

॥ श्री स्वामिनारायणो विजयतेतराम् ॥

sahajANAND

The Eternal Bliss

The fickle mind has become steady,
And the heart falters no more.
For, brave Shree Swaminarayan,
Has adored my heart.
(Nishkulanand Swami)



MONKEY - MIND

Molded into Meditation

In the holy scriptures human mind has been compared with a monkey. This is the same spot situated on the bank of Gomati lake, where Lord Swaminarayan had made monkeys turning beads and chanting Mantras!

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Vachnamrut is Para-vani of Lord Swaminarayan. It contains all the quintessential secrets of all the Vedas. Lord Swaminarayan delivered holy sermons of Vachnamrut in simple language to the followers of His time. They realised one thing that the Lord of infinite universe had taken birth as a human being, and living as a human being among them, showered the wisdom to them which is now known as Vachnamrut.

Lord Swaminarayan has expressed His message explicitly in many Vachnamruts. The message may be about Incarnation - Incarnator (avtar-avatari) or about Upasana or about five religious vows (Pach Vratmans) to be followed by the saints or about the code of conduct for the followers. Lord Swaminarayan has emphasized more on egoless devotion. Lord Swaminarayan said that He would not like an egoistic person. Shreeji Maharaj said that the lustful person would spend his time in one corner and fulfill his goal of devotion. But the self-centered, egoistic person would never survive in the Holy fellowship. Lord Swaminarayan has conveyed many such elements in these discourses.

Only Dev, the temple, five times Aarti etc. may not help us to flourish the Sampraday. We strongly believe that the propagation of the Sat-shastras of the Sampraday can strengthen the faith for all time. The scriptures of the Swaminarayan Sampraday are - Shree Shikshpatri, Shree Vachnamrut, Shree Satsangijeevan and Shree Bhaktachintamani. Lord Swaminarayan Himself wrote Shree Shikshpatri. It is a book of 212 verses in Sanskrit and the followers recite and read it everyday. Satsangi jeevan is a scripture which is understood by the scholars only, while the common followers understand it in discourses. Nishkulanand Muni wrote Shree Bhaktachintamani in a traditional style and the followers recite it for their worship. While Vachnamrut is a compilation of the discourses of the Lord.

Out of these four scriptures, the Vachnamrut is a compilation of discourses delivered and authenticated by Lord Swaminarayan Himself - a sheer compassion for the people. The four prominent saints had compiled Vachnamrut.

Whenever we talk about Vachnamrut, we have not to say anything new. We cannot interpret in our own way. We merely follow it. We follow the message of the Lord in its true sense. If we do this, we get the result. Otherwise everything is worldly. The wise Satsangi will be jitendriya (a person having control over his senses); he will not be cowed down by any thing, he will not be influenced by anyone. But the person having the worldly passions will care for all worldly things like who attended his function, how many of them are influential and who are not. Even the end result is also worldly. Nothing is done to please the Lord. Those who tread on the path of the Lord, achieve the true happiness.

Vachnamrut is the root of our Sampraday. So all should read it. Those who do not read should make a point to read it once in a year. Even reading once may enable him to understand one tenth of our God. That will provide him the guts for this Holy Faith. This will build one generation.



H. H. Acharya Shri
Rakeshprasadji Maharaj

Prelude



SHIKSHAPATRI

THE GOSPEL OF LIFE DIVINE



Shantikumar Bhatt

SHIKSHAPATRI AND PHYSICAL HEALTH

Shikshapatri is not only a scripture that leads you to spiritual bliss in heaven, but it is also a book of practical religion that would help you to live as happily in this world as in heaven.

There are two modes of achieving happiness in this life – through one's body and through one's mind. Your mind and your body, both must have soundness for achieving happiness.

“Perform well all your just duties and obligations in this world and expect to live happily for a hundred years” – so says the sage of the Upanishad...

If you live a proper well-disciplined life, your faculties of listening with ears, perceiving with eyes, tasting with the tongue, smelling with the nose should remain as sharp as ever. Such an active life is possible if one follows the tenets of Shikshapatri.

The Venerable Rishi of the Veda says:

*With steady limbs,
Hands raised in prayer;
May we spend our life,
In service of gods.*

This shows that the body is as important as mind in spiritual progress.

The body is usually considered the temple of God. Therefore, in the Swaminarayan way of devotion we always put great emphasis on the health of the body.

It is through the body that one enjoys the happiness of worldly life. Though the pleasures of worldly life can never be lasted in

themselves, yet the domestic life is not entirely worthless. If one learns to lead a balanced worldly life, this world is not entirely “a well of tears” for him as some pessimists tend to think. The sword in itself is not good or bad. It can be an instrument of violence in the hands of an ill-tempered man but it can also serve as an instrument of protection against danger.

Shreeji Maharaj often used to say that one who is happy in his body is usually happy in all other aspects.

In Shikshapatri Lord Swaminarayan has laid down such rules for conducting life as would lead to happiness. Let us enumerate some of his precepts in this regard:

Shreeji Maharaj says: “A person who follows the non-violent way of good conduct leading to the welfare of the community as laid down in Shreemad Bhagwat and other authorized scriptures, attains great happiness in this world as well as in the next.”

Any act of violence sows its seeds in man's mind. These seeds lie dormant but when a situation leading to its fructification arises these seeds sprout into poison trees of violence. Man who takes to the course of violence harms himself and others. Therefore, Ahimsa, non-violence is held as an important tenet of good conduct.

Even if the smallest manifestation of life is destroyed, the violence sows its seeds in the mind of man. All violence is self-destructive. Therefore, Shreeji Maharaj says:

“Those who are our Satsangis, who follow our path, should never kill any insect or animal. One should not knowingly and with deliberation kill even such pests as lice, bed-bugs or gnats.”

Now this raises a question. Should we not destroy such pests as cockroaches, mice and

mosquitoes?

The right answer is “No.” They are created by God to teach us a lesson of cleanliness and hygiene. Lice warn you about the state of your scalp, that, it is infested with dandruff. So wash your scalp and hair regularly. Instead of learning such a lesson we see women exposing their hair to lice-pickers who catch the lice and kill them with their nails. Isn't it a shabby sight of slovenliness?

The bed bugs warn us that there are cracks in the walls and that the bed linen is not kept clean. Instead of following such rules of cleanliness that bed-bugs do not breed at all, these cruel men hunt bugs one by one at night, pierce them with a needle and put them in a bowl of water.

The mosquitoes come and sing in your ears. These musicians tell you that dirty water pools lie stagnant around you. Go and clean up and drain out the water. And do not keep your household stuffs in such a way that in their dark corners, these mosquitoes hide during the day.

In the same way cockroaches warn you to keep your house clean and not to leave food crumbs around. Don't let dirty pots and pans remain open overnight to attract the cockroaches. Your trunks, cupboards, and chests should be kept well painted and should be cleaned periodically and exposed to sunlight. The cockroaches breed in dark, warm and moist corners. Your clean house drives away the cockroaches.

Shikshapatri bans every use of tobacco. It also bans the use of opium and its derivatives, ganja or marijuana or hemp; these addictions destroy digestive system and affect the liver and kidney.

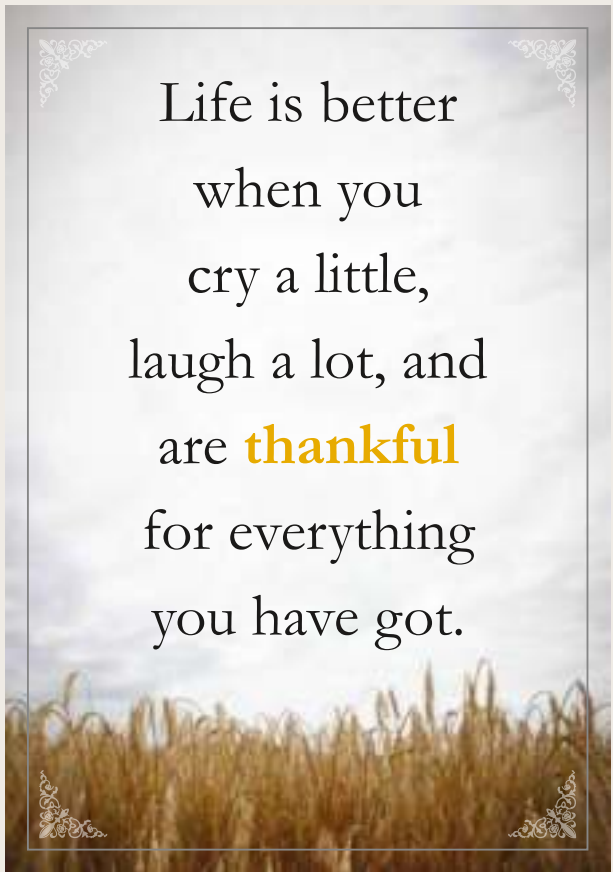
In Shikshapatri Shreeji Maharaj bans the use of animal flesh as food in any form. In old

days, there used to be animal – sacrifices and the flesh of the sacrificed animal was distributed as “graced” food, prasadi. Such cruel practices were severely banned by Lord Swaminarayan and His influence has eradicated this pseudo-religious practice of sacrifices. Our Way of Life bans the use of animal flesh, fish or eggs as food in any form. The physiology of human teeth clearly shows that man is not a flesh-eating animal.

Animal flesh as food is not hygienically acceptable. The slaughtered carcass attracts flies and bacteria, and the decay sets in. Bad smell soon starts emanating from the decay. This causes a thousand diseases of the stomach.

Those who eat eggs become victims of high cholesterol in their blood. It leads to heart disease.

(Contd.)



Life is better
when you
cry a little,
laugh a lot, and
are **thankful**
for everything
you have got.

Evedom

Parshottambhai Kacha - Dhoraji

Monghi Ba Of Bhuj

A LADY PEARL IN THE OCEAN OF SATSANG

As the name denotes 'Monghi Ba' was costly for Satsang of entire Kutch area. Hers was the great contribution in making a beginning in the field of Satsang in Kutch. She was a founder Satsangi even from the time of Sadguru Ramanand Swami.

Sadguru Ramanand Swami had sent two saints - Muktanand Swami and Devanand Swami to study Sanskrit at Bhuj from the hermitage of Loej. These two saints had stayed in an inn at Bhuj. Pilgrims frequently visited the inn and therefore the saints could not have proper atmosphere for study. They studied Sanskrit with a Shastriji. They begged for meal. It was the time when saints accepted begging from women too. Sometimes they used to go for begging from Monghiba; mother of Sundarji Suthar. Monghiba treated the saints with great feeling of respect so they thought to talk to her for accommodation.

The next day they supplicated Monghi Ba to arrange for a solitary small room for them to make their study comfortable. Monghi Ba talked about the saints' problem of a proper place to carry on study to her sons named

Sundarji and Hirji. She praised their behaviour. Hirjibhai advised his mother not to trust Sadhus. At the same time the saints came up there for begging. Their appearance made the two brothers feel peace at heart.

They said to Monghi Ba, "Mother, these saints are capable of soothing and pacify anyone. There is no harm in accommodating them in our house near the peepul tree." Then they asked the saints, "We have a room in spare but ghosts reside therein. Would you adjust to stay there?" The saints replied, "Oh! Yes. It would make no difference to us. The ghosts would not be able to harm us."

Both the saints came up to the wraith-like room; leaving the inn. At night both the saints were busy preparing their lessons in the light of lantern. There arrived so many ghosts. They asked, "Who are you?" Muktanand Swami replied, "We are the saints of Lord Swaminarayan." The ghosts said, "This room is our dwelling place. If you are to reside here, where would we go then?" Muktanand Swami said, "All of you go to Badrikashram and worship the Lord there." Saying so, Muktanand Swami took water and sprinkled over the ghosts and sent all of them to Badrikashram. Both the saints passed their night under the peepul

tree in sound sleep.

The following morning both the brothers came to the saints and asked, “Swamiji, How are you? Did the ghosts harass you?”

Muktanand Swami said, “All the ghosts had come together. We conferred upon them the rite of Vratman and sent them to Badrikashram to observe penance.”

Monghi Ba and her sons did not aspect such an answer from the saints. They felt that these were really the saints who had come to their house. From then onwards; mother and the two sons used to listen to the preaching of the saints. Day by day they began to cultivate the feelings of inclination for Satsang and they accepted the holy fellowship of Lord Swaminarayan. Sundarjibhai recommended the Shastriji, “Please teach these two saints well. Teach them twice in a day as they are true saints.”

Sundarjibhai talked to Gangaram Malla about these two saints. Gangaram Malla came to have the Darshan of Muktanand Swami and Devanand Swami with Valji Malla. They were pleased with Muktanand Swami’s preaching. They accepted Satsang. After completion of the study of Sanskrit, the two saints stayed there for some time.

Sundarjibhai, Hirjibhai. Gangaram Malla, Valjibhai Malla etc. came to Loej with the two saints. They had the Darshan of Sadguru Ramanand Swami for the first time.

Then the two saints came to Bhuj with the four new Satsangis.

Thus, Satsang had a good beginning in Bhuj. There is no exaggeration in saying that the credit goes to Monghi Ba.

A Potter & 3 DONKEYS

A potter had three donkeys and only two ropes. He wanted to go for a bath, so he decided to tie the donkeys with the rope, but the ropes were two, and donkeys, three.

He took advice of an intelligent man. The man said, “You tie the two donkeys in a way that the third donkey sees them, and then just enact that you are tying the third donkey, just act it out.” The potter did exactly as advised.

After taking his bath, when he came back and saw, the one whom he had not tied, that donkey stood as if tied, at his place.

The potter freed the two donkeys and started walking, but was dumbstruck to see that the third donkey did not move from his place. He pushed him, still he didn’t move. The potter asked the man again, man asked, “Did you set him free?” The potter answered, “I didn’t tie him in the first place.” The man answered, “Only you know that the donkey isn’t tied, but the donkey feels he is tied. You will have to act falsely to set it free.”

The potter did as advised, and to his surprise, the third donkey, now started walking. What was it that stopped or obstructed the third donkey?

Didn’t he hold a chance? • Didn’t he have the path to walk? • Did he lack support? (His master kicked him to make him move).

Everything was there. Then what stopped him from walking?

Readers, with us too it happens like the third donkey. With false illusions, false embarrassments, disappointment and frustrated mind, with this imaginary rope, we are entwined.

I am reluctant • I don’t get chance • I don’t get support • I can’t do this etc... etc.

All these are false ropes that bind us. We need to set free from such false illusions which stand as blocks in our mind.

The one who wishes to fly, gets the sky. The one, who wishes to sing, gets the song. The one, who wishes to walk, finds the path!!!!

Whats & Whys

Answers to the questions of curious seekers

Tilak - Chandalo

(Chanting the Name of God)

Tilak Chandalo is the most significant aspect of our Holy Fellowship. You can recognize the follower of Lord Swaminarayan from the crowd of thousand people just by his forehead bearing Tilak Chandalo. Tilak Chandalo should not be a compulsion for us but it should be done with great love and understanding. Then you will feel proud to have Tiak Chandalo on your forehead. We should do it because it is the command of our beloved Lord Swaminarayan. This type of feeling behind this process will cultivate love for our lord which leads to strengthening of our devotion.

The holy scriptures say that without putting Tilak Chandalo on our forehead, the entire ritualistic process of Pooja becomes null and void, as there are some significant auto suggestions involved in the process of making Tilak Chandalo. Let us go in the details of this subject.

Bhagwan Swaminarayan has written in Shikshapatri Verse 41, 42, 43 that " My disciples, initiated by the respective Acharya Shree of both the dioceses i.e. Vadtal and Amdavad gadi, shall put on their forehead, chest, both the arms a vertical Tilak mark.

This Tilak mark shall be made with either Gopi-chandan or sandal wood paste with saffron etc. received as Prasad after the Puja. And in the middle of this Tilak shall put on round mark either with Gopi-chandan or with red kumkum powder received as Prasad of

Shri Radha or Laxmiji.

Now we shall have a look into the process involved in putting these Tilak. It is not just the ritualistic process but it contains deep meaning. This process leads one to the state of awareness. There are some Mantras to be spoken while putting on the Tilak mark. Now let us understand the purpose behind it.

The mantra for putting tilak on forehead is **Om Vasudevay Namah**, for tilak on chest - **Om Sankarshanay Namah**, for tilak on left arm - **Om Aniruddhay Namah**, and for tilak on right arm - **Om Pradyumnay Namah** - should be spoken.

In Gadhada Vachanamrit First-78 Shriji Maharaj says: "Only one Who is Purushottamnarayan is Himself Vasudev, Sankarshan, Aniruddha and Pradyumna - making divine square of Himself in terms of divine power."

So here, these four aspects have close relation with the various energy aspects of Lord Swaminarayan Himself. In this way, the names which are spoken during this process carry a very deep meaning. When we put Tilak on the chest and speak Om Sankarshanay Namah. In that *Sankarshan*, the power of knowledge is hidden and its function is the spread of the scriptures and destruction of the evil. So while putting Tilak on the chest, such feeling should be held that "O Lord Swaminarayan! Burn all passions and bodily desires, make me chaste and unite me with Your real form."

For the Tilak on the right arm, you chant Pradyumna, in which sovereignty is hidden and its function is to spread religion. In practical life also, we perform many auspicious activities with our right hand; so speak with a firm mind “O Lord Swaminarayan! Grant me the firmness to follow Your commands, please be kind to me.” It has to do with the religious element. It inspires to be firm in following religious codes of conduct.

While putting Tilak on the left arm, we address Aniruddha. In that, we find strength and light and its function is to protect from evil and offer philosophy. So while putting Tilak there, utter silent prayer, “O Lord Swaminarayan! Kindly protect me from the internal enemies who stand as obstacles in the path of Your devotion.” Here there is a prayer for the Energy aspect against the evil forces which creates the obstacle in your spiritual journey.

While putting Tilak on the forehead we speak Vasudev. The Nirgun aspect of God (means free from three attributes of Maya - Sattva, Rajas and tamas) is expressed through this word, so while putting Tilak on the forehead we should silently pray, “O Lord Swaminarayan! Kindly grant me such understanding that I can do Your Kirtan-Bhakti by splitting the barriers of three bodies and three stages.”

This is a very important process. It helps the aspirant to reach the Brahmanhood, which should be an ideal for every seeker.

So the rituals prescribed to be done before Puja and the Mantras related to them are the remover of **Dehbhav** (means the sense that I am the body) and **Aham Tattva** (means I am the doer) and after removing both, the connection with God's form becomes very gentle.

- Lalji Bhagat

(Contd.)



Shree Swaminarayan

most practical and active mystic

Swami Narayan was a wise man of affairs. He was not a sentimentalist, nor a doctrinaire, nor an altogether other-worldly ascetic. He was the most practical and active mystic in the best sense of the term. He had deep insight into human character and things. Had it not been for this, he would never have been able to lead such a big religious movement, nor lay its foundation so deep. Traces of this deep wisdom are found at every step in the course of the movement. The way he trained the sadhus, built big mandirs, divided the country in different dioceses, harmonised the relations between the sadhus and the laymen, etc., in all this he reveals himself as a man of profound wisdom and insight.

- Manilal C. Parekh

Shree Swaminarayan,
3rd edi., p.173



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

19. Akshar Bhuvan at Vadtal :

It is the first Museum of Swaminarayan Fellowship. Acharyashri Viharilalji Maharajshri, the third Acharyashri of Vadtal diocese, conceptualized and created it.

Viharilalji Maharajshri served the post of the Acharya for 20 years i.e. from V.S.. 1935 to V. S. 1955. He moved around the villages in satsang continuously. He had the fortune to have Darshan of the articles used and blessed by Sahajanand Swami. At the same time he became unhappy because those things were not kept well and looked after properly. He elucidated the need of a museum to those who had those things with them. He strived hard and convinced the collectors to dedicate their precious collection to Akshar Bhuvan, Vadtal. Acharyashri Viharilalji Maharajshri succeeded in his mission and the Holy Fellowship got its first museum at Vadtal.

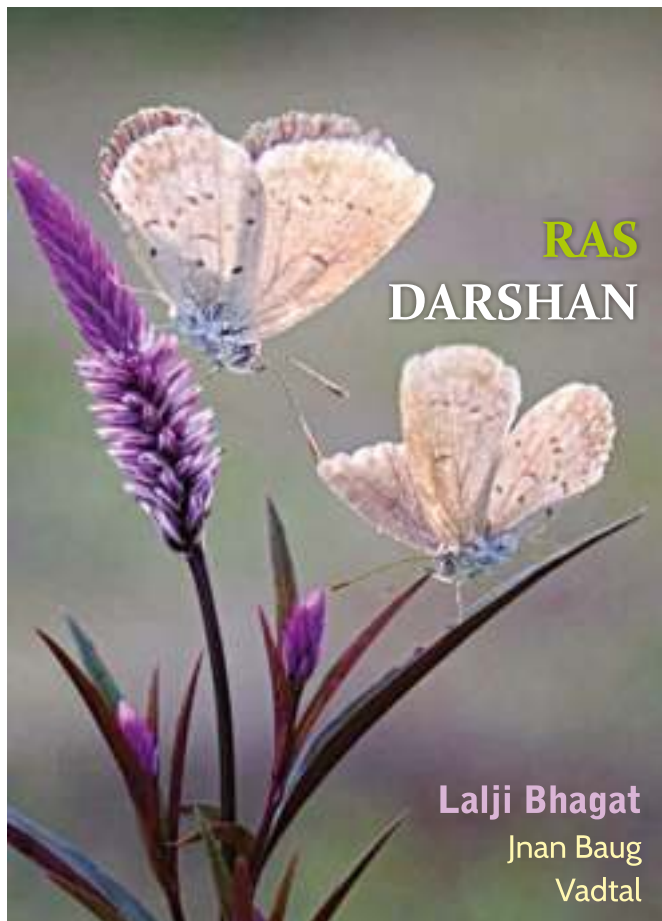
Akshar Bhuvan, located at the southern side of the Laxminarayan Dev Temple at Vadtal, is a three storied grand building. The ground floor is a big store house, while the first floor houses the wooden image of Shree Ghanshyam Maharaj in standing posture and the second floor has the wooden image of Shree Ghanshyam Maharaj in sitting posture along with the prasadi articles. These wooden images

of Ghanshyam Maharaj are considered the finest specimen of the wood craft.

The things collected here are varied and invaluable. The collection is rich; the museum possesses hundreds of items. Every article has a story. The noting down of stories connected with these things is another strenuous work. Yet, the 12 door hindolo prepared by Nishkulanand Swami, the crown presented by the queen Kushalkunverba of Dharampur state, the aarti used by Shri Hari at the time of the consecration ceremony of Shree Laxmi-Narayan Dev at Vadtal, a rare manuscript of the epic Mahaharat, the hand written Shikshapatri, chakhdis (wooden footwear) worn on different occasions, charnrvinds (image of Shree Hari's feet) the gagar (a copper utensil) used to fill water for abhishek veedhi at the time of Vadtal Mandir inauguration ceremony, the chariot, beds, ornaments, rosaries, kanthis, scriptures, clothes, money, sticks etc are exhibited in this museum for Darshan.

We may say that Akshar Bhuvan has the biggest collection of religious things related to Lord Swaminarayan and Swaminarayan Fellowship and its contribution is appreciated by the scholar since its inception. This example is followed by other temples of the Holy Fellowship since then.

(Contd.)



RAS DARSHAN

Lalji Bhagat
Jnan Baug
Vadtal

Harikrupa Tab Janiye ...

*Harikrupa tab janiye,
Jab upajat Vairag;
Mukt kahe tehi hot hei,
Sahaj vishay sukh tyag.*

(Muktanand Swami)

Take it as the grace of Hari when asceticism (renunciation) emerges from within. Muktanand Swami says that such spontaneous emergence of renunciation of sensual objects, is the grace of God.

In this world people interpret God's grace in different ways. For example, if an ordinary person happens to visit the house of a millionaire and watches pictures and images framed in gold plated frames hung on the walls of the gorgeous drawing room, He begins to think how rich this man is! But he has not seen his treasures and lockers. In the same way the prima face happiness available in this world is very slight and

meagre. Like the drawing room grandeur God has created artful device to attract the souls of human beings who do not know about the riches, treasures hidden in His abode. If you are stunned by the enchantment of His sensual objects just think of the great and rich paragon of happiness in His imperishable abode!

Of course this miracle is beyond the imagination of an ordinary soul. Before the happiness available in the abode of God, the worldly pleasures looks feeble and futile. But usually when you ask somebody, "How are you?" he would say "Thakorji has showered grace on me (I'm happy). There is nothing but joy in my family. Have two sons and have got both of them married and now they too have sons. My business runs very fine. Thakorji has showered a great deal of grace on me. His limitless bounty has descended on me." Like this an ignorant person believes the pleasure of worldly material as eternal ocean of happiness. He considers the momentary pleasure as eternal happiness. But he is thoroughly mistaken as he considers the momentary pleasure as the extreme grace of Hari. But Muktanand Swami says, "HARI KRIPA TAB JANIE, JAB UPAJAT VAIRAGYA". That should be regarded as genuine Hari Kripa (grace of God) which engenders and inspires non-attachment.

Those upon whom the grace of Shriji Maharaj has descended, have accepted the path of renunciation which means the happiness above and beyond this world. When the attachment from worldly objects dries up and attachment for God develops and when that attachment grows thick and fast, it shows that this feature is the right symptom of oncoming asceticism.

It is natural for an individual to try to detach oneself from the attraction for worldly material objects, but genuine grace of God can be experienced only when the attachment for worldly material object is uprooted thoroughly. The soul abandons all material objects and experiences love for total relinquishment only when the grace of Lord Swaminarayan descends upon him. When such real relinquishment is consolidated, the being of the person undergoes a change. Muktanand Swami says that such renunciation unites the soul with the Moorti of God.



The Purpose

Shastri Swami Bhanuprakashdasji
Porbandar

Step-well at Mangrol

Sahjanand Swami, after the demise of His guru Ramanand Swami, started giving a new shape to the Holy Fellowship with His charismatic personality and within a short span of only two weeks. He pondered on the demands of the society and the resources to meet those demands; He even thought about the solutions to eliminate those social problems. He started moving about the Sorath region aiming to strengthen the Holy Fellowship and the society and arrived at Mangrol port. Shree Swaminarayan Bhagwan celebrated many religious festivals as per the Vaishnav traditions with great festivity which were attended by a large number of people from the surrounding villages. The people of Mangrol provided best food and staying facilities to these devotees. But there was an acute water problem in those days; they had to bring water from far areas.

There was a stepwell at the outskirts of Mangrol but it remained unused as it was filled with dirt and dung. Yet, it was surrounded by many banyan trees. To get rid of the water shortage problem Shree Hari thought about cleaning and recharging that stepwell. He asked for the permission for that from Nawab Shree Badruddinji of Mangrol state which the Nawab willingly gave. Bhagwan Shree Sahjanand Swami, along with His followers and saints, worked for twelve days and cleaned the stepwell. The stepwell provided clean and sweet water. The Nawab and the people became very happy as they got a new source of water. Shree Hari bathed

Himself with fresh water of the stepwell and even sanctified it.

Shree Hari called the learned Brahmins and asked them to perform a Vishnuyaag sacrifice. After that ceremony Shree Hari allowed the people to make use of the water of that stepwell. This was the first activity of social welfare by Shree Hari. The Nawab of Mangrol realised that Sahjanand Swami was indeed a khuda in person!

Shree Swaminarayan Bhagwan had initiated religious awakening and social reformation movement from the day first. The movement was Vaidik and traditional too. It also aims to incorporate a sense of congeniality among the religion, and society. To make the society religious, the founder of the religion or the leader has to become social. Only then the society moves towards an ideal way of life. Bhagwan Shree Sahjanand Swami aimed for the upliftment of the soul and the society. Along with many divine virtues of Bhagwan Shree Sahjanand Swami, we find two virtues explicitly; which are lokabhimukhta (caring for the people) and loknishta (sincerity for the people). For social awakening, it is very necessary to know the plight of the society and how to remove it. There are four vital pillars for social service: 1. Education, 2. Health, 3. Social cooperation and 4. Public works. The Swaminarayan Fellowship has been doing these four on a large scale. The ruler or the government is responsible for their implementation. But the Hindu scriptures have considered them as the main sources to get punya. Ishtam yaagaadi, purtam khataadi, Yagna or sadavratt are

considered ishtkarma. While making roads, canals, to dig tanks, wells, stepwells or build or renovate Dharmshalas are considered purtkarma. Shree Sahjanand Swami found the people ignorant, insecure, dirty, suspicious and full of bad habits and were lost among various sects, vairagis and heads of various religions. Shree Sahjanand Swami wanted the upliftment of even the last person of the society. (He saw to it that the benefits of His services reach to them.) Shree Sahjanand Swami was a genius of the scriptures and so wanted to make all our cultural traditions alive as He felt our scriptures are universal textbooks of religion, culture and what not. Each scripture is a different school of culture. Consequently the social service was prevalent, is at present and will be in future.

The stepwell cleaning activity provides an insight into the dynamic character of Bhagwan Shree Sahjanand Swami!

Questions of Yaksh

Answers of Yudhisthira



Q. What is larger/ bigger than earth?

A. Mother.

Q. What is higher than the sky?

A. Father.

Q. What is faster than the wind?

A. Mind.

Q. What grows faster than the grass?

A. Worry.

Q. In this world, what is bigger than religion?

A. Compassion and wisdom.

Q. With whom there is no end to friendship?

A. With a virtuous, kind-hearted man.

Q. What is the secret behind never being unhappy?

A. The one who can keep one's mind in

control never becomes unhappy.

Q. What is the biggest wealth?

A. Education.

Q. What is the biggest profit?

A. Good health.

Q. What is the biggest joy?

A. Satisfaction.

Q. Who is the mind's biggest enemy?

A. Anger.

Q. Which disease/ illness doesn't have a remedy?

A. Greed.

Q. What is the biggest weirdness in life?

A. An ambition to live till time eternal. Every day we see so many people dying, still we think we are not going to die.

BRAHMAVIDYA, TRANSCENDENTAL SCIENCE!

Written by :

Sadhu Saunakmuni Dasji (Bhuj)

Translated by :

Prof. Madhusudan Vyas

Lord Swaminarayan generated a simple and easy flowing stream of the profound and complex sermons contained in the Vedas, Puranas, Smritis, Upanishads, and History Books.

Kishorilal Masharuwala a close disciple (of Gandhiji) and an inhabitant of Gandhi Ashram tells about the 'Vachanamritam', "The Vachanamritam is the collection of the nectarnal speeches of Lord Swaminarayan. It is indeed a gem of literature. I believe that a person pursuing spiritual attainment cannot progress

direction, the vestment worn by Him and the class and category of the people attaining the holy meeting and listening to the nectarnal sermon flowing from the divine mouth. The style of this volume is lucid, simple direct and easy going. It expresses profound thoughts in simple short words, clauses and sentences which can be easily comprehended by uneducated or less educated person, also it offers illustrations and examples to explain complex and difficult philosophical intricacies. The soul imbibes the taste of different visual objects by the eyes, and tastes other

material objects through the ears, the skin, the nose and the tongue. He enjoys all these objects and takes pleasure from it. But that fellow is the most ignorant who does not know himself and who has

not recognized his own happiness. The words spoken by Lord Swaminarayan in Vachanamritam suggest us how to get flowing on the path of self-awakening.

People try to get money by any means and search for happiness by getting gorgeous buildings, luxurious cars, tasty food, costly mobile phones, TV Sets, by visiting to five star hotels, restaurants, foreign countries, multiplex theatres, ultra modern shopping malls, merry gardens and they try to get permanent happiness from all of them. The Lord here considers all the people of this type as most ignorant fellows, because the happiness which depends upon other person, place or object can be easily stolen or snatched away. But the people like Narasinh Mehta, Mirabai, Prahmanand Swami, or Ladhiba from Bhuj who respectfully devoted their time for



without referring to a rich volume like Vachanamritam. A person who has studied and contemplated upon these volume shall not remain unsuccessful in life. There is no other volume so small as these one which can offer practical ways and solutions of obtaining spiritual attainment by disclosing spiritual secrets and philosophical aspects of religious elements." The special feature of these volume is that it describes the entire phenomenon of the religious assembly with its day, date, time and place, the spot on which the Lord seated Himself, in which

devotion remain peacefully happy though the entire world may give them pain and torture.

Today people take Selfie with mobile. It means they take their own photograph with their own hands. This selfie is just an external form (shape) of the body. But God has given us a camera called the eye, recorder called ears, and sensors called nose, skin, tongue we can catch the sights of various spots, objects, people and animals on the earth and store them in our conscience. But we do not use the eyes, ears, tongue, skin and nose to take our own selfie. We should use them to take the photograph of our conscience. In the spiritual aspect this selfie is called internal vision, inner consciousness or inward looking exercise.

When man gets tired of dullness of routine life he needs a change and takes tour to Shimla, Manali, Ooty, Dubai, Singapore etc. . There is no guarantee that change of place will bring peace in the life of that traveler. All material objects cannot guarantee the peace and ease of mind. The reason for boredom is not the work on hand, but its root cause is our attitude, aptitude and psychic response to that work. 'Satsang' means the coordination of (1) Service to the God, (2) Putting religious principles into practice, (3) The study of holy scriptures and (4) The guidance by sacred and saintly people. Good and bad qualities of one's nature can be traced and visualized by pressing the switch called Satsang. This type of self-realization can be achieved by obtaining the continuous coordination of Satsang and devotion. For this very reason genuinely sensible people opt for change of mind instead of change of air and change of place. Those who opt for change of mind do not need to struggle for change of place or change of atmosphere.

In this way The Vachanamritam is full of various types of secrets. The religious, philosophical dialogues in the Vachanamritam offer practicality and reality and put the listeners on the real and practical platform of self-realization!



A cow went to a jungle to graze. It was nearing dark. She saw a tiger coming towards her silently. She got scared and started running here and there. The tiger too started chasing her. While running, she saw a lake nearby. Scared, she got inside the lake. The tiger also got inside the lake. They noticed the lake wasn't too deep. And it was filled with mud puddle. The distance between them was too less. But he wasn't able to do anything. The cow started submerging in the puddle. The tiger though near, couldn't do anything. Both of them were stuck in the puddle, almost neck-deep. The tiger, though very near, couldn't catch hold of her. The tiger also started getting stuck in the puddle. They weren't able to move. In spite of the cow being near, the tiger wasn't able to catch hold of her. After a while, the cow asked the tiger, "Do you have a guru or Lord? The tiger roaringly said, "I am the Lord/owner of the jungle." The cow answered, "But what is the use of your power over here?" The tiger answered, "You too are stuck and about to die. Your condition is same as mine."

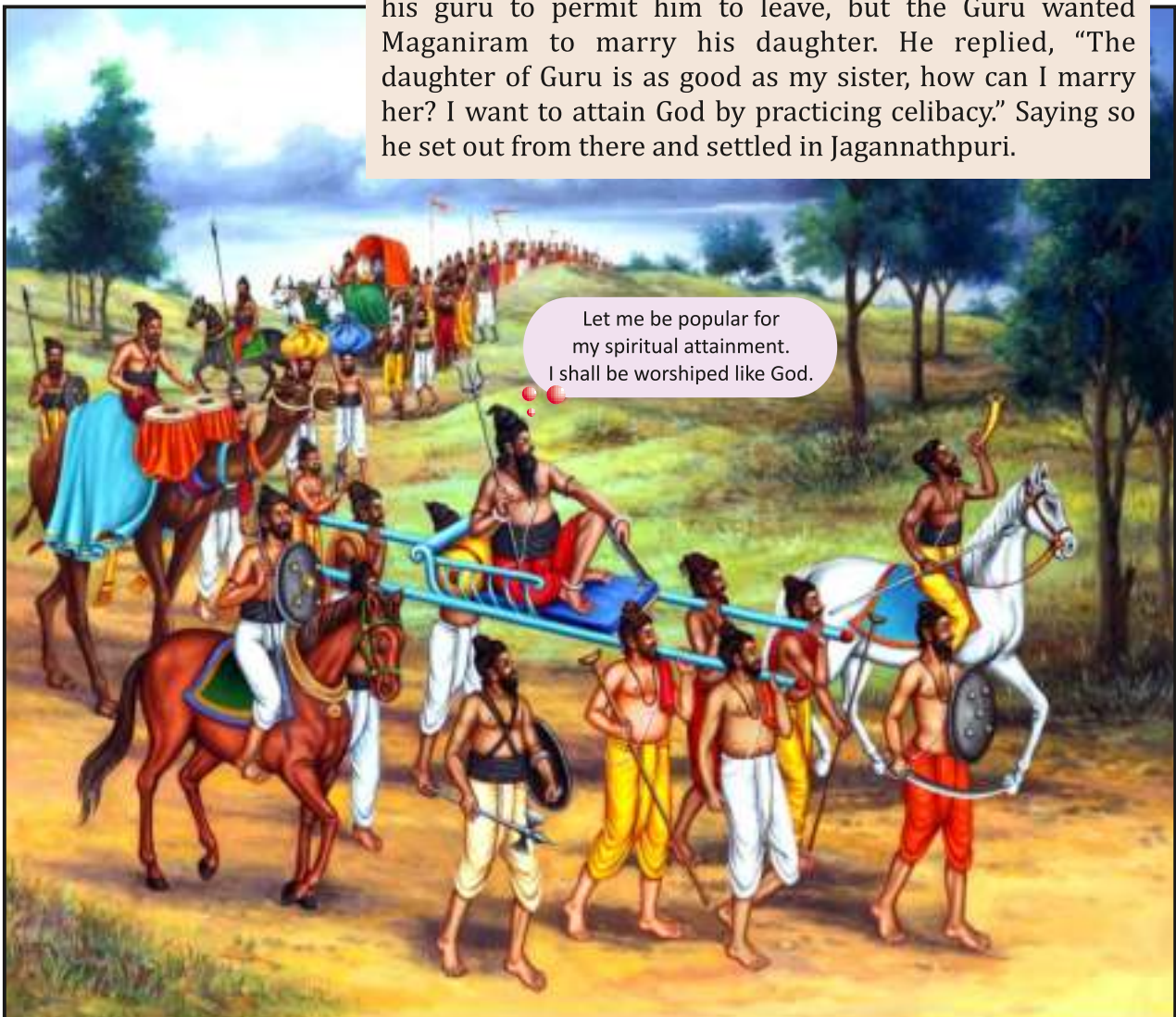
The cow, with utmost faith said, "Not at all. My owner, when returning home in the evening, won't see me, would surely come to search me here and taking me out of this puddle, will take me home. Who will come to take you?" After a while, a man came, indeed. He took the cow out of the puddle and took her home. While going, both were looking at each other in gratitude. They couldn't take the tiger out even while they wanted to because it was risky for them.

Cow is the symbol of a committed heart. Tiger is arrogant mind, and owner is Guru's symbol. The mud puddle is the world. And the struggle is the everyday battle of reality. To not rely on anyone is a good thing but to overdo is not good. Everyone needs a Guru to come out of a mud-like worldly mess.



Magniram

There lived a Brahmin in a South Indian region called Maganiram, with broken yogic achievement. Since his childhood he cherished a desire to attain God, so he renounced his home-life and traveled towards Bengal. Some one advised him to contemplate goddess Sharada worshipfully who could get him to God. By practicing special penance under the guidance of a Brahmin he could get goddess Sharada under his control. Maganiram asked his guru to permit him to leave, but the Guru wanted Maganiram to marry his daughter. He replied, "The daughter of Guru is as good as my sister, how can I marry her? I want to attain God by practicing celibacy." Saying so he set out from there and settled in Jagannathpuri.



The goal of attainment of God was forgotten due to his strong ego. He could get a number of followers as they were attracted by his Mantra-achievement. He visited monasteries and defeated great Master scholars, and finally came to Porbundar.

At Porbundar



Swaminarayan.....
who cares?" I will show
him my strength.

"One Who is known as
Swaminarayan is
putting up in Mangrol
today, He destroys the ego
of the egoist and has the
power to order people
like you to become His
disciple. Go and defeat
Him if you can. What
great name would
you get by defeating
small persons
like frogs?"



Maganiram encircled Mangrol and
threatened the king that he will downpour
stones from the sky if he will not pay Rs. 5,000.



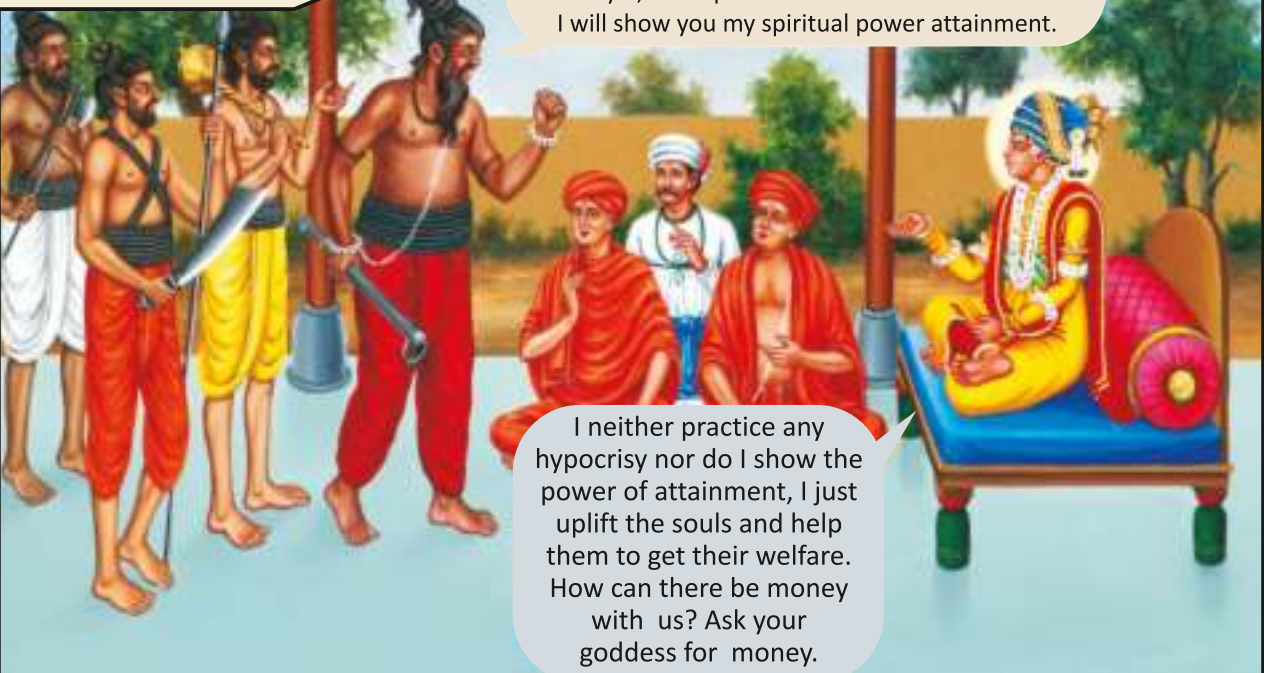
I will give you ten
thousand in stead of
five thousand rupees,
first you go and win over
Sahajanand Swami.

And if I turn over this
bowl, your state will be
turned upside down.



Burning with anger Maganiram arrived in
the holy meeting of Shri Hari.

Sahajanand Swami! What a great hypocrite you are.
Pay 5,000 rupees here and now otherwise
I will show you my spiritual power attainment.

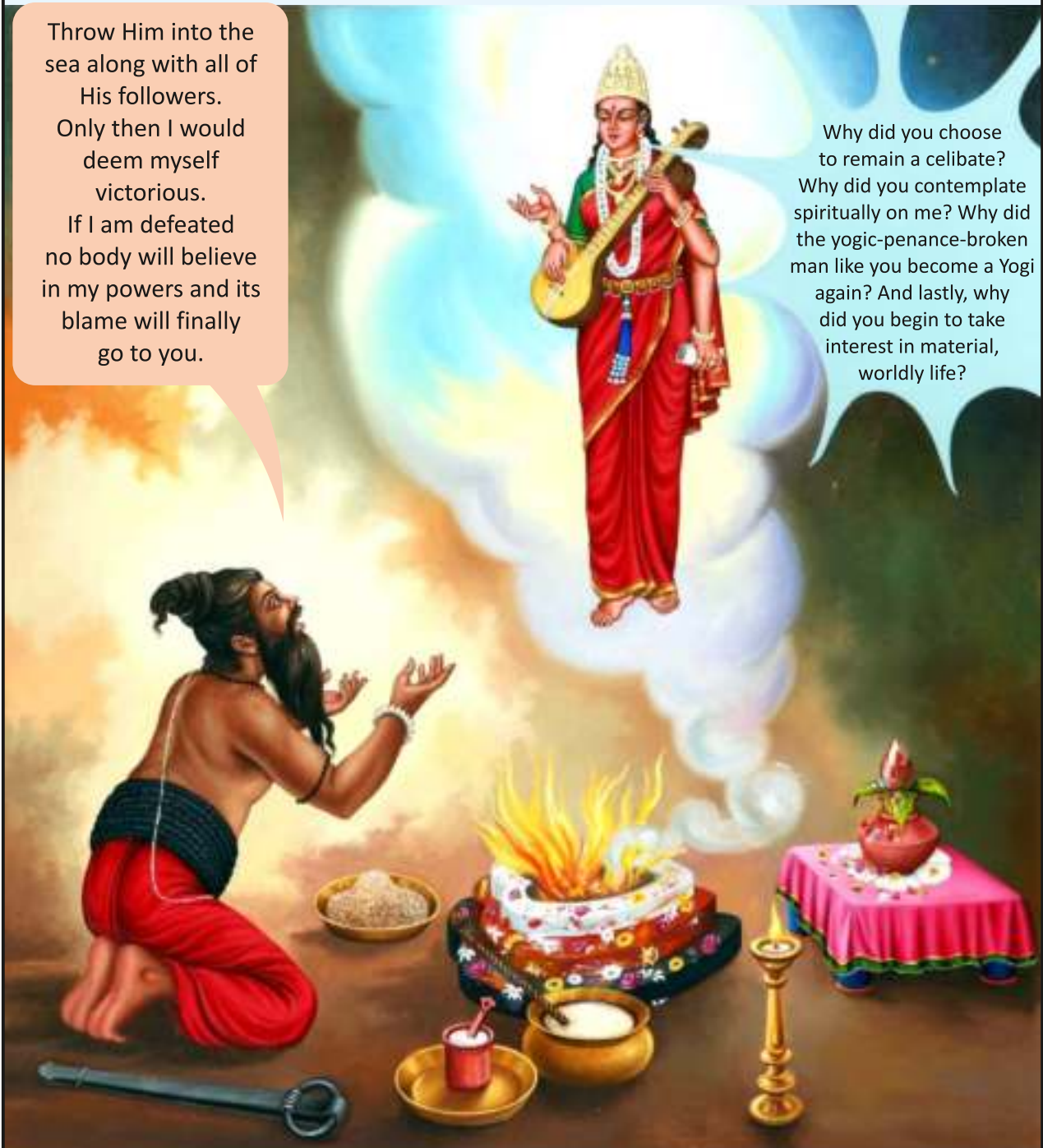


I neither practice any
hypocrisy nor do I show the
power of attainment, I just
uplift the souls and help
them to get their welfare.
How can there be money
with us? Ask your
goddess for money.

Maganiram went to his quarter and evoked Sharda Devi. She emerged before him and asked the reason for calling her : “What do you want; express your wish.” Magniram said, “Swaminarayan has insulted me. I have called you over hear to help me defeat him.”

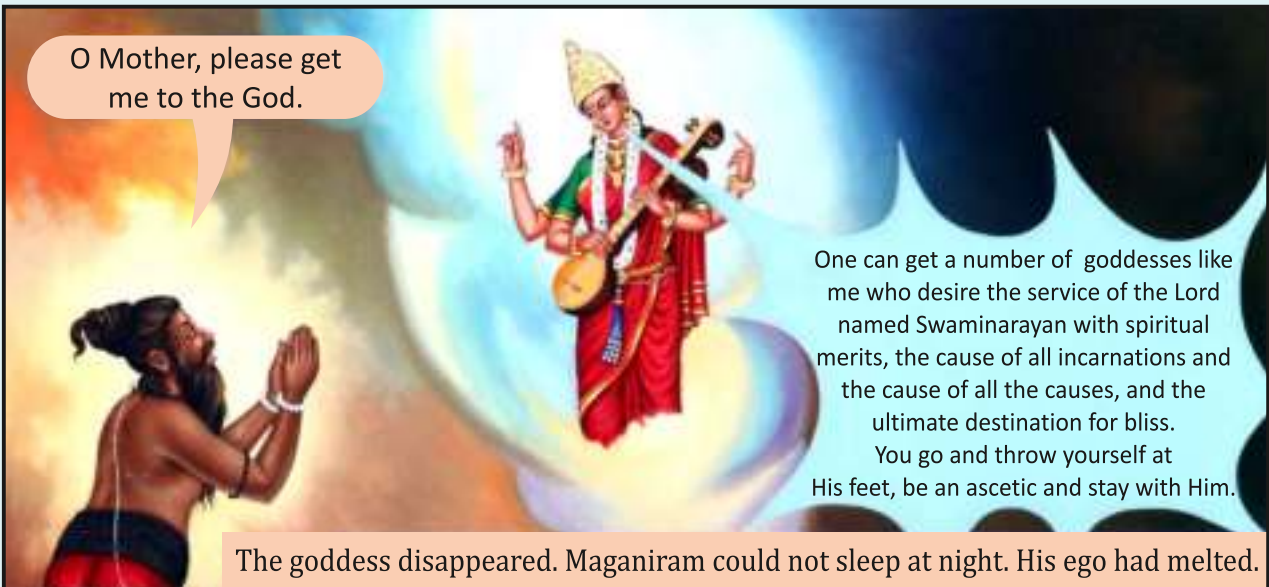
Throw Him into the sea along with all of His followers. Only then I would deem myself victorious. If I am defeated no body will believe in my powers and its blame will finally go to you.

Why did you choose to remain a celibate? Why did you contemplate spiritually on me? Why did the yogic-penance-broken man like you become a Yogi again? And lastly, why did you begin to take interest in material, worldly life?



Goddess Sharda said, “O Maganiram you have piled sins upon sins to satisfy your hunger. The pride of mantra attainment diverted you from the path of liberation. Have you lost your senses!” Maganiram regained his forgotten pure inclinations.

O Mother, please get me to the God.



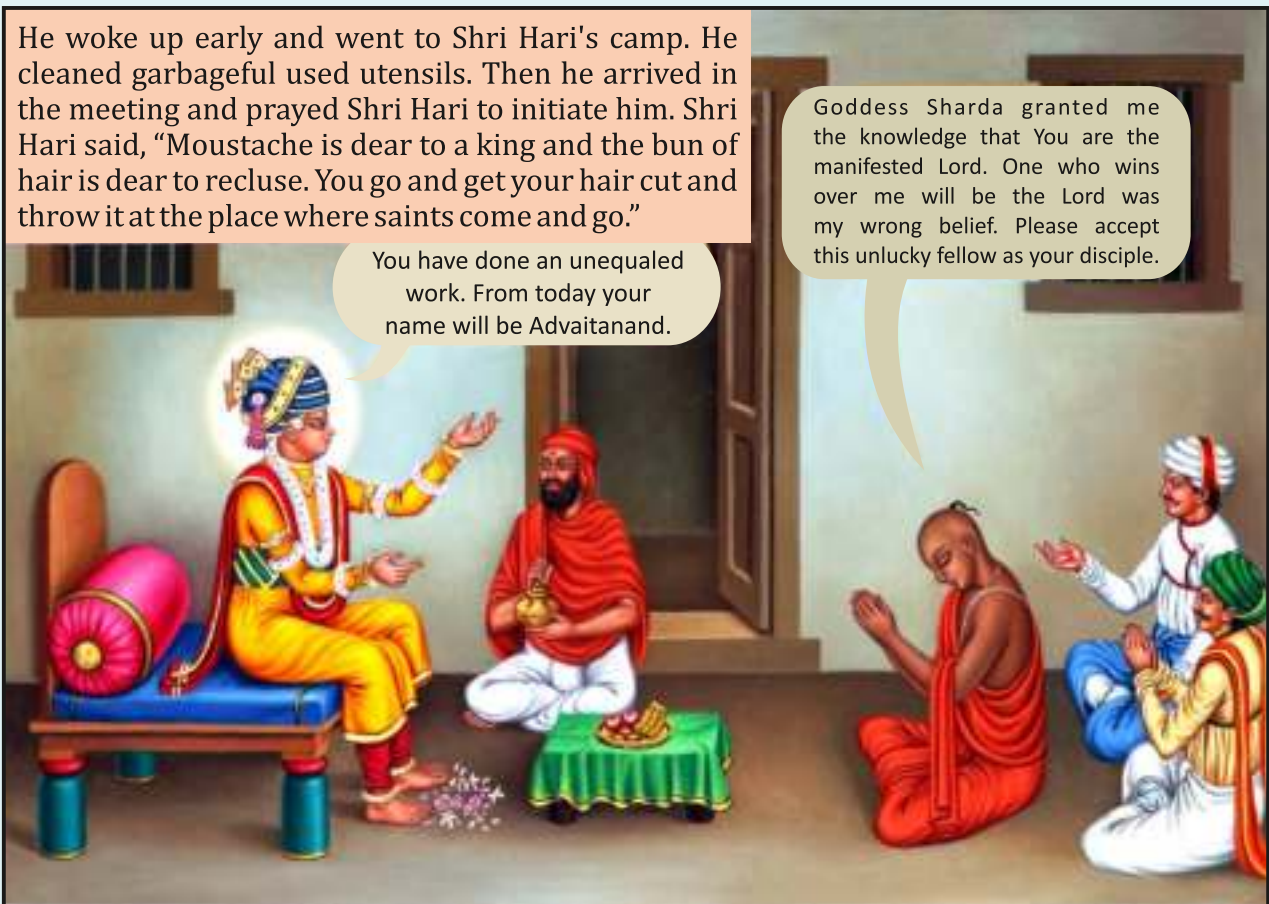
One can get a number of goddesses like me who desire the service of the Lord named Swaminarayan with spiritual merits, the cause of all incarnations and the cause of all the causes, and the ultimate destination for bliss. You go and throw yourself at His feet, be an ascetic and stay with Him.

The goddess disappeared. Maganiram could not sleep at night. His ego had melted.

He woke up early and went to Shri Hari's camp. He cleaned garbageful used utensils. Then he arrived in the meeting and prayed Shri Hari to initiate him. Shri Hari said, "Moustache is dear to a king and the bun of hair is dear to recluse. You go and get your hair cut and throw it at the place where saints come and go."

You have done an unequalled work. From today your name will be Advaitanand.

Goddess Sharda granted me the knowledge that You are the manifested Lord. One who wins over me will be the Lord was my wrong belief. Please accept this unlucky fellow as your disciple.



Shri Hari thought that Maganiram comes from that part of society which lives luxurious life-style and My saints are prideless. So Shri Hari said him, "Collect all the footwear of the saints in a bundle and put them on your head then move five times around this saintly meeting. That will bring real atonement." Humbly obeying the order of Shri Hari, putting the bundle of shoes on his head, Maganiram took five rounds of the saintly meeting and that made him Advaitanand in the real sense.



The Mode of Divine Discourse in

VACHANAMRIT



Vachanamrit, Gadhada Pratham - 18, Shriji Maharaj, thought in his heart, that what is the reason of the disturbance, arising in the heart of a devotee of God? In that, he did not find any fault of Antah Karan : Manas (Mind), Buddhi (Intellect), Chitta (Subconscious Mind), and Ahankara (Self Consciousness). However, there may be fault of indifference, when, it commits error in thinking that, it has realized God, and now it has nothing more to do.

Then Maharaj said that, fault is, in fact, that of five cognitive senses. Shriji Maharaj talked about five senses here, first, Maharaj talks about the sense of taste (tongue). A man consumes food of various types as a meal. There are different tastes in each food; and also different quality (character). By eating the foods, their characters are spread in the conscience, and also in the body. Here there is illustration of Lilagar Bhang. A man, even if supposed to be a good man or he may be a devotee of God, if he consumes Lilagar Bhang, (the extract of Hemp), will not he experience the intoxication effect? Definitely he will experience such effect. By this effect, he will lose the sense of reality. He will lose the power of understanding what is good, what is bad, and what is to be done or not to be done. If he is a devotee, he would take no notice of his duties or that of worshipping the God. Similarly, there are countless properties of various type of foods, like Lilagar Bhang.

In the same way, Maharaj talked about other four cognitive senses. The ears, the skin, the eyes, and the nose.

Infinite types of words are heard by the ears.

Infinite types of touches are experienced by the skin. Infinite types of beauties are seen by the eyes. Infinite types of smells are smelt by the nose.

Thus, five “Objects of Pleasure” of five cognitive senses, have infinite types of qualities. By association of an immoral person, human life is spoiled, like use of liquor or bhang; and one’s intellect is spoiled. Thus Maharaj has said as a warning, that, one should associate with the saints and devotees only, and then only one’s conscience will be sanctified.

The objects enjoyed through five cognitive senses will be purified, and only then, there will be constant remembrance of God. Out of five cognitive senses, if objects enjoyed by any one sense becomes impure, the conscience becomes impure.

The conscience of a soul, is molded according to his association.

In a fine mansion of seven floors, very nice planning of luxurious facilities may have been done. The mansion may be studded with glass panes and beautiful mattresses may have been spread. There, lustful persons may be taking alcoholic drinks, and prostitutes may be dancing. Various musical instruments may be playing. If a person goes there and attends that assembly, his conscience becomes impure.

Atmanishtha (Soul Awareness), Vairagya (Renunciation) and Bhakti (Devotion). If a person attends that assembly, his conscience becomes pure.

Hence, one must not associate with immoral person.

- Bhavanji A. Kotak, Vadodara

There was a Vanik (Baniya) called Jadavji and he was a thorough and sacred devotee of God. He believed in Swami Sahajanand as the perfect manifested God. He had firmly planted his faith in God and taken his unfailing and incessant shelter. He had achieved through devotion strongest discerning rational power.

Once he happened to attend a social occasion at the place of his relative. As he was accompanied by other companions he went to take dinner along with them. Among all other kith and kins he, too, went to the dining ground and ate the dinner offered by the relative who was hosting the entire celebration.

After eating the meal Jadavji felt that he had overloaded his belly. So he went to an ayurvedic physician to get enzyme in the form of herbal powder. In the name of digestive powder the ayurvedic physician gave them poison by mistake. But the error of the physician took toll of four lives. The poison also affected Jadavji. He started dozing and dark circles appeared before his eyes. His pulse stopped, he became unconscious, throat began to choke and the tongue was crushed between his teeth. He began to stammer and spoken broken and disconnected words. His speech was vague and confused.

He began to pray to Lord Swaminarayan.

The prayer rose from his heart. It was the voice of his soul and spirit. Words of earnest prayer rise from his heart. He urged and beseeched the Lord to rush at once and save his soul.

*Padyo Kashtama Kare Pokar
Sune Vallyam Avya Te Var*

As loud and deep cries of prayer came from his mouth, the Lord rushed there at that moment. Oh! What a surprise. Jadavji visualized the idol of the Lord standing right before his eyes. His heart was delighted to see the attractive figure of the Lord. O Lord! How grateful I am! I feel so blessed and sated. O Lord! You have come here and it is good that my soul leaves the body when I fix my eyes on your sacred figure. My soul will be liberated by getting your

divine Darshan.

Then the Lord said that four of your companions have died and left this world and you were also about to leave this body. The Lord promised him that he will not die but, he will survive. "Do not have any fear, you shall be saved" telling these words the Lord departed from there. The moment the Lord set out from there Jadavji felt great relief in his body.

The Lord heard the earnest prayers of devotees and rushed to save the devotee from trouble.

- Prof. Madhusudan Vyas, Vadodara.





Health & Spirituality

Dr. Dhanwantari Jha - M.B.B.S., M.D. (Ayurveda), Anand

Yoga and Spirituality

Yoga word is derived from the root 'Yuj' which means 'to Unite' or 'to integrate'. Yoga is an age old Indian science which has been practised in India since thousands of years. Yoga is not just merely a physical form of exercise but a guide to completely harmonise your body with the universe and feel the 'oneness' of the Universe.

6. Dharana

Dharana means concentration, introspective focus and one-pointedness of mind. The root of word is dhr (धृ), which has a meaning of "to hold, maintain, keep."

Dharana as the sixth limb of yoga, is holding one's mind onto a particular inner state, subject or topic of one's mind. The mind (not sensory organ) is fixed on a mantra, or one's breath, navel, tip of tongue, any place, or an object one wants to observe, or a concept/idea in one's mind. Fixing the mind means one-pointed focus, without drifting of mind, and without jumping from one topic to another.

7. Dhyan

Dhyan literally means "contemplation, reflection" and "profound, abstract meditation".

Dhyan is contemplating, reflecting on whatever Dharana has focussed on. If in the sixth limb of yoga one focussed on a personal deity, Dhyan is its contemplation. If the concentration was on one object, Dhyan is non -

judgmental, non-presumptuous observation of that object. If the focus was on a concept/idea, Dhyan is contemplating that concept/idea in all its aspects, forms and consequences. Dhyan is uninterrupted train of thought, current of cognition, flow of awareness.

Dhyan is integrally related to Dharana, one leads to other. Dharana is a state of mind, where as Dhyan is the process of mind.

Dhyan is distinct from Dharana in that the meditator becomes actively engaged with its focus. Patanjali defines contemplation (Dhyan) as the mind process, where the mind is fixed on something, and then there is "a course of uniform modification of knowledge". Adi Shankara, in his commentary on Yoga Sutras, distinguishes Dhyan from Dharana, by explaining Dhyan as the yoga state when there is only the "stream of continuous thought about the object, uninterrupted by other thoughts of different kind for the same object." Dharana, states Shankara, is focussed on one object, but aware of its many aspects and ideas about the same object.

Shankara gives the example of a yogin in a state of dharana on morning sun may be aware of its brilliance, color and orbit; the yogin in dhyana state contemplates on sun's orbit alone for example, without being interrupted by its color, brilliance or other related ideas.

8. Samadhi

Samadhi literally means "putting together, joining, combining with, union, harmonious whole, trance."

Samadhi is oneness with the subject of meditation. There is no distinction, during the eighth limb of yoga, between the actor of meditation, the act of meditation and the subject of meditation. Samadhi is that spiritual state when one's mind is so absorbed in whatever it is contemplating on, that the mind loses the sense of its own identity. The thinker, the thought process and the thought fuse with the subject of thought. There is only oneness, Samadhi.

AVOID THE COMPANY OF THESE SIX

Ramanand Swami advised Dharmadev to avoid the company of the following six types of persons :

1. He may be an ascetic but now and then he may be becoming angry.
2. He may be a devotee of God and yet he may be passionate.
3. He may be practicing religion but in reality he may have no sincere devotion.
4. He may be a man of renunciation and yet he may be avaricious.
5. He may be the guru and yet he may not force his disciples to follow the code of the scriptures.
6. He may be a scholar but he may condemn the form of God as unreal.

The company of such persons destroys your noble understanding.

Therefore we should keep away from them.

(Satsangi Jivan 1-16-21)





KARNA

The true principle of KARMA.

After the battle of Mahabharat got over, Lord Shri Krishna returned to Dwarka, Rukmani came to Him and asked Him, "What about Karna? A great friend, mighty, heroic and extremely generous Karna, what was his fault? The one who had promised his mother Kunti that besides Arjun, he wouldn't kill any of the Pandavas! He gave away his armour and metal ring (attached to spear) to Indra out of generosity. What sin did he commit that You had to kill such a great and generous soul?"

Shri Krishna said, "Maharani, after fighting fiercely and single-handedly with seven brave warriors, Mahavir Abhimanyu fell down. Just when he was nearing his death, with great hope, he asked Karna, who was standing beside him, for some water. He had faith that in spite of being an enemy, the great and generous Karna would undoubtedly give him water. But in spite of having pure sweet water spring near him, just so that his friend Duryodhana wouldn't get upset, Karna didn't give water to the dying Abhimanyu. The young warrior died thirsty! O Rukmani, this one sin of his life was enough to wash away all the meritorious deeds he did in his entire life span. And see the mysterious pace of Kaal (time), in the mud of the same spring of water, the wheel of his chariot got stuck and became the reason of his death!"

This is it, the principle of committing actions - injustice of even a moment done to somebody creates a hole and destructs the honesty of a lifetime.

Moral of the story : Everyone has to bear the fruit of one's actions here itself. To break someone's feelings and trust is the biggest sin.

MOTIVATION

Conversation between a learned man and woman about Education & Meditation.

Woman : My education transformed me. It made me civilized.

Man : My meditation transformed me deeply. It made me realized.

Woman : My education gave me gold medals.

Man : My meditation gave me golden moments.

Woman : My education fostered appreciation.

Man : My meditation fostered introspection.

Woman : My education sharpened my intelligence.

Man : My meditation deepened my awareness.

Woman : My education stimulated my passion.

Man : My meditation motivated my compassion.

Woman : My education made my job fruitful.

Man : My meditation made my life grateful.

Together both speak : Educate to Meditate.

Woman : I think meditation will make me complete.

Man : May the Almighty bless you with good health, long life, enough wealth, peace, prosperity, fame and wisdom.



inspiration

the inner BEAUTY

loyalty

truth

THE OLD LADY

Once I was walking home alone. On my way, on a light pole, I saw a paper stuck over it. I went near it, and it read:

“I lost Rs. 50 note on this road yesterday. I can’t see properly. Whoever finds it, please give it on this address.”

Reading this, I don’t know why but I felt to go that address. I remembered the address. It was the last house on that lane. I screamed aloud, an old lady with a stick came out slowly. I got to know that she stayed alone. She couldn’t see properly. “Maaji...” I called out. “I found your lost 50 rupee note. I have come to return it.” Hearing this, the old lady started crying. “Beta, till now around 50 – 60 people have given me 50 rupees notes. I am not literate, neither can I see properly. I don’t know who wants to help me seeing my condition, is writing this.”

After much convincing, the old lady kept the money. But made a small request, “Beta, I haven’t written that. Somebody has written it to show sympathy for me. While going back, please tear it off beta!” I said ‘yes’ just to avoid it but my conscience forced me to think that ‘Ma’ would have

told those 50-60 people also the same thing. Nobody had torn it so far. In life, how right or wrong we are, only two people know. One is Parmatma, the Lord and the other is Antaraatma, our inner conscience. My heart was filled with gratitude for that person who figured out a way to help the old lady. There are various ways to help but this kind of help touched my heart. And I too did not tear that paper. There are various ways to help. One’s mind should bear firm conviction to help.

One should do some acts of kindness and good deeds in life for which there is no other witness than God himself!

One man asked Guru Nanak, “Why am I so poor?”

Guru Nanak replied, “You are poor because you haven’t learnt to give.”

The man said, “But I don’t have anything to give.”

Guru Nanak said, “Your face can give a smile; your mouth can praise someone, or speak sweet words to satisfy others; your hands can help the needy and you say you don’t have anything to give. Soul’s poverty is the actual poverty.”

The one who knows to give is truly worthy to gain.



Once when the sun was going by turning into its golden cup, I asked my master : 'Guruji, what can be the first pre-condition in the pursuit of religion ?'

The great master calmly replied : 'Of course, healthy body.....'

'And to keep the body healthy?'

Before my question completed, he retorted : 'To keep the body healthy, it is essential to have a healthy mind. As is the mind, so is the body and as is the body so is the mind. Actually body and mind are the either side of the same coin.'

After a pause of few moments, Guruji said with brilliant smile : 'Now you obviously intend to ask, how can mind remain healthy ? Isn't it ?'

I nodded my head with smile and affirmation.

Being a little bit serious, the Guruji spoke : 'As a matter of fact, for that purpose one has to know the mind. This can be procured only by keeping wake. Wakefulness means to live with awareness. The same is referred as Sakshibhav (sense of witness) in Shrimad Bhagwad Gita.

What Bhagwan Swaminarayan refers to as being oneself at the entrance of awareness is in this context. By keeping yourself aware, learn to observe the mind. Never tag it with your likes or dislikes. Keep on observing the mind neutrally without intermingling yourself with the vagaries of mind. If you keep on observing the ego-centrism of mind with awareness, then the mind will become your friend and will help you with ease in your spiritual practice.'

This - the most remarkable fact is to be taken

to the bosom of our hearts. It is well understood by experience that the body is in total control of mind in all respects.

The body usually does not get into serious illness unless and until it is confronted with external difficulties or badly affected by an accident or falls prey to circumstantial serious infection. Many a time, it is observed that persons with strong will power do not experience any contamination from outside. Feeble mind fetches all types of ailments.

The feebleness of mind destroys even the immunity of our body to a large extent. Mind has a special tendency to give reactions. In the morning, what do you do after leaving your bed? You usually stretch the body or just yawn.

It is nothing but merely the natural reaction of mind. While talking with someone, if a fly happens to sit on your nose; automatically your hand will make it fly. This is also a mind's reaction. Sometimes when a person whom you dislike the most, meets you on your way and starts talking in sugar coated manner, your mind immediately thinks in reaction on the basis of bitter experiences of the past as - 'This man is a great rogue. How cunningly he had cheated me ! Surely he must have some task to be fulfilled by me, that is why he speaks so sweetly.' Thus our mind gives reactions of the present incidents on the basis of past experience.

Our life is thus full of mind's reactions. When mind stops reacting, whatever is evident is truth. Reactions of mind do not permit us to realize the things in their real forms.

By dint of reactions, mind creates the transparent curtains of thoughts between every events or objects or persons, consequently we comprehend or understand any person or object or event in accordance with our prejudices or past experiences. As a result, we always remain deprived of the reality.

In Ikshwanku dynasty, there lived a king named Janshruti. Once he asked a question to

his master Raikava : ' O Godly saint ! Why does a man reap the fruits of his deeds in the form of sin or virtue even after dedicating his sole being to the Almighty ?'

As a reply, the master hit the king's head with a nearby stone. When the king being enraged ordered to arrest the master & punish him, the master said : ' O King, If you have dedicated everything belonging to you to God, you must realize that the hitting of stone has also happened by God's will. So try to understand that when the body is dedicated to God, never mind whether the body being hit by stone or spears! But no, you forgot the truth and your mind reacted with rage. O King, you are still under the influence of mental reactions, so you are entitled to accrue the results of every sin and virtue. Even if every event owes its existence to circumstance, fortune or God, you become part and parcel in that outcome through your reactions.'

Finally, the master sermonizes the king Janshruti saying : ' O King, the supreme bliss by dint of whose power there exists sin-virtue, happiness-sorrow, creation- destruction, resides in you and in entire universe concomitantly. No need to add and subtract sin-virtue and happiness-misery to achieve Him. He already exists within you. The mind , surrounded by Him by virtue of His power, which you call your own out of egoism, keeps you occupied through strange reactions between you and the Supreme bliss. Be liberated from mind's reactions and observe the life. Doing thus, O King, you will be able to realize the God despite living worldly life.'

If you observe every activity of each sense with full awareness, mind's habit of giving reactions will be lost. The mind needs a seat to rest peacefully. Whenever the mind is engrossed in any object or person, it gets temporary peace, but the peace experienced in worldly objects or mundane person is very momentary.

Hence if you want to experience eternal peace in the mind, it should be allowed to have a shelter at the feet of Shri Hari - the God Almighty.

The peace and the bliss experienced by getting engrossed in the Divine would be everlasting and supernatural!

- Rameshbhai Bhagwandas Soni
(Vadodara)



In the heart of My saints
there prevails awareness (true
knowledge about soul and God). This awareness
leads to the gate of Akshardham. All the saints
stand at the gate like the vigilant volunteers of
God, like the gate-keepers who stand at the gate
and do not allow thieves and unworthy persons to
enter in the royal presence. The servants of a king
courageously think that they would cut to pieces
anyone who would go to the king to create some
disturbance and under no circumstances they would
allow them to reach the king. With such
enlightenment they see God in Akshardham. With
God in their hearts, they do not allow wealth, women
and other Mayik objects to enter their hearts!

- Shree Swaminarayan Bhagwan
Vachanamrut : Gadhada - Antya 9

Chakhadi

All the material objects change into celestial by getting into contact with the aura of Lord Swaminarayan. One living example of such material objects is the pair of artistic wooden foot-wear (Chakhadi) worn by Lord Swaminarayan.



Tiny jingling silver bells tied with these foot-wear used to make sweet musical vibrations, when the Lord traded on the ground. This celestial musical vibrations were so divine that they induced the listeners into meditation which empowered them to visit different lokas and get the Darshan of the Lord in the imperishable abode!