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॥ श्री स्वामिनारायणो विजयतेतराम् ॥

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sahajanand

The path of eternal happiness shown by LORD SWAMINARAYAN

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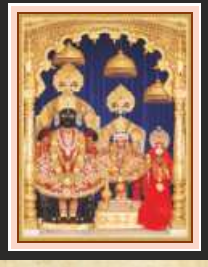
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Ashirvachanam

To,

The Chief Executive Kotharishri,
Shri Swaminarayan Mandir, Vadtal.

From the Lotus-feet of our Aradhya Ishta Dev (worship worthy beloved God Supreme) Shri Harikrishna Maharaj and Vadtalvasi Shri Laxminarayan Dev, Shri Vadtal Diocese, my Jay Shri Swaminarayan with blessing.

I am pleased to know that our Sansthan is going to publish a quarterly English Magazine - Sahaj Anand. Bhagwan Swaminarayan, His 500 Paramhans Muktas spread the Satsang sincerely. Likewise, the Acharyas, the saints and the devotees have been doing that since then.

For the welfare of the people, Lord Shri Hari established temples, scriptures and unique traditions. To nourish and flourish them, and to attain the abode of our Lord, such attempts are necessary.

In modern times, print media, social media and tele-media are widely used for Satsang. In this time we welcome this English publication. We wish that the teaching and preaching of our Lord reaches to everyone and everywhere by this Magazine. So, we pray to Vadtalvasi Shri Laxminarayan Dev to lead us towards success in this noble attempt and request all Santsangis to extend their help by making this Magazine more and more popular through the means of Satsang.

Jay Shri Swaminarayan.

Rakesh Prasadji

श्री निलकण्ठ ! हरिकृष्ण ! हरे ! दयालो, स्वामिन् ! परात्परवराक्षर धामवासिन् ।
हरिप्रसाद ! पुरुषोत्तम ! धर्मपुत्र ! नारायणं सुखनिधिं प्रणमाम्यहं त्वाम् ॥



In our Holy Fellowship, Vasant Panchami holds great significance. It was on this auspicious day that Lord Shri Swaminarayan had Himself written the Shikshapatri. Shri Bhagwan says, "Rutunam kusumakar". Among all seasons, I am the Spring Season, which has great association and deep bonding with the Supreme Lord. Therefore, Muktanand Swami writes:

*Sab ruturaj Basant hai; Purushottam pragat jab,
tab Ruturaj Basant; Jui chameli malti, kesu kele sant.*

When the Supreme Lord Purushottam manifested His divine form on this earth, then in the true sense, the season of spring commenced on earth. Shri Hari removed the ignorance, doubts, grief etc. of innumerable souls, driving them towards higher consciousness and true awakening. He bestowed upon them rightful positions in Akshardham. Just as when Spring commences, the earth looks resplendent and fragrance of beautiful varieties of flowers like jasmine, Mogra etc. (jui, chameli, malti, kesudo) spreads everywhere; likewise, accompanying Lord Swaminarayan, His innumerable Muktas too came along, who formed a firm bond of innumerable souls with Lord Swaminarayan. By doing so, they made their lives unexplainably beautiful and extremely fulfilling, overflowing with

immense welfare.

The worshipper of Spring never gets disheartened in life. This means a man who lives his life according to the Shikshapatri (written on the auspicious day of Vasant Panchami), doesn't remain a common mortal, but acquires liberation. Such a man's body exuberates different energy level, his mind experiences a unique joy, intellect gets jubilant and a vital life-force encompasses his inner being. He experiences enlightened. As a result of which the entire universe becomes devoutly divine and sublime; everywhere one experiences an unsurpassable form of beauty and harmony in this world.

*Purushottam pad ratt bhayo,
ta gher sada basant.*

Enamoring the soul with the firm connect with Shikshapatri, which expounds joy and liberation in the truest form, his inclination stays firm at the feet of Purushottamnarayan. In such a devotee's house and his family, the Spring Season always blossoms and elements equivalent to the purity of Nature such as true religion, profound knowledge, freedom from worldly pleasures, devotion etc. eternally reside at such a place of dwelling.

- Lalji Bhagat
Jnan Baug, Vadtal



SHIKSHAPATRI

THE GOSPEL OF LIFE DIVINE



Shantikumar Bhatt

“My dear followers shall never kill any living being under any circumstances, knowingly, not even minute insects like a lice or a bug etc.”

- Bhagwan Swaminarayan
(Shikshapatri V. 11)

Q. Why should we not kill any living being?

A. Killing creates bad impressions on our subconscious mind and as a result of that we become aggressive, irritable and heartless.

Q. Why should we not kill insects like lice, bugs, mosquitoes etc.?

A. We create them through our negligence of hygiene and sanitation. By biting us they remind us about maintaining the cleanliness all around as well as within and outside the body. They are thus our teachers. So we should not kill them and at the same time create such condition that they are neither born nor do they flourish.

Q. Can sound kill insects?

A. Yes, harsh and angry words can kill or harm microscopic insects flying in the air. So, loud, harsh, angry words are also violence. Such violent persons go to the hell named Andhakoopa.

Q. Are there other ways of killing living beings?

A. Yes, Those who raise the sword for killing, those who poison others, those who set fire to houses etc. and those who curse others - commit the sin of violence.

Q. What about killing by proxy?

A. If a man gets someone killed or instigates others to kill someone also commit the sin of killing.

Q. Can one kill himself except by suicide?

A. Yes, starving the body to death or harming the body by over-eating, over working or by keeping awake unreasonably is slowly killing the body. It is also the sin of violence.

Q. Is punishing a criminal or hanging him the sin of violence?

A. Certainly. A criminal should be detained and kept in seclusion till he repents and improves himself.

Q. Can there be exceptions in violence?

A. Yes, a soldier kills the enemy or someone injures or kills someone to defend himself - are exceptions.

Q. A teacher or a mother punishes a student or a child to improve him. Is it violence?

A. Yes, if more force is used than necessary and if the motive is other than of improving the child and that to in excitement, it is violence.

Q. A doctor uses medicines to kill germs, and microbes. Does he commit the sin of violence?

A. Yes, but he can wash off the sin of killing by doing merciful meritorious acts.

Q. Is killing out of ignorance a sin of violence?

A. It is, but the punishment would be lighter for such a person.

Q. Sexual act and breathing, heating water and cooking involve subtle violence without which we cannot live. Will we be punished for this?

A. No, Because life would be impossible without that.



Can You Judge ?

Can you judge who is the better person out of these 3 ?

- Mr. A** He had friendship with bad politicians, consulted astrologers, two wives, was a chain smoker, used to drink eight to ten times a day.
- Mr. B** He was kicked out of office twice, slept till noon, used opium in college & used to drink whiskey every evening.
- Mr. C** He was a decorated war hero, a vegetarian, did not smoke, did not drink and never cheated on his wife.

You would select **Mr. C Right!**

But...

- Mr. A** was Franklin Roosevelt!
- Mr. B** was Winston Churchill!!
- Mr. C** was ADOLF HITLER!!!

Strange but true...

Its risky to judge anyone by his habits!

Character is a complex phenomenon.

Almost everybody can stand through adversity, but if you want to test the true character of a man, give him power, give him liberty .

So every person in your life is important, don't judge them, accept them.



What is Maturity ?

(Based on thoughts of Adi Shankaracharya)

1. Maturity is when you stop trying to change others,
...instead focus on changing yourself.
2. Maturity is when you accept people as they are.
3. Maturity is when you understand everyone is right in their own perspective.
4. Maturity is when you learn to "let go".
5. Maturity is when you are able to drop "expectations" from a relationship and give for the sake of giving.
6. Maturity is when you understand whatever you do, you do for your own peace.
7. Maturity is when you stop proving to the world, how intelligent you are.
8. Maturity is when you don't seek approval from others.
9. Maturity is when you stop comparing with others.
10. Maturity is when you are at peace with yourself.
11. Maturity is when you are able to differentiate between "need" and "want" and are able to let go of your wants.
12. You gain Maturity when you stop attaching "happiness" to material things!!

And last, but most meaningful !

Wishing all a happy matured life !



Whatever happened for the first time during the lifetime of Lord Shree Swaminarayan or 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.

1. The question that Neelkanth Varni asked Muktanand Swami at Loj.

Lord Neelkanth Varni reached Loj on the sixth day of the dark half of the month of Shravan in V. S. 1856. Here, He met Muktanand Swami, the head priest of the Sadavrat founded by Ramanand Swami.

Neelkanth Varni asked a question to Muktanand Swami - 'What is Jeev, Ishvar, Maya, Brahman and Parbraham?' It is said, Sahajanand Swami as Neelkanth Varni went on asking this question to all the religious leaders and gurus throughout His wanderings but none satisfied this curiosity. Muktanand Swami answered this question which satisfied Neelkanth Varni.

Neelkanth Varni had left His home in search of a true guru. The answer of Muktanand Swami convinced Him that His search for a guru would come to end with the Darshan of Ramanand Swami.

This became the first spiritual question of Neelkanth Varni at Loj in Uddhav Sampraday. The answer and personality of Muktanand Swami convinced Him that at last He found His spiritual home at Loj!

First, this question and its answer created a sense of deep respect between Neelkanth

Varni and Ramanand Swami. They looked upon each other as Guru. The friendship resulted out of this mutual reverence lasted for the next thirty years. This friendship, opined Manilal C. Parekh, formed 'One of the most beautiful chapters of the history of this fellowship.'

2. The first Letter of Neelkanth Varni to Ramanand Swami.

Neelkanth Varni reached Loj in Kathiyavad on sixth day of the dark half of the month of Shravan in V.S. 1856 during His Van-Vicharan and stayed at the Asharam which was presided over by Muktanand Swami. Neelkanth Varni found Muktanand Swami a true sadhu and the atmosphere of the Ashram congenial. Neelkanth Varni wanted to know and have a Darshan of the Guru, who was the inspiration of such noble spirits and institutions. He waited for months for the arrival of the Guru who was at that time on a visit to Kutchh. Neelkanth Varni lost the patience and decided to go to Kutchh to meet the Guru but Muktanand Swami calmed Him down and convinced Him to write a letter before going there. Muktanand Swami and Neelkanth Varni both wrote letters which were delivered to Ramanand Swami by a devotee Mayaram Bhatt.

Neelkanth Varni wrote the letter in his native dialect which in English sounds like this :

To,

Swami Ramanand the true Guru, who is shining like the sun in Bhuj at present with salutations and prostrations from his servant Neelkanth Brahmachari alias Sarjudas now living in Loj.

I beg to write this in order to let you know that I have come to this part of the country after finishing My pilgrimage in the entire four great centers at the will of God. Here I heard that a Jivanmukta has manifested himself. Besides when I was learning Yoga from Gopal Yogi living with him in a forest, and when I attained mastery over Ashtang Yoga, he told me that I would find a Siddha (a perfected man) in the shadow of mount Girnar. I passed many a day living only on air, but I could not see the Krishna Incarnate. Now I have stayed here knowing this to be holy land and hearing from Swami Muktanand whom I look upon as a holy saint and therefore as one who would tell the truth. That you give a vision of Krishna in Dharana (an intense form of meditation). Swamiji and Bhattji told me that they would call your worship here and so I stayed. This is why Bhattji has come there and so kindly return soon after reading both these letters. I am eager to see you as a Chakor (a kind of bird considered to be very fond of seeing the moon), and so kindly come back soon, otherwise I shall come there.

This is written on the fifth day of the dark half of the month of falgun in V. S. 1857. Please be merciful on reading this otherwise I shall not stay.

(Note : English translation by Manilal C. Parekh)

Ramanand Swami gave a reply to this

letter and sent to Loj with Mayaram Bhatt.

This is the first letter of Neelkanth Varni written by Himself in His own handwriting in Gujarati. This prose letter is described in verse form by Shree Nishkulanand Swami in Bhaktachintamani.

3. Swaminarayan Mahamantra at Farenī.

Sahajanand Swami propounded the Swaminarayan Mahamantra before the assembly of saints and devotees for the first time at Farenī on 31st December, 1801, the 14th day after the demise of Ramanand Swami. This was the first official meeting of Sahajanand Swami as the Head of the Holy Fellowship.

In His holy assembly introducing the Swaminarayan Mahamantra, Sahajanand Swami said, 'Today, I introduce you to a new Mahamantra Swaminarayan. It is a Mantra that contains the essence of all other Mantras. By chanting this Mantra, one can overcome any sort of physical, mental or environmental calamity. It will ward away evil spirits, remove superstitious belief, and give all who chant it the courage to face the difficulties in their lives. It possesses the power to liberate lives from the cycle of birth and death. It is the only Mantra which can fulfill all your mind's wishes and desires. From this moment onwards, you will only recite the holy Mahamantra Swaminarayan during your Mala, Jap, Puja and other daily activities. Then Sahajanand Swami closed His eyes and chanted the Mahamantra loudly, the assembly followed Him. Since that moment, the devotees chant Swaminarayan Mahamantra in the Holy Fellowship.

4. Vyapakanand Swami : the first dikshartha (initiated) saint of Lord Swaminarayan.

Shitaldasji, a scholar from Bihar, wanted to have Darshan of Ramanand Swami, but he

could not do so because before his arrival at Fareni, Ramanand swami had passed away. Sahajanand Swami fulfilled his desire of Darshan in Samadhi. Impressed by this miracle of Darshan in Samadhi, Shitaldasji surrendered to Lord Swaminarayan. Later on Lord Swaminarayan gave him a saint Diksha and named him Vyapakanand Swami.

5. Water problem solution : Sahajanand Swami's first welfare (Sarvajeevhitavah) activity for mankind .

Lord Sahajanand Swami after assuming the reign of Uddhav Sampradaya, visited Mangrol as part of His Satsang Vicharan (tour) in v. s. 1858 (AD 1802). He celebrated Pushpadolotsav, Ram Navami, Akhatrij, Nrusinh Jayanti, Bhim Ekadashi festivals there. The Satsangis and the people attended all these festivals in large number, but they all faced water problem. Even the monsoon got delayed. Realizing the difficulty, Lord Swaminarayan decided to clean and repair an old step-well at the outskirt of Mangrol city. The Navab of Mangrol willingly gave the permission and even offered help to Lord Swaminarayan. But, Lord Swaminarayan, with the help of all saints, devotees and religious people, worked for ten days under the scorching heat and cleaned and repaired the old step-well. The result was astonishing; sweet water sprouted in it ! All those, who worked for it, requested Lord Swaminarayan first to take a bath, which He did. He sprinkled the water of the step-well on all present there. Later on, a Yajna was performed and all the Brahmins were fed.

This step-well is well preserved even today and now it has become a part of Shikharbaddh (multi dommed) Temple there. The water is considered Shree Hari's Prasadi and the people take it at their homes for use on auspicious occasions.

Lord Swaminarayan visited Kariyani in Saurashtra for the first time in A. D. 1805 and stayed at Macha Khachar's residence. Macha Khacher opened his heart, home and coffers to serve Lord Swaminarayan. Lord Swaminarayan asked Macha khachar to dig a fresh water tank on the outskirts of the village. Lord Swaminarayan had noticed that there were no nearby freshwater resources. Women had to go far to a neighboring village every morning to fetch water. Farmers had difficulty in farming and their cattle often had to suffer without water. Lord Swaminarayan called hundreds of devotees from around the Satsang community for this humanitarian work. For 21 days, Satsangi and non-satsangis worked together and Lord Swaminarayan looked after them. To celebrate the completion of this water tank, Lord Swaminarayan organized a large Mahavishnu Yajna. Macha Khachar spent considerable money for this welfare activity. This was the first festival of this magnitude in the Holy Fellowship.

Thus, Lord Swaminarayan would engage the sadhus, the Satsangis and others in digging new tanks or repairing old ones.

(Contd.)



You cannot help
men permanently
by doing for them
what they could
and should do
for themselves.





The Purpose

Shastri Swami Shri Bhanuprakashdasji
(Porbandar)

We would get a strong (conviction about the godhead of Lord Swaminarayan) message if we can try to understand the meaning (purpose) behind Lord Swaminarayan's contemplation and (His)doings. We should not only hear about the deeds of the Lord but also try to understand the mystery (motivating purpose) behind it in order to get mental contentment. Such an incident took place in Gadhpur. Though it would appear ordinary to common people but its meaning is extraordinary.

Deed:

Shri Abhalbapu, the landlord of Gadhpur village nominated all his lands and other property to Shriji Maharaj on the piece of copper for the immortal time as a gift. Shriji Maharaj undertook this responsibility and said that it's our humble responsibility to look after the property of Abhal khachar as he had given all his property to us. The land covers of 750 Acres were full of the plants and trees of Bavad, Bordi and Bhorngadi (unproductive plants). In order to remove all the bushes, Shriji Maharaja asked all to join the task of clearing the land. Upon the order of Shriji Maharaj all the saints, devotees and followers reached farm and all were set in the task of cleaning the farm.

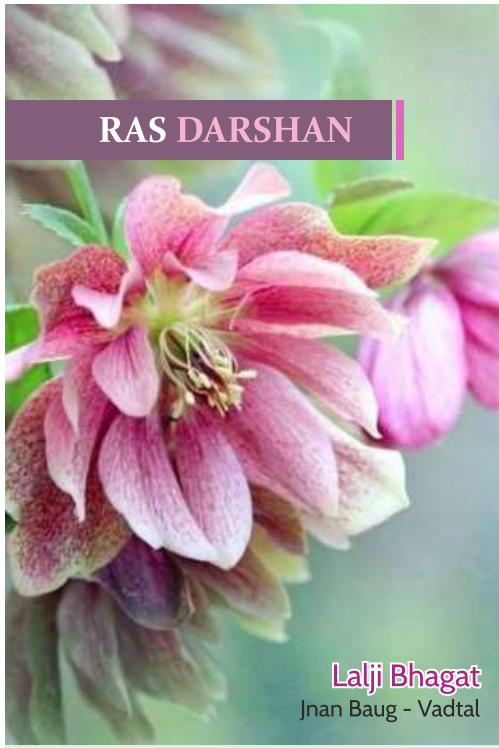
Big hearths were made to prepare food and some saints were assigned the responsibility to prepare food for morning, afternoon and evening. Ten mound wheat was boiled for morning snack and snack was offered with jaggery. Those who contributed in the task were served with black pea's cotyledon, Chapati and buttermilk at noon and Chapati,

khichadi and curry at evening. All were inhabited in the farm at night. Separate arbour was prepared for horse and bullocks were leashed under the tree. By making available Himself in the farm Shriji Maharaj

made His devotees to work and all the saints and followers worked according to the order of Shriji Maharaj. Jivuba came to the farm at morning and evening with prepared food dish for Shri Hari and He ate this dish with full of love.

Message:

Such a significance of Lord Swaminarayan's life-sports that the queen of Butolpur was willingly ready to give all her property and even kingdom and apart from that several monastery and hermitage also. Skilled Princess prayed for the handling of her kingdom but Shriji Maharaj was not impressed with all this matters. Behind Shriji Maharaj's happiness to bear all the responsibilities of Abhal khachar was the selflessness and total dedication with innocent love of Abhal-family and that is why Shri Hari says that His responsibility is to look after all types of matters of His devotees. Lord Swaminarayan not only profoundly recommended to keep every year's account of charity, devotion, knowledge, sacrifice, penance, mature worship of God, constant awareness to free from lust and how much extent to one dedicated to God but also aware of the reality of society. This materialist world is better but not real and everyone has to work to lead one's life without any prejudice. To withdraw from the future responsibilities is not suited to work oriented man. Through the deeds of Shriji Maharaj we get noble message of how to sustain one's life in retirement by remaining workaholic for the well being of life in a natural way.



Lalji Bhagat
Jnan Baug - Vadatal

PREM RASAYAN

Muktanand Swami says...

Premrasayan je jan paame, tehno maarag nyaro;
Pind Brahmand ma preet na rakhe, Urr dhare piyu pyaro.

The man who imbibes the chemistry of compassion,
is the one whose path becomes distinctly interesting.
Who never fond to body and worldly attachments,
His heart searches for the Supreme Lord as its fond Companion.

On his way to the ethereal journey, while overcoming various hurdles, when the devotee reaches his final stage, then he realizes that the prime factor to support his meditative worship to the Lord, is none other than compassionate devotion. In these lines, Muktanand Swami explains about selfless love.

As in a big laboratory, there are various chemicals to perform different kinds of research.

Likewise, in the ethereal lab, in order to experience the divine presence of the Lord, to do variety of research, tools like knowledge, renouncement, religious codes of conduct, firm determination, self-restraint, meditation, prayer, firm resolve and compassionate devotion – such kinds of chemicals are required. Amongst all these chemicals, the supreme and versatile chemical is that of love; due to which his life, thought process and state of being changes.

After attaining appropriate and complete knowledge of the physical Universe as vis-a-vis the divine knowledge of the Supreme Entity, the devotee's mental frame turns towards and merges with Lord Swaminarayan and the course of his life changes. Initially, while performing various religious practices, the conscience used to be inclined towards the material pleasures, but after realization of divine knowledge, the self starts longing for never lasting joy which is related to the Lord.

In the kitchen, various utensils like plate, bowl, spoon, glass are used for various

purposes. Once they are used, they are cleaned properly and are put back to their respective places. Everyday, as a routine, they are used and are aptly taken care of. But we are not attached with them. But if the utensils are of gold, then we surely do get attached to them. This is simply because they are more costlier than those normal utensils in use. Steel & Brass utensils if buried in the ground, they get merged with the earth, but nothing happens to gold utensils (they stay as it is).

Likewise, when the body known as the physical state and universe known as the world of materialistic pursuits, comes in context with Kaal and Maya, then its deterioration occurs. But the person who is able to transform his physical being to an elevated level of spirituality, and whose universe becomes Akshardham, then Kaal cannot destruct that being's journey. Therefore, when one realizes the Supreme Knowledge, then one detaches from one's body and worldly pursuits. Bhagwan Swaminarayan adores and graces his heart and thereby, Supreme joy and everlasting divine peace prevails within him, forever and ever.

Evedom

Feminist Perspective
in Swaminarayanism

by
Prof. Dyuti Yajnik

A thought provoking article

We have chosen to deal with the question of the status of women in Swaminarayanism for two reasons:

- (i) There is a wide spread impression among intellectuals in Gujarat that the position of women is very much degraded in Swaminarayanism. This impression is created by the fact that some saints keep away from women very rigidly in all possible ways. It, thus, becomes necessary for us to point out that this behavior of saints had nothing to do with the status of women in Swaminarayanism.
- (ii) The most glaring example of not only equality of men and women both but also gave women an independent status in theory and in practice of religion had been shown to the contemporary world by Lord Swaminarayan. We therefore, thought it proper to choose this topic.

Further, Monier Williams also says, “It was this utter corruption of Vaishnava faith that led to a modern puritan movement under a reformer – Swaminarayana.” (Monier Williams, p.101) This is the reason why Widgery says that Swaminarayana re-established Hindu worship in its virgin integrity.

Thus, to study what the status of women

have in the Swaminarayan Holy Fellowship, it is important first to understand the feminist perspective. Then only it will be clear how Swaminarayanism fulfills the aims of all the three waves of feminism.

What is Feminism?

Most of the civilizations and cultures of the world have been based on philosophical, social and political systems in which men determine what part women shall or shall not play, and in which the female is everywhere subsumed under the male.

The power of patriarchy has been extremely difficult to understand because it is all-pervasive. It has influenced our most basic ideas about human nature and about our relation to the universe – ‘man’s’ nature and ‘his’ relation to the universe, in patriarchal language. The time-span associated with patriarchy is at least three thousand years.

In our culture, i.e. in this patriarchal bias, the women have traditionally been portrayed as passive and receptive, men as active and creative. This imagery goes back to Aristotle’s theory of sexuality and had been used throughout the centuries as a ‘scientific’ rationale for keeping women in a subordinate role, subservient to men. (Merchant, (1980), p.13)

Further, women have been identified with nature throughout the ages. With the rise of Newtonian science, nature becomes a mechanical system that could be manipulated and exploited, together with the manipulation and exploitation of women. Thus, as Capra interprets that science and technology represented masculine dominance and self assertion while nature represented the feminine principle of submissiveness. This ideology penetrated human mind and great thinkers like Kant,

Rousseau, Nietzsche, Schopenhauer reflected their strong anti-women, patriarchal belief. For instance, Book V of Rousseau's *Emile* – where Rousseau says that abstract truths are not for women. For Rousseau, the existence of women in the public sphere is not only unnatural in broadest sense, but even constitutes a danger to the orderly running of society. Being unable to sublimate their natural passions and desires, women have no sense of justice, they will therefore always prefer to support and protect their own kith and kin rather than accept the principle of equality before the law.

Pierre Roussel, in his treatise of 1777 on women says that women are not suited to theorizing because their first impulse, in their natural roles as wives and mothers, is to be practical, to have an over-active imagination which does not allow them to retain ideas.

Thus, on the one hand, the whole edifice of science was erected on patriarchal presuppositions and on the other hand enlightenment correlated with scientific progress propagated the value of equality and freedom. This becomes the base of the emergence of the feminist movement. The feminist movement is one of the strongest cultural currents of our time and will have a profound effect on our future evolution. Theodor Roszat called it a 'counter culture'.

Biological perspective

Researches show that in human biology, masculine and feminine characteristics are not neatly separated but occur in varying proportions, in both sexes. (Goleman (1978), review of recent research on sex differences) The personality of each man and each woman is not a static entity, but a dynamic phenomena resulting from the interplay between feminine and masculine elements.

This view of human nature is in sharp contrast to that of our patriarchal culture.

Psychological perspective

Further, Freud took the masculine as a cultural and sexual norm and thus failed to reach a feminine understanding of the female psyche. Female sexuality in particular remained for him – in his own expressive metaphor – the 'dark continent' for psychology. Against this, Alfred Adler, a psychoanalyst, pointed out that what Freud called masculine and feminine psychologies were not so much rooted in biological differences between men and women, but were essentially consequences of the social order prevailing under patriarchy.

Definition of Feminism

Feminist theory is an attempt to make an intellectual sense of and then to critique, the subordination of women to men. The evolution of feminist thought had been classified into following three waves:

(1) The first wave is often dated to the publication of Mary Wollstonecraft's "A Vindication of the Rights of Woman" (1792).. Under the influence of nineteenth century liberal political philosophy. First wave feminism concerned itself largely with gaining equal political rights and economic opportunities for women.

(2) The second wave of feminism can most easily be dated to 1949 with the publication of Simone de Beauvoir's "The Second Sex". This movement is sometimes characterized by the efforts to move beyond the first wave. The First wave aspired women to be equal to men. While, second wave emphasized on womanhood and women specificity. Secondly, second wave feminism believes that only legal, political, economic equality is



Health & Spirituality

Vaidyaraj Harinath Jha - Anand

Health according to Ayurved is a complete state of balance - Balance between organs, cells or tissues of the body, balance between the body and the soul or balance between the human being and the Supreme Being. Acharya Sushrut defines health as :

**Samadosha, samagnischa samadhatu mala kriya,
Prasanna atmenindriya manah swasthya ityabhidheeyate .**

Thus, Healthy state of body is when the *Doshas* (Humors) of the human body are balanced along with an ideal state of *Agni* (Digestive fire), stable *Dhatu*s (Tissues) in a perfect condition and quantity, proper excretion of body wastes through sweat, stools or urine, and when the *Atma* (Soul), *Indriya* (Senses) and *Manah* (Mind) are in a condition of Bliss and proper functioning.

Now, this Perfect health can only be gained through "Spirituality". Spirituality here doesn't refer to any belief or following any religion but it means to connect oneself with his own soul, understand the material world and do our own righteous *karma*. And if you are not spiritually healthy you cannot attain perfect health as even the WHO in its definition of perfect health has added "Spirituality" as an important component. If you are not spiritually well, then your mind is unable to remain stable. This instability of mind leads to many mental and physical disorders as today almost 85% of the diseases are psychosomatic disorders (i.e. which occurs due to the involvement of both physical and mental dysfunction). And once you correct the mental or the spiritual component, the physical disorder is sure to be resolved. Spirituality thus is an important factor to be

considered before treating a patient. It has been clearly noticed that when a person is mentally well-oriented, he responds to medicines and treatments quickly and more effectively. Spirituality plays a very important role in keeping a person healthy. Being spiritually correct, it automatically keeps you away from things which can easily make you ill. It also helps you avoid unnecessary stress and tension. Being spiritually well oriented, keeps your desires, greed, necessities under tremendous control which not only keeps you away from '*Paap Karma*' (Sinful acts) but also keeps you in a condition of perfect health.

Ayurved has a concept of '*Hita-Ahita*' (Beneficial-Unbeneficial) and '*Sukha-Dukh*' (Pleasing-Unpleasing). Ayurved believes that one must follow *Hitakar* lifestyle (That which is Beneficial) and not *sukhakari* lifestyle (Pleasing lifestyle which later harms us). For example for a patient suffering from Diabetes taking excessive sweets maybe pleasing (*Sukhadayi*) but may not be Beneficial (*Hitakari*) for his/her health while taking *Neem* juice may not be pleasing but would surely be beneficial. Thus one must have control over his/her senses, desires and necessities to remain healthy. And this is only possible through Spirituality.



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Whats & Whys

Answers to the questions of curious seekers

KANTHI

A mini Tulsi-bead rosary graced by LORD SWAMINARAYAN.

Kanthi or necklace (neck + lace) is better called mini rosary because it carries a deep spiritual function. When Mumukshu, liberation-desiring person becomes ready to become the follower of Lord Swaminarayan, he is conferred Mantradiksha and offered Kanthi to wear round his neck.

In Shikshapatri Verse-41, Shriji Maharaj has commanded that having accepted Diksha from Acharya born in the family of Dharmadev, the concerned Satsangi should wear round his neck a double-laced Tulsi-mala (rosary). This double laced rosary means Kanthi of the Holy Fellowship.

Tom, Dick or Harry cannot wear this Kanthi because it occupies a great significance as it is sanctified by Diksha Mantra. Shriji Maharaj has explained this point in Shikshapatri Verse-41. कृष्णदीक्षां गुरोः प्राप्तैस्तुलसीमालिके गले One who preaches about God is called Guru, and such Guru makes his disciple achieve God and makes him free from the bondages of Kaal, Karma and Maya. For this reason, he is called Shiksha Guru.

There are two types of Guru : Shiksha Guru and Diksha Guru. Diksha Guru can become Shiksha Guru but Shiksha Guru cannot become Diksha Guru. Any eligible person can become Shiksha Guru. According to Bhagawatji, Bhagawan Duttatreya had 24 Gurus and all of them can be defined as Shiksha Guru.

The children born of legally married husband and wife are called 'heirs' but children born of illegal relations between man and woman are

called 'half-caste' or 'hybrid'. Legal heir can succeed to parental property but illegal children have no right to become heir and succeed to ancestral property.

As regards Shiksha, many can be called Guru, but Diksha can be conferred only by the Dharmadev-family-born and nominated as Acharya by Lord Swaminarayan on Ahmedabad or Vadtal diocese. If we accept Diksha from such a Guru who doesn't have authority, it will be called unauthorized. As RTO approved driving licence cannot be transferred to other person, likewise authority for conferring Diksha also cannot be transferred.

Shatanand Swami writes in Arthadipika treatise of Shikshapatri गुरोः गुरुपदस्थ धर्मवंश ब्राह्मणात् सकाशात् कृष्णस्य दीक्षा तां प्राप्तैः The authority of Gurupada has been fixed in Dharmadev's family line for His followers by Lord Swaminarayan. The person can become the follower of Lord Swaminarayan by accepting Diksha from Dharmadev-family-born Acharya. Any person, may he be a scholar saint with sacred wealth, other than Acharya Shree on either Vadtal or Ahmedabad diocese, cannot confer Mantra Diksha. And if it is given by him, it will not be approved by Lord Swaminarayan. So, we have discussed the eligibility or qualification before accepting and wearing Kanthi.

As regards Kanthi, Shriji Maharaj has offered us to wear a double-laced rosary of Tulsi-beads. When a person wears the double-laced rosary on

his or her neck, he or she becomes associated with Lord Swaminarayan by thought, speech and action; and this Kanthi is the symbol of selfless love between God and His devotee.

So this Kanthi is the tool or medium to remind us about self-sacrifice and dedication at the feet of Lord Swaminarayan. Skand Puran says :

धारणीया कंठदेशे तुलसी काष्ठ मालिका ।
वैष्णवेन विशेषेण भगवत् प्रीति वर्धना ॥

Rosary made from Tulsi-wood-beads should be worn round the neck, especially by Vaishnavas, to increase the graceful favours of the Lord. The Kanthi is a means to increase the grace and strengthen faith in the form of God.

Our duty does not end only by wearing it round our neck. Let it be explained that Shriji Maharaj has instructed in Shikshapatri “When there is a fear of attack by ghost etc., chanting of Narayan Kavach or Hanuman Mantra should be done.”

This process is to be followed when someone is victimised by evil spirit. But unfortunately some people started the tradition of keeping amulets in the Kanthi, which is not acceptable as per the precedent of Shriji Maharaj, because there is no need to add anything along with the Kanthi. If the Kanthi is worn round the neck with the above stated condition of mind, no extraneous material is required. The simple and direct function of Kanthi is to establish bridge or link between our soul and Jagadishwar, Lord Swaminarayan. It is not Sampradaya oriented but it is the symbol of our surrendering to God and our unsurpassing love for Him. Of course, Kanthi includes the subtle meaning of the spiritual doctrines of the Holy Fellowship.

As per the command of Shriji Maharaj, Kanthi should be “**always**” worn round the neck and if for some reason it breaks, the same scattered beads should be threaded together and the same Kanthi should be worn. If it is too worn out to be used, you should have new Kanthi and make it touch with the idol of God and it should be put round the neck. It is not necessary to take Mantradiksha

again.

Those who have exposure to Sanskrit can speak Kanthidharan verse, otherwise offer earnest prayer before wearing Kanthi. The Kanthidharan verse is as follows :

तुलसी काष्ठ संभूते मालेविष्णुजन प्रिये ।
बिभर्मि त्वामहं कंठे कुरु माम कृष्णवल्लभम् ॥

“O Kanthi ! As you are made from Tulsi-wood, and you are coveted by Vaishnavas, I wear you round my neck. Will you please endear me to Lord Krishna ?”

This verse has such connection which directs to the feet of God.

In Hindu society, a woman wears a double-laced Mangalsutra round the neck after her marriage. Under undue circumstances, if she has to sell off all golden jewellery, she will not part with Mangalsutra, however critical the situation may be; because Mangalsutra is the symbol of sacred bondage between husband and wife. In the same way double-laced Kanthi is the symbol of the divine bondage between soul and Super-soul; Lord Swaminarayan, therefore never neglect Kanthi except in unavoidable circumstance like surgical (operation) emergency. Otherwise, never put it off by the doubt of impurity or fear or self-interest, because Shri Hari has dearly commanded to wear it all the time.”

In Hindu society all the gold jewellery is taken away from the body when a person dies, but Kanthi is not removed. In this way worldly material objects remain here but Kanthi, which associates with Lord Swaminarayan stays with us after death, therefore it should be always worn round the neck.

As the rosary beads are 108 in number, there is no fixed number for Kanthi and there is no fixed measure for its length; but in Shikshapatri Bhashya, Shatanand Swami explains that Kanthi in length should start at the shoulder and should end where the chest part ends. In short, it covers the chest. God resides in the heart which is concealed in the bosom. God's lotus-feet stay at the point where bosom ends. So the Tulsi-Kanthi should be of such length as it would touch the lotus-feet of God. Tulsi is the symbol of

unmatched devotion of God and is the dearest of God, therefore known as **Haripriya** i.e. dear to Shri Hari and has an immortal and eternal place in the feet of God. Kanthi expresses a two-fold concept (1) constant contact with the lotus-feet of God and (2) Dasattva Bhakti - total complete submission as a part of devotional association with God. Premanand Swami says - **You are my Master, and I am the attendant in Your service divine. Well, that's my vow.** The two laces of Kanthi are combined by a big bead, in the same way, the soul achieves oneness with God.

I am Brahmarupa sevak of Lord Shri Swaminarayan, Who is my absolute Master, Having this feeling in the soul, offering selfless devotion, is the essence of Vishishtadwait philosophy.

Kanthi carries very deep spiritual roots because all the time it reminds us of our concealed identity with God Supreme and with the lotus-feet of Lord Swaminarayan. Also Kanthi functions as red signal against wine drinking, eating non-veg food, theft, debauchery and many other vices. One who wants to progress on the path of spiritualizm and does not want to be moved from one's own religion, one who wants to strengthen his selfless faith and devotion for Shri Hari should wear Kanthi in the way and manner suggested by Shri Hari.

- **Lalji Bhagat**

Jnan Baug - Vadtal



Our soul is like a virgin and Kanthi is the link to unite her with the groom called Lord Swaminarayan.

હથેવાળો હરિસંગાથે મેં કીધો રે,
ભૂમાનંદ કહે જન્મ સુફળ કરી લીધો રે.

I have grasped the hand of Shri Hari (accepting Him as my husband); thereby I have this birth as a success.



Harendra P. Bhatt

The temple dedicated to LAXMINARAYAN

- Sir Monier Williams

“The temple dedicated to Laxminarayan, erected about sixty years ago, is a handsome structure. It has the usual lofty cupolas, and stands in the centre of a courtyard, formed by the residences of the Maharaja and his attendants, the great hall of assembly, and other buildings... We entered the temple by a homdsome flight of steps. The interior is surrounded by idol shrines... The two principal shrines have three figures... One of them has an idol of Krishna in his character of Ran-chhor - ‘deliverer from evil’, - a form of Krishna specially worshipped at Dwarika and throughout Gujarat. A image of Narayan (Vishnu) as the supreme being in the middle and Lakshmi, consort of Vishnu, is on the right. The other principal sanctuary has Krishna in the middle, his favourite Radha on the right, and Swaminarayan, the founder of the sect, on the left. The letter is here worshipped, like other great religious leader, as an incarnation of a portion of Vishnu - that is, he is held to be one of the numerous Narvatars or descents of parts of the god’s essence in the bodies of man. In adjacent shrine are his bed and clothes, the print of his foot, and his wooden slippers...’

(pp 151 to 153, Brahmanism & Hinduism)



Anger is happening. You have to be aware that you are angry. Watch it ! It is a beautiful phenomenon. Anger is beautiful, but beautiful things can become ugly too. If you transform them into something higher and nobler, they become divine.

It is a kind of energy moving within you, becoming hot! Anger is just like electricity in your body. You do not know, what to do with that energy. Either you will destroy yourself or you will kill somebody.

Religion says that both are wrong. The important thing required is to become aware and to know the secret of this energy - anger - the inner electricity. It is electricity, because you become hot, when you are angry, your temperature goes high. When the same anger is transformed into compassion, one can experience the bliss of inner self.

Even though electricity makes you hot, it can become the source of air-conditioning too ! Anger makes you hot but it can become the source of compassion. Compassion is the inner air-conditioning. Suddenly everything is cool and beautiful and nothing can disturb you!

- Dr. Mahavrat Patel, Vadodara

Suppose a serpent appears in the congregation. It may not bite anyone but all will get up and run away. Similarly even the trace of anger is extremely harmful.

- Bhagwan Saminayan

Give not bitter words to anyone. He will return them more. The hard words of the opponent will pierce your heart.

- Dhammapada

There is no enemy more dangerous than anger. Anger, lust and avarice are the three gates of hell.

- Bhagwad Geeta

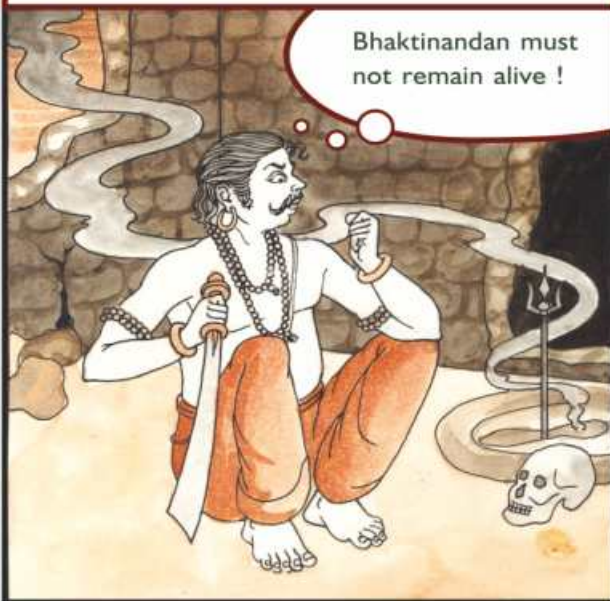
The anger of God is as good as a boon. - Kalidas



Kalidatta CHILDREN'S WORLD

THE ILL WIND BLOWS NOBODY ANY GOOD

When Kritiyas, the female Tantrik evil spirits failed to destroy Shree Hari, Kalidatta, the leader of demons waited for an opportunity to finish Him for ever.



Shree Hari's parents are busy in receiving guests at His tonsorial ceremony.



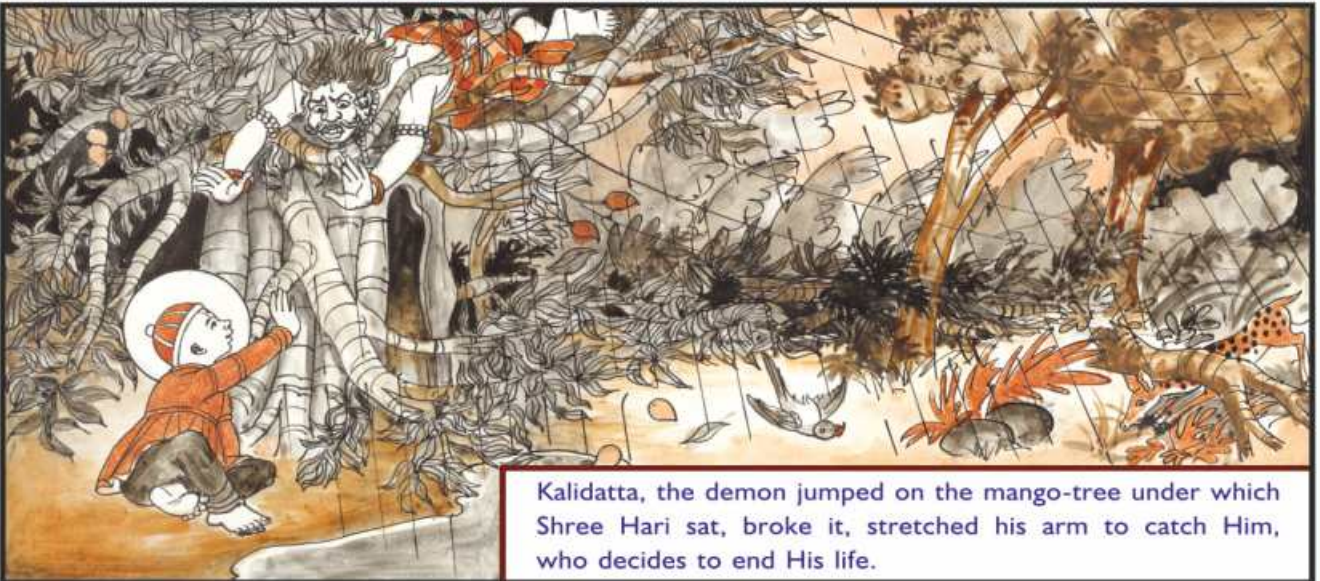
The grove of mango-trees.



Kalidatta, in a child's form fails to catch Shree Hari because of His projecting divine light.



With his power of black magic, frustrated Kalidatta creates devastating cyclone with heavy rain, thunders and lightning.



Kalidatta, the demon jumped on the mango-tree under which Shree Hari sat, broke it, stretched his arm to catch Him, who decides to end His life.

Blinded at the very sight of Shree Hari, he dashed here and there with fanatic fury and finally fell down for ever.



Like the dust,
thrown at the sun.

Like a ball,
thrown at the wall.

Like beating,
the wall with fists.

Like throwing,
boomrang at a bird.

Like digging,
a pit for others to fall.

**EVIL SHALL COME TO THOSE
WHO DO EVIL TO OTHERS**



Ladhibai of Bhuj

The sky of Shri Swaminarayan Holy Fellowship is vastly embroidered with a number of star-like male and female aspirants who led such inspirational and motivational lives that even after a great phase of time they bear a very respectable and revered place in the hearts of millions of saints and devotees in our Holy Fellowship. Ladhibai of Bhuj – Kutch was one of them. Let's have glimpse of some of her life episodes.

Born in the caste of Kayastha Ladhibai, who led a godly life, was one of unique disciples of Ramanand Swami. At a very early age of life she had been married to a person who was envious of Holy Fellowship. When Ladhibai was taken to her father-in-law's house, a number of efforts were made to get her rid of her Satsang. On the other hand Ladhibai was firm like the Himalaya on the path of Satsang.

She could not be moved from her obedience to the rules of Satsang and her faith in Lord Swaminarayan. She was not ready to yield before any kind of physical torture that her husband gave her. But she bore the pain without even showing any sign of displeasure. She was firm to live as she thought that all this was but her test in the path of devotion. She never complained for such harsh situation because she knew that Lord Swaminarayan is Omnipresent, Her firmness pleased Shriji Maharaj. At last greatly pleased with her silent

tolerance like penance, Shriji Maharaj freed her from the married worldly life. She became a widow. She returned to her father's house. Her father managed for a small room for her to live a solitary life and her pilgrimage on the path of spirituality began to move ahead.

Once in the winter Shri Hari was warming Himself at the fire-pan at Sundarjibhai Suthar's house. Ladhibai came there for Darshan. There also came up a hypocritical ascetic and began to pretend to be Brahma Swarup (one identical with Brahman); just to impress all present there. Shriji Maharaj called in Ladhibai to bring his pride down. Shriji Maharaj made her go to trance. Then a burning piece of coal was placed on her wrist. It began to burn Ladhibai's body. Having seen this Amrabai, the wife of Sundarji got irritated and began to rebuke Maharaj saying, "If you harass this way, then who will be Your Satsangi?" Narayanji Suthar had also been present there. The hypocrite ascetic was sitting showing to be under deep state of meditation. He felt the smell of physical burning and at a moment took to heels even without looking back.

Smilingly Shriji Maharaj asked Amrabai to wake up Ladhibai. Amrabai shouted in the ears of Ladhibai, "Ladhi ! Ladhi !" but being in the trance she did not wake up. Then Shriji Maharaj woke up her and asked, "Where had you been so long ?" Ladhibai narrated her being in Akshardham.

Once Ladhibai arranged for the festival of Annakuta. All satsangi women cooked a variety of sweets, vegetables, pickles etc... When everything was prepared, Ladhibai prayed Shriji Maharaj to kindly come and have the dinner. Shriji Maharaj wanted to test her state of determination in His Form as God. He told her, "You are a widow but following My words; if you put on clothes and ornaments like a married woman and fetch water on your

Ramayana

THE QUINT ESSENCE

Ra means 'light', Ma means 'within me', 'in my heart'.

So, Rama means 'the Light Within Me..'

Rama was born to Dashrath & Kaushalya.

Dashrath means 10 chariots..

The ten chariots symbolize the five sense organs (Jnanendriya) & five organs of action (Karmendriya)...

Kaushalya means 'Skill..'

The skillful rider of the 10 chariots can give birth to Rama...

When the 10 chariots are used skillfully, Radiance is born within...

Rama was born in Ayodhya.

Ayodhya means a place where no war can happen...

When There is no conflict in our Mind, Then The Radiance can Dawn...

The Ramayan is just not a mere story which happened long ago...

It has a philosophical, spiritual significance and a deep truth in it...



It is said that the Ramayan is happening in our own Body.

Our Soul is Rama,

Our Mind is Sita,

Our Breath or Life-Force (Pran) is Hanuman,

Our Awareness is Laxman and

Our Ego is Ravan...

When the Mind (Sita), is stolen by the Ego (Ravan), then the Soul (Rama) gets Restless...

Now the Soul (Rama) cannot reach the Mind (Sita) on its own...

It has to take the help of the Breath - the Pran (Hanuman) by Being in the form of Awareness (Laxman)...

With the help of the Pran (Hanuman), & Awareness (Laxman)...

If the Mind (Sita) got reunited with the Soul (Rama), the Ego (Ravan) is vanished...

In reality Ramayan is an eternal phenomenon happening all the time within our self...!

head from Deshalsar tank and return through the main market openly, I would surely come to dine at your home." No sooner did Shriji Maharaj expressed His wish than Ladhibai dressed up like a married woman and fetched water from Deshalsar tank!

On the way people were asking to make fun of her, "Ladhi! Whom did you get marry with?" Ladhibai proudly replied, "Lord Swaminarayan." Shriji Maharaj was so much pleased with Ladhibai's firm understanding of firmness of the form of God that He blessed her with Samadhi and handed her the care of Jhamakubai, known as Mataji.

Let's pray Shriji Maharaj to give us such pure understanding of Satsang and firmness of determination in the form of God which Ladhibai had!

- Purshottambhai Kacha (Dhoraji)

The Perfect

Prayer



Yogesh Patel (U.S.A.)

We often hear the word prayer in our daily life. We are told to pray regularly. We know people who pray regularly. So, what is prayer? What should we pray for? Why should we pray?

What is a prayer?

Following are some of the definitions of prayer from different sources.

From Encyclopedia Britannica : Prayer : an act of communication by humans with the sacred or holy—God, the gods, the transcendent realm, or supernatural powers.

From Merriam-Webster Dictionary : Prayer: an address (as a petition) to God or a god in word or thought.

From Easton's 1897 Bible Dictionary : Prayer : Prayer is converse with God; the intercourse of the soul with God, not in contemplation or meditation, but in direct address to him. Prayer may be oral or mental, occasional or constant, ejaculatory or formal.

What should we pray for? Why are we seeking those things?

We know that praying for things to God is better than praying for things to others. Praying for worldly things, that distract us from God is not a good idea. So, what shall one pray for?

In Sarangpur, Shriji Maharaj, saints and devotees were celebrating the festival of Holi.

Being very pleased, Shriji Maharaj asked the devotees to state their wish. At the event, a group of female devotees stated their wish (prayer) to Shriji Maharaj, this prayer has been widely admired by satsangies and many recite it as daily prayer of their own.

This prayer has been written by Shree Niskulanand Swami in 64th chapter of Bhakta Chinatmani (Maha Balavant Maya Tamari, jene Aavaria Nar Nari....).

Following is the translation of the prayer.

Maharaj! Your mighty Maya has entrapped all men and women. Please bless us with a boon that the Maya does not engross us. Additionally, please grant us that:

- We never think of You as any human being.
- We realize that all Your pastime are supernatural.
- We never get distaste for Satsangies.
- We never forget You even under the influence of any circumstances (place, time and activities).
- Our intelligence never gets cursed by lust, anger, greed, illusion.
- Anything that keeps us away from worshipping You, we request to save us from such an obstacle
- O Maharaj! with Your mercy please grant us what we have just requested. We also like to

state what we do not wish :

- Never give us bodily ego that makes us forget You.
- Never give us bad association and keep us away from improper conducts.
- Never give us worldly pleasures, never give us proximity among those who are against God.
- Never give us the worldly prestige, ego, jealousy and so on.
- Do not give us opportunities for physical comforts and separation of the followers of God.
- Please do not give us dislike of Satsangi.
- Do not give us an arrogant nature.
- Do not give us the company of those

atheists who (incorrectly) favours Karma over God.

Why is this a perfect prayer ?

Notice that the things being prayed for are not for the pleasure of the person praying. In fact, the prayer is explicitly requesting not to grant pleasures, prestige, etc. It is not even suggesting any desire for liberation. This prayer is not focused on the needs and wants of the person who is praying. So what is the focus of this prayer ? The focus of this prayer is Shriji Maharaj. It is about seeking qualities and circumstances to become an humble servant of God. It is about becoming a perfect object for His pleasure.



*Brahmarup hoi bhajan tumaro, Karat hoon sanjh savari re;
Ahamkrut apno maan mitayo, Vachan dori galey beech daari.*

(Devanand Swami)

O Lord Swaminarayan ! I abide by Your advised words, code and conduct and wear the 'kanthi' (bead necklace) around my neck. You have set me free from pride and attachment. Now I stay engrossed in Your devotion whole day. You have bestowed Your Supreme kindness on me!

Vadtal Temple - From where **Lord Swaminarayan** listens to **the Prayer** of His beloved devotees.



Fruit Seller

Once while returning from office, I saw a small board hanging over a lorry on which it was written with thick bold letters with a marker - "There is no one in the house, my aged mother is sick. I have to go to feed her every now and then, give her medicine, take her to the washroom. If you are in a hurry, you can weigh the fruit yourself, keep money under the stone kept at the corner. Price is written along. If you don't have money, it's okay, pay later. You have my permission."

I looked around. Took the weighing scale and weighed 2 kg apples and 1 dozen bananas, put them in the bag, saw the price in the rate chart, took out money and lifted the stone. I saw 100, 50 and 10 rupee notes lying underneath. I also kept my money there.

I came home with the bag. After meals, along with my wife, I happened to pass by the fruit lorry. I saw an old, worn out man, shabbily dressed in Kurta - Pyjama, who was about to leave with his lorry. He saw us and told us with a smile, "Sir, fruits are over." Just with the intent of striking a conversation, I tried to enquire about the board hanging over the lorry with much curiosity.

He said, "Since past 3 years, my mother is bed-ridden. She is slightly mad and now she is also paralytic. I don't have kids, wife is dead. Only me and my mother are there in the family. There is nobody to look after my sick mother. So I have to take care of my mother, most of the time.

Once while massaging her feet, I told her gently, "Ma, I really wish to serve you. But my pocket is empty and you don't let me out of

the room. Tell me what should I do? Food is not going to fall from the sky above...right?" Hearing this, with a faint smile, she tried to get up, shivering and panting. I comforted her putting a cushion behind her for support. She lifted her wrinkled face, with her frail hands gestured with folded hands to the Lord Almighty and murmured, "God alone knows about our fate." After a while, she said with a confident voice, "You keep the lorry there. We will get what we deserve sitting here in this room." I said, "What are you talking? If I keep it there, thieves, loafers will steal away all stuff. These days who understands anyone's predicament? And without the vendor, who will come to buy the fruits?" he asked in a worried tone.

His mother said, "You utter the Lord's name in the morning and keep the lorry at its place. Bring the empty lorry back in the evening. That's it. Don't argue with me. I have complete faith in my God. I bet you won't face any loss."

"It's been 2 ½ years... Every morning I keep the lorry and bring it back in the evening. People leave money there, take away fruits. Not even a single fruit gets misplaced. Sometimes someone keeps extra money deliberately. Sometimes, someone keeps flowers for Ma, sometimes something else. Day before yesterday, a doctor kept his visiting card written behind it, "If your mother is unwell, please call. I will be there."

Whether it's the fruit of my mother's service, or the strength of her heartfelt prayer, I do not know. Either my mother is innocent or I am ignorant. All I could understand is that if we serve our parents, then the Lord initiates and carves the way of our success." He left after saying this. But I stood there dumbfounded, fully drenched in faith!





Prasadi

The Articles graced by Shri Hari

GRACE ABOUNDING

During His holy tour Bhagwan Shree Swaminarayan visited the town of Botad in order to redeem the fallen and to please the holy ones. The enthusiasm of the residents of this relatively small town was so great that His visit electrified the whole town. Wearing the best of their clothes and ornaments the

residents formed a long serpentine queue to pay their respect. The ruler too, with his royal family stepped out of his courtyard. Following the custom each and every person in the queue had brought gifts consisting of flowers, garlands, dresses, ornaments, crystal-sugar, coconuts, coins and many such presents as per their

financial condition. Shree Hari evaluated all these gifts with the faith and affection behind them and not by their financial worth.

The grocer of the town, a Bania by caste unwillingly closed his grocery shop as he was sorry to lose a day's income but he was afraid about his absence in the queue as he feared the wrath of the townsmen. Before locking the shop he had picked up an internally rotten coconut to

present it to Shree Hari. He thought none would know the inner content of the coconut and he would certainly secure the blessings of Shree Hari. What a profitable transaction!

With the rotten coconut he joined the queue and when it was his turn he offered the coconut at the holy feet of the Omniscient Lord! Shree Hari cast a meaningful smile at him who shivered as if he had malaria!

Shreeji Maharaj remarked: "Have you brought a good water full coconut or a worthless rotten one?"

The grocer was unable to hide the fact. Telling the truth for the first time in his life. He said, "My coconut is as rotten as my mind but the divine light of the moon falls equally on a palace, a cottage or a dung hill! I have no doubt about Your capacity to raise even the greatest sinner. I pray You to carry my soul to Akshardham when I cease to breathe!"

Such sincere confession by a tricky Bania moved the heart of our Lord Who promised to fulfill his greatest ambition of life.



18 pairs Lotus-feet imprint of Shri Hari

That day brought a turning point in the life of that grocer, who became a great devotee while carrying on his trade of grocer in a fair manner.

Years rolled on and the time was up for the grocer to say goodbye to the world. His bedroom was suddenly brightened up with divine light as Shree

Hari personally arrived. He had that rotten coconut in His hand. He said: "Look Shethji. Here is the rotten coconut offered by you but your confession about it earned My grace to change your life for the better. So I have come to fulfill My promise to take you to My divine abode - Akshardham!"

The grocer together with Shree Hari ascended to Akshardham.

Inauguration Of SWAMINARAYAN HOSPITAL AT VADTAL



My followers should serve an ailing person according to their ability.

- Bhagwan Swaminarayan

To make this command of our Lord fulfilled, Swaminarayan Temple Vadtal Board has established a new venture of well-equipped, multi-speciality Hospital at Vadtal. Here, free medication is being provided to all - irrespective of any caste or creed. During the last 3 months approximately 500 various surgeries have been done and more than 50,000 persons have taken an advantage of this noble attempt done by Swaminarayan Temple Vadtal.