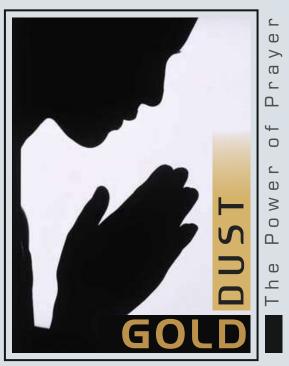
intelligence so as to lead the day to day

activities, integration of mind and sense organs, and all mind functions are manipulated, controlled and governed by Prana Vata.

Prana Vayu carries out smooth breathing functions and movements. Prana Vayu on circulating in the chest makes breathing process easy by creating space for inspiration and expiration by creating movement of organs of breathing and movements of main and accessory muscles of respiration. Prana Vayu thus creates expansion and contraction of chest cavity so as to enable free breathing and good aeration in the body. Mainly it helps in breathing in (inhalation) of air or oxygen.

When the Prana Vayu gets vitiated it causes diseases like Hikka (hiccups), Shwasa (dyspnoea, breathlessness, asthma, and bronchitis), Pratishyaya (cold, congestion), Swarabheda (hoarseness of voice). Kasa (cough) etc. By this it is clear that the pathological manifestations and the territory afflicted by the vitiated Prana Vayu is predominantly the respiratory system.

And thus, for proper breathing the balance



P A R T 2

2. No indulgence in criticism

We must distance ourselves from indulging in criticism. Criticism could be genuine, jealous and mostly habitual. The habitual criticism we find almost in every person. Such criticism is more often mindless and unnecessary. For example to criticize someone's appearance, physical shape, poverty, personal habits are unnecessary; as such things are existing with birth. But if you criticize some wealthy person flaunting his richness and luxurious life style amounts to jealousy. If someone is in a better state of position socially, economically or status wise and if we be critical about his acquisitions it is jealousy.

Now of all; genuine criticisms are rare. One can criticize immorality in general may it be in trade, social relation, nuisance creator, habitual liar, deploring religion or the God. These are the unworthy scandalous vices; which could pollute, contaminate, corrupt, vulgarize and ultimately tarnish and shred the texture of society. So certain bad characteristics should and must be criticized and deplored vigorously and also remain watchful and on the guard against the enlargement and expansion of such degradation and fall in the virtues of the

society. In such cases the criticism is valid and acceptable. In principle, criticism should not be malicious and on the other hand bona-fide criticism should be appreciated as it helps to decontaminate and clear-up the society.

My personal conviction is that if you come across such thing which required some sort of criticism it would be better to avoid it and instead politely approach the person whose attitude in general required criticism, suggest few things to him, which is rather ideal than straight way to have recourse of criticism.

Shun Criticizing God

The God is the creator of universes, which includes our earth. He is the creator of resources like light, air, water, heat, cold, animals, creatures, birds and humans and so on. He has power to subsist and maintain each and every creature from ant to elephant. Every living creature is well equipped to live and maintain itself through natural resources. He has given procreation power to everyone. Death and life is a routine feature in every creature. Each creature is given different identity; shapes and distinguished physical and mental features. Are they not marvelous creations?

God is the truth, fountain of virtues. The divine Almighty is the light Himself. Every creation is blessed with brain, a driver of the body which never fails till the death. It is merely a lump of flesh which can generate joy, sorrow, pain, love, hatred, enmity, friendships and has got creative and destructive power. God has created the hottest sun, coolest moon and twinkling Galaxy of Stars and every season with different characteristics and perfect duration of timing.

The God has not left any corner of the human body to be sculpted to its perfection according to its use and utility. It is a marvelous creation.

Human being is the superlative creation which is also afforded capability to create; suffer and destruct by the use and misuse of the brain.

Hence for what reason and excuse can the God be criticized? Swami Premanandji knows the reason which is ego, that leads to such sinful thinking to criticize the God. Some of the professional Kathakars religious story tellers to make them to look superior above their creator criticized God. Can any human being create Sun, which, for the infinite, inexhaustible time that

provides energy to the universe. Impossible !! So, refrain from criticizing God.

God is the shining truth, fountain of virtues. He is light. The feeling is invisible but He is omnipresent.

Theft is Immoral and Criminal Offence

Theft is an unauthorized and immoral acquisition of property belonging to others. It could be, in day or night or on the road or anywhere, and of any kind; like house-breaking, burglary, pick pocketing or robbery by force with or without killing. The man involved in such act; mostly has the tendency to acquire livelihood without doing any efforts or labour. This starts from small lifting from house and shops and it extends in proportions to big adventures and the person becomes a habitual thief. The family members are subjected to embarrassments and insult from the society as one of the members of the family is branded 'thief'. The children of the family will be highly subjected to the insulting, hurting and annoying remarks from the people of the society; labeling them as the children of the thief etc. The conscience of the thief would also not pardon himself from his immoral activities of theft. Thus theft is most shameful and degrading for the person involved in it and also makes his family look down heavily in shame. A thief is two faced. In his immoral activities, he wears corrupt, sinful and unscrupulous face; while generally he pretends to wear average normal face. He may wear normal face but his perverted vice does peep from his eyes.

Immorally accumulated wealth of any kind would pile-up fear, anxiety and mental unrest. So the disquiet, fear and worries would be large in proportion as compared to peace and comforts.

So honestly earned Money has more value than immorally acquired unlimited wealth. The legitimately earned wealth enriches your inner conscience and that is the ultimate richness. Better to remain contented with whatever honourable resources you have rather than to move with the feared black face in the society by indulging in immoral activity like theft.

Follow only your religion.

Religion is a matter of faith. It's a matter of trust, belief and convictions. Religion is followed as a matter of tradition, and traditions are formed

and persisted since time immemorial. There is an element of sanctity behind the beliefs; and the beliefs are followed religiously which makes deep grooves of recognition of tradition in the family. Thus, religious beliefs are always inherited like culture and wealth. So generally the religion being traditional faith, one would like to stick to the religion followed by family.

Religion could only be changed either by force that is conversion or through marriage, and rarely by volition. Changing the religion is rare as it would require to change the traditional faith and religious culture which would be very difficult. Our social associations and environment are mostly formed, maintained and based on religious convictions. Marriage and other important relations are also preferred and made in the clan following the same or similar religion and having faith and praying the same God. Further, the social and family bondage are so enormous and strong that normally nobody would prefer to jump the line and limit or religion followed and attached to by the family since time immemorial. We and our society are so thickly woven in traditional religious fabrics that would desist to change the track on which we are on. It has never benefitted ever to anybody by changing their own religion. The reasons are that if you do that you are detached from your conventional and traditional religious beliefs, faith and convictions. There would be complete severance from the religious circle presently you are in. It is also hard to adjust with the new philosophy and approach to the new religion. So keep following your own religion.

Faith is an ultimate bond. Faith is stronger than belief. Faith is an ultimate stage of belief. The difference between belief and faith is that belief could be changed or altered. Faith is conviction by heart and mind, and hence is ceaseless and unchangeable. Further faith is created through generations' of belief and conviction in a particular creed or religion. So, one cannot change the faith like changing clothes. It is better to stick to the religion you have faith in till now. It will give you peace and perfection. The change of faith can lead to vagrancy a most miserable plight.

(Contd.)

Advocate

Pradip Jayvadan Maheta Surat

BADHITANUVRUTTI

We're so overwhelmed by our responsibilities towards the various spheres of our life, that we barely have time to spare for God related activities. From within, we may have aspirations to incline Godward, but, our responsibilities don't permit us to do the same. Thus, in such situations, how should we coalesce both our social and spiritual aspirations?

Our 'vrutti' (mental inclination) is split in two parts. In any activity we perform, even though our mind is engaged in that process, simultaneously, it may also be having other thoughts. For example, say you are having a meal with someone. At that time, you are as consciously engaged in the activity of eating, as you are in conversing with the person you are having your meal with. Even while you are keenly conversing with the person next to you, the hand with the morsel of food is still going inside your mouth and not elsewhere. Thus, you are performing both the tasks with equal sharpness. So, you see that God has bestowed such sharpness in our inner faculties. However, we don't know how to fully utilize it. It is a matter of flow of our mental inclinations.

Shriji Maharaj has pointed out this topic many a times in the 'Vachnamrut' and has given many examples to explain the same.

He has given an example of a village woman filling up a pot of water at the well. As she draws a bucket full of water from the well, the woman places her one foot forward to apply force and other foot backwards which acts as counterforce to balance her body. During this entire process, a fraction of her mental inclination is towards pulling the rope, while

another fraction towards the watchfulness that she does not fall into the well herself. This example is paradigmatic to the day-to-day life of people in that era.

Let's look at a present-day example. While driving a car our mental inclination is distributed on various different things viz., the accelerator, the brakes, on the steering, on the road, the GPS, monitoring the level of fuel etc. Whilst being watchful of all these things we may also be eating or talking to the person next to us in the car or on the phone. So, what do all these examples suggest? All these processes are performed by us simultaneously, effortlessly and perfectly because of a cultivation of a pattern in our mind.

In the 'Vachnamrut', G. last. 4, this is referred to as 'Badhitaanuvrutti'- Badhita+anuvrutti. Badhita means awareness of connectivity. When your vrutti turns inward it is called anuvrutti. To follow something or someone is called anuvrutti. Thus, awareness of connectivity with something or someone is called 'Badhitaanuvrutti'. 'Badhitaanuvrutti' is explained in a different context in the Vachnamrut. There, Shriji Maharaj has explained a negative aspect of Badhitaanuvrutti. He says, if someone has already renounced worldly pleasures and yet, if the thoughts about the same arise in him/her; it is because his anuvrutti is fixed there. Let's understand this with an example of a vessel. Say you leave a strong fragranced food item in a container for several hours. Now, even if you empty out the contents of the vessel and wash it, yet a trace of its smell remains in the vessel.

The denser our vrutti becomes, more it reflects in all our day to day activities. That is called 'Badhitanuvruti'. If you take it in a positive sense, then, it will allow you to practice devotion in your social activities as well. How is that? Say you chant Swaminarayan mantra before drinking water, or after you yawn or sneeze then that is said to have awareness of God in all those activities. In times of happiness, if you express a sense of gratitude towards God from within; then, you shall have 'Badhitaanuvruti' with Shriji Maharaj in those moments. Similarly, in times of sorrow, you should remember God with intense emotions. Likewise, in times of celebrations too one should remember God. During the days of Navratri one should recollect the Raas Utsav of Panchala. During the days of Diwali one should remember the Annakut Utsav of Gadhada and Shriji Maharaj seated in the middle of a Deepmala at Gyan Baug. On the day of Holi one should recollect the Rangotsav. During monsoon one should recollect the description of Lord Swaminarayan being completely drenched as described in scriptures like 'the Dhyaan Manjari'. During the month of Shravan one should imagine Shreeji Maharaj taking bath at the river Ghela.

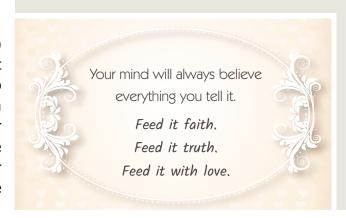
Like this, there are numerous other episodes through which your Badhitaanu Vrutti will become more and more positive. This is the art of increasingly diversifying your vrutti in Shriji Maharaj in various different ways.

Some people listen to Katha (holy narration) whilst doing household chores or driving. That type of listening is not fruitful. There are two types of Katha. One is an intense type of Katha which talks about correcting your habits or imbibing good virtues in you. Those should be listened with concentration. Katha is for listening while sitting still. When you are

listening to Katha, your mind, ears and intellect should all be focused on the contents of Katha. If these three are focused, then and then only, you will have the perception of listening to Katha. After listening, you should pick those points of the Katha that align with your spiritual journey. After that, you ponder upon those selected points and then by constant recollections those things will manifest in your self. That is the process. Second type of Katha is about live episodes or inspirational events. You can listen to such Katha while driving. However, it is best to listen to Dhun or Kirtan while performing chores or daily activities.

Above everything else, with awareness, through your breathing process, if you experience the Mantra and aura of Lord Swaminarayan, then that is the highest order of devotion. You may not be able to have the awareness of the Moorti everywhere. But, through the breathing process, as much impact of the Mantra is projected on your consciousness, the Moorti of Lord Shree Swaminarayan will become still within your heart easily when you do Pranayaam, Mansi Puja or meditation. This is the matter of how to keep awareness of God in daily activities by stable Badhitanu Vrutti.

- Lalji Bhagat Jnan Baug, Vadtal.





THE GOSPEL OF LIFE DIVINE Swami Bhanuprakashdasji

A Volume of Vedic Canons - 2

Lord Swaminarayan has emphesised on Vedic scriptures. Among the followers of Swaminarayan Holy Fellowship, mainly two volumes have gained great reverance and they are Vachanamritam and Shikshapatri. Shikshapatri is an ideal guide for practical, social, religious, domestic, political life of various classes of people following this Holy Fellowship.

This small booklet is the essence of universal knowledge contained in a compact nut shell form. It is like an ocean contained in an earthen water pot. One can visualize the farsightedness of Lord Swaminaravan in this small booklet. While the Vachanamrita is delivered in day-to-day language used by a common man. It expresses the graceful speeches of Lord Shree Swaminarayan in easily comprehensible language and style.

On the auspicious day of Vasant Panchami, Dt. 12-02-1826 i.e. before 195 years, Lord Swaminarayan had written Shikshapatri at Vadtal village of Kheda district in Gujarat state. This Patri is smaller than 1/3 part of Shrimad Bhagwad Geeta, is not only Smriti of the Sampraday but it is also Shruti because the Lord has said, "My word is My another form" and thus he has instructed all of his wards to follow (His words). This booklet presents its contents in 212 verses. The instructions given in these 212 verses do not discuss any mysterious topics of philosophy but in the form of this Shikshapatri Lord Swaminarayan has given a ladder to the average common people to live their material worldly life comfortably and then uplift oneself to the divine life and thus to elevate oneself to divinity.

In Shikshapatri Lord Swaminarayan has given importance to Holy Fellowship as well as to local religious faiths. The individual should play his role appropriately at the place where he lives. He may be a king, a household person, an Acharya, Brahmachari, Saint, married woman, widow, male or female but their ways of living can never be equal. So each one of these has to perform his duty in a special way. It should be performed in such a way that public dealing remains clean and spiritual life leads to elevation of self and soul. In this respect the booklet of

Shikshapatri can serve as a potential guide.

Shikshapatri can be regarded as supplementary to Bhagwad Geeta. Shikshapatri is an outstanding volume written on the values of human conduct coupled with moral duties and religion presented during the period of last 300 years. Lord Swaminarayan has accepted the fact that Hindus following Sanatan Dharma worship various deities, but the root cause of all incarnations, the Supreme Lord is our beloved God for worship and we have realized liberation through His service and devotion. This has been strongly emphasized by Him but at the same time He has passed instruction to worship the group (Panchayatan) of five deities – Vishnu, Shiv, Ganesh, Surya and Parvatiji.

He has ordained that "You should not understand any difference between Vishnu and Shiva. While during travel it Shivalay comes on the way they should go there for Darshan. And it has been instructed by Him to celebrate the Shivratri festival. You should not follow religion without faith and devotion and should avoid association with lusty fellows. Also he has instructed in Shikshapatri to remain away from fake Gurus, cults and deceptors. In this way

he has made great efforts to remove blind faith and defect in superstitions. He has also taught practical wisdom of social life. 195 years before this date he has instructed people not to pass urine or spit in the garden or on the bank of river or tank. Also he has touched the economic aspect of life. One should incur expenses in view of one's income and should keep as much number of animals which can be comfortably maintained. In case of dealing of give and take between father-son, brotherbrother, frriend-friend about land, gold, wealth, money written statement should be made. These precepts of Shikshapatri are for people of all castes, category and religion. If people from any class follow this Shikshapatri they will get exemplary happiness in life.

Thus all the imperatives given by Lord Swaminarayan in His Shikshapatri stated - is an essence of all Smriti volumes. For that reason this booklet is also an important volume serving as a moral lighthouse even today.





What exactly do thousands of people get by simply visiting temples?

Why thousands of years ago our ancestors created temples?

When do we visit temples? During fasts, festivals, New Year, when we get a new job, new car, new house, after marriage; the list is long. Somewhere, each person has his own association attached or some materialistic approach to visit temples and sometimes we visit just to say 'Thank You God.' Do you really think thousand years ago, temples were constructed just because of the same reasons?

What's the actual reason to construct temples? Why did we need temples? There were temples, which were created in a span of

more than hundred years. Why? We believe the truth is, temples were constructed to receive the divine power in its intensified form.

Let's make it simple. To catch the sound waves, we need a cellphone. Similarly, to catch the natural intensity of the Divine Power, we need a powerful tool, that is a temple. So we can say that, to establish the cosmic connection, temples were created as a powerful tool. This is one of the possibilities; to touch the dimension, which has created us, this world, this universe. And to establish the connection with other dimensions of the universe, our ancestors not only established divine structures in the temples, but they consecrated them as well. Consecration doesn't mean that idols will start walking as a human being; consecration infers to energy idols. These idols are energized. The moment we sit in front of those idols, we feel energized. As if God has answered all our prayers. This happens only because of those divine energies. Our body mechanism catches this positive energy and we feel more aligned, feeling a different spark within us. It's like the way we feel positive and negative vibes from people around us, as energy system is derived from our thought process, and other person can feel that same energy. Similarly, when we visit a historical temple, we feel a lot of positive vibrations. If you are sensitive enough, you will definitely feel the same. There are many temples, where energy is such that we become highly emotional and can't stop crying. Maybe you feel guilty of the deed that you think is wrong. These kinds of temples make you feel melted, they make you feel lighter and relaxed.

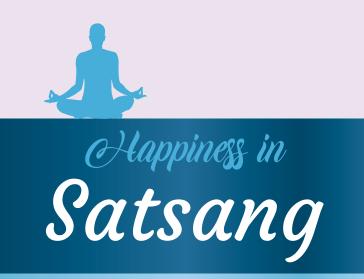
Old temples were energy centres, which were constructed for the deep transformation for the human being, that's the reason, we take bath before entering the temple so that our body will be more receptive. Temples were constructed to make our connection with the cosmos, where we feel connected with the dimensions of the universe. That's the reason, whenever we visit temple, we sit for sometime with our eyes closed. It doesn't matter what you do, what you eat, how much do you earn, at one point in our life we all feel

the need to connect ourselves with the source of creation. We want to feel that energy which has created us; temple is the door of that road.

We don't say it's only possible by visiting a temple. If you have a temple like environment at home, or have consecrated idol, that can also help you to make your connection with the cosmos. We should be around this divine energy. We should go to consecrated places. Specially, if children less than 14 years old visit consecrated spaces often, their adolescence issues can be resolved at the right age.

Temples or consecrated spaces are doors to the dimension of our origin. It's a technology that helps our energy system to be aligned which helps you to gain a fresh perspective towards life. So whenever you visit temple or go near the consecrated idol, do feel the energy of that consecrated space.

This is not just a religion but a thought process. This is a science that was evolved millennia ago, which upgrades humans and this is still relevant. In this modern age, our outer appearance might have changed. But deep inside we are the same human beings. That's why all the Sanatan practices and science are still applicable. Through Sanatan ideology, we will get to know such practices and science. It is our past and it will be our future.



Mohanbhai Patel, U.S.A.

2. Good character:

"My followers - man and woman may not get involved in adultery." (Verse -18) "My Satsangi may not do work of stealing even for good cause of Dharma." (Verse -17)

Shri Hari has set out high standards of moral behavior which are very essential for good human beings living in the society. Such standards serve as an ideal for others to follow, purify our mind and soul, and clears our way going towards Akshardham. The five vows are to be taken as follows:

1. I will not eat meat, 2. I would not drink wine, 3. I will not steal, 4. I will not do adultery; and keep no illicit relationship with woman. 5. May not eat outside-food "BIN KHAPATO NAHI KHAT."

Shri Hari also designed beautifully daily work program as follows:

- 1. My Satsangi may get up daily before the sun rise and after remembering the Lord may go for bath. (Verse 49)
- 2. After brushing teeth, may take shower with clean and pure water and after that may wear Pooja dress Dhoti and Khes. (Verse 50)
- **3.** May do Tilak and Chandalo as well as Pooja as suggested by Bhagwan Swaminarayan.

- **4.** As per the Shikshapatri, after Pooja one may follow their own routine work of livelihood.
- **5.** "May go to Bhagwan's temple during evening time daily and sing kirtan of God and chant the name of God loudly." (Verse 63).

Thus, Shriji Maharaj has taught each and every aspect of our life and wants us not to be lazy, but active.

For our soul-uplifting Shreeji Maharaj advised us in various ways to achieve our goal.

Summarized as follows:

- 1. "My followers have to do fasting happily on Ekadashi Day." (Verse-78)
- 2. "My followers may have to listen/read/study the eight Satshastra, the four Vedas, the Vyas Sutra, the Shreemad Bhagwat Puran, the Vishnu Sahasranaam of the Maha Bharat, the Shrimad Bhagvad Geeta, the Vidur niti, Vasudev Mahatmya and the Yajnavalkya Smruti." (Verse-93 to 96)

Shri Hari studied all (ancient vedic scriptures) during His young age and at that time prepared a summary of all the scriptures called the "Gutko" As a father and a teacher Dharmdev realized and felt Ghanshyam is really an incarnation of God.

In the Shikapatri Shriji Maharaj put highest spiritual knowledge about Dharma, Bhakti, Vairagya, Jnan, Maya, Atma, Paramatma etc. in a very precise, simplest and convincing way. Otherwise, in spirituality it is very hard to comprehend and understand concepts unless it is properly understood. Verses 103 to 108 are the heart of the Shikhapatri as follows:

- 1. Righteous conduct, according to the Shrutis and the Smrutis is called Dharma" (Verse 103).
- 2. "With Knowledge of the glory of Bhagwan as well as immense love and affection for Him is called Bhakti or true devotion" (Verse

103).

- **3.** Detachment from everything except for Shri Krishna Bhagwan is called "Vairagya" (Verse 104).
- **4.** To know precisely real form of Jiv, Maya & Ishwar is called "Jnan" (Sloka 104).
- 5. Soul (Jiv) resides in the heart and is like an atom but enlightening and knower. By its own knowledge capacity is spread throughout body from toenail to (hair/shikha). It is indivisible, eternal, indestructible, (Verse 105).
- 6. "Maya is known as composed of three modes of nature Rajas(mode of passion), tamas(mode of inertia), Satva(mode of goodness); and darkness, energy of Bhagwan Shri Krishna and It has power to create relationship between Jiv and body (Verse 109).

Just as the soul resides in the heart; likewise, Ishwar resides within a soul and operates from within. Ishwar is independent and Giver of fruit of all actions of the soul (Verse 107).

- 7. Ishwar Parbhrham Purusottam shri Krishna Bhagwan is our beloved God, appropriate for worship and the cause of all incarnations of Bhagwan (Verse 108).
- **8.** "First, understanding that our own soul is different from own physical body, subtle body as well as causal body, identifying oneself as Brahman and then performing devotion towards Lord Krishna" is the best technique to achieve our goal for liberation (Verse 116).

Shri Hari gave us super knowledge - essence of the Vedas/spirituality which can be learnt and understood through an absolute saint who may lead us to the path of Akshar Dham. There one liberated soul may get perfect peace, happiness and bliss from Swaminarayan Bhagwan.

Shriji Maharaj is concerned about big virus-KUSANG (bad association). He said, "please do not associate with six type of persons such as thief, sinner, intoxicated pretender, lustful and cheater by malign techniques "(Verse 27). "Also, do not associate with man who is pretending bhakti and spiritual knowledge and going after woman, money as well as tasteful for eating (Verse 28).

"My follower has to act to protect oneself as well as other person during the time of natural calamities and unfavorable situation created by men as well as health problems; no other solution (Verse 119") This is best advice in context of unusual time facing people due to spread of Covid virus pandemic throughout the world. Also, Shriji Maharaj teaches us to be careful while living on this planet as follows:

"My followers may not do monetary transaction with even friends and son without written agreement with witness" (Verse-143) "My followers must know that they may spend money according to income; anybody spends more than their earning may invite Big problem/misery" (Verse 145). Here, Shri Hari is concerned about economic welfare of a person.

"My followers may keep record of earning as well as expense" (Verse 146). "My devotees who are householders, should donate ten percent of annual earning yearly and those who are poor may give five percent of their earning" (Verse 147). "My followers may do service their father, mother, Guru, as well as persons needing medical services during period of whole life time" (Verse 139).

This is great human service call by Shri Hari.

Here we tried to highlight main core points which shape our destiny for living better life on earth as well as after death. Worth to read entire Shikhapatri with full attention and interest so we may appreciate in our heart vision of our Bhagwan.

Jay Swaminarayan



Attitude of Gratitude

At a building construction site, lots of poor labourers were working there and their small children used to hold on to one another's shirt and play "train-train".

One child would become the engine and others would become bogies.

Every day, these children used to take turns to become the engine and the bogies.

But, there was one small boy in shorts who used to hold one small green **cloth** in his hand and become the guard daily.

So, once I went to him and asked him. "son, don't u also wish to become an engine or a bogie some time?"

He softly replied, "Sir, I don't have a shirt to wear so how will the other children catch me to make the train?

 $I \, could \, see \, the \, slight \, we tness \, in \, his \, eyes.$

But, it gave me a lesson... he could have cried and sat at home and criticized his parents for not affording to buy him a shirt.

But instead, he chose another way to play and enjoy himself...

In life, we don't get all things we desire and we keep complaining...

I don't have a bike, I don't have car, I don't have this or that etc...

Life is like that ... we need to make it beautiful and be grateful for what we have ...

HAVE AN ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE.



MUD-FRIDGE

a scientific version of 200 years old craft

The milk and curds which were to be used by Lord Swaminarayan where being preserved in cupboard shaped Mud-fridge having 6 inches thick wall. The surprising fact about this Mud-fridge is that it had the capacity to maintain the freshness and purity of the milk and curds for nearly forty eight hours! This simple and manually operated Mud-fridge could compete with the modern electrical Mud-fridges! Fortunately we have been able to preserve this Mud-fridge, a Prasadi article is a piece of ancient craft at Jnan Bag in Vadtal.



