Pragat Parcha Pade Pade

Part - 2



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Shree Swaminarayan Mandir - Loyadham



Inspirer: H.D.H. Shastriji Shri Ghanshyamprakashdasji Swami

H.D.H. Shastriji Swami (Pujya Guruji) is the founder of Shree Swaminarayan Mandir Loyadham Parivar. Due to his preaching, thousands of devotees have given up immoral vices and continue to walk on the path of spirituality. Additionally, many youths have been inspired to renounce this world, and today there are over 50 sadhus (saints) who have dedicated their lives to serve the Swaminarayan faith. Under his expert guidance, numerous institutions such as Loyadham – India, Kandari Gurukul, Vadodara Gurukul, Navli Gurukul, Loyadham – NJ (USA), Loyadham – FL (USA), and Loyadham – Macon (USA) are being operated as enters of spiritual and educational learning along with social service.

Due to the presence of God within, his life continues to inspire numerous saints and devotees in the Swaminarayan fellowship today. His profound discourses have enlightened countless devotees, and well-wishers and have motivated them to adopt religious, addiction-free lives. His saintliness and devotion to Bhagwan Swaminarayan continues to leave a lasting impression on innumerable devotees.



Aadi Gurudev Pu. Swamishri sevit Shri Thakorji Maharaj

Book Title:

Pragat Parcha Pade Pade Part-2

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H.D.H.Shastriji Shri Ghanshyamprakashdasji Swami (Loyadham)

Publisher:

Shree Swaminarayan Mandir Loyadham

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Design:

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Our Divine
Guru Parampara





Sadguru Shri Ramanad Swami



Sadguru Shri Muktanand Swami



Sadguru Adharanand Swami



Sadguru Haripriyadasji Swami



Sadguru Vaikunthcharandasji Swami



Sadguru Narayanswarupdasji Swami



Sadguru Nandkishordasji Swami



Sadguru Ghanshyamprakashdasji Swami



Dedication

This book is dedicated to our great Sadgurus of the Muktanandi Parampara from Adi-Gurudev Anadi Mahamuktaraj Shri Muktanandji Maharaj to our Pujya Dadaguruji, Shri Nandkishordasji Swami. They are the ones who have given us a matchless gift in the form of our pujya Guruji. They are the ones who have guided us on the path of righteousness. During their lives, they exemplified eternal divine virtues through which the people of society experienced the bliss of Bhagwan Swaminarayan even today. Nonetheless, there is no way for us to return their favor as they have provided us with this Loyadham Parivar satsang but this book is a mere gesture of appreciation for their efforts. Shree Swaminarayan Mandir Loyadham is honored to publish this book on the occasion of Youth Shibir - July 2022, being celebrated in the memory of our Adi Gurudev Pujya Swamishri.

Inspiration

This book is published by the inspiration of Pujya Guruji, H.D.H. Shastriji Shri Ghanshyamprakashdasji Swami - the seventh Sadguru of Sadguru Muktanand Swami's lineage, and the founder of Shree Swaminarayan Mandir Loyadham. His vision is broad and farsighted, such that generations to come will benefit in joining one's self in the divine form of God. We owe a great deal to Pujya Guruji, whose overall saintliness, selfless, and tireless devotion continues even in his 60s. He is the divine personality who is the founder, developer, and sustainer of Loyadham Parivar.



Guruji's Blessings

Due to the immense grace of Sarvopari Shri Bhagwan Swaminarayan - Shri Thakorji Maharaj served by Anadi Mahamuktaraj Aadigurudev Shri Muktanand Swami and the holy Sadgurus of the Muktanandi Parampara, during the year of 2019, “Parcha - Prakran” written by Sadguru Shri Nishkulanand Swami within the Bhaktachintamani was translated into English and published as stories. These stories, based on the 15 chapters of Bhaktachintamani, received a lot of love from its readers.

Moreover, sensing the need for spiritual advancement of today's generation, the remaining 16 chapters have been translated in English which will prove to be greatly beneficial to the youths who are only well-versed in the English language. Whosoever reads this book or listens to it with love shall obtain deep affection and faith in Sarvopari Bhagwan Shri Swaminarayan and his Mukto, which will in turn strengthen the factor of Upasana. Also, these stories will provide one with immense courage to live according to the rules set forth by Bhagwan Shri Swaminarayan.

This book has been prepared as a result of timely efforts put in by the saints and devotees of Loyadham Parivar. An electronic version of this book is being released on the occasion of Youth Shibir - 2022. I pray in the feet of Shri Thakorji Maharaj and the Sadgurus of the Muktanandi Parampara to shower their blessings upon all those who have provided their service in the writing, designing, and all other aspects required in the publication of this book. Also, I shower my blessings with love upon all saints and devotees who have worked hard for this publication.





Preface

Supreme Almighty Lord Swaminarayan manifested on this earth and performed countless divine episodes. Each and every action of God and His Satpurush are only for the liberation of countless people. It is stated in the Vachanamrut G.I. 21, "In all of those scriptures, there are talks of the divine actions and incidents of either God or His Sant."

Adi Gurudev Shri Muktanand Swami and other prominent saints had collected incidences of Bhagwan Swaminarayan, His saints & devotees. Sadguru Shri Nishkulanand Swami had also written some of the incidents in Gujarati in one of his holy books - Bhaktachintamani. The ending chapters of it are known as 'ParchaPrakran', as they effectively describe the Supremacy of Bhagwan Shri Hari through miracles he had performed.

Loyadham Parivar is rapidly growing in the different countries of the world. To satisfy the thirst of the younger generation of the world, a translation in the language of English as been made of these chapters.

Pujya Guruji's divine vision invigorates the younger generation to become more God-centered. He has a clear

vision and mission to spread the Supremacy of Bhagwan Shri Hari, to everyone. For that He has been inspiring numerous spiritual aspirants from all over the globe, and initiated them as sadhu in the divine lineage of Adi GurudevMuktanand Swami. Moreover, he nurtured them with the knowledge of all of the scriptures of the fellowship, along with the virtues of saintliness. He is the sole inspirer of this book.

This second part begins in the presence of Our Adi Guruder Pu. Swamishrisevit Shri Thakorji Maharaj and Pujya Guruji, and similarly finished in their presence. May all the readers receive the divine blessing of Shri Thakorji Maharaj, our Muktanandi Sadgurus, and our pragat Sadguru Pujya Guruji.

This book is by no means the translation of the original text of Bhaktachintamani. We have performed some research on the incidents with the references of other authentic & reliable sources and derived each chapter.

We are glad to publish the electronic version of 'Pragat Parcha Pade Pade' Part-2 during the Youth shibir 2022 - Sarvopari Sant Shri Muktanand Swami.

Loyadham Parivar

INDEX

1.All Wishes Fulfilled 1

2.The Burning House 13

3. Awakening Of The Dead Man.....24

4.Change Of Plans 26

5. Shri Hari Becomes A Teacher 29

6. Shri Hari Decides Otherwise.....37

7. Yamduts Chased Away!.....41

8.Bhagwandas Experiences Bhagwan! 45

9. Released From The Shackles 48

10.Prasadi From Samadhi 50

11. True or False? 52

12. Stolen Ornaments 55

13. Broken Vows and Oaths.....61

14.Fever Struck Twice! 63

15. Overflowing Emotions.....66

16. “Never Falters From His Words”.....68

17. Story Of The Black Sari.....73

18. Prayers and Prophecies 75

19. Hungry For Devotion 77

20. Divine Flower Garlan 80

INDEX

21. Shri Hari Provides ForShambai 82

22. Heart-Touching Devotion 84

23. Locked Doors Unlocked 86

24. Young Yet Highly Enlightened 88

25. Gifts From Akshardham 90

26. The Magical Stick 92

27. Rewards Unrevealed 98

28. Prison Break! 101

29.Put him back to life 103

30. Jetha's Illness Cured! 106

31. You Attain What You Wish For 109

32. Bhagwan Comes ForSakarbai 112

33. As Firm As A Lion 116

34. First Time In Surat 120

35. Chariots And Elephants 125

36. Fruits Reaped 128

37. Shobharam Saved 133

38 Small Child Surprises All 139

39. Rescued From The Dacoits 145

INDEX

40. Swaminarayan Mantra - A Medicine 150
41.Quarrelsome Aunt 154
42. Power Of Celibacy 158
43.Believe It Or Not 163
44.True Form Of Relations 167
45.Fruits of Firm Faith 171
46. Ghosts - A True Incident 174
47. Holi with Shri Hari 178
48. Jibhai's Warning 182
49. Kandas Convinced 186
50. House of Ghosts 189
51. Saved the Brahmin 193
52. How Is This Possible? 196
53. Uncommon Behavior Explained 198
54. Dug His Own Hole 202
55. Remorse Leads To Compassion 205
56. Merits Of Darshan 208
57. Saints To The Rescue 212
58. Diseases And Evil Spirits 214
59. Yamduts Remained Yelling 216

To the readers

1. Bhagwan Swaminarayan is referred to in a variety of ways including, 'Shri Hari', 'Shriji Maharaj', 'Lord Swaminarayan', 'God', 'Supreme Lord', 'Supreme Almighty,' 'Supreme God.' etc.

2. Some words are used interchangeably; for example, 'saints' may be referred to as 'santo'.

3. Words in italics are definitions that are clarified in the glossary of this text for your convenience.

1. All Wishes Fulfilled

In the city of Vadodara, Bhagwan Swaminarayan had shown numerous miraculous incidents to devotees and saints. The devotees and saints had developed unwavering affection and devotion towards Maharaj. Therefore, Shriji Maharaj gave them his divine darshan according to their wishes. All the divine incidents revealed the supremacy of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. It is a fact that by reading and listening to such miraculous *charitras* of God, the devotees' devotion strengthens day by day.

There was a brahmin devotee by the name of Sadashiv. He had a daughter named Umiya. Due to the grace of Bhagwan, Umiya attained the power to enter into samadhi. While in samadhi, she visited many divine realms and abodes of God such as swarg (Realm of the Indra and other deities), Kailash (abode of Lord Shiva), Vaikunth (abode of Lord Shri Ram), Golok (abode of Lord Shri Krishna), Shvetdwip (abode of Vasudev Narayan), and also the divine abode of Akshardham (abode of Bhagwan Swaminarayan). During Samadhi, Umiya was able to perform divine darshan of all the abodes and of the forms of God that reside within those abodes.

When she returned from Samadhi, she narrated the various abodes and their existence to the other devotees. In this way, Umiya, while engrossed in samadhi would reach Akshardham as well where she would see the form of Shriji Maharaj and talk with him to a great extent.. Once during samadhi, Maharaj was talking to Umiya and He said, “I wish to

eat at your home! Thus,go and prepare a good meal! I would like to eat only roti and bananas, nothing else."

Umiyabai became conscious after returning from Samadhi. At the request of Bhagwan, she began to prepare the rotis from wheat flour. On the other hand,she washed, peeled, and cut the bananas into smaller pieces. While she prepared the meal, she did so with the remembrance of Maharaj. Once the meal was ready, she put the food in a dish and a bowl and waited for Shriji Maharaj to arrive.

After some time, Shriji Maharaj divinely appeared at Umiya's home. Upon hearing his arrival, Umiyabai quickly got up to welcome him. Everyone in the family could see the form of God but no one could fathom as to how and where God came from. Regardless, they all realized how fortunate they are for having the Supreme Almighty himself present at their home.

Umiyabai welcomed Maharaj in and offered him a seat. She could not let her eyes off of Maharaj as she expressed her gratitude to Shri Hari. She got carried away by the emotions and forgot everything else. Afterwards, she requested Maharaj to come and accept the meal. Shri Hari got up and followed Umiyabai towards the dining room where she had prepared a comfortable seat for Maharaj. To fulfill her devotion, Shri Hari sat down for the meal. Umiyabai served Maharaj some rotis and pieces of banana. As Maharaj was eating, Umiyabai was sitting across from him to do His darshan and would not let her eyes off of Maharaj. Since Maharaj was so dear to Umiyabai, her mind always contemplated the darshan of Shri

Hari and his talks. All this time, He was the one whom she enjoyed talking to, asking something to know, and offering her respectful obeisances during samadhi. Now, she was with him outside of samadhi thus her joy knew no bounds. She was extremely happy to have the Supreme Lord in front of her and eating food prepared by her – which was beyond the speculation of her mind, body, and senses.

After finishing His meal, Shri Hari washed His hands with the help of Umiyabai and got up to sit in the living room. There, all of the family members of Umiyabai, including her father Sadashivbhai, were doing darshan of Shri Hari. Maharaj delivered discourses while everyone listened discreetly. He gave eternal bliss and happiness to all who were present there. In this way, Shri Hari stayed at Umiyabai's home for about three hours to bless her.

Then, Shri Hari suddenly disappeared from the home of Umiyabai. No one could comprehend where and how He departed. Soon after, all the devotees, along with Umiyabai understood that Shri Hari appeared in his divine form to provide his divine darshan and to give eternal bliss. In this manner, Umiyabai experienced many similar miraculous incidents by the grace of Shri Hari. That was the greatness of Supreme Lord Shri Hari.

Once, Umiyabai was so engrossed in devotion that she forgot her own existence. She was lost in the thoughts of her beloved Maharaj and forgot everything related to her body and this world. Mentally, she went to Gadhada through Samadhi

while leaving her physical body back at home. She was so engrossed in Maharaj's murti that nothing could hinder her to go to Gadhada for His darshan. Umiyabai entered Gadhada from the bank of the holy Ghela River and proceeded towards the darbar (courtyard) of Dada Khachar.

Shree Hari was sitting and eating lunch on the veranda outside of the rooms of Dada Khachar's darbar in Gadhada. Mulji Brahmachari, a personal attendant of Shri Hari, was serving him food. Maharaj sat on an embroidered asan (seat) in a very charming fashion. He was wearing a white dhoti and a light pink colored cloth with a decorative border that covered the upper body. In front of him, there was a plate full of various delicious foods. While eating, as per His habit He was drinking water frequently.

Umiyabai was doing darshan while staying amongst the group of female devotees. As she was in a samadhi form, no one besides Maharaj could see her. While doing darshan, Umiyabai requested, “Maharaj! Please give me something as a prasadi (a thing used by you).” Unfortunately, Maharaj finished his meal therefore could not give any food in the form of prasadi, but he washed his hands and wiped them with a cotton napkin. Shree Hari gave that napkin to Umiyabai in the form of prasadi to worship every day.

By receiving such a rare gift from Maharaj, Umiyabai's heart was filled with joy. Holding the napkin in her hand, she stared at Shree Hari with fulfillment and peace of mind.

Umiyabai returned to her mortal body, opened her

eyes and found the cotton napkin in her hands. She was surprised because nothing was in her hands when she entered into samadhi. Not only did this shock Umiyabai, but also her family members who were all surprised by the miraculous event. The devotees had also seen that same napkin in Maharaj's hand when they had gone to Gadhada a month ago. Therefore, everyone was convinced that the napkin was Shriji Maharaj's and surprisingly, it was in Umiyabai's hand.

When other devotees asked, Umiyabai narrated her divine interaction with Shree Hari during her samadhi. By listening to Umiyabai's incident, everyone realized the immense glory and greatness of Shriji Maharaj as someone who can grant others the power to enter into Samadhi without practicing ashtanga-yoga. In fact, even those that master ashtanga-yoga, may not experience samadhi; only a handful of them can experience samadhi. The devotees of Vadodara became more inclined towards Shree Hari by listening and witnessing Umiyabai's incident.

Another similar incident occurred when Umiyabai entered into the state of samadhi on the day of *Makar Sankranti*. She went to Gadhada where Shriji Maharaj was sitting on a cushion with a cylindrical pillow on the veranda outside the rooms of Dada Khachar's darbar. He was wearing a white cotton *dhoti* and a light-green colored *khes*. A garland of yellow flowers had been placed around his neck and bunches of white and yellow flowers had been placed upon his ears. He was sitting in a very charming fashion. The assembly of *paramhansas* as well as devotees from various places had

gathered before him.

The day of *Makar Sankranti* was special since it was the day to donate food & money to the Brahmins along with providing grass to the cow. Also, a sweet made of sesame seeds with jaggery was offered to God and distributed amongst the Brahmins. So, to continue the tradition, Shri Hari also wished to distribute the sesame seed sweet balls to the Brahmins. Shri Hari was giving those sweets to the Brahmins along with gold coins. When all those Brahmins were satisfied by getting such 'Prasadi' and gold coins from Shri Hari's hand, they considered themselves fulfilled and thereafter, left for their homes.

While being in samadhi state, Umiyabai was also seated there. Shriji Maharaj gave her the same prasadi and gold coins for her father, Sadashiv, who was a Brahmin devotee of Shri Hari. He was very dear to Shri Hari because of his pure devotion. After getting blessings and due to Shri Hari's command, Umiyabai returned from samadhi to her bodily consciousness and found the prasadi of sweet balls made with sesame seeds and the gold coins in her hands. According to Shri Hari's commands, Umiyabai gave all of those prasadi and gold coins to her father Sadashiv. She also narrated how she had received prasadi directly from Shriji Maharaj during Samadhi. She explained the divine atmosphere of Gadhada due to the presence of Shriji Maharaj and *paramhansas.* Sadashiv also felt very pleased that the Supreme Lord of Lords, Bhagwan Shree Hari had sent prasadi for him. He himself took some of the prasadi with great affection and distributed the rest to the

other devotees. They all satisfied themselves by accepting the prasadi of sweetened sesame seed balls and realized the true glory of Shri Hari by whose power and wishes Umiyabai could enter into samadhi. Thus, they appreciated Shri Hari from the bottom of their hearts.

As per her routine, Umiyabai approached Shri Hari through samadhi again. She went where Shri Hari was sitting on an ornate cot. So, while looking at her, he asked her why she comes every day for His darshan. Immediately, Umiyabai replied, “Maharaj! You are the Supreme Lord - the cause of everything. You are the only one who is worthy to be loved by everyone. Only someone with a demonic intellect would not believe in you. In fact, I have understood your glory and thus, I do not long for anything besides your darshan.” By listening to such precise answers from his devotee, Shri Hari became pleased with her affection and gave her a fist full of crystal sugar as prasad. Moreover, Maharaj picked up some tulsi flowers and gave them to her as prasad. Maharaj was in a very fresh and joyous mood as it was the day of Krishna Janmashtami – the birth day of Lord Shri Krishna and also the birthday of His guru - Sadguru Shri Ramanand Swami. Some devotees brought a kewda flower and offered it to Shri Hari which he put on his cap. The fragrance of the kewda flower filled the atmosphere with aromatic fresh air. Umiyabai was fascinated by the fragrance and the beauty of Maharaj. In turn, Maharaj gave her the kewda flower from his flower-cap. Then Shri Hari said, “Now, Umiya! You should return to your home.”

Though she did not want to go back home, but only to

follow her beloved Maharaj's wishes, Umiyabai returned to her body consciousness from samadhi. When Umiyabai opened her eyes, she found all of those prasadi given by Bhagwan Shri Hari in her hands. Thus, she received the prasadi of the Supreme Lord Bhagwan Swaminarayan for which even the demigods like Brahma, Shiva and Vishnu are longing. Our ancient scriptures narrate an incident of Brahma who became a fish to get prasad of Bhagwan Shri Hari. Shiva also passed through such trouble to receive the prasad of Bhagwan Shri Hari. Such rare and precious prasadi were very easily received by the devotees through samadhi. That itself reveals the greatness of Shri Hari, who provided samadhi to his devotees with such ease. In fact, no one is able to fully comprehend His true glory as it is.

Once, half of the monsoon had passed, still there was no rain. At that time, in India, even though the country was dependent mostly on agriculture, there were no irrigation systems or any other sources through which one could obtain water. Therefore, people naturally worried about their survival. During the drought, the people of the city of Vadodara began to store sufficient grains because everyone – older, younger, male & female- worried about how they would survive in these times.

Sadashiv – Umiyabai's father – was also worried about the same problem. Moreover, he had not stored sufficient grains. Thus, he thought, “It is better, if I ask Maharaj through Umiyabai as to when will it rain?” Thereafter, Sadashivbhai told his daughter Umiya that the next time she approaches

Shri Hari, she should ask him about the rains.

Hearing this, Umiyabai showed no reaction as she didn't care whether it would rain or not. She had unflinching faith in Shri Hari as He will undoubtedly take care of her in all situations. Yet, to follow her father's commands, she entered into samadhi and went directly to Shri Hari. She first enjoyed the darshan of Shri Hari. After doing darshan, Umiyabai struck a conversation with Maharaj. Shri Hari was in a very charming mood, so He gave her a loving smile and asked her, "What do you want to ask me?" Umiyabai didn't reply as she was captivated by Maharaj's unique smile. She was looking towards the bright reddish-pink lips and milk-white teeth. She was dazzled by the cheeks of Maharaj because when Maharaj gave her a smile, dimples emerged on his beautiful cheeks.

So, again Lord Shri Hari insisted on getting her reply. By waving his hand to distract her sight, he said, "You may ask whatever you want to. Don't hesitate and ask me what's on your mind."

Thereafter, she spoke politely, "My Lord, please forgive me if I am making a mistake but my father wants to know when it will rain?"

In reply, Shri Hari exquisitely reprimanded her, "Why are you worrying about the rain? You will get your basic and primary needs such as clothes, food etc. Let go of all your worries, and engage in my devotion! "

However, Maharaj's verbal corrections never

sounded astonishingly like reprimands for his devotees. So, Umiyabai replied formally, “My dear Maharaj, please forgive me but I do not ask for myself, nor do I worry about anything. I have asked you on behalf of my father and the other people of the city. So, please remain pleased with me.”

With a unique smile, Maharaj said, “Umiya! Rain will pour within an hour and half. Thus, go back right now and tell everyone that rain will soon pour. Following Maharaj's commands, Umiya returned to her body. Sadashiv immediately asked her, “What did Maharaj say about the rain?” At that time, many devotees were present there at Sadashiv's home. So, addressing them all, Umiyabai said, “Maharaj has told me that there will be rain soon.” Everyone visualized this as by the wish of Maharaj, it was raining heavily within an hour and half. Even though it was not time yet for rain to fall, by the power of Shri Hari's words, there was plenty of water falling from the clear sky! This way, the inhabitants of Vadodara witnessed the true form of devotion. Again, they appreciated Umiyabai and her Bhagwan Swaminarayan.

One day, Umiyabai approached Lord Shri Hari through samadhi again. This time she did not come to ask Him anything, but just came to do His Darshan. She did Maharaj's darshan with full attention of her mind and eyes. In fact, she became emotional by getting the darshan of her beloved Maharaj. At that time, it was summer so Shree Hari had worn an extremely fine white dhoti and had covered His torso with another such cloth of pink color. Numerous devotees came to have this darshan. They came with different gifts for their Lord.

Some devotees offered a garland of fresh flowers with a nice fragrance. Some devotees offered their devotion to Shree Hari by giving bunches of flowers. Those bunches of flowers were precisely thick and enough to fill the room with a unique fragrance.

By observing such divine darshan of Shri Hari, Umiyabai became completely engrossed in the form of her beloved Lord. However, Shri Hari is the all-knower as He knows the mind and thoughts of all living entities at the same time without any means. So, He was aware of the devotional love Umiyabai possessed for Him. However, to appreciate her affection, Shri Hari said, "This lady has become habituated to come here every day. She has uncommon extreme affection for me." By saying so, Shri Hari appeased her by throwing a flower garland around her neck. Also, He gave her a thick bunch of flowers as a memory. After receiving such gifts, following Shri Hari's signals, Umiyabai returned to her body from samadhi. When she opened her eyes, she found a flower garland and bunches of flowers given to her by Shri Hari in her hands. She touched them to her eyes and forehead and kept them for everyday darshan.

In fact, everytime Umiyabai visited Shri Hari in samadhi, Shri Hari blessed her by giving her a different prasadi each time. Once, Shri Hari gave her 7 pieces of guava fruit. When she returned from Samadhi, all those seven guava pieces were found in her lap. Another time, Maharaj gave her a ripe and sweet mango. Once, while eating His meal, Maharaj gave her prasadi from the thal. Maharaj gave two freshly made

motiya ladoo (sweet-balls made of gram flour, sugar and ghee) in a dry leaf bowl as prasadi.

However, those items given by Shri Hari were divine and not given to Umiyabai in her physical presence. Yet, all of the items-were found in Umiyabai's hands upon her return from the samadhi. Umiyabai distributed the divine prasadi amongst the devotees.. There are numerous such incidents which reveal the supremacy of Lord Shree Hari and Nishkulanand Swami states that by narrating such miraculous incidents, everyone realizes the supreme bliss of Shri Hari.

2. The Burning House

In Vadodara, Shri Hari has showered his mercy upon his devotees numerous times and because of Shri Hari's miracles, all of the devotees felt His presence with them and remained elated day and night. Such power boosted their level of devotion. Therefore, they did not experience any miseries nor did they worry about what will happen after death. Lord Shri Hari always came to take these devotees to His abode Akshardham at the time of their death. One such devotee who experienced the various miracles from Lord Shri Hari was Ramchandra Vaidya. Originally Ramchandra was a brahmin and a *vaidya* (physician) of the royal family of Sayajirao Guiekwad. He was a devotee of Ranchhodray and visited the temple at Dakor with his family every full moon day.

Once, while visiting Dakor to do darshan of Dakornath (also known as Ranchhodray) Ramchandra Vaidya was not satisfied because he wanted to do the darshan of the manifest form of God. He wanted to meet God face to face. However, at this temple, he only saw the idol of God..

Due to his intense desire to meet the manifest form of God, he started to think in a different way. He thought, "I have been walking from Vadodara on every full moon day to do direct darshan of God, yet, I did not get any response from God." While deeply thinking about this, he became very sad and decided to commit suicide for this reason. To kill himself, he arrived at the main shrine of the temple amidst the darkness of the night. He prayed to God, "Oh God! If you do not manifest

in front of me right now, I will commit suicide by falling off from the top of this temple.'' When his prayer was not answered, Ramchandra moved forward and was ready to fall. He came to the edge of the shrine and suddenly a Brahmin appeared there in the dim light of an oil lamp arranged near the corners of the temple. He directly spoke to Ramchandra, “Why are you wasting your human life by committing suicide ?" Ramchandra bewildered and thought, who is this person at this time? Immediately, Ramchandra responded, “Who are you and why are you asking me this?" The Brahmin said, "Firstly, please come down.'' Ramchandra listened to the Brahmin and came down via a ladder. He approached the Brahmin and asked, “Now tell me what you want to say." The Brahmin said, “Ramchandra! If you want to attain the manifest form of God and if you wish to attain your ultimate liberation, you must go to Amdavad. There you should meet Muktanand Swami. He will grant you ultimate liberation and also lead you to the manifest form of God - Bhagwan Swaminarayan.”

Ramchandra was still confused so he asked, "Who are you and why should I believe you?" The Brahmin replied with a smile on his face, "I am Dakornath.'' Ramchandra spoke out, “But... how do I believe you!" The Brahmin said, "You should believe that I am Dakornath if I merge back into the idol of God in this Mandir." After saying this, the Brahmin walked towards the idol of Dakornath through the closed doors. Not only that but Ramchandra could witness how the Brahmin entered and merged into the idol of Dakornath - Shri Ranchhodray.

Ramchandra Vaidya realized that Dakornath himself

came to show him the true path of liberation. The next day, Ramchandra Vaidya sent his family members back to Vadodara and he left for Amdavad. There, he stayed with a friend who was a great merchant - Hemabhai Hathibhai. He asked his friend, "Is there any sadhu of Swaminarayan by the name of Muktanand Swami staying here in the city?" Hemabhai replied, "Yes, there are many Swaminarayan sadhus staying in Navavas (a place). They often come to get alms." Ramchandra said, "I want to do their darshan." The next day, he went to the place where the sadhus stayed. He prostrated before Muktanand Swami and sat in front of him to listen to his katha. After katha, he asked Swami, "Where is Bhagwan Swaminarayan?"

The diwan of Vadodara, Baba Rao, was opposite of Shriji Maharaj. Ramchandra Vaidya was his friend as a royal physician. So, knowing that Muktanand Swami replied, "We don't know where Bhagwan is at the moment." Again the next day, Ramchandra Vaidya came to Muktanand Swami and after listening to katha, he pleaded with folded hands, "Swami! I don't have any deceit in my heart. I am not playing a plot. In reality, Dakornath has sent me here to you. Dakornath gave me his divine darshan and instructed me to meet you in order to get Bhagwan Swaminarayan's darshan. So, please accept me as your disciple and tell me where Bhagwan Swaminarayan is."

Muktanand Swami then explained to him that Shri Hari is in Gadhada. The very next day, Ramchandra left for Gadhada and did darshan of Lord Shri Hari. As per the agna of Dakornath, Ramchandra became a devotee of Bhagwan Swaminarayan

and began to worship Him by understanding Him as the manifest form of the Supreme God.

As a royal physician, Ramchandra Vaidya held relations with the king and his courtiers which kept him busy all day long. Though he was a devotee of Shri Hari, he didn't get time to go for Shri Hari's darshan. Nevertheless, he chanted Shri Hari's holy name with the remembrance of his divine form. But, when he compared himself with the other devotees, he felt guilty for not being able to go for the darshan of Shri Hari to Gadhada. He became very emotional and he hated himself for not being able to take advantage of satsang. He started to hate his profession and his connection with the royal family.

One night, Ramchandra was trying to sleep but he could not. The thoughts of intense desire for Shri Hari's darshan kept him awake. Though he was laying on his bed, he was praying to God from the deepest of his heart. Tears welled up from his eyes. While laying on his bed, Ramchandra broke down with folded hands. As the words didn't support him, he was praying from his heart expressing his love for Shri Hari.

In such a condition, Ramchandra didn't realize when he finally fell asleep and entered a state of deep sleep. On the other hand, Bhagwan Shri Hari heard his prayers and wished to fulfill them. At midnight, there was a knock at the door. Ramchandra woke up and asked, “Who's there?" In reply, he heard the familiar voice of Shri Hari. Shri Hari lovingly said, “Ramchandra, open the door. Don't waste your time." Ramchandra immediately got up from his bed and ran to open

the door. When he opened the door, he didn't believe that Lord Shri Hari was there! Shri Hari entered the room. Ramchandra was overjoyed by seeing Bhagwan Shri Hari in front of him. He realized his Dakornath came there in the form of Shri Hari. So Shri Hari showed him a mass of divine light emerging from Himself. Though the divine light was worth millions of sun, it was calm and pleasant. In that mass of divine light, Shri Hari gave him darshan according to his belief. He got the darshan of Dakornath (Narayan) along with Lakshmiji amidst the mass of divine light.

The divine forms of Shri Lakshmi and Narayan were extremely beautiful. They wore a variety of golden jewelry and rich clothes. Upon getting such divine darshan, Ramchandra began to pray while folding his hands.

After a while, the two divine forms and the mass of divine light merged back into the human form of Shri Hari. By doing such divine darshan, Ramchandra Vaidya fell down at the feet of Shri Hari. He prayed, "Oh Maharaj! Today, you have made me extremely fortunate by giving such divine darshan. I am the most fortunate because of your mercy upon me." Tears of appreciation rolled down from his eyes and fell onto the lotus feet of Shri Hari. Shri Hari put his left hand upon Ramchandra's head and gave him blessings. He then consolded him with his sweet words and helped him stand up. Shri Hari embraced him. Ramchandra was still filled with emotion. Again, he requested Shri Hari, "Please, Maharaj, leave only after having a meal. If you stay for some more time, I will make arrangements for your meal." Shri Hari responded,

"Ramchandra! I don't feel like eating anything and need to hurry to return. Go call others in your family to do my darshan." Ramchandra called his wife, Amrutbai, and the rest of the family to do darshan of Shri Hari. Then, Shri Hari suddenly disappeared. Ramchandra Vaidya realized the glory of Shri Hari, as truly omniscient. Yet, he did not have the understanding that Bhagwan Swaminarayan is the Supreme Lord. But, later, by the association of Muktunand Swami and other saints, he realized Bhagwan Swaminarayan's true glory.

Once, Ramchandra and his wife Amrutbai were sleeping at night. At midnight, suddenly, one of the rooms of their home caught on fire. They were sleeping in another room and their maid was sleeping outside on the balcony. No one was aware that the house had caught on fire.

Nevertheless, Bhagwan Swaminarayan divinely appeared there at the burning home. He tried to wake up Ramchandra's daughter but she didn't get up. So, Shri Hari went to Amrutbai and woke her up. He said, "How could you sleep while your house is burning?" Amrutbai got up and woke up Ramchandra Vaidya. She said, "Wake up! Maharaj came to our house. Moreover, Maharaj informed me there is a fire in our house. Please get up and search for what is burning?" Meanwhile, Shri Hari disappeared from the scene. Immediately, Ramchandra got up and left the room. When he came out, Ramchandra's eyes couldn't believe his house was on fire!

Ramchandra, his wife Amrutbai, and their daughter worked together to extinguish the fire by spraying water. After some efforts, they finally succeeded in extinguishing the

fire completely. Then, they all began to pray to Maharaj from the bottom of their hearts. They prayed, “Maharaj! You are the most compassionate God. If you did not come today to wake us up, we would have all been burnt to ashes. But, You are our savior! By your grace, we have received a new life." In this manner, they were appreciating Maharaj and his doings by prayers.

Suddenly, Maharaj appeared in front of them again. They fell down at Maharaj's feet. Maharaj, on the other hand, gave a divine charming smile and said, “At present time, I manifested from Akshardham and assumed this human form to take care of my devotees. I cannot see my devotees passing through miseries. And because of that, I myself personally came here today to save you from the fire." By saying so, Maharaj disappeared from there.

* * * * *

Once, some of the saints of Lord Swaminarayan visited Vadodara. Most devotees of the city invited those saints to take food at their home. Ramchandra also wished to invite saints at his home to take their meal. He went to the place where the saints stayed. He requested with folding hands, “Please shower your mercy upon me and my family. Please don't say no. Please come to my home and grace us by accepting our food.” The saints did not deny and the next day the group of saints arrived at Ramchandra's house. At that time, as per the agna of Shriji Maharaj, saints could eat the

food prepared (cooked) by householder brahmin devotees. According to that custom, Ramchandra had kept food ready for saints. When the saints came to his home, he came forward to the entrance and welcomed them by showering the flower petals upon the saints who were carrying a small idol of God - with them. In this way, Ramchandra had expressed his feelings of joy.

He spread a silken cloth (asan) as a seat and requested them to sit on it. First, Santo put Thakorji in the ghar-mandir and thereafter, they sat-down on silken asan. Ramchandra had prepared a big dish with *jalebi* and other sweets, *farsan*, *shak,* and *puri*. He offered it to Thakorji Maharaj by putting a dish (thal) in front of Thakorji. He then prayed along with the saints by singing thal-chant. Ramchandra and the saints were singing with their sentiments. After completing the singing, all became engaged in performing mansi puja.

Today, Ramchandra's love had no bounds. As santo finished mansi puja, they were requested to get ready for taking a meal by washing their hands. Meanwhile, Ramchandra went to take back the thal from ghar-mandir. He found something missing. He had counted the *Jalebi* while putting it in the dish for thal. Surprisingly, eight *Jalebi* were missing. He thought it might actually have been eaten by Shri Hari through the idol. However, he didn't say anything regarding this matter. He lovingly served food to the saints. He repeatedly served the saints by forcefully giving Jalebi and other food-items. Santo ate the food realizing it as prasad of Shri Hari. They were eating while remembering the form of God. Ramchandra's

mind was very busy thinking of how and when Shri Hari came to eat his food in His divine form.

Bhagwan Swaminarayan came to eat food prepared by Ramchandra but He came in his divine form so no one could fathom Him. Moreover, Bhagwan ate everything that was in the dish and yet, the dish remained as no one touched it. Nothing was reduced from the dish other than the Jalebi as Shri Hari took eight of them for his other devotees. Bhagwan then arrived in his divine form at the home of another female devotee in the city. He gave her eight Jalebi as prasad and instructed her to distribute it amongst the other female devotees. He also told her, "I myself went to Ramchandra Vaidya's home to eat my meal and I liked the Jalebi because it is very tasty. So, I brought eight of them for you and other female devotees. After a few days, when all of the devotees gathered for a religious assembly, that incident was discussed by the female devotee to whom Shri Hari had given jalebi to distribute among other female devotees. Hearing that, Ramchandra remembered that he had found 8 *jalebi* missing from the dish. He understood how Shri Hari came to eat his food in His divine form. So, he also shared the details of the miracle that happened at his home. All the devotees in Vadodara joyfully enjoyed listening to the divinity and immense glory of Shri Hari.

Once, Ramchandra and his wife had decided to go to Gadhada to attend an event (samaiyo). Amrutbai asked Ramchandra Vaidya, “When we go to Gadhada for Maharaj's darshan, what shall we take with us for Maharaj?” Ramchandra

was interested in taking some precious things for Maharaj. He thought for a while and responded, "In my opinion, we should take a pair of new clothes with extravagant colors and rich embroidery." Immediately, Amrutbai interrupted, "But, Maharaj mostly wears simple white clothes. He wears such extravagant colored clothes only during the days of Utsav-samaiya (celebration of festivals) - not everyday." She added, “So, it is better if we take white clothes because Maharaj will make use of them everyday.” Ramchandra did not want to continue that conversation by making more arguments and thus, to finish the conversation, he said, "It will be according to Shriji Maharaj's wish. So, we will decide later."

Then, both of them engaged in their daily chores. The day was over and it was evening when Maharaj appeared there in the outskirts. He had put on colorful clothes embroidered with gold and silver strings. On His head, He had put on a rich *pagh*. In this fashion, Maharaj looked very beautiful with colorful clothes, ornaments, flower garlands and with very costly 'shal- dushala' - a silken long piece of cloth with a decorative border of golden and silver threads.

At that time, one of Amrutbai's neighbors who is her friend was passing through the way where Maharaj appeared in his divine form. So, Shri Hari called her and told her to pass a message to Amrutbai. Maharaj told her, “You go to Amrutbai's house and tell her that she said that Maharaj does not like to wear colorful and rich clothes. But, see today, I have worn such costly colorful clothes." That female devotee performed a detailed darshan of Shri Hari with full concentration. Then Shri Hari disappeared and that female devotee also went directly

towards Amrutbai's home.

She knocked on the door. Ramchandra Vaidya himself opened the door and invited her inside. Meanwhile, Amrutbai also came home. That female devotee narrated what had happened. She described how she got the divine darshan of Maharaj and also told them what Maharaj said to her.

Ramchandra and Amrutbai both were convinced of what Maharaj wished from them. So, they felt gratitude for Maharaj and in their minds, they thanked Maharaj because He himself solved their confusion. Later on, Ramchandra Vaidya had very costly clothes with golden and silver threads prepared for Maharaj. During their visit to Gadhada, they offered those valuable clothes to Shriji Maharaj and received His blessings.

In this way, Shri Hari fulfilled the wishes of his devotees. For fulfilling devotees' wishes, Maharaj took various miraculous forms. However, people with spiritual tendencies understand and believe it as truth and people with demonic intellect do not believe it as truth.

3. Awakening Of The Dead Man

Shobharam Shastri was a staunch devotee of Bhagwan Swaminarayan who lived in the city of Vadodara. He was very devoted and humble. Academically, he was a renowned scholar of sanskrit, but professionally, he worked in the courtyard of King Sayajirao Gaikwad of Vadodara. It is very difficult for one to attain the traits of humbleness and politeness when one is known as a reputed scholar.

But, due to the grace and association of Muktanand Swami and Gopalanand Swami, Shobharam had acquired the quality of servitude. He understood the profound glory of Bhagwan Swaminarayan and worshiped him with great affection due to which he developed firm faith in Bhagwan Swaminarayan. Slowly, he started firmly believing that Bhagwan Swaminarayan is the all-doer and whatever he does will surely grant us happiness. Due to such an understanding, Bhagwan continued to flourish his divine blessings upon Shobharam.

Once, Maharaj came in His divine form to take Shobharam's son to Akshardham. Shobharam was present there. His son was laying on his bed. His eyes stopped showing any movement and his heart stopped pumping. His soul was taken out of his body by Lord Shri Hari. Even though Maharaj was present there, no one could see Him. Shobharam shook his son's body, called by his name but all his efforts became futile. He then began to pray to Maharaj without lamenting. At that time, Shri Hari manifested in front of Shobharam. Maharaj

said, "I am pleased by listening to these heartfelt prayers performed by you." By getting such darshan from Shriji Maharaj, Shobharam and other devotees became excited. They said "Maharaj! It is our great fortune that you came at this time and graced us with your darshan. You are the ocean of compassion."

Then Shri Hari said, "Shobharam! Today, actually I came to take your son with Me to My eternal divine abode, Akshardham. But, now I have decided not to take him to Akshardham and keep him here with all of you. So, do not lament or grieve for him. He will be alive again." By saying so, Shriji Maharaj disappeared. Everyone was surprised and waited for the next surprise.

Remarkably, Shobharam's son woke up and got up from his bed. He told everybody, "Maharaj Himself came to take me to His divine abode Akshardham. He had already fetched me out of my body. But..... But! He returned after putting me back into this mortal body. He even told me to narrate this incident to you all." In this way, Shobharam's son spoke in detail to all who were present there. By listening to this experience of Shobharam and the miracle performed by Shri Hari, everyone said, "Maharaj showed a miracle and granted a new life to a dead boy like you!" Shobharam had narrated this incident to the other saints and devotees. Nishkulanand Swami had also heard about this incident from Shobharam and then wrote it in *Bhaktchintamani.*

4. Change Of Plans

In the city of Vadodara, Bhagwan Shri Hari protected numerous devotees from various types of problems and dangers. In this avatar, Shri Hari was using his divine powers without limitations. Because, in his previous avatar, Shri Hari had shown his divine powers through miracles yet not like that of this present avatar of Sarvopari Bhagwan himself. Shri Hari used a totally different method than that of previous avatars. Therefore, no one is able to describe His complete glory and greatness. However, Nishkulanand Swami narrated Shri Hari's matchless miracles according to his memories.

There was a devotee who lived in the city of vadodara named Narupant Nana. He was a southern brahmin and worked in the state government at a high position. Due to the contact of some devotees of Shri Hari, Narupant Nana became a satsangi. His satsang strengthened with the company of great saints like Muktanand Swami, Gopalanand Swami etc. He firmly believed that he had attained the Supreme Lord in human form as Bhagwan Swaminarayan. Because of his understanding of the form of Shri Hari, he remained elated day and night. His thoughts related to his attainment of Shri Hari allowed him to advance in satsang so much so that he was able to engage in devotion even amidst the work of state affairs. Due to his firmness in the faith of Shri Hari, he clearly understood that only Shri Hari is the Supreme Lord himself. Besides Shri Hari, Narupant did not care for anyone. Thus, he worshiped the form of Bhagwan Swaminarayan

wholeheartedly.

Once,Narupant's only son, Bapu became seriously ill. Despite facing this problem, Narupant didn't worry about it. He understood that only Shri Hari is the all doer and whatever Shri Hari does only brings happiness. So, he remained worry-free and worshiped Shri Hari day and night. However, Bapu's mother worried for the health of her only son. So, she began to pray and invoke the other deities and goddesses for the betterment of Bapu. Surprisingly, her sincere prayer was answered by Shri Hari, instead of goddesses. For that Bhagwan Shri Hari appeared in front of Bapu's mother. There was a divine light worth thousands of sun radiating from the form of Shri Hari. Shri Hari came there in His divine form along with thousands of divine saints.

Shri Hari told her, "We have come here to take your son, Bapu to our Akshardham. Moreover, he will not recover even if you tried thousands of other ways. So, if you believe that your son will regain his health by invoking *Bhairav*, *Bhawani* or any such deities or goddesses, then keep trying to keep your son alive." By listening to such strong and firm words from Shri Hari, Bapu's mother fell down at Shri Hari's feet. She began to pray with folded hands, "Please forgive me! My Lord! I forgot about your all-doership! As a mother, I have natural affection for my only son. And that's why I prayed to other deities and goddesses to protect my son. Please forgive me! Now, if you have come to take my son to your Akshardham, then happily take him with you. I'm happy now and do not need to pray to anyone besides you." While praying in this way, tears rolled

down from her eyes.

The group of saints who came with Maharaj requested Him, "Maharaj! Householder devotees have only two types of pleasures: one is wealth and second is their offspring. Narupant has his only son Bapu, so please, Maharaj, it is our humble request, do not take him with us". Shri Hari granted the request of the saints and said, "It's ok. We will not take Narupant's only son with us to Akshardham but, instead of him, we will take the son of his neighbor." By saying so, Shri Hari went back to Akshardham with the neighbor's son.

Shri Hari gave darshan to many people at that time. Narupant Nana folded his hands and prayed to Maharaj, "Oh Maharaj! You are the most compassionate of all. You kept my son Bapu alive by your grace. You have done this miracle only to give pleasure and happiness to me and my wife. Thank you Maharaj!" After this, Shri Hari returned back to Akshardham with the soul of the neighbor's son instead of Narupant's son. Such was the great miracle performed by Shri Hari.

5. Shri Hari Becomes A Teacher

Another devotee Bapubhai, a sarvariya Brahmin by caste, was not a devotee from the beginning. By observing the unique behavior of saints of Shri Hari, Bapubhai became a satsangi along with his family. He had never seen such pious saints before. Bapubhai gradually became addicted to listening to the saints' *katha-varta*. Due to the association of the saints, all types of Bapubhai's doubts were washed away and his faith became stronger. In this way, Bapubhai became a staunch devotee.

Without any kind of fear, he performed the devotion of Shri Hari. He inspired other people into following the Swaminarayan fellowship by talking to them about Bhagwan Swaminarayan and the methods of satsang.

Bapubhai had one son named Ramsevak who was seriously ill and unfortunately, no medicine worked to cure his illness. His death was almost near. Shri Hari divinely came there sitting on a garuda - a celestial large bird. Maharaj came with Muktanand Swami, Gopalanand Swami and Nityanand Swami and other saints. Gopalanand Swami was holding a small golden water pot in his hand. Nityanand Swami was fanning Shri Hari with a *chamar*. In this manner, Shri Hari gave darshan to all the devotees and non-devotees. Everyone could see Maharaj and a group of saints coming towards Bapubhai's home.

When Shri Hari and the saints entered Bapubhai's

home, Bapubhai and the other family members bowed down to Shri Hari. They welcomed Shri Hari and the saints with courteous and welcoming words. Bapubhai was overjoyed by doing the darshan of Shri Hari and several saints in his home. He immediately spread a new piece of cloth on a chair and requested Maharaj to sit on it. He also spread a piece of carpet for all the saints to sit on. Shri Hari said, "Bapubhai, today, we have come with a special reason. We have come to take your son to our Akshardham with us." Bapubha was very happy to hear that. He prayed, "Maharaj! It is Ramsevak's greatest day today as you yourself have come to take him with you to your divine abode Akshardham. Maharaj! I am happy as I can be. Please proceed to fulfill your wish and take him with you." Bapubhai's hands remained folded and tears of joy rolled down from his eyes. He sat on his knees and requested the same again and again to Shri Hari. All the saints were very pleased to see Bapubhai's understanding. In fact, the saints requested with folded hands, “Maharaj! Please do not take Ramsevak to Akshardham right now. We will come later to take him to Akshardham." Shri Hari granted their request. He then stayed there for some time to bless Bapubhai and the family with His darshan and then disappeared from Bapubhai's home.

Once upon a time, Bapubhai invited Gopalanand Swami along with his group of saints at his home for a meal. According to his wishes, Bapubhai's family were preparing sweet balls and many other dishes to feed the saints. That was a very pleasing day for him as the saints were coming to his home for a meal. With a delightful heart, they had prepared delicious food for

the saints. When Gopalanand Swami arrived with all of his saints at the house, Bapubhai welcomed them by showering flower petals upon them. He had decorated the foreground with powder colored designs. He had prepared comfortable seating for them in the house. When the saints entered the house, Bapubhai requested them to sit. First, the saints offered the meal prepared by Bapubhai to the idol of Shri Hari. Then everyone performed mansi puja and thereafter, took the prasad. Gopalanand Swami himself served all the saints the sweet balls and other dishes prepared by Bapubhai. Bapubhai had cooked more food than was necessary and the saints ate to their satisfaction. Even after the saints finished their meal, there were lots of leftovers. Bapubhai pleaded to Gopalanand Swami with the feeling of dissatisfaction, “Swami! You saints didn't satisfy your hunger. You have still remained hungry. "He added, "Swami! If you all ate up to your satisfaction, then why are there so many leftovers!” Gopalanand Swami consoled him by saying, “Bapubhai, we all ate fully and did not remain hungry. But, listen! Some devotees of God will come soon who might be hungry. So, feed them this food." By listening to such a prophecy, Bapubhai's grief was removed. He had faith in the words of Gopalanand Swami.

After the saints left, Bapubhai was waiting for the devotees. Meanwhile, Shri Hari arrived at Bapubhai's home with many devotees. Bapubhai became elated by doing the darshan of Shri Hari at his home. He welcomed Shri Hari and all the devotees. Shri Hari said, “Bapubhai, all of the devotees are hungry so bring whatever food you have.” Bapubhai pleasantly said. "Maharaj, I had invited Gopalanand Swami and

other saints for a meal. So, there is plenty of food ready for all the devotees." Saying so, he prepared the food and started to feed the devotees. After serving the devotees to their satisfaction, Bapubhai sat in front of Shri Hari. He narrated the incident that Gopalanand Swami already knew about the arrival of these devotees. Listening to Bapubhai's talks, Shri Hari responded with only a smile and did not say a single word. Maharaj and the devotees actually came there in divine form to fulfill Gopalanand Swami's words and Bapubhai's trust (faith) on those words of Gopalanand Swami. In actuality, at that time Shri Hari was staying very far from where it was impossible to be at Bapubhai's home.

Once, Shri Hari had given Bapubhai an idol of God to worship daily. After getting such a valuable gift from Shri Hari, Bapubhai had adored and lovingly worshiped the idol. He had taken an oath to not even drink water without first performing the puja of that idol. Once, Bapubhai was worshiping that idol and offered a very light weight and a very cheap necklace. He put it around the neck of the idol. The next moment the idol became alive and threw away the necklace. Moreover, God spoke through the idol, "Bapubhai, why are you offering me such a necklace? Nevertheless, for your family, you spend a lot of money without any hesitation. Why do you not think about saving money there? Do you think that God is less important than everyone else?" In this way, Shri Hari scolded Bapubhai through the idol he worshiped. Bapubhai started to plead by folding his hands and humbly said, "Maharaj, today you have made me realize

my mistake." He added, "But, please, forgive me. I promise I'll never commit the same mistake again. So, please forgive me, my Lord." This way, Bapubhai witnessed the miracles of Shri Hari and firmly believed that Maharaj himself resides in his idol. Bapubhai became ecstatically happy after perceiving such divinity of Shri Hari.

Gangabai was Bapubhai's wife and Ramsevak's mother. She was also a staunch devotee of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. Once, Gangabai was performing mansi puja in which she became emotional while mentally worshiping her beloved God. Because of her intense devotion, she even forgot her own self. She lovingly invited Shri Hari for a meal. That day, Shri Hari himself wished to show His divinity to Gangabai so He appeared in front of Gangabai and woke her up from her mansi puja. Gangabai opened her eyes and saw the same figure in front of her eyes whom she was just inviting for a meal. Her heart skipped a beat. Before she could say anything to her beloved God, Shri Hari himself broke the silence and asked for a miswak stick for brushing his teeth. In those days, people used miswak sticks for cleaning their teeth. Gangabai knew that Shri Hari wanted to brush his teeth, so she gave him a fresh miswak stick with a small water pot. Shri Hari was chewing on one end of the fresh miswak stick to make it flocky. Then He was moving it on each side of his teeth in his mouth. Gangabai was doing the darshan of Maharaj cleaning his teeth.

Suddenly a thought came to her mind that as Maharaj is brushing his teeth, He might wish to take a bath afterwards.

Thus, she prepared the necessities to take a bath for Shri Hari. Meanwhile, Shri Hari had finished brushing and washing the stick. He gargled with water and also poured some water on the stick. Then he split the stick in two and made it into a tongue scraper and cleansed his tongue. As he completed, He gave both parts of the stick to Gangabai after washing them. Then, Shri Hari took a bath and put on lavishing clothes.

Now, Shri Hari was ready to have his meal. He was eating very slowly to maximize the time for Gangabai to do His darshan. Maharaj ate everything that Gangabai had offered. However, He left some prasad for Gangabai. In this manner, Shri Hari fulfilled His devotees' wishes to reinforce their devotion. Afterwards, Shri Hari had disappeared. Later, Gangabai did darshan of the miswak stick and also ate some prasad and distributed the remaining to the other devotees. She also narrated to them how Maharaj came divinely, ate and gave prasad. By listening to that story of miracle everyone became extremely happy.

Another day, Gangabai was engaged in devotion as she was worshiping Shri Hari. She forgot herself and intensely fixed her consciousness onto the form of Shri Hari. Due to that, she entered the state of samadhi and reached Akshardham. There, she experienced divine light everywhere and in the center of that mass of light, she did the darshan of Shri Hari. Moreover, she also found many saints in the company of Shri Hari. She did darshan of all of the saints. Also, Shri Hari told her the names of all of the saints. After enjoying the divine darshan of Shri Hari and the saints, Gangabai returned from Akshardham

to her mortal body's consciousness. She prayed again and again to Shri Hari as a token of appreciation for His compassion upon her. Gangabai realized the form of God and was touched by His mercy. When she met the other devotees, she narrated what she had witnessed in Akshardham through samadhi. She described Akshardham so vividly that some of the devotees started to believe they were there too. She even recounted the names of all of the saints. Before that event of samadhi, Gangabai did not know any of those names. All of the devotees were astonished by listening to her experiences. They realized the greatness of Shri Hari, as well as Gangabai's great devotion.

Bapubhai and Gangabai's son, Ramsevak, was young and studying sanskrit. So, for that he had to learn and memorize the "Ganpati Ashtak" - (A poem in Sanskrit that contains 8 stanzas). Ramsevak worked hard to memorize those 8 stanzas which described the glory of Lord Ganesh. However, despite his hard work, Ramsevak could not remember the Ganpati Ashtak. Yet, he did not lose hope and continued to memorize it. One night, he had a dream during his deep sleep. In his dream, Shri Hari appeared in front of him. Ramsevak, even as a young boy, understood that Shri Hari is the almighty God. He bowed down to Shri Hari in his dream and became joyful by getting such darshan of Shri Hari in his dream. Shri Hari asked, "Ramsevak, what are you studying?" Ramsevak replied, "Maharaj! I'm studying the Ganapati Ashtak, but..." Shri Hari asked, " but what... ?" Ramsevak continued, "But, Maharaj, I can not memorize it." Maharaj said, "Do not worry, I'm teaching you a new one. " In this way, Maharaj taught him

"Radha Krishna Ashtak" instead of the "Ganapati Ashtak". As Shri Hari blessed him, Ramsevak memorized the "Radha Krishna Ashtak". Then, Shri Hari disappeared from his dreams. In the morning, Ramsevak sang the ashtak he learned from the dream. By listening, his parents asked him, "Where did you learn this new ashtak, aren't you are learning the Ganapati Ashtak?" Ramsevak replied. "In my dream yesterday, Maharaj came to me and taught me this new ashtak." Everyone was surprised and said, "Ramsevak, you are the most fortunate in the world, as you got darshan and teachings from Supreme Lord Swaminarayan himself." In this way, Bapubhai, his wife Gangabai and their son Ramsevak got miracles from Shri Hari and they all became more devoted towards Him. There were many such incidents that happened in their life, but only a few were written. No one is able to write all of the incidents.

6. Shri Hari Decides Otherwise

Nathji bhagat or Nath bhakt was a very staunch devotee of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. He originally lived in Kanabha and later, he migrated to Vadodara. His business of vegetables and fruits thrived there.. Nath bhakt was a devotee of Shri Hari with a very high caliber. His spiritual life inspired other new devotees and he was well respected by them. In Vadodara, Nath bhakt was an ideal devotee with unflinching faith in the form of Shri Hari. Moreover, he firmly abided by commands of Shri Hari. Whatever little he earned from selling vegetables and fruits, he would spend half of that for Shri Hari and His saints by offering them rich delicious meals. He lived satisfactorily with his family by spending the remaining half of his income. Because of his dedication for satsang and unflinching faith in Shri Hari, Muktanand Swami, Gopalanand Swami, Nishkulanand Swami and all other saints always preferred to stay at Nath bhakt's home. He firmly believed that only Shri Hari and his saints are granters of liberation. For this reason, Shri Hari has mentioned Nath bhakt's name amongst the list of such devotees in the Vachanamrut G. I-59.

Once, Nath bhakt had gone to Gadhada to stay there for some time. Then, he planned to leave for Vadodara, but before leaving he went to get permission from Maharaj. At first, Maharaj gave him permission, but then after some time, Shri Hari changed his mind and asked to call Nath bhakt back. The follower replied with folded hands, "Maharaj, Nath bhakt has already left." Shri Hari said, "Go and call him back." The devotee went on the way towards Vadodara and later, caught

up with Nath bhakt at the outskirts of Vadodara, near the River Vishwamitri. Nath bhakt's house was not too far from there. The devotee passed Maharaj's message to him. On hearing the summons from Shri Hari, Nath bhakt turned back around even though he had almost reached his home. When Nath bhakt reached Gadhada, Shri Hari was greatly pleased by his obedience and loyalty.

Nath bhakt's wife was also of very higher caliber in satsang. She worshiped God with a pure heart. She followed each and every single rule prescribed by Shri Hari. She did not have any kind of interest in worldly life (family life). Due to her uncommon devotion for Shri Hari, she remained aloof even while staying with her family. She had been living a pure devotional life while engaging in more and more devotion of Shri Hari. After many such years, her day of farewell arrived and she was on her death-bed. Shri Hari divinely appeared there with many celestial planes full of several saints. Shri Hari gave everyone the bliss of doing darshan of Him and his saints. After a while, Shri Hari took her great soul and carried it to his Akshardham. This incident happened in the presence of many people and it left them talking amongst themselves as they had never seen such divinity and miracles. She is really blessed and fortunate that Bhagwan Swaminarayan Himself came to take her into His Akshardham. Bhagwan Swaminarayan is the Supreme God who manifested in this present age - Kali yuga.

Nath bhakt had a son who was very virtuous from a very young age. In his youth, instead of playing with other kids, he

used to play with Shri Hari. He used to experience samadhi in which he would reach Shri Hari in Akshardham and enjoy His darshan. He would also talk with Shri Hari in his childish language. Shri Hari showerd his mercy and blessings upon him. Time and time again, Shri Hari would bless him with His prasadi. Surprisingly, the prasadi would remain in his hands when he returned from samadhi. Mostly, he would return with different types of prasadi as Shri Hari understood he was a young child. The son would bring Indian bear fruits, sugar crystals (sugar candies), dry dates etc., from Shri Hari as prasad. Sometimes when Maharaj was extremely pleased upon him during his visit to Akshardham in samadhi, Maharaj blessed him by giving him a betel nut after eating half of it. In this way, Shri Hari showered His mercy upon Nath bhakt's young son.

Once upon a time, Shri Hari personally came to Nath bhakt's home in his divine form and ate a meal. Nath bhakt and his son had offered that meal in front of Shri Hari's murti and Shri Hari divinely came to eat the food. Moreover, Shri Hari gave His darshan to Nath bhakt and his family. Such was the great devotion Nath bhakt and his son held for Shri Hari.

Once again, Shri Hari divinely came to Nath bhakt's house but this time, he came with a different purpose. Nath bhakt's nephew, Rayji, who was also a devotee of Shri Hari, stayed with him. His life was over and Shri Hari had come there in His divine form to take his soul to His divine abode Akshardham. At first, Shri Hari gave His darshan only to Rayji and Nath bhakt and later told them the purpose of His sudden

visit. Hearing this, Rayji and Nath bhakt were very happy. Afterwards, Nath bhakt prayed to Shri Hari, "You are the most compassionate of all as you have personally come to take my nephew to your Akshardham. You can take him with you, we all are happy. It is Rayji's great fortune that at the time of his death, You - the almighty Supreme Lord have personally came. " Rayji also noded with folded hands. He also said, "Maharaj, please take me with you, I am ready. I do not have any worldly desires in my heart." However, Shri Hari said, "No, today, I'll not take Rayji's soul to my Akshardham with me because if I take him with me, Nath bhakt would be alone. So, today, I will return without Rayji." By saying so, Shri Hari disclosed His divine form in front of everyone for darshan. After giving His darshan to all, Shri Hari disappeared from Nath bhakt's home, leaving everyone astonished by that event. Shri Hari showed such miraculous events numerous times but not every such divine event can be noticed. Along with Nishkulanand Swami, many other saints of that time noted many of the thousands of miracles in their written work to give us the chance to strengthen our faith in Shri Hari by reading them.

7. Yamduts Chased Away!

There was another devotee in Vadodara named Kishordas. He was a patidar by caste and happily lived with his family. He had a son, Lakhabhai, who was young yet mature in satsang. Due to Shri Hari's grace, Lakho attained the power to enter into samadhi at his own wish. Being in samadhi everyday, Lakho enjoyed the company of Shri Hari. Once, Kishordas suggested to Lakhabhai, “Next time while in samadhi, please ask Maharaj on my behalf to visit our home and have a meal. ” Lakho followed his father's instructions and went into samadhi to ask Maharaj. As per his father's wishes, he asked Shri Hari with folded hands, “Could you please come to our home to have dinner? Please, Maharaj, have mercy on us and come to our home.” When Shri Hari listened to a humble request from His innocent devotee, He became pleased and answered his request by saying, "Lakha! I'm pleased with you. Now you should go back to your conscious body and should prepare for my arrival. I will come to your home soon. "Lakho became overjoyed and returned to his body. He happily narrated to his father what Maharaj had told him.

Lakhabhai and Kishordas along with other family members began to prepare for the arrival of their beloved Bhagwan Shri Hari. They prepared a delicious meal and offered it to Maharaj's murti. They prayed, “Oh Maharaj! Please come to eat the food that we have cooked especially for you. Please come and eat." Maharaj immediately appeared there in His divine form and sat down to eat the food. He happily ate everything according to Kishordas and his family's wishes.

Everyone joyfully celebrated the presence of Shri Hari and did His darshan. At the end, Shri Hari ate half a sweet ball and gave the remaining half as prasadi to the family. They all enjoyed the prasadi of Shri Hari with great satisfaction. After fulfilling His devotees' wishes, Shri Hari disappeared.

Once, Lakha's mother said, "Lakha! I would believe your samadhi is true only if you gratify me with the darshan of Shri Krishna Bhagwan.'' Lakho went to Akshardham through samadhi and explained to Shri Hari what his mother told him. Maharaj told him with a smile, "Lakha! Do not worry about it. She will get the darshan of Shri Krishna as per her wish. " Later, Shri Hari gave her darshan in the form of Shri Krishna. Shri Hari wore a silk yellow dhoti, a golden helmet (mugat) decorated with precious jewels and a peacock feather was inserted in it. He gave the mother divine darshan in a way that He was coming on His manki while playing the flute. By having such divine darshan, Lakha's mother was astonished and firmly believed that Bhagwan Swaminarayan is the true God. She also started to believe that the samadhi that her son was experiencing was true. She then said, “This is the first time I have experienced such a divine event. I'm glad to have your divine darshan, oh merciful God - Swaminarayan! ”

There once was an incident when Lakho went into samadhi and visited Maharaj in Akshardham. There, he did the darshan of Shri Hari taking a shower. After showering, Shri Hari was drying his body with a towel and asked Lakho, “ Lakha! Now what do you want?” Lakho could not figure out what to say to Shri Hari so he humbly said, “Nothing, Maharaj! I am just

having your divine darshan." Shri Hari was pleased upon him by getting that answer so He gave Lakha the towel He used to dry His body as a prasadi. Lakho was very happy and accepted the valuable gift from Shri Hari. The expression of gratitude radiated from Lakha's eyes and face. After getting that precious gift from Shri Hari, Lakho returned to his conscious body. There, he found that towel in his hands when he opened his eyes. Lakho became emotional by the compassion of Shri Hari. Lakho was overjoyed by getting the prasadi of a towel.

One time, *Yamduts* were coming towards the street where Lakho was living. Yamraj had sent those Yamduts to bring one non-believer of God who had committed many sins throughout his life. Lakhabhakt had been watching those Yamduts coming towards his street so he stood near the entrance to stop them. He told them, "Do not enter this street." The Yamduts did not care about what he said and started laughing at Lakho. They said, "Go to your home. We are Yamduts - the attendants of Yamraj." They added, "Do not care for others, keep your house safe." In reply, Lakho said," I have seen many like you, so don't believe that I will be fearful by your appearance or words. I will not let you take any soul from this street."

The Yamduts still persisted in their final decision to take the sinful soul to hell. On the other hand, Lakhabhakt had also decided to not let them take any soul. So, he remembered the form of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. With the remembrance of God, Lakhabhakt began to increase his body size and began to beat the Yamdut. They ran to hell but Lakhabhakt ran after them to hell. There,he beat many Yamduts so vigorously that

the other Yamduts ran away from Yampuri- hell. All of the Yamduts went to Shri Hari and *Yamraj* requested Shri Hari to stop the devotee from beating. *Yamraj* narrated to Shri Hari what had happened. Then Shri Hari said, ''Now, you should go back. He'll not beat the Yamduts any more although, none of you should try to scare him." By getting blessings from Supreme Lord Shri Hari, Yamraj along with all of his attendants returned to hell. Lakhabhakt then returned back home. In this way, Lakhabhakt protected and saved even a sinner from the sufferings of Yampuri - the hell.

Once, Pitambar - a devotee, came to Lakha bhagat with a fresh guava fruit. He gave it to Lakha bhagat and requested, "When you go to Akshardham through samadhi, please give this to Shri Hari to eat. Please do this on behalf of me." Lakha bhagat entered into samadhi within a few minutes and reached where Shri Hari was. There, he gave Shri Hari the guava fruit given to him by Pitambar. He requested Maharaj to eat that fresh fruit. Maharaj knew that Pitambar had sent that guava fruit. Maharaj took it in His hand and praised it many times. He ate half of it and gave back the remaining as prasad. When Lakha bhagat returned back to his conscious body, the half eaten guava fruit remained in his palm. Pitamber felt the appreciation and gratitude that Shri Hari had accepted his devotion by eating half of the guava. Lakha bhagat narrated what had happened during samadhi to all. They all understood the glory of Shri Hari more and more. In this way, Lakha bhagat had experienced thousands of such miracles but only a few were recorded here.

8. Bhagwandas Experiences Bhagwan!

There was a devotee named Bhagwandas who lived in Vadodara. He was a staunch devotee and possessed all of the divine virtues of a true devotee. Along with the other devotees of Vadodara, he worshiped Shri Hari with ardent devotion.

Once, Bhagwandas desired to have the darshan of Shri Hari and immediately left for Vartal without any companion with him. Though he had enough food, and money for his journey, he was alone enroute. However, he felt Shri Hari with him through the remembrance of His divine form and actions. He had a great spiritual affection for Shri Hari and thus, he did not feel difficult to keep constant remembrance of God.

On the other hand, Shri Hari was eager to respond to his devotion. Even though Shri Hari was not present there in human form, he took a human form and appeared divinely to give company to Bhagwandas. Bhagwandas became elated by having darshan of Shri Hari by his side - walking and talking with him. Shri Hari was talking in such a sweet tone, his talks were captivating. Bhagwandas also responded with great devotion. In this way, Bhagwandas enjoyed conversing with his beloved Shri Hari, and in a matter of time, he reached Vartal without any tiredness.

Upon reaching Vartal, the form of Shri Hari that came with Bhagwandas disappeared. In Vartal, there was a great festive event in the presence of Shri Hari & saints. Also thousands of devotees were gathered to take part in the event. Bhagwandas performed dandavats to Shri Hari and the saints.

He prayed, "Oh. Shri Hari! You are the most compassionate of all. You have been with me throughout my journey. You have been walking with me only for the sake of my protection. You have tolerated me. You really are a guardian of your devotees. "While praying in such a manner, he sat in front of Shri Hari with folded hands. Shri Hari blessed him by putting his hands upon his head.

Bhagwandas stayed there for a few days. After that, Shri Hari left for Jetalpur, a town near Ahmedabad. There was a festival in Jetalpur. Many saints and devotees had also gathered there. In Jetalpur, Bhagwandas experienced a miracle. He saw divine things while doing darshan of Shri Hari.

Shri Hari was sitting on an ornate seat on the bank of lake - Dev Sarovar. While sitting in the assembly, Shri Hari was delivering sermons & the others were listening attentively. The saints & devotees were also doing Shri Hari's darshan with pure devotion. Bhagwandas was also one of them. Seeing Bhagwandas's devotion, Shri Hari wished to show him divinity. So, Bhagwandas felt as if divine flowers were flowing out from Shri Hari's mouth. He doubted his vision and thus he wiped his eyes with his fingers. But, again he saw the same picture in front of his eyes. The divine tiny flowers were flowing out of Shri Hari's mouth.

Bhagwandas realized that all of this was happening because of Shri Hari's wishes. He understood the glory and greatness of Shri Hari to a further extent. He did the darshan for about an hour after which the flowers suddenly disappeared and stopped flowing out of Shri Hari's mouth.

Bhagwandas had experienced many such miracles. He experienced divine incidents continuously. Once, Shri Hari shared his thoughts with him and showed his all-pervasive nature. Another time, Shri Hari came to his house in his divine form. Bhagwandas was preparing to offer thal to God at that time. Shri Hari himself appeared there to eat that food. Shri Hari enabled all of those present there at Bhagwandas's house to have his darshan. Bhagwandas fed him all of the delicious food with pure affection after which Shri Hari disappeared. Yet again, Shri Hari divinely appeared in front of Bhagwandas and gave the prasadi of sakar (crystal sugar). In this way, Shri Hari had shown Bhagwandas many divine Incidents - which we can consider as miracles or divine experiences.

9. Released From The Shackles

Jagjivanbhai, a devotee of Bhagwan Swaminarayan, lived in Vadodara. He was not attracted to material opulences. Instead, he always engaged himself more and more in the devotion of Shri Hari. He never intended to harm anyone nor disturb them. Many ignorant people tried in different ways to divert Jagjivan from the devotion of God but their bad intentions never seemed to work out. Thus, the wicked people got together and made a plot to serve their evil purpose.

According to their plan, they filed a false allegation against Jagjivan and complained to the state officer. That officer was an opponent of Shri Hari, so he arrested Jagjivan without any fault. He threw Jagjivan into prison and there, he was given pain and tortured. The officer warned him that he will be released only if he pays a thousand Rupees as a fine. Until then, they would beat him continuously. In this way, the wicked people tortured Jagjivan.

On the other hand, Jagjivan remembered the form of Shri Hari while chanting His name under his breath. He prayed to Shri Hari, "Oh Maharaj! You are the only savior at this time, so please protect me from the clutches of this vicious company." Instantly, Shri Hari divinely appeared in front of Jagjivan. Shri Hari gave darshan only to him, so no one besides Jagjivan could sense the presence of Shri Hari. Shri Hari consoled him, "Jagjivan, do not worry about anything as nothing will happen to you. Also, do not give the officer any Rupees for penalty. I'll release you tomorrow in any way possible."

Jagjivan had firm faith in Shri Hari's words. Without having any fear, he slept blissfully in the prison even though his hands and feet were shackled with iron chains. The next day, Shri Hari visited Jagjivan to release him from the bondage. Shri Hari divinely touched the shackles and merely by touching, the iron chains broke down. Shri Hari touched the iron- gate of the jail-room, and it opened right away. Then Shri Hari instructed Jagjivan to follow him towards the exit door from the prison cell. None of the guards were able to see Shri Hari taking him out. In this divine way, Shri Hari released his devotee Jagjivan from the bondage of wicked people.

Later, after many years, Jagjivan's father died. Shri Hari again appeared there in his divine form with celestial vehicles to bring the father's soul to His divine abode Akshardham. Shri Hari disclosed his divine form to everyone present at that time so all of them could do the darshan of Shri Hari. In such a divine way, Jagjivan's father left for Akshardham with Shri Hari.

Once, Jagjivan was so engaged in worship that he forgot everything else. At that time, Shri Hari manifested in front of him amidst the mass of divine light. Only Jagjivan enjoyed the darshan of Shri Hari while the others could only visualize a mass of divine light. Everyone was surprised and they understood the glory of Shri Hari and his devotee-Jagjivan.

10. Prasadi From Samadhi

Khushal Kachhia was a great devotee of Bhagwan Swaminarayan living in Vadodara. He affectionately worshiped Shri Hari with pure heart. Everyone in his family was a devotee of Shri Hari and worshiped Maharaj with a singular mind and intense affection. He had a daughter named Amrutbai who also possessed intense love for Shri Hari. Due to her affectionate devotion, she attained the power to enter into samadhi according to her wishes. In samadhi, she enjoyed the divine bliss and eternal happiness of Akshardham.

Once upon a time, Amrutbai entered samadhi and reached Akshardham. There, she saw a divine mass of light and in the center of that mass of divine light, there were countless millions of divine *muktos* of Akshardham. Finally, she received the darshan of her beloved Shri Hari in the center of those muktos. She rushed to Shri Hari with intense affection and performed *panchang pranam*. Shri Hari became extremely pleased with her devotion. At that time, Shri Hari was eating sugar cane pieces and Amrutbai became engrossed in doing the darshan of Shri Hari. Then, Shri Hari gave her some penda (a sweet) as a prasad. However, Amrutbai did not become too happy by getting that prasad of penda from Shri Hari as she was absorbed in the darshan of Shri Hari.

Shri Hari then gave her some sugar cane pieces that he was suckling juice from along with some *bor* fruits. After that, Shri Hari instructed her to go back to her conscious body. Following Shri Hari's instructions, Amrutbhai returned to her

conscious body from samadhi and with great surprise, she found those prasadi of penda, sugar-cane pieces and *bor* fruits in her hands. Moreover, She also gave those prasadi to others and narrated the story of how she got such prasadi from Shri Hari.

In this manner, Amrutbai narrated the divine glory of Shri Hari to others and enjoyed divine blessings of Shri Hari from within. Amrutbai received such prasadi many times from Shri Hari through samadhi and enjoyed them with the remembrance of the glory of Shri Hari.

11. True or False ?

There was a devotee in Vadodara named Bechar from the Kachhia family. He had attained satsang from birth as his parents were devotees of Bhagwan Shri Hari. From childhood, Bechar remained engaged in devotion to Shri Hari rather than playing with the other kids. When the other kids were playing, Bechar loved to do bhajan or listen to Shri Hari's divine incidents from the elders in his family. For that reason, he mostly was found around the elder bhaktos instead of kids of his age.

Due to his unparalleled devotion and the grace of Shri Hari, Bechar attained the power to enter into Samadhi and experience the divine abode Akshardham. Many times, he went to Akshardham through samadhi and received divine prasadi from Shri Hari. Once Bechar reached Akshardham, Shri Hari became pleased to see him. He then gave prasadi to the little Bechar who was very young in age. Sometimes, Maharaj gave him sweet lemons which grew only in Nilgiri and Malabar in India at that time. Sometimes Shri Hari gave him prasadi of fruits and sometimes gave him *penda* (a sweet).

Upon Shri Hari's instructions for him to go back home. With the different kinds of prasad, Bechar returned from samadhi and enjoyed those prasadi with great satisfaction. Moreover, he praised the taste of prasad to others as well as the glory of Shriji Maharaj. In this way, Bechar showed the prasadi to others. The satsangi people were pleased by knowing

such a miraculous incident. On the other hand, those who were non- devotees did not accept such events as the truth.

To find out the truth, some people gathered at one place and called Bechar. They said, “Bechar! Today we want to inspect whether your samadhi and prasadi are true or false.'' Bechar agreed with their ideas. They made Bechar take off all of his clothes and then sit for testing. We will believe your samadhi is true only if you do this and come back with prasadi in your hands after the samadhi.” With that being said, they took away Bechar's clothes and said, “Now, go and bring prasadi from your Bhagwan.”

Without any hesitation and in his childish way, Bechar sat for samadhi and began to remember Bhagwan Shri Hari. Within a few seconds, he entered into samadhi and reached Akshardham. He did the darshan of Shri Hari and prostrated before Shri Hari. Then, he sat near Shri Hari. Shri Hari was laughing at him as he was nude and then gave him three penda. Bechar took the prasadi in his hands and returned from samadhi. Bechar showed all the non-devotees the prasad of penda in his hands.

They were all surprised by seeing such a miraculous event and then they accepted the Swaminarayan fellowship as a true and genuine sect. They spoke with each other about the divinity they had just witnessed. They even bowed down to Shri Hari and Bechar and asked for forgiveness in return for their misunderstanding. By witnessing such a miraculous event, everyone became devotees of Shri Hari. Those who

were devotees of God became more delighted by getting such divine experiences of their beloved God - Shri Hari.

12. Stolen Ornaments

Another devotee of Shri Hari in Vadodara was Trikamji Soni. He was a staunch follower of Shri Hari and had a son named Dayadji. Dayadji was young, yet advanced in satsang. Dayadji had attained the power to enter into samadhi according to his wish and enjoyed the divine bliss of Akshardham during samadhi.

Once, Dayadji went to Akshardham through samadhi where he experienced the divine mass of light and countless muktos standing in front of Shri Hari. Moreover, he saw that 330 million demigods came for the darshan of Shri Hari. They all had different appearances with different clothes and they all prayed together to the Lord of the Lords by folding their hands. Moreover, they were all delighted by getting the direct darshan of the Supreme Lord. Shri Hari made a proposal and asked them, "If you all agree, then I wish to install the murti of Shri Nar-Narayan in the Amdavad mandir." They all folded their hands and humbly replied, "Oh Maharaj! You are the Supreme Lord. You are always independent according to your wishes and you do not need to ask us anything. We will always respect your choice and your decisions. So, please do as per your wishes. We are happy to hear that you are going to install a murti of Nar-Narayan in the temple."

They added, "Even though Nar-Narayan is the principal deity of this Bharat -Khand, there is no murti installed in any temple before. Therefore, your decision to install their idols is revered by all. Please do so according to your wishes." Dayadji

listened to that conversation and then returned to his conscious body from samadhi. Then, he told others what he had experienced during samadhi. He described the name and appearance of these demigods. Listening to such talks from a child, everyone was surprised in amazement at how such a young boy had the ability to enter samadhi. Everyone realized the greatness of Shri Hari.

Once, Trikamji said to Dayadji, “Please tell me when you will enter samadhi next time because I want a mala (rosary) from Shri Hari. When you go to Maharaj next time through samadhi, ask for a mala for me." Dayadji agreed. Meanwhile, Ichharam and Ranchhod also requested to bring mala for them. They said, "Only those who are very fortunate and blessed by God have the chance to get a mala given by Shri Hari. So, please, ask Shri Hari on behalf of us." Laldas and Rugnathdas, who were also present there, demanded for a mala for themselves too. They said, "If Bhagwan Shri Hari Himself will give mala then what is more precious than that?" Then Bhagwandas said, "I don't have a *gaumukhi*(bead - bag) to do mala. So, ask one from Shri Hari if He will give it to you for me." Listening to this, Vanarashi said, "I don't have a mala and a *berakho*, so if Shri Hari would give you mala and gaumukhi for the others, please, beg for a mala and a berakho on behalf of me ." Keeping everyone's requests in mind, Dayadji sat for meditation.

He remembered Bhagwan Shri Hari and in no time, he entered into a different state of mind in samadhi. During samadhi, he saw the mass of divine light worth thousands of sun, yet it was very cool. He found the divine form of Shri Hari amidst the

divine light. Dayadji went closer to the Supreme Lord Shri Hari. There, he saw the countless divine muktos of Akshardham constantly praying and worshiping Shri Hari. When Dayadji reached up to Shri Hari's sinhasan, Shri Hari looked at him with pleasant eyes. Dayadji folded his hands and bowed down to Shri Hari. He then prostrated before Him.

Shri Hari asked him, “Dayadji, why are you here today? Is there any specific reason?” Dayadji was very young and very innocent. He just began to reply, and Shri Hari interrupted him and lovingly asked, "Dayadji! Tell me what are those things you want from me? Tell me, I'm happy to give everything you'll ask today." By saying so, Shri Hari lovingly put his palm on Dayadji's head and showered his unconditional affection upon Dayadji. Then, Dayadji gave a detailed list of what the devotees had requested from Maharaj. He narrated what type of mala devotees required. Some wished for a mala of Tulsi bead, and the others, a mala of sandal wood. Some wished to have a mala with big beads, and some desired to have a mala of small beads. In this way, Dayadji told every detail to Shri Hari.

Shri Hari laughed and with a smile, He gave 6 different types of malas, 1 gaumukhi, and a berakho. Dayadii became happy by getting those divine things. Then, Shri Hari instructed him, "Dayadji, now you should go back. All of those devotees are waiting for all these malas and other things. So you should head back." Even though Dayadji wished to stay with Shri Hari for more time, he decided to return. He bowed down and touched the feet of Shri Hari in deep reverence. Then, he

folded his hands and prayed to Him and returned to his conscious body.

All of the devotees - Ichharam, Ranchhod, Laldas, Rugnathdas and Vanarashi were waiting along with Dayadji's father, Trikamji. When Dayadji opened his eyes, he found 6 malas, 1 gaumukhi and a berakho in his hands. Everyone was surprised and watched Dayadji in amazement. They all bowed down to Dayadji, understanding him as a great devotee of Shri Hari. Dayadji distributed the mala and other things as per their choices. By getting their requested things, they all became happy. They were talking amongst themselves that it was a really great thing to get such divine things from God and bring them to this earth through samadhi. In this manner, they realized the glory and greatness of Shri Hari and of Dayadji.

Dayadji was habituated to enter into samadhi and go to Akshardham. On the other hand, Shri Hari was also so kind that he gave some prasadi to Dayadji every time. Once, Dayadji went to Akshardham via samadhi and enjoyed the darshan of Shri Hari. In return, Shri Hari gave him some guava fruits. After that samadi, whenever Dayadji entered samadhi and went to Akshardham, Shri Hari gave him the same prasadi of guava fruits for the next five times. Some times, Shri Hari gave him five guavas, some times seven, the other times six or at other times, four. In this manner, Shri Hari gave him pleasure by blessing him with divine prasadi of guava fruits. Moreover, those guava remained in Dayadji's hands when he returned from samadhi. Dayadji, even though very young, he ate some prasadi and distributed the rest amongst the devotees so that

all the other devotees also got that divine prasadi.

The next time Dayadji went into samadhi, Shri Hari gave him a prasadi of five bananas. Those remained in Dayadji's hands when he returned. Not only Dayadji, but others also enjoyed that divine prasadi. After that day, whenever Dayadji entered into samadhi, Shri Hari gave him barfi many times. The other times, Shri Hari blessed him by giving the prasadi of penda or patasa or coconut or sakar (crystal sugar).

Once, Dayadji went to Shri Hari during samadhi and requested him, "Oh Maharaj! Please come to my home for a meal. Please, don't say no. Please come to my home." Shri Hari agreed to the innocent prayer of young Dayadji. Shri Hari appeared at Dayadji's home in his divine form. He ate whatever food was offered by Dayadji. In this way, Shri Hari gave pleasure to His young devotee. Moreover, Shri Hari gave divine darshan to all who were present in Dayadji 's home at that time. Then, Shri Hari disappeared from the house after giving His blessings. In this way, Dayadji experienced many such divine miracles from Shri Hari.

Once, Dayadji's mala and silver ornaments were stolen. The thief had hidden them in such a way that no one was able to find them. No one could figure out the way that the thief stole goods without them being disturbed. Dayadji engaged in devotion and worshiped Shri Hari. Dayadji thought devotion towards Shri Hari was the only way to overcome the difficulties.

As per his routine, Dayadji sat for meditation and

engrossed in the divine form of Shri Hari. He entered into samadhi and reached Akshardham. There, he did the darshan of Shri Hari. Dayadji was so absorbed in the darshan of Shri Hari that he forgot to pay Him his respects or perform dandavats. However, Shri Hari lovingly called him and asked, “What happened today? Did you lose your mala and silver ornaments?" Shri Hari paused and then He said, "I am going to give you all of your stolen things."

Shri Hari gave a mala and silver ornaments to Dayadji. Dayadji recognised his mala and ornaments and accepted them from Shri Hari. When Dayadji woke up from samadhi, the mala and silver ornaments remained in his hands. He showed them to his parents. They were also surprised and started to make sure whether those were the same ornaments or different from those that were stolen. Finally, they found out that those were the same ornaments. They understood that Shri Hari protected them and gave them back. Dayadji, his father Trikamji Soni and all other family members felt extreme gratitude for the ceaseless mercy Shri Hari had showered upon them.

13. Broken Vows and Oaths

Vallabhji Soni was a staunch follower of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. He had deep devotion for Shri Hari and he always remained alert for obeying each of the commands prescribed by Shri Hari. For instance, he remained pure by taking a bath, washing his hands frequently, putting on clean clothes, eating and drinking only after offering to God, etc.

According to his routine, Vallabhji cleaned grains to avoid small insects, cooked them, and then offered it to the murti of Shri Hari. After offering it to Maharaj, he sat down to eat his meal while remembering the form of Shri Hari. Once upon a time, while eating, Vallabhji thought that there was an insect in his cooked food. In reality, there was no insect in the food as he had already checked all the grains before cooking it. However, Vallabhji had his doubts so he did not finish his meal and threw everything away. After washing his hands and cleaning his mouth, he became remorseful and prayed to God.

He thought he had broken the vow of not killing any living being and not eating meat. For that reason, he broke down in front of the murti of Shri Hari and prayed again and again, begging for forgiveness. Moreover, he took an oath to never eat any food for the rest of his life. He had not done anything wrong but all this was only because of his doubts and because of his strong desire to follow Shri Hari's commands.

Many days had passed for Vallabhji without taking any food. Normally, it would be hard for anyone to remain alive

without eating any food for such a long time. But, to everyone's surprise, Vallabhji remained healthy even without having food for many days. Moreover, Vallabhji himself did not feel an appetite or feel hungry at all. He engaged himself in the devotion of Shri Hari, and his devotion supplied him with the bodily strength in the absence of food. Due to that divine strength given by Shri Hari, Vallabhji remained elated and happy.

Then, Shri Hari sent a message for Vallabhji that he should not keep the oath of fasting. Moreover, Shri Hari instructed him through the messenger that starting today, he should begin to eat food. He added, "We are not to become siddh(proficient) by avoiding food." All of a sudden, merely by receiving a message from Shri Hari, Vallabhji began to feel hunger and desired to eat. To follow Shri Hari's instructions, he began to eat as usual. Everyone was surprised. Before that day, Vallabhji always said he wasn't hungry whenever asked to eat and would not eat. Although, merely by Shri Hari's instruction, he began to eat food. Moreover, nothing had happened to him during the period of not eating any food. By witnessing this incident, everyone realized the immense glory of Shri Hari and his devotees. There are numerous such incidents that happened in the satsang fellowship, but it is merely not possible to write them all down in a single book.

14. Fever Struck Twice!

In Vadodara, Vajesinh was a Kshatriya by caste and a devotee who followed each of the commands and niyams prescribed by Shri Hari for the satsang fellowship. He worshiped Shri Hari with single minded faith. One of the main virtues of Vajesinh was his constant chanting of Shri Hari's mahamantra - Swaminarayan. Even when he remained unhealthy, he would still chant the mantra.

Once, Vajesinh was ill with a high fever so he didn't do any work and just laid in his bed. Even while on medications for his illness, his condition worsened. Due to the high fever, he had a severe headache and body aches. At that time, he hated himself as he could not worship Shri Hari properly due to his illness. However, without being discouraged, he continued chanting the holy name of Shri Hari, along with the remembrance of His form.

Vajesinh did not have an appetite due to his illness which made him weaker day by day. He had lost half of his weight during his illness. Yet, he did not stop chanting the holy name while fixing his mind on the divine form of Shri Hari. Shri Hari became extremely pleased upon Vajesinh by his pure devotion. So, Shri Hari once appeared in front of him in His divine form. By getting such divine darshan of Shri Hari, Vajesinh felt relief from the pain.

Shri Hari blessed him by putting His hand on Vajesinh's head. Shri Hari instructed the fever to get out of Vajesinh's body.

The fever came out of Vajesinh and stood in front of Shri Hari while folding hands in his personified form. Shri Hari struck it with a stick twice as punishment. The personified fever cried out loudly and asked for forgiveness, " Oh the Lord of the Lords! Oh Maharaj! Please forgive me. I'll never enter Vajesinh's body again. If I come again to him, you can punish me but please forgive me this time." By saying so, the personified fever ran away from there.

Shri Hari also disappeared after giving his darshan to Vajesinh. Vajesinh appreciated Shri Hari for giving him relief from his illness. In this manner, Shri Hari protected his devotee Vajesinh of Vadodara from the illness.

Adit Kadiya was also a prominent devotee of Shri Hari in Vadodara. Once, he was also ill with a fever. For that, he took some herbal medications but nothing seemed to help. Nevertheless, Adit ate a little bit of food for some days and finally, reached the condition that he did not eat anything. Gradually, his body became very fragile. Moreover, due to high fever, he was suffering from severe body aches. However, he did not stop worshiping God and praying everyday. While laying on bed, Adit was chanting the Swaminarayan mahamantra along with the remembrance of the divine form of Shri Hari.

Once, he prayed to Shri Hari, "Oh Maharaj! I cannot bear this pain. Please, do something. Either cure my illness or take me to your divine abode Akshardham." While praying, Adit became emotional and tears welled up from his eyes. The next

second, Shri Hari appeared in front of him in his divine form. Adit forgot his bodily pain and engaged in the darshan of Shri Hari. Though he was not able to get up from his bed, he folded his shivering hands to give respect to Shri Hari. He was so weak that he could not even speak clearly. Shri Hari lovingly put his hand on Adit's head.

Adit's emotions could not remain hidden as it was coming out as tears from his eyes. This time it was not because of his pain, but due to the causeless mercy and compassion of Shri Hari. Then Shri Hari consoled him and told him, "Adit! I do not wish to take you with me to Akshardham right now. I'll come later to take you with me. I have specially come here to remove your pain and illness. I have come to cure your fever. Now, nothing will be wrong with you." Shri Hari instructed the fever to leave Adit's body. Right then, the fever left Adit's body and was told to never enter again.

In this manner, Shri Hari protected his devotee from the fever and disappeared. Similarly, Shri Hari had protected thousands of devotees in different places and made them happy.

15. Overflowing Emotions

There lived another devotee of Shri Hari in Vadodara named Bapubhai from the Vanik family. Before he came in contact with saints and devotees of Shri Hari, he was a non-believer. With the company of devotees in his daily life, he was impressed by their pious and humble behavior. He became a devotee of Shri Hari and gave up the company of *kusungis*. He firmly realized that only Shri Hari and his saints are true. Gradually, due to the company of saints and devotees, Bapubhai's satsang flourished day by day. He realized Shri Hari as the supreme Lord of the Lords and the ultimate cause of all. With such an understanding, he followed all of the commandments prescribed by Shri Hari. In this way, his bhakti (devotion) flourished day by day.

Once, Bapu bhai was engrossed in devotion to Shri Hari and desired to do his darshan.. For that, he was pleading to Shri Hari from the bottom of his heart while performing daily worship. His words were saturated with emotions. As emotions increased, they began to overflow from his eyes and his voice choked up. His wet eyes were urging for the darshan of Shri Hari. Shri Hari decided to bless Bapubhai with his darshan. He divinely emerged in front of Bapu bhai amidst a mass of divine light. Shri Hari gave him darshan as the beautiful form of Ghanshyam Maharaj.

The mass of divine light merged back into Shri Hari's Ghanshyam form. Bapubhai's joy knew no bounds.. He got up and bowed down to Shri Hari. Shri Hari blessed him by putting

his palm on Bapubhai's head and helped him get up. He embraced Bapubhai. Bapubhai sat Shri Hari on a decorated seat. He did the darshan of Shri Hari to his satisfaction.

He then called other devotees to do the darshan of Shri Hari. Meanwhile, Bapubhai went to get some items to do the puja of Shri Hari, but Shri Hari disappeared. All of the devotees could not understand where Shri Hari went! However, everyone along with Bapubhai treasured this event as a miracle. Such incidents never happen anywhere else besides the satsang fellowship.

16. "Never Falters From His Words"

The devotees of Vadodara were very spiritually elevated souls. They had attained their high state of spirituality by surrendering their body, mind and wealth to Shri Hari. They had the highest form of devotional love for Shri Hari and firmly abided by the prescribed rules of satsang fellowship. They never faltered from obeying the commands of Shri Hari. There were many such devotees in Vadodara to whom Shri Hari gave divine experiences of fulfilling their wishes. Nishkulanand Swami said, "My mind becomes energetic to write about the greatness of such devotees.

There was a female devotee, Monghibai, from the Nagar Brahmin caste who had unflinching faith in Shri Hari. Along with other virtues, Monghibai possessed the virtue of intense devotion for Shri Hari. Not only did she hold devotion but she firmly believed Shri Hari as the Supreme Lord and that there is no one greater than Him. He is the supreme controller of all. Moreover, because of Shri Hari's divine blessings upon her, she was graced with the power of samadhi. Whenever she wished to enter samadhi, she entered by herself and enjoyed the divine bliss of Shri Hari in Akshardham.

Once, Monghibai entered into samadhi and reached where Shri Hari was. She performed panchang pranam to Him and became engrossed in His darshan. She enjoyed getting the darshan of Shri Hari and when she was satisfied with His darshan, she desired to do the darshan of Shri Hari in a different form. She requested Shri Hari by praying, "Oh

Maharaj! You are the Supreme Lord. In every yuga, you have been taking different forms to redeem the devotees and destroy the demons. Now, I want to see you in the form of Shri Krishna along with eight chief wives and their sons. Also, I wish to see the form of yours with four hands carrying the different symbols of club, conch shell, disc and lotus flower. Please give me such darshan of your forms."

Shri Hari replied with a smile, "You will receive the darshan of that form." He then instructed her to go back to her conscious body from samadhi. When Monghibai returned from samadhi, she was waiting for the darshan of Shri Hari as He had given her assurance. It is noteworthy that Shri Hari never falters from his words. He always fulfills the wishes of His devotees. Shri Hari appeared there in His divine form as Shri Krishna and Monghibai, along with the other devotees had His darshan.

They saw that the color of the transcendental body of Lord Krishna resembled the hue of a newly formed cloud in the sky. He appeared before them nicely covered by yellow silken garments, with four hands like the form of Vishnu, and carried the different symbols of the club, conch shell, disc, and the lotus flower. His eyes appeared to spread like the petals of a lotus. His smiling face exhibited the symbol of eternal peace and prosperity. He wore glittering shark-shaped earrings and His *mugat* (helmet) was bedecked with valuable jewels. The Lord's necklace of pearls and the bracelets nicely situated on His body all shone with transcendental beauty. The *Kaustubh* jewel hanging on His chest glittered with great buster, and the

Lord wore a beautiful flower garland. Along with the darshan of Lord Shri Krishna, all got the opportunity to do the darshan of His eight chief wives. They were standing on both sides of the Lord. They were Rukmini, Bhadra, Jambavati, Nagrajiti, Satyabhama, Kalindi, Mitravinda and Lakshana. They were all surrounded by their sons.

Thus, Monghibai and all other devotees got darshan of Shri Krishna along with His eight chief wives and their sons. After some time, Shri Hari disappeared from sight.

Once upon a time, Monghibai had cooked some special food for offering to Maharaj. She had prepared *penda*, *patasa*, other sweets, *vada*, *bhajiya*, *shak* etc. She held so much affection for Shri Hari that she had made a mini *annakut*. Then she nicely put all of the food items she had prepared in dishes and bowls. In this way, she prepared the food and put it in front of Shri Hari's image. She was then praying to Shri Hari by singing *thal* (a song for requesting to Shri Hari to eat) and requested Shri Hari to come eat.

Due to her request, Shri Hari divinely appeared in front of her to eat the food. Finding Shri Hari in front of her eyes, she became extremely surprised. She immediately got up to prepare a nice seating arrangement and requested Shri Hari to sit. After washing Shri Hari's hands, she served him all the different foods she had cooked. Shri Hari began to eat all of the different varieties of food. She was fanning Maharaj with a hand-fan while engaging in the darshan of the beautiful charming form of Shri Hari. At last, Shri Hari was eating a vadu

but could only finish half of it and He gave the rest to Monghibai as prasad. Monghibai put the prasad away in a bowl and helped Maharaj wash his hands. After that, Shri Hari disappeared from Monghibai's home.

Later, she shared the prasadi of Shri Hari amongst the other devotees. In this manner, Shri Hari fulfilled Monghibai's wishes by manifesting in His divine form.

Once, Monghibai went to Akshardham through samadhi and did the darshan of Shri Hari. There, Shri Hari gave her unique prasadi of “bor” fruits which were not available anywhere. Generally, “bor” fruits have a big seed, but the “bor” given by Shri Hari had very small seeds within. Shri Hari had given her a fist full of the fruits. Monghibai returned from samadhi and saw the fruits in her fist. She took some prasadi for herself and distributed the rest to other devotees.

Monghibai was a senior amongst the female devotees of Vadodara. She narrated discourses to other female devotees. The group of female devotees gathered at her home to listen to discourses and religious songs. Monghibai mostly remained engrossed in the divine bliss of Shri Hari even while discoursing. In such an elevated spiritual state, she talked about the manifest form of Shri Hari. From her teachings, all the female devotees also received higher states of spirituality. They all developed intense affection and devotion for Shri Hari within their hearts.

Once, a group of female devotees were engaged in the devotion of Shri Hari under the guidance of Monghibai at her

home. At that time, flowers showered from the sky. The showering of flowers occurred only within the compound of Monghibai's house. Understanding those flowers as a divine gift of God, all the females collected them and kept them for daily darshan and memory. The flower showers continued for four days. Through this miracle, all female devotees experienced divinity and understood the immense glory of Shri Hari.

17. Story Of The Black Sari

Originally from Southern India, Ambabai was a female devotee who lived in Vadodara. Due to contact with the other female devotees of Shri Hari, Ambabai also joined the satsang fellowship and worshiped Shri Hari. She passed her life with the devotion of Shri Hari along with the understanding of His glorious greatness and faith. Her unflinching faith in Shri Hari governed her to abide by all of His spiritual injunctions. Thus, she had both *Agna* and *Upasana* of Shri Hari.

At the time of her death, Shri Hari came with thousands of divine planes and divine *muktos* of Akshardham. Shri Hari provided His divine darshan to all - devotees and non- devotees along with Ambabai. In the presence of all, Shri Hari took the soul of Ambabai with him in a celestial vehicle and went to Akshardham. Thus, Shri Hari showed such divine miracles to all and gave a divine body to Ambabai by relieving her from her worldly body. Thereafter, Ambabai enjoyed eternal happiness in Akshardham.

Once, a female devotee entered into samadhi and went to Akshardham. She did darshan of Shri Hari and also of countless divine *muktos*. The female devotee met Ambabai in her divine body. Ambabai told her that she had kept a black sari in a so and so cabinet in her home. That sari was given to her by another female devotee; so she should return it back to that female devotee. With this message, the female devotee returned from samadhi and remembered what Ambabai told her in Akshardham. Searching within the cabinets, she found

the sari and returned it to the female devotee who had given it to Ambabai.

By listening to such an incident, all devotees and non-devotees were greatly surprised. They all had just seen Shri Hari come to take Ambabai's soul at the time of her death. However, they did not know where Ambabai went after her death. From this incident, it was confirmed that Ambabai was in Akshardham. In this manner, not only can Shri Hari show his divine powers but according to His wishes, His devotees can also show the same divine powers.

18. Prayers And Prophecies

Jamunabai, born into a Brahmin family, was a devotee of Shri Hari. She was very thorough in her devotion to Shri Hari. She always engaged herself in the meditation of the divine form of Shri Hari. She had the highest form of spiritual affection for Shri Hari. During her meditation, she always invited Shri Hari to accept a meal at her house.

Shri Hari was pleased with her devotion and He would always come divinely to her place and eat the food she had specially prepared for Him. Everyday, Shri Hari came in His divine form and gave her His darshan in different colored clothes. At her home, He not only ate but also talked to her. She remained happy day and night by getting the divine presence of Shri Hari in her house. However, no one besides her was able to see the divine form of Shri Hari.

Many times, Shri Hari talked to her about the past and the future. If something was going to happen in the near future, Shri Hari told her about it early on. When she shared her experiences of Shri Hari with other devotees, they would become surprised and would also appreciate her devotion. Moreover, she narrated to them what Shri Hari prophesied. When the exact event or incident would take place, they would all realize that the forecast Jamunabai had told was in fact, true. Thus, they realized that Jamunabai's devotion was true and that Shri Hari's divinity was also true.

For the most prominant devotees, Shri Hari divinely appeared to eat the food offered to Him on very rare occasions.

On the other hand, in the case of Jamunabai, Shri Hari appeared at her house to eat her food and give her darshan in different clothes on a regular basis. By knowing this, all understood the glory of Shri Hari and his perfect devotee - Jamunabai.

19. Hungry For Devotion

Parvatibai was the daughter of Vrajlalbhai Sheth of Vadodara, a great devotee of Bhagwan Shri Hari. As she was born in a satsangi family, Parvatibai was naturally inclined to worship Shri Hari with pure devotion from childhood. Later, Parvatibai's marriage was arranged with a person who was also living in Vadodara so she had to go to her husband's home.

Unfortunately, Parvatibai's father and mother-in-law were not devotees of Shri Hari. After her marriage, Parvatibai was forced to give up satsang and accept their religious sect. On the other hand, Parvatibai was extremely firm in observing religious rules prescribed by Shri Hari and she remained firm in her decision to live as per the rules of satsang. Her in-laws tried in every single way possible to harass her. However, she tolerated all types of harassment and continued her satsang. At last, they prohibited her from going outside to attend satsang sabha.

Even then, without becoming discouraged, Parvatibai continued her daily satsang routine while staying at home. Shri Hari was satisfied by the devotion and tolerance of Parvatibai. Shri Hari came to her home daily in His divine form and ate the food cooked by Parvatibai. At times, Shri Hari brought some prasadi for her. In this way, not a single day passed without her having such divine darshan of Shri Hari. In this manner, Shri Hari gave pleasure to his devotees and fulfilled their wishes.

Once, Shri Hari came to Parvatibai's home in his divine form. That day, Parvatibai wished to feed Shri Hari freshly fried bhajiya. With extreme affection for Shri Hari, she began to fry bhajiya. On her request, Shri Hari sat there for His meal. Because of her pure affection, Parvatibai forgot everything and thought only of Shri Hari while cooking. In a hurry, she gave half-cooked bhajiya to Shri Hari. However, Shri Hari ate all of the bhajiya to please her. After eating the half-cooked bhajiya, Shri Hari disappeared and gave His blessings to Parvatibai.

Then, Shri Hari went to Monghibai's home. He gave her darshan of his divine form. Monghibai requested Shri Hari to stay there for a little while so that she could cook some food for Him. Shri Hari told her, “There is no need to cook anything right now! I come directly from Parvatibai's home. There she had cooked *bhajiyas* for me. Although the bhajiya were half-cooked, I ate them anyway to please her.” After saying that, Shri Hari disappeared. Monghibai then went to Parvatibai's house and narrated to her how Shri Hari divinely came to her and told her about the uncooked bhajiya. Parvatibai felt extremely sorry for serving half-cooked bhajiya in a hurry to Bhagwan and thus, she began to pray to Shri Hari to forgive her for her mistake.

Later, the other devotees found out about this incident and they all realized the greatness of both of the female devotees. The Supreme God, who is the rarest to attain, easily came to eat and give darshan to both females - Parvatibai and Monghibai. By thinking of the glory and greatness of Shri Hari

and His devotees, they all remained happy and enjoyed satsang.

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20. Divine Flower Garland

In previous times, people who sold betel leaves, areca nuts, or any other mouth freshners were known as Tambodi. There was a female devotee named Jamunabai born in one of these Tambodi families. When Jamunabai grew up, she became a devotee of Bhagwan Shri Swaminarayan. In the company of other female devotees, she became very firm in her devotion for Shri Hari.

Due to Shri Hari's grace, Jamunabai obtained the power to enter into samadhi as per her wish. Everyday, she entered into samadhi and performed darshan of Shri Hari. When she was not in samadhi, she prepared delicious food items and offered them to Shri Hari's murti. Seeing her devotional affection, Shri Hari came in His divine form to eat those varieties of food items. Due to this, all of the devotees in Vadodara became accustomed to the advanced level of devotion that Jamunabai possessed.

Once, Jamunabai's such divine devotion became the talk of the town. Most of the people looked upon Jamunabai with great reverence; whereas some non- believers raised doubts in her devotion. They did not believe that God Himself came to eat in His divine form at Jamunabai's home. They said, "Nowadays, such talks are not possible. All of you devotees falsely praise your own satsang." They added, “We only believe such things as true when we see the incident with our own eyes. So, Jamunabai should prepare food and offer it to God's murti (image). If the food goes missing from the plate, then we will

believe that she is a true devotee and that your Bhagwan Swaminarayan is true."

Jamunabai went to her home and prepared food for Shri Hari. She prepared a dish and offered it in front of God's image. Then, she began praying to Shri Hari. Shri Hari came in His divine form but no one besides Jamunabai could see that divine form of Shri Hari. However, Shri Hari graced everyone so that everyone could see the food items gradually decreasing from the plate. Shri Hari, in this divine way, ate the food prepared by Jamunabai. Moreover, when Shri Hari finished His meal, He gave a flower garland to Jamunabai by putting it around her neck. No one was able to see the divine form of Shri Hari, but they could see the flower garland around Jamunabai's neck.

By witnessing such an incident, all of the non-believers accepted that Bhagwan Swaminarayan is a true God in this age of Kali. They said, "Many years ago, Narsinh Mehta had performed devotional prayers for a long period of time before he received a flower garland from God. And here, in the case of Jamunabai, she received a garland from God with such ease." In this way, Bhagwan Shri Hari gave divine darshan and divine flower garlands to thousands of devotees in satsang.

Shri Hari used His divine powers in such a way that He had never shown before. Thousands of such divine incidents happened in satsang but no one is able to scribe them all on paper. Nishkulanand swami described the greatness of Shri Hari through few of such incidents in his writings.

21. Shri Hari Provides For Shambai

Shri Hari had shown His divine powers to His devotees of Vadodara thousands of times. Shri Hari utilized His supreme powers solely for helping devotees during their adverse times. Numerous such divine incidents took place in Vadodara and no one can write all of them because Shri Hari's divinity and power are limitless. Nishkulanand Swami has written some of these incidents in the Bhaktchintamani because he believed, "There is no greater work than to write or think about the glory and greatness of Shri Hari and His devotees."

There was a female devotee named Shambai living in Vadodara. She was a Kshatriya by caste. She would engage in the worship of Shri Hari all day long. Due to her devotion for God, Shri Hari became extremely pleased upon her. Thus, Shri Hari graced her with the power of samadhi.

Shambai remained in samadhi most of the time and enjoyed the eternal happiness of Akshardham. However, she was very poor and since she spent the whole day in samadhi, there was no time for her to earn some bread. Due to such a tough condition, She could only eat whatever she received or whatever leftovers she had at home, which meant mostly nothing. Though Shambai was living in such poverty, she did not give up her daily devotion.

After many days passed, she contemplated "Since I am not able to work anywhere, who will provide me food and clothes? While pondering upon this question, she entered into

samadhi and after enjoying the divine form of God in Akshardham, she returned from samadhi. When she opened her eyes, to her surprise, she found freshly cooked food for her. Shri Hari had divinely put a meal of *Rotlas and Dal* for her.

Shambai became emotional by receiving this meal. She thought of the most compassionate nature of Shri Hari and His causeless mercy upon her. Then, she ate the prasad of Rotla and Dal. In this way, Shri Hari provided her with hot meals everyday whenever she returned from her samadhi. Once, Shri Hari delivered about 40 pounds of flour and eggplants (vegetables) for her daily use of cooking food.

Such divine experiences took place in Shambai's life on a regular basis. Once upon a time, she entered samadhi and did the darshan of Shri Hari along with the muktos of Akshardham. While doing Shri Hari's darshan, she desired for the footprints of Shri Hari for daily worship. Immediately, Shri Hari gave her what she desired. Shri Hari dipped his feet into the kumkum- water and imprinted them onto a piece of cloth. When it dried up, He gave it to Shambai for daily worship. Moreover, Shri Hari saw that Shambai wore extremely old clothes and thus, he gave her new clothes as well. When Shambai came back from samadhi, she found footprints and new clothes given by Shri Hari during samadhi in her hands.

When the other people saw those new clothes and footprints of Shri Hari, they became greatly surprised. They all experienced divinity in Shri Hari and in the devotion of Shambai. In this manner, Shri Hari took care of His devotees by providing them with food, clothes etc.

22. Heart-Touching Devotion

There was a female devotee in the Patidar family. Her name was Jivibai. She had an inclination of devotional affection for Shri Hari. With great love, she worshiped Shri Hari most of the time. Because of her heart-touching devotion, Shri Hari became pleased with her and so, graced her with His divine darshan every day.

Everyday, Shri Hari came in His divine form to her home. Sometimes, Shri Hari gave her some prasadi food; other times, He gave her flower garlands and sometime else, she would be given sakar (crystal sugar). In this manner , Shri Hari provided her with some sort of prasad every time He came to her home in His divine form.

Once, Shri Hari appeared in her home and graced her with His darshan and asked her, " Jivibai, today I'm very hungry. So, if you have anything ready to eat, give it to me. Otherwise, I'll go to another devotee's home to eat a meal. Jivibai had cooked *kodari*! She offered it to Shri Hari in a dish. Shri Hari happily ate the *kodari* because of Jivibai's affection.

The next day, Jivibai prepared Rotli and bhaji for Shri Hari as she had confidence that Shri Hari would definitely come to her house that day. As time passed, Shri Hari divinely appeared in her home at the time of lunch. Jivibai requested Shri Hari, "Please, eat this meal! I have prepared Roti and bhaji for you." Due to Jivibai's pure affection, Shri Hari sat down to eat. She was serving the meal to Shri Hari and He was

eating it to please His devotee - Jivibai. Shri Hari gave His darshan to everyone. All of the people who had witnessed a series of such miraculous incidents realized the great value of Jivibai's pure devotion and affection for Shri Hari.

Nishkulanand Swami writes that, "This was not the talk of dream or of samadhi. This was a real incident. Shri Hari came to Jivibai's home assuming a human-like form and everyone who was present there could witness that divine form of Shri Hari."

23. Locked Doors Unlocked

There was another female devotee by the name of Umiyabai. She was from a Vanik family. Due to the company of some female devotees of Shri Hari, Umiyabai also began to worship Shri Hari. However, her other family members did not like the way she was worshiping Shri Hari. Thus, they never allowed her to go outside for satsang purposes. Moreover, they even harassed her if she ever visited the homes of devotees. They all persecuted her and disturbed her while she would be performing devotion. All they wanted was for her to give up satsang. However, instead of giving up, as they harassed her more, she worshiped Shri Hari more and more.

Many such days had passed. Once, the relatives decided to lock Umiyabai in a room and not provide any food or water. According to their plan, they locked Umiyabai in a room. For three days, she was not given food or water. They thought," when she will become hungry, she will knock on the door and we will open the door only if she is ready to give up her devotion for Shri Hari." Three days passed without food and water. Inside the locked room, Umiyabai remained engaged in her devotion of Shri Hari. She chanted the 'Swaminarayan' mahamantra day and night. She did not care about food or water nor did she consider that she was locked inside the room for harassment. Instead, she thought that such a situation is the best time for her to worship Shri Hari without any sort of disturbance.

On the other hand, Shri Hari worried for her. Thus,

on the fourth day, Shri Hari appeared in the locked room in His divine form. He had a dish full of prasad in His hands. Shri Hari graced Umiyabai with His divine darshan. He lovingly said," Umiyabai, please take this dish and eat the prasad. I have brought you fresh rotis and mango pulp mixed with sugar." Umiyabai became extremely joyous by having such divine darshan of Shri Hari. She bowed down and performed panchang pranam. Then, she took the dish from Shri Hari's hand and began to take the prasad as per Shri Hari's instructions. She ate the prasad of Rotlis and mango pulp while doing darshan of Shri Hari. Shri Hari remained there until she finished her meal. In this way, Shri Hari is the most compassionate God who is ever ready to protect His devotees during their adverse times.

24. Young Yet Highly Enlightened

Another Kshatriya satsangi family resided in the town of Vadodara. The family members gave each other co-operation on the path of satsang and due to this, the values of satsang became more and more prominent. One such devotee of the family was Prembai, whose mother taught her the methods of devotion. Prembai was only five years old and did not understand a lot about meditation or devotion of Shri Hari but she would always sit together with her mother while she engaged in devotion. Whenever her mother entered into samadhi, Prembai also sat beside her mother and tried to do meditation. But, it remained impossible for a small child like her to do meditation. However, Shri Hari became pleased with her innocent efforts and graced her with the power to enter the samadhi.

Once, Prembai reached Akshardham in samadhi. There, she did the darshan of Shri Hari. Shri Hari lovingly called her near and graced her with a flower garland. Moreover, Shri Hari loosened the flower-bracelets from both of His wrists and tied them on her wrists. In this way, Shri Hari showered His pleasure upon her. Then, Shri Hari sent her back from samadhi.

When Prembai opened her eyes, she saw the garland around her neck and the flower wrist-bands upon her wrist. Many people witnessed these incidents and performed darshan of those garlands and wrist-bands. Then, some of them asked her, “Prembai, where did you bring this flower

garland and flower wrist-bands from?" To that, She replied innocently in her childish language, "I went to Akshardham and Shriji Maharaj gave me these things and when I returned from samadhi, they remained with me.

Listening to her reply, all said, “you are a great devotee of God as you received such a miracle from Shri Hari. Shri Hari has showered his mercy upon you!” In this way, Shri Hari gives happiness to his devotees and blesses them regardless of how old or young they may be.

25. Gifts From Akshardham

Vadodara was a treasure of advanced devotees. There were thousands of devotees who experienced the divine form of Shri Hari in Akshardham through the samadhi. Lakshmibai was one of such ardent devotees of Shri Hari. She had an inclination of devotional love for Shri Hari. Due to her affection for Shri Hari, Lakshmibai felt that the worldly pleasures were insignificant, as she was firmly attached to Shri Hari.

In this way, Lakshmibai's life was full of devotion. In her life there was nothing besides God and since she was firmly attached to God, Shri Hari did not remain away from her either. In fact, Shri Hari does not leave the heart of such a devotee even for a fraction of a second. And, therefore whatever she wished, Shri Hari did accordingly.

Due to Lakshmibai's uncommon love, Shri Hari appeared many times with different varieties of prasadi which were rare even for Brahma, Shiv and other Demigods to attain. Not only did Shri Hari remain in her heart, but He also appeared in his divine form in front of her eyes. Sometimes, Shri Hari appeared with delicious food and He would eat some and give the rest as prasadi to her. Also, Shri Hari would give her mukhwas (mouth freshner) every day after the meal. Sometimes, Shri Hari gave her new clothes, groceries etc. during samadhi. When she was in samadhi, Shri Hari gave her these things and when she returned from samadhi, she found all those clothes and groceries in front of her.

For Lakshmibai, such events did not evoke any feeling of surprise as they took place everyday. But for the others, these were events of great wonder. They all became awestruck because there was nothing when she sat for samadhi and when she returned, there were different varieties of clothes & groceries with her. Seeing all this, everyone realized the greatness of Shri Hari because they hadn't experienced such incidents elsewhere. Thus, they felt gratitude as they had attained such a divine Lord - Shri Hari, his divine saints and a mass of such divine devotees.

26. The Magical Stick

Dhundhuba was a south Indian Brahmin who lived in Vadodara with his family. He was a Tantrika by occupation. He had attained some sort of evil black-power through invoking evil deities and chanting their mantra. By using his black-powers, he used to deliberately take money from people and whosoever did not act according to his wishes, they would be punished. He used to carry a stick and whenever He spelled a charm mantra; through its power, the magical stick itself flew in the air and hit on the targeted person's head.

He became very famous due to his powers and one day, the government officers of Vadodara invited him. The main officer of the Gaikwad state of Vadodara was Babaji Diwan who upheld hatred with Bhagwan Swaminarayan. Thus, the Diwan offered Dhundhuba a big amount to use his black powers against Swaminarayan and His sadhus. Being greedy for money, Dhundhuba readily agreed with the Diwan. Meanwhile, Dhundhuba found that Gopalanand Swami was in the city. so, he decided to debase Swami. When Gopalanand Swami was discoursing to the devotees, he went to the assembly with his magical stick. His neighbors and fans also joined to see the play of Dhundhuba.

In the assembly, Gopalanand Swami was sitting on his seat under the pipal tree. In front of him, thousands of devotees were listening to his discourse. Dhundhuba sat in front of Swami without paying respect. Then, he asked Swami to stop the discourse and leave Vadodara, otherwise he would use his

magical stick which would hit Swami on his head. Gopalanand Swami just smiled at him and humbly said , "If you want to use your black magic upon me,go right ahead! I'm not afraid of anything as I am a sadhu of Bhagwan Swaminarayan." Hearing this, Dhundhuba furiously recited his evil-mantras and put the stick in the air. But, to everyone's surprise, the stick began to beat him on his own head instead of Gopalanand Swami. He became seriously injured and blood spewed out of his head. He used his strap of clothes to cover the bloody head and returned to his residence.

Meanwhile, a kid who came there with Dhundhuba's neighbor entered samadhi due to Gopalanand Swami's wishes. He enjoyed divine happiness in Akshardham during the Samadhi. Shri Hari gave him a pendo as prasad. So, when that small kid returned from Samadhi, the pendo remained in his hand. But, the neighbor did not allow him to eat it. When they returned home, the boy was suggested to give that pendo to someone else but not to eat. So, the boy gave that pendo to Mathurabai, the daughter of Dhundhuba.

Mathurabai was only five years old. She ate the pendo and at that time, Mathurabai felt that she was in different territory. She felt as if she was within a mass of divine light. She didn't realize that she was in samadhi. There, amidst the mass of divine light, she saw Bhagwan Swaminarayan surrounded by countless muktos of Akshardham. She felt that Shri Hari was God himself and when Shri Hari called her near, she immediately reached up to the feet of Shri Hari. She bowed down, touched his feet and folded her hands. Shri Hari

blessed her with true eternal knowledge and sent her back to her body-consciousness.

Upon returning from the samadhi, Mathurabai was telling others what she experienced during the samadhi. She also told her father about the samadhi and suggested going back to Gopalanand Swami the next day and to beg for forgiveness. Also, since Shri Hari is the God of Gods and the Supreme Lord, he should accept His refuge by becoming his devotee." Listening to such talks from his five year old daughter, Dhundhuba agreed with her. The next day, they reached the residence of Shri Gopalanand Swami. Mathura stayed far away and Dhundhuba went near Gopalanand Swami. There, he fell down to Swami's feet and asked for forgiveness for what he had done the previous day. Gopalanand Swami consoled him. By listening to Swami's soothing words, Dhundhuba felt great comfort.

He prayed to Swami, "Please accept me as your follower! I want to be a devotee of Bhagwan Swaminarayan." Hearing this, Gopalanand Swami explained to him in regards to the five religious vows and the other rules of Satsang. Swami also put a Kanthi around his neck. In this way, Dhundhuba became a devotee of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. On the other hand, Shri Hari had blessed Mathurabai with the power to enter samadhi as per her wishes and so, she went to Akshardham via samadhi everyday. There, she enjoyed the divine light and form of Shri Hari. Whenever she returned from Samadhi, she narrated to everyone else as to what she had seen in samadhi. Sometimes, she narrated the *swarg* and other divine abodes

while at other times, she would foretell the future. When things happened according to her forecasting, people believed her as an incarnation of God.

Once, someone informed King Sayajirao about Mathurabai's miracles. The king sent his intelligence officers to confirm whether the miracles of Mathurabai were true or false. But, when the team of the officers witnessed the incident and listened to Mathurabai's talks, they forgot as to why they had come there and what they needed to verify. So, they gave their report to the King that, "The five year old Mathurabai is like an incarnation of God. When she was talking, everyone felt that her Bhagwan Swaminarayan was speaking through her because such wisdom and knowledge can never be possible in such a young girl. So, we all bowed down to her with reverence and returned without asking her any question." King Sayajirao was astonished by hearing about such divine powers in a young girl.

In this way, Mathurabai daily experienced samadhi for three months. After that, she stayed in samadhi for several days and sometimes, she returned from samadhi after a month or two. In this manner, Mathurabai enjoyed the eternal happiness of Akshardham through samadhi. Day after day, Mathurabai's popularity increased and many non-devotees also visited her home for her darshan and blessings.

Once, a female came to her. She was from a vanik family and followed vaishnavism. She encountered a false Guru because she did not know how to discriminate between a true saint and a false saint. She wasted twenty years of her

life with a false guru because in those twenty years, she was unable to obtain any sort of spiritual progress or even feel at peace within. So, she came to Mathurabai to find a new way to get inner peace and obtain spiritual progress. She disclosed everything that she had done during those twenty years under the guidance of her Vaishnav Guru. Thereafter, she assured Mathurabai that she will follow each and every instruction of Mathurabai in order to obtain inner peace. Hearing this, Mathurabai told her to come the next day in the early morning.

The next dew when she came to Mathurabai, she was instructed to engage in worship of Shri Hari. Mathurabai taught her how to chant Swaminarayan mantra. So, that female began to chant the swaminarayan mahamantra. Within a few minutes, she was in the samadhi due to the wish of Mathurabai. In the state of samadhi, Mathurabai sent her to Golokdham - the abode of Lord Shri Krishna as she previously believed in Vaishnavism. There, she saw the divine attendants in both male and female form. They were the gopas and gopis. She also saw many cows grazing in an open field near the divine river of *Virja*. Then, finally she got the darshan of Lord Shri Krishna and Radhaji. She also got the darshan of thousands of other queens of Lord Shri Krishna along with their female friends and maids. In this way, she was overjoyed by such divine darshan of Golok in samadhi. When she returned, she fell down at the feet of Mathurabai and expressed her gratitude. Mathurabai said. "It's all done because of my Lord Bhagwan Swaminarayan as He is the Supreme Lord."

That female again and again appreciated Mathurabai. Also, she narrated her experiences with everyone who met her. She openly declared that only Swaminarayan Bhagwan is the Supreme Lord and that His fellowship - His satsang is true and all others are false. Reason being that what other gurus could not do, the young female devotee, Mathurabai could easily achieve with the power of her God - Swaminarayan." In this manner, Shri Hari showed His divine powers through his devotees. No such incidents have been recorded anywhere in the world. Nishkulanand Swami noted that there were countless such divine incidents that happened in Vadodara and that he has mentioned only one percent of those miracles.

Later, when Mathurabai grew up, she decided not to engage in married life. She stayed at home and worshiped Shri Hari to her last breath. At the very early age of 24, she told her father and other family members that Shri Hari will come the day after tomorrow and she will go to Akshardham with him. According to her words, Shri Hari appeared along with many saints and devotees to bring her soul to Akshardham. Mathurabai sat in the meditation of Shri Hari. Shri Hari enabled everyone to do His darshan. In this way, thousands of people got darshan of Shri Hari, and the saints and devotees who were present there in their divine forms. They also watched how Mathurabai said Jai Swaminarayan to all and left her mortal body and went with Shri Hari via the celestial plane while assuming a divine body.

27. Rewards Unrevealed

Jijibhai was an ardent devotee of Bhagwan Swaminarayan and lived in the village of Itola in the region of Kanam. He was a very dedicated devotee and had kept everything - his body, mind and wealth for the sake of satsang. He had unflinching faith in the form of Shri Hari. He was a senior devotee in the village, so all the other devotees came to him to listen to his discourses. In this way, all the devotees of Itola, under the guidance of Jijibhai performed their devotion and Satsang to please Shri Hari.

Meanwhile, Shri Hari wished to bring Jijibhai to his divine abode Akshardham as his lifespan was over. Shri Hari came in His divine form with thousands of divine saints and devotees. Shri Hari came in a divine golden chariot. He came at midnight and there was darkness all over the village. Thus, Shri Hari spread his divine light. That divine light expanded over the entire village. Shri Hari stopped his golden chariot at Bapubhai's driveway.

Bapubhai, a Brahmin devotee of Shri Hari woke up due to the divine light. He came out of his room to see who was there. There, he found his beloved Bhagwan Shri Hari in front of his eyes. He bowed down and prostrated before Him. He was elated by having the darshan of Shri Hari. He prayed, "Maharaj! Today, I'm extremely glad to see you here at my home. I have attained everything as You have come here. Maharaj! Please stay here considering this home as yours." Hearing Bapubhai's requests to stay there, Shri Hari revealed

to him the purpose of his arrival.

Shri Hari said, “Bapubhai, today I have come with a special purpose as to take Jijibhai's soul to Akshardham. These saints, devotees, and golden chariots are all divine." Shri Hari added, "Therefore, we can not stay here any more. We will now go back to Akshardham and take Jijibhai with us." Hearing this, Bapubhai requested Shri Hari, “Maharaj! Please do not take Jijibhai with you. He is the only one who has helped us in Satsang. He is the senior-most devotee in the village and if you take him to Akshardham, who will recite sermons of wisdom related to satsang? So, it is my humble request to not take him with you." Shri Hari said in reply, "Bapubhai, if it is the matter of all satsangis, we will not take Jijibhai. Instead, we will take the soul of Jijibhai's bullock to Akshardham." Bapu bhai asked with surprise, "Maharaj! Bullock? What has it done for you? What are it's good merits? It is an animal! Has it even engaged in your devotion? Shri Hari replied," Bapubhai! When Jijibhai went to provide groceries to my *sarvopari* saint-Muktanand Swami, this bullock carried a cart full of groceries. Due to that merit, we will take it to Akshardham." Bapubhai could not speak for some time and he simply stared at Shri Hari with folded hands. He thought in his mind as to how compassionate Shri Hari is because today, he has redeemed a bullock!

Then, Shri Hari disappeared from there and went to the bullock and returned to his Akshardham with the soul of the bullock. Bapubhai went to Jijibhai's home. He knocked on the door. Jijibhai opened the door and thought as to who it was

at midnight ? When he found Bapubhai, he asked, "Bapubhai! Why have you come at this late hour? What happened? Is it an emergency?" Bapubhai replied "Jijibhai! Maharaj came to my house with thousands of saints and devotees." Before he could finish, Jijibhai asked, "Where have they stayed? Let's go for their darshan!" Bapubhai said "Maharaj and saints came in their divine form to take you to Akshardham but they kept you here and instead took the soul of your bullock."

Right away, both Jijibhai and Bapubhai lit an oil lamp and went where the bullock was kept. They found the bullock lying on the floor and dead. So, they believed that the bullock (its soul) went to Akshardham with Shri Hari and his saints. Jijibhai's eyes moistened. He became emotional and spoke out "Maharaj! You are the most compassionate! Today, you have granted liberation to an animal. Therefore, there is no doubt that the people who chant your holy name knowingly or unknowingly will definitely attain Akshardham.

Then, Bapubhai narrated the details of the event to Jijibhai about the merits of bullock which Shri Hari revealed to him. Then, they gathered all of the devotees of the village and narrated what had happened. All of the devotees became very surprised and they truly understood the immense greatness of Shri Hari. They all realized that Shri Hari is the Supreme Lord and knowing that He grants liberation to even animals, they all considered themselves very fortunate.

28. Prison Break!

The village of Mangrol is situated near Vadodara in the region of Kanam. In Mangrol, there lived a devotee named Bechar bhagat. As a farmer, he worked on his farm. He used to work only a little and most of the time, he engaged in devotion because he had no interest in social - worldly life. But, as a householder devotee, he had to fulfill his duty towards his family. So, he had to work at the farm. But, he was not interested in earning more than his basic necessities and as a result, he spent most of his time in Bhakti. Due to that, he did not earn enough money to pay the fixed taxes of the Government and was unable to pay the taxes.

Due to this, the officers once summoned him for paying his part of the taxes. Even though it was a law to not collect tax from someone with a low-income, the officer ordered him to either pay the tax or that he would be sent to prison. Bechar bhagat requested, "I do not have any savings or income and I am not able to pay right now. Moreover, according to the law, I am not required to pay the tax." However, the officer sent him to the prison and ordered the security personnel to not provide him water or food.

As Bechar bhagat did not have any savings, he could not pay anything even if he wished to. Two days passed in jail without taking food and water. Then, Bechar bhagat prayed to Shri Hari "Oh ! Maharaj! You are the only hope for me. No one will come to release me from this situation, besides you. I only have the strength of your divine form. So please, have mercy

upon me and come early to rescue me from this jail." In this way, Bechar bhagat was absorbed in praying to Shri Hari as if He was actually standing in front of him.

On the other hand, Shri Hari decided to answer Bechar bhagat's sincere prayers. Shri Hari came to the prison in his divine form. The soldiers and security guards could not stop him from entering the premises and could only watch as to how Shri Hari entered the jail premises with ease. Shri Hari just touched the gate, and it opened by itself. When the soldiers saw that, they stayed away in fear. They understood that Shri Hari is not an ordinary person.

Shri Hari touched the lock of the prison cell where they locked Bechar bhagat and it also opened by itself. Shri Hari entered the cell and met Bechar bhagat. He could not believe that Shri Hari was standing in front of him. He bowed down to Shri Hari and became emotional by seeing Shri Hari's mercy upon him. Shri Hari embraced him and asked Bechar to follow Him. Shri Hari, in this way, without any hindrances, came out from the jail with Bechar bhagat in a divine manner. No guard could do anything but simply watch the divinity and divine powers of Shri Hari.

Shri Hari divinely dropped Bechar along with the belongings in another state where he could live happily. Shri Hari made arrangements for Bechar's new house, farm and all other basic necessities in the new place. Due to Shri Hari's divine powers, everything was done within a few minutes. In this way, Shri Hari satisfied his devotees by giving them happy and prosperous lives. Then Shri Hari disappeared from there.

29. Put Him Back To Life

There were many villages and towns in the Kanam region where many ardent devotees of Shri Hari lived. One such village was Karali. There lived a senior devotee named Nanabhai. Besides Nanabhai, there were many other devotees also living in the village of Karali. They all had the inclination of devotional affection for Shri Hari. So, they all lovingly worship Him with pure heart.

Due to their pure unconditional love, Shri Hari fulfilled their wishes, protected them in all kinds of situations and showed many divine miracles to them. Many times, Shri Hari came there in divine form to bring the devotees' souls to Akshardham at the time of their death. Many times, He came to take the devotees lying on their deathbed with celestial chariots, divine vehicles, divine planes etc. Such incidents happened numerous times. Such an incident also took place in Karali.

Once, Nanabhai was seriously ill. He could not even intake food or water. His body became very fragile and weak without food and water. Many days passed in such conditions. Whoever came to see him for his health, they all thought that he would not live any more. In such a critical situation, once, Namabhai's heart stopped pumping and his pulse died out.

Seeing this, all of his family members declared him dead. They all decided to perform his last ritual of cremation

as soon as possible. Meanwhile, some of the relatives had done all of the preparations for his cremation ceremony. However, when they were to begin leaving for the cremation ground, all of a sudden, Shri Hari appeared in his divine form in Karali! Many saints were also present with him.

They all came there with celestial chariots, divine vehicles and divine planes. All devotees and non-devotees received the darshan of Shri Hari and the saints. They all welcomed Shri Hari and the saints and requested, "Please, stay here in the village of Karali for a long time!" Shri Hari then said, "Today, we have specially come to take Nanabhai to our Akshardham but now we have decided to keep him here and not take him with us. We will bring him to Akshardham in the future but not now."

Then, Shri Hari turned towards Nanabhai and put him back to life by His divine vision. Nanabhai woke up and opened his eyes as if he had woken up from sleep. He saw Shri Hari and saints standing in front of his eyes. He folded his hands and tried to pray but words did not come out as he hadn't taken food or water for many days. Then Shri Hari told him, "Nanabhai we had come for you but now we have decided otherwise. We will come again in the future to bring you to Akshardham. So, stop worrying and begin to eat food, drink water and also chant my holy mantra 'Swaminarayan' day and night." Shri Hari then disappeared along with saints and all the divine vehicles. Such was the miracle Shri Hari had performed by giving a life to a dead person.

By witnessing this incident, all of the villagers got

a great surprise. They all talked amongst themselves that Shri Hari possesses extremely divine powers. So, they firmly believed that Shri Hari is the Supreme Lord of Lords because such a divine miracle has never happened any where and to any one besides the Satsangis. Thinking in such a way, they all left for their homes.

30. Jetha's Illness Cured!

In the same village of Karali, there lived another satsangi family. In that family, a small kid named Jetha bhagat became seriously ill. His illness was such that it could not be cured. He could not speak anything. He just laid on the bed with extreme weakness in his body.

Knowing that Jetha bhagat was ill, the villagers used to come to his home to wish him well. However, instead of wishing positively, all villagers advised his father to contact the near by *bhuva* (a worshiper of evil-deities) to cure his child. In addition, they said, “Jetho has been captured by the impact of ghosts. So, a bhuva must come to cure his illness, otherwise, Jetho will not remain alive. The evil spirit will kill him. So, at once, you should invite the bhuva.”

However, Jetha's father was a devotee of Bhagwan Shri Hari. He immediately responded with firmness, "Even if my son will not remain alive and die soon, I will never invite a bhuva at my home. Our family has a refuge of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. So, we do not need any worshipers of evil deities. To keep my son alive or to give him death, both the matters are in my Bhagwan's hands. Never give me the same advice again.” In such a bold way, Jetha's father responded to the villagers. The villagers had no option than to leave. They left for their homes.

On the other hand, Jetha's father engaged in prayer to Shri Hari. In Akshardham, Shri Hari became extremely pleased upon Jetha's father as he had openly shown his

firmness to follow Shri Hari's wishes. So, Maharaj changed his decision. Originally, Shri Hari had decided to bring Jetha's soul to Akshardham which means that he would die. But, because of his father's sincere devotion and unflinching faith and loyalty, Shri Hari decided otherwise.

He came in His divine form to the village. Shri Hari, however, did not come to Jetha's home. Instead, He appeared in another female devotee's house. Shri Hari gave his darshan to the female devotee. The female devotee bowed down to Shri Hari and requested, "Oh! Maharaj! It is beyond my fortune that you are in my house, in front of me! Maharaj! Please stay here considering this home is yours." Then, She asked, "Maharaj! Where are you coming from?" Shri Hari replied, "Today, I have come here with a special purpose. Actually, I wished to bring the soul of Jetha to Akshardham. But now I'm not going to take him right now. Even though he is very ill, he will be relieved." Then, Shri Hari gave kumkum powder with the instruction, “Take this kumkum powder and apply a chandlo on Jetha's forehead. He will get up from his death-bed. He will be relieved from illness by this chandlo. Therefore, go and apply the kumkum on his forehead with the utterance of my name - Swaminarayan. By this, Jetho, who has not been speaking for several days, will speak today." Giving such instructions, Shri Hari disappeared from her home.

The female devotee immediately went to Jetha bhagat. She told his parents about Shri Hari's divine arrival and instructions. Then, she applied the kumkum chandlo on Jetha's forehead while chanting ' Swaminarayan'. Within no time,

Jetha bhagat woke up. He said Jay Swaminarayan to all who were present and asked, “Why have all of you gathered? The female devotee who got Shri Hari's divine darshan explained the details of Shri Hari's wishes and the incident to Jetha bhagat. Listening to this, everyone realized the greatness of Shri Hari and also understood His divine power and all-doership.

In this way, the devotees of Karali village realized that Shri Hari is their protector and savior. Jetha bhagat and his family received the fruits of their unflinching faith in Shri Hari as they did not agree with the villagers' idea to invite the bhuva. In this manner, Shri Hari always remains with the devotees who are loyal to him and offer devotion with firmness by understanding him as the all-doer.

31. You Attain What You Wish For

Prabhatgar was a spiritual aspirant who lived in the village of Thikariya. He had left his village and traveled to different places of pilgrimage to attain God. For attaining God, he became an ascetic, While traveling he arrived at the village of Ranu. There, he stayed and joined in the digging work of a village pond. As time passed, he became a well-known personality within the state of Gaikwad. The King and his people started considering him as a great ascetic.

However, as a spiritual seeker, he always remained in search of God. He always wished to attain God. Once, he met with the saints of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. They informed him about Bhagwan's manifestation in human form as Bhagwan Swaminarayan. Prabhatgar understood the talks of the saints and accepted them as the truth. Some days passed and two devotees of the village of Ranu - Tulsibhai and Lallubhai were going to attend the grand yagna ceremony at Dabhan. They were traveling in a bullock cart and were passing by the digging site. Prabhatgar asked them as to where they are going. Tulsibhai replied, "Bhagwan Swaminarayan is performing a grand yagna in the town of Dabhan and we are going there for his darshan." Prabhatgar asked them , "I also want to come there. Can you please give me a ride in your cart? Both devotees happily agreed and in this way, all of them reached the yagna site in Dabhan.

At that time, Shri Hari was sitting on an ornate seat in an assembly of thousands of saints and devotees. Joban

Pagi of Vartal, a notorious dacoit, surrendered at the feet of Shri Hari. Shri Hari was transforming him from a dacoit to a devotee by giving him religious vows. Prabhatgar Bawa was watching this from far away. He understood and believed Shri Hari as God. But, his mind still had some doubts. To clear them, he formulated a thought “If Shri Hari gives me the quilt he has wrapped around his body without being asked, then I will believe Him as the Supreme God."

Shri Hari was well aware of this wish of Prabhatgar. So, he sent a parshad to call Prabhatgar and gave him the quilt. Prabhatgar requested , "How can I take this quilt of yours? You are the Supreme Lord!'' Shri Hari said, "Take this as a prasadi (gift). There are many others who will give me such quilts. So, take it without hesitation. "In this way, Shri Hari fulfilled the wish of Prabhatgar by giving him the quilt.

Prabhatgar had now realized Shri Hari as the Supreme lord. So, he bowed down and pleaded for giving him vartman (five religious vows) and to accept him in the holy fellowship of Satsang. Bhagwan Swaminarayan, performed the ritual of accepting him as a disciple in the holy fellowship by giving some drops of water in his right palm and reciting the sharnagati verse. In this way, He instructed Prabhatgar about the five religious vows to follow. Prabhatgar also continued to follow those rules till his last breaths.

Prabhatgar returned to Ranu with the quilt given to him by Shri Hari. There, he decided to stay at the Tulja Mata mandir as a priest. However, he had changed his lifestyle from that of a sanyasi to that of a Swaminarayan devotee. He kept

the quilt as a prasadi in the mandir for the visitors to perform darshan. In this way, Prabhatgar spent many years performing the devotion of Shri Hari. But. due to his old age, his death was near. While laying on his bed, he continued to chant Swaminarayan... Swaminarayan..Swaminarayan.

As time passed, Shri Hari appeared in His divine form in the village of Ranu with many celestial planes. Shri Hari came there with many saints to bring Prabhatgar's soul to His Akshardham. Shri Hari put a garland of flowers around Prabhatgar's neck. Also, He gave him a bunch of flowers and instructed him to be ready for Akshardham. Prabhatgar became very happy as he saw Shri Hari at the time of his death. He folded his hands and left his mortal body and sat in a divine plane with Shri Hari.

In this way, Prabhatgar's soul went to Akshardham with Shri Hari in a celestial plane. On the other hand, his physical body lay dead but the flower garland that Shri Hari gave remained there. Also, the bunch of flowers Shri Hari Gave also remained in the hands of Prabhatgar's dead body. By seeing this, the people of the village became greatly surprised and realized that such a miracle happened due to Shri Hari's divine powers.

32. Bhagwan Comes For Sakarbai

There was the village of Utaraj in the region of Kanam. Many devotees of Bhagwan Swaminarayan lived in the village. The village was not too big nor too small. At that time, the village was a cluster of mud-houses in the tiny dusty streets. Within those homes, there was a mud-house with the roof of clay-tiles. Inside, a few oil lamps were glowing, the door was closed, and the divine vibrations of the divine sound of Swaminarayan... Swaminarayan spread within the environment.

The house was not a mandir but had the same divinity of the mandir because a devotee of Bhagwan Swaminarayan was living in the house. However, she was lying in bed! Sakarbai coughed while chanting her beloved God's name. She was alone in her room. All the other family members were busy with their chores. Thus, Sakarbai was engrossed in chanting Swaminarayan in the state of half-sleep.

The room was dimly lit and the sun had set. All of a sudden, the room filled with divine light. Sakarbai awakened fully to search for where the light was coming from! After a few seconds, she finally understood. She found someone amidst the mass of light. The light blurred the figure of a person standing there. To know who the person is, she spoke out, “Who's there?” At the same time, the mass of divine light merged into the figure and Sakarbai's question was answered without any words being uttered. Her beloved God, Bhagwan Swaminarayan was standing in front of her eyes. Sakarbai's divine joy knew no bounds. She tried to get up from her bed

but it was very difficult for her due to her illness. However, Shri Hari himself helped her up and sat her comfortably on the bed. Her heart pounded with excitement and nervousness.

Shri Hari blessed her by putting His left palm on her head and lovingly asked. "How do you feel now?" By the tender touch of Shri Hari, Sakarbai, who felt revived, replied “Maharaj ! I'm feeling better but I feel bad for not being able to provide you a seat." To divert her mind, Shri Hari changed the topic and asked her, "By the way, how do you do my bhajan? Are you satisfied with the devotional life you have been living?" Sakarbai folded her hands and replied "Maharaj! You know the answer better than anyone." Shri Hari simply smiled with satisfaction and blessed her. "Sakarbai, I'm very happy with your devotion and will come again after four days to take you to my divine abode, Akshardham." He paused for a while and added, “Prepare yourself and increase my bhajan as much as you can and be ready for the journey to the final destination.” Sakarbai happily agreed with the instructions. Then, Shri Hari told her at last "Take care of yourself and remember more and more of my divine form. Jay Swaminarayan.”

Sakarbai closed her eyes, tears rolled down from her eyes and her voice choked up with emotion and she could hardly say, "Jay..Swa-mi-na-ra-yan". When she opened her eyes, She could not see the divine light or Shri Hari as if nothing had happened. She understood that Shri Hari had come to inform her to become ready for the eternal journey. Keeping Shri Hari's instructions in mind, she increased bhajan. She also felt better than before. Thus, while sitting on an asana, she

chanted Swaminarayan.... Swaminarayan along with the rhythm of her breathing. Then, she forgot the worldly phenomenons and only remembered the form of Shri Hari. Four such days passed in full devotion as she awaited for Maharaj. On the fifth day, Shri Hari came to the same village but not to Sakarbai's home, He came to Kesarbai's house.

Kesarbai was the nephew of Sakarbai. She lived in Sakarbai's neighborhood. In spite of being in her teenage years, she had achieved advancement in satsang with her unflinching faith for Shri Hari. This time, Shri Hari came to the village as if he was coming from Vartal or Gadhada. He came riding on a horse so that everyone could perform His darshan. When Shri Hari arrived, Kesarbai was sweeping the floor of her entrance. Seeing Shri Hari at her entrance, Kesarbai's joy knew no bounds. Happily, she welcomed Him by holding the reins of the horse. Shri Hari dismounted the horse and gave the reins to Kesarbai.

She tied the horse within the stable and provided it some fodder. Then, she entered her house with Shri Hari. She offered a seat to Shri Hari and sat in front of him on the floor. While performing panchang pranam, she prayed to Shri Hari, “You have showered immense mercy upon this useless soul as you arrived at this meek's house." While praying, she became emotional. Shri Hari blessed her by putting His left hand on her head. She insisted Shri Hari to stay there until she cooks some food for Him. Her request was approved and accepted by Shri Hari. So, she cooked many delicacies and fed Shri Hari. He ate up to her satisfaction. When He finished, she offered

mukhwas. Shri Hari put it into his mouth, and while chewing on it engaged in talks with her.

Thereafter, Kesarbai asked, "By the way, can I know the reason for this surprise visit? Shri Hari replied. "Actually, I have come to bring your aunt Sakarbai to my divine abode. That's the only purpose of my visit. Would you be pleased if I took her to my divine abode?" She replied, "Maharaj! It's her good fortune that you have personally come to take her to your divine abode. Why should I become sad? In fact, I am very pleased with this decision of yours." Listening to her reply, Shri Hari became pleased with her understanding and told her "You have great understanding but as of now, I have decided to not take her today."

Thereafter, Shri Hari added "I came four days ago to inform her that I would come today to bring her to Akshardham. Thus, she might be waiting for me. You should go to her and tell her that she will not die today. Also, narrate my visit and our conversation to her." With such words, Shri Hari blessed her and disappeared from her home. When she went outside, she didn't find the horse as it had also disappeared. Then, she realized that Shri Hari came there in His divine form. Then, she went to Sakarbai's home and described Shri Hari's visit and what He had told her.

33. As Firm As A Lion

At the time of Shri Hari's presence on this earth in human form, all of the Swaminarayan Saints traveled to different parts of the country. Those who came in contact by any way, became touched by the saints' selfless and humble life, listened to their talks, imbibed the glory of God, understood the rarity of human birth and accepted their advice, they all became staunch devotees of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. It is reasonable that Hindus changed their beliefs and joined this fellowship, but, when Non-Hindus also joined this fellowship, it became surprising for all. It is noteworthy that during the time of Bhagwan Swaminarayan, many muslims became His disciples and worshiped Him with great love. Such a muslim devotee of Bhagwan Swaminarayan was Valibhai.

Shekh Valibhai was born in a muslim family that lived in the village of Kelod. The village was situated in the region of Kanam. Once, Saints were traveling in the same region of Kanam and preached the true way of life. According to the teachings of Bhagwan Shri Hari, the saints selflessly spoke for the benefit of human society. Due to their pious and humble behavior, their words touched the hearts of people. Due to this, the people discarded their bad habits of smoking, drinking, gambling etc. and led pious lives. Some of them even became devotees of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. Valibhai Shekh was one of them. Since he was a muslim by birth, naturally, he had the habit of eating meat. But, because of the talks of saints, he decided not to touch such things in life ever again. He was very firm in doing what he had decided upon.

Moreover, due to satsang, he disregarded all the other misleading spiritual and social leaders. Valibhai realized what's right & what's wrong by comparing the behavior of leaders of other religions & that of Swaminarayan Saints. As a result, he firmly accepted the saints of Lord Swaminarayan as his spiritual masters and lived according to their preachings. All of his family members, the other villagers and the fake religious leaders noticed that Valibhai's behavior and life changed. They observed that he had stopped eating meat, he didn't come or sit to gossip, and that he had stopped going to the mosque. Also, he had begun to chant the holy name of Swaminarayan and that he had joined with Hindus to worship God. Thus, they decided to rebuke him. During a special gathering, Valibhai was summoned. There, at first, they tried to persuade him. But since Valibhai was firm in his conviction, the leaders declared him as an outcast. From that day, no one in his community kept any kind of relation or business with him. Moreover, even his own family members did not keep any relations with him.

On the other hand, Valibhai took this positively as now, he had more time to do bhajan because no one talked to him or kept any relations with him. However, he did not hold enmity towards anyone. In fact, he did not have time to think about what others were doing to disturb him. Thus, he engaged more and more in Satsang by worshiping Bhagwan Swaminarayan. No clever arguments, no persuasive facts or theories could make a dent in his conviction regarding the supremacy of Lord Swaminarayan. In this way, he spent four years as an outcast. During these four years, Valibhai tolerated

hatred & insults from others but never retaliated.

Due to his calm behavior, his relatives and the religious head of their community realized their mistake and stopped insulting and disturbing him. However, unphased with love and hate, Valibhai continued his daily worship and chanted the holy name of God. He had firm faith that Bhagwan Swaminarayan will come at the time of his death to bring his soul to Akshardham. Moreover, he wished that God would come and give darshan to all of the villagers to show His divine presence so that everyone could witness the divinity and miraculous powers of Bhagwan Shri Hari. In this manner, wishing good for all, he worshiped Shri Hari for many years. His faith and devotion for Shri Hari was true and due to that his wish was later fulfilled. At the time of his death, Shri Hari came there in his village with many saints and devotees in their divine form.

Since Shri Hari wished to allow his darshan to all, he first appeared in the vicinity of the village of kelod. He came to a nearby farm on his horse. Along with Shri Hari, there were many saints and devotees. They were all seated in celestial chariots, planes, bullock carts etc. Shri Hari and the group of saints & devotees left their horses, bullocks, carts, chariots, celestial planes etc. in the farm. The guardian of the farm came and was surprised by seeing those horses, bullocks and vehicles etc. in the farm. He requested Bhagwan that the horses and bullocks will eat my crops and we do not have other means to earn. So, please keep them outside my farm. Shri Hari consoled him "Don't worry about that! These horses

and bullocks are not of this world, they will not eat your crops. We are all coming from the divine abode of Akshardham. So, do not worry about your farm. When we depart, you will find everything in your farm as it was before. We have just come here to bring the soul of our devotee - Valibhai. By saying so, Shri Hari departed for Valibhai's house.

Shri Hari graced Valibhai with His darshan. Valibhai's joy knew no bounds. He became overjoyed due to the divine darshan of Shri Hari and His saints & devotees. He bowed down to Shri Hari and the saints & devotees. He sat in front of Shri Hari with folded hands and said, "Maharaj! I have trust in you and that you would definitely come at the time of my death and today, you have come! While saying this, he became emotional. He bent down and put his head to the feet of Shri Hari. Shri Hari put his hands on his head to bless him and said "Valibhai! Today we have come to bring you to Akshardham with us." Listening to such pleasant words from Shri Hari, Valibhai happily became ready to go with him. Finally, leaving his physical body, Valibhai left with Shri Hari to Akshardham. The event was witnessed by both the Satsangis and the Kusangis. All of them became greatly surprised by witnessing this miraculous incident. They all murmured amongst each other that the Swaminarayan Satsang is a true fellowship of God and that Valibhai is a true devotee of God. In this way, by talking with each other, they all accepted the divine power of Bhagwan Swaminarayan.

34. First Time In Surat

First, Muktanand Swami came to Surat with a group of sadhus. That was the time when no one provided food and shelter for sadhus. No one knew about Bhagwan Swaminarayan and his holy fellowship. That's why Shri Hari sent Muktanand Swami to establish satsang in the city of Surat. Muktanand Swami and the group of sadhus lived under the vicinity of the trees outside the city. They went to the city to beg for alms and whatever they received they mixed it with water and ate it. By observing Santo's humble and pious behavior, and especially the saintliness of Muktanand Swami for many days, Bhalchandra Sheth became a devotee of Shri Hari. Thereafter, Satsang flourished day by day in the city due to the heart touching discourses of Muktanand Swami.

All of the devotees in Surat had an equal level of understanding in regards to Shri Hari's greatness. They all firmly believed that at the time of death, Shri Hari would come at the time of their death to bring them to his Akshardham. They all had firm faith that they would not depart their mortal bodies without the divine presence of Shri Hari. Moreover, bound to their faith, Shri Hari himself came along with saints in their divine form at the time of the devotee's death. In addition, the devotees also informed others that "Maharaj" and santo come to bring me to Akshardham and I'm going with them."

Such was the Satsang in the city of Surat which was established and flourished by Muktanand Swami's discourses. Such divine incidents took place on a regular basis. Thus,

Nishkulanand Swami mentioned a unique incident which shows us the Supremacy of Bhagwan Shri Hari.

Ardeshariji Kotwal became a satsangi due to his contact with the devotees of Swaminarayan. Though he was born in a Parsi family, he was different from the nature of his religious caste. He was a chief officer in the administration of the city and was a very reputed dignity in Surat. Ardesharji Kotwal had sent an invitation to Shri Hari to come to the city of Surat. Upon receival, Shri Hari departed from Vartal for Surat in November, 1824. About 500 saints and many devotees also joined Shri Hari. On the bank of river Tapi, there was a beautiful place known as Rustambag which belonged to a Parsi family. When Shri Hari reached there, a huge assembly formed. The devotees of the city came to attend the satsang assembly. The Parsi devotee, Ardesharbhai, requested Shri Hari, "We will come to welcome you to our city tomorrow." The next day, Ardeshar Kotwal, his brother, Pirusha Kotwal, Bhalchandra Sheth, and other prominent devotees & dignities came with an English band to welcome and receive Maharaj. As a government officer, Ardeshar made arrangements for the festive reception of Shri Hari and Saints on a grand scale. They seated Maharaj in a decorative cart and a grand procession was taken out in honor of Maharaj. Ardesharbhai's eyes filled with the tears of joy. He had been waiting for the moment of Shri Hari's grand procession. With the power of his authority, he had ordered the closing of all the government offices so that all of the citizens would have the chance to have darshan of this grand procession of Shri Hari & His saints. The devotees of Surat welcomed Maharaj with great

pomp. A grand procession was taken through the city, Ardeshar Kotwal led the procession. People crowded in the streets to see Maharaj. From windows and terraces, everyone peeped to have the glimpse of Maharaj. In the procession, devotees were all around Maharaj, singing *Kirtans*. When Maharaj neared, people from the windows showered flower petals upon Him. Also, they loudly chanted 'Swaminarayan Bhagwanni Jay'.

One day, Ardeshar Kotwal requested Maharaj, “Please come to my home for padharamani." Knowing that God is beyond discrimination of caste or community. To Him Hindu, Muslim, Parsi or Christian were all equal. So He agreed to the proposal and went to Ardeshar's house. Next to his house, his brother Pirusha Kotwal's home. He also requested for the padharamani so Maharaj also visited Pirusha's house. Many Britishers also lived in the city. They came to know of Maharaj's divine personality due to Ardesharbhai's contact. They also invited Maharaj to their homes and they all lovingly received Maharaj as they had great respect for Maharaj. On the last day, Shri Hari and Santo arrived back at Rustambag. There, a farewell assembly was organized. Maharaj discoursed in the assembly. At the end, Ardeshar Kotwal got up and prayed, "Oh! Maharaj You are God, for me, You are my Ahura mazda. In history, Lord Ram had given his*chakhadi* to his brother to worship. It would be nice if you also give something to me so that I can worship and remember you daily. Immediately Maharaj took his *pagh* off and gave it to Ardeshar. Ardeshar was delighted just as if a poor man became happy on getting a treasure! That was the last meeting with Maharaj and Ardeshar. Maharaj and Santo

then departed.

Years passed, Ardeshar could not forget the memories of Shri Hari gave him his pagh. Everyday he did the darshan of pagh before he started his day. Once, it so happened that he fell victim to certain jealous rivals. Due to that, Ardeshar was accused of some financial issues. As a result, he lost his post as the officer. He became very disappointed. One night, while he was lying in bed worrying about his problems, his prestige, and his post, his mind became totally upset. However, he was reminded of Shri Hari. He prayed while laying in bed, “O Maharaj! Please protect me, my prestige is at stake." He repeated his prayer again and again. He did not know when he fell asleep.

During his sleep he had a dream. Shriji Maharaj appeared to him in the dreams. Maharaj was standing in front of him amidst a divine mass of light. Ardeshar bowed down many times and did darshan of Shri Hari to his satisfaction. Maharaj came close and applied a *chandlo* on his forehead by using red Kumkum powder. Shri Hari said, “Tomorrow morning, the king will re-appoint you as an officer with more respect than before. In this way, after blessing him, Shri Hari disappeared.

In the morning, when Ardeshar woke up, he was surprised by finding a chandlo on his forehead. Also, as promised by Shri Hari in the dream, the king's personal officers came to him and with due respect they brought him to the king. They all reached the palace and the King honored Ardesharbhai and reappointed him as a “Suba" (chief officer)

with full honor. Ardesharbhai explained everything as to what had happened during his dream - How Maharaj gave him his divine darshan and blessings to be appointed as an officer again.

Over 200 years have passed, but the matchless gift given by Maharaj - His pagh - is still intact with the Kotwal family. On the 175th anniversary of the pagh, Pu. Dada Guruji had celebrated the grand festival "Pagh Mahotsav" and a grand procession took place with the Pagh placed on a golden palanquin upon an elephant.

35. Chariots And Elephants

Bhagubhai was a devotee of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. However, his reputation in the city of Surat was not good. Not because of his behavior or nature, but because of his occupation. He had selected a totally different way to earn money. No business, no farming, no banking. His occupation was to consult people in need. However, the consultations were not for anything reputable. In fact, he worked as an agent when there was any dispute or quarrel between two people or more. His job was to finish the dispute amongst the two. For that, he took money from one side and went to the other party to fix the problem. There also, He would take more money than the previous side. In this way, he collected money from both sides and solved the dispute. No matter who was right or wrong, he always seemed to fill his pockets.

Moreover, sometimes Bhagubhai deliberately developed disputes amongst the people and earned money by fixing the problems. It was very easy for him to solve the disputes as the problems were created by himself. Some intelligent people could understand that most of the disputes were created by Bhagubhai and due to this, the people of the city did not consider him as a genuine person or reputed person. They discussed amongst themselves that Bhagubhai will go to hell after his death.

In reality, Bhagubhai's nature was not as to what the people thought for him. By his nature, he was a pure devotee. However, only to earn money, he used to create problems

amongst people and then solve them. He never tried to spread jealousy or hatred among the people. It's as if the person cannot be understood by his outer appearance because Bhagubhai had faith in Bhagwan Swaminarayan beyond anyone's imagination. He firmly believed that Maharaj would not look at his deeds. He would continuously contemplate “No matter how I am, my Maharaj will not forget me at my death time.” Even though the vices such as greed, lust, arrogance, deceit, avarice, infatuation, desires, and cravings for worldly things etc. are within me, my Maharaj will not consider them as grave sins. He will make me pure by removing such impurities from my soul merely by his wish after which, Maharaj will bring me to his divine abode of Akshardham. Such was his unflinching faith in Bhagwan Swaminarayan.

Bhagubhai had such faith in Maharaj and due to that, he did not worship or remember any other deities besides Maharaj. Thus, his firmness in satsang became solid. Many years had passed, and Bhagubhai's last days arrived. Maharaj himself came to take him to Akshardham. Maharaj was in his divine form but because of his wishes, everyone was able to see him. Maharaj came with a divine chariot. The chariot was special because even though generally, horses pull the chariot; this chariot was pulled by an elephant. By seeing such an unique elephant-chariot at the time of Bhagubhai's death, everyone became astonished. They had never seen such a divine incident. They had heard from devotees many times that Maharaj himself came to take his devotees when they died, but that day, they themselves witnessed the incident.

Everyone told each other that such a divine incident has never been experienced or witnessed anywhere besides the holy fellowship of Swaminarayan. In this way, by giving darshan to everyone present, Maharaj, with the soul of Bhagubhai, entered the divine chariot. With the wishes of Maharaj, the elephants began to walk towards the sky and within a few seconds, they disappeared from sight.

36. Fruits Reaped

There was a small state of Burhanpur in India. (At present time, Burhanpur is a city in the state of MP, India). Due to the santo's traveling for satsang preaching at the time of Shriji Maharaj, many people became satsangis and followed each commandment of Shri Hari. Also, many times the group of devotees went to visit Gadhpur, Vartal etc. for the darshan of Maharaj. Maharaj also fulfilled their wishes by sending Santo to Burhanpur. Though there were many devotees who lived in certain areas of Burhanpur, Santo also visited the other parts of the city where there were no devotees. There Santo stayed for some days and preached to the people regarding the rarity of human birth and that Bhagwan himself has manifested in a human form as Bhagwan Swaminarayan. By observing Santo's selfless, pious, humble nature, and daily devotional routine, other people also joined Satsang and became followers of Shri Hari..

Once, Sadguru Shri Krupanand Swami and Sadguru Shri Gunatitanand Swami traveled to that part of the region. The land & people were all new for them. They stayed under the trees and ate whatever they received in alms. Once, both of them reached an almshouse to get food. The almshouse was run by Dadabhai Diwan, a brahmin by caste. He was a Diwan - an officer in the state government. However, he had employed personnel to give food to those who came to seek food. Fortunately, Krupanand Swami and Gunatitanand Swami also received food from there. Regularly, the vairagibawas and other poor people were given food but that day two saints -

Krupanand Swami and Gunatitanand Swami were fed. Dadabhai was not a satsangi. As a gentleman and a wealthy Brahmin, he performed charity work considering it as a meritorious deed. However, Dadabhai's life was not worthy of merit. He was committing many sinful activities as well. Unknowingly, two Swaminarayan Saints ate his food and throughout his life, that was his only good deed. Time passed and the final day arrived. Dadabhai did not want to die , but death waits for no one. According to the deeds he had performed his whole life, Yamduts - the attendants of death-God Yamaraja arrived to take his soul to hell. As they caught Dada's soul, they forced him to have a series of images in his mind regarding his sinful actions. The yamduts were ready to give him a thrashing. At that time, Dada Diwan began to remember various deities and goddesses to come to his rescue from the clutches of Yamduts. But nothing happened. So, Dadabhai remembered all of the vairagibawas to whom he fed everyday. However, even though Dadabhai prayed to all deities, goddesses, and vairagibawas, no one responded to his prayer.

On the other hand, the yamduts were frightening him. As no one came to protect him from the Yamduts, Dadabhai became disappointed by thinking that no one came to his rescue. However, to his surprise, he saw two saints. Only those three could see each other. The saints told the Yamduts, "Why are you coming here? You cowards! " Before the Yamduts responded, the saints added, "Get out of here, Why are you still standing here? " One of Yamduts responded, this soul had committed many sinful actions his whole life and he has not

performed any good deeds nor has he worshiped Bhagwan by obeying his commands. Thus, he deserves to be in hell. Why are you wasting our time by making arguments? He's not yours. He's ours."

The saints strictly said, "In our presence, we will see as to how you can take his soul! " In the voice of the saints, Yamduts understood the warning. Dadabhai was watching the discussion and felt relaxed. He regained hope to be rescued. After listening to the alarming words of the saints, the Yamduts pleaded with folded hands, "We are just attendants of death - God and we are merely performing our duties. If you want to take this soul, please let us go to the death God first. He has been keeping everyone's records of sins & merits and if his merits equal more than his sins, we will give him up to you. Please, help us do our job." The saints agreed to go to hell first. The Yamduts fetched Dadabhai's soul out of his body. As Dada died, his wife also commitedcustomery suicide after her husband's death because at that time, it was a ritual custom, known as *sati pratha*'. In this custom, if one's husband dies, his wife must die after him. Either she commits suicide or she gets forcefully burnt in the funeral pyre along with her husband's dead body.

On the other side, the Yamduts headed onwards towards hell and the saints came along. In no time, two Swaminarayan Saints - Krupanand swami &Gunatitanand Swami, Yamduts, and the souls of Dada Diwan and his wife reached hell. In hell, the death God was sitting on an ornate seat. When he saw that the saints are coming, he immediately

got up from his seat and went forward to welcome them. He bowed down to both of saints. The Yamduts became astonished as they found their master bowing down to the saints. They felt guilty for making arguments with them.

The death God prayed to the saints with folded hands to sit on his *sinhasan* - ornate special seat. The saints sat on his seat and the death God stood in front of them with folded hands. He then asked, "Why did you need to come here? How can I serve you?" He added, "Whether I can do anything for you or not - that doesn't matter. But, today, I am surely very fortunate to have your darshan." The saints described the reason for their visit and the death God summoned his secretary with the balance-sheet of Dada Diwan's deeds. Chitragupta - the secretary, presented the detailed balance sheet of Dada Diwan's sins & merits. The death God read it for the saints and summarized "He has performed lots of sins and in comparison, his only merit is of unknowingly feeding two saints of Bhagwan Swaminarayan.

Then, the death God requested the saints , "If you still want to relieve the soul of Dada Diwan, we all should go and get the final judgment from the Supreme Lord Bhagwan Swaminarayan because what I'm performing is simply what his commands are for me. Thereafter, the saints proceeded towards the divine abode of Akshardham. Yamduts, souls of Dada Diwan & his wife also joined. It is noteworthy that besides the mukto (liberated souls), no one could enter the divine abode of Akshardham. But, due to the wishes of the saints, they were allowed to enter. Crossing the divine

darkness, they finally reached the divine territory of Akshardham. There was a mass of divine light everywhere. The mass of divine light was not hot like sunlight. Instead it was very cool and soothing. There were countless divine mukto that encircled the divine throne, whose beauty cannot be described by words.The Supreme Lord, Bhagwan Shri Hari was sitting on it. With a divine charming smile, he asked the saints “Oh ! my dearest of all, why are you here with this party of Yamduts and two souls.” The saints first performed dandavats to Shri Hari and while doing his darshan, they explained everything about the case of Dada Diwan.

After listening to them, Shri Hari declared “As Dada Diwan has provided food for my saints, he & his wife should be sent to heaven. After nine years, they will be born as humans and will become satsangis. Finally, after living a life of devout devotees, they will attain Akshardham." By saying this, Shri Hari blessed them by giving two garlands made of divine flowers. Then, with the wish of Shri Hari, the souls of Dada Diwan and his wife left for heaven and the Yamduts empty handedly left for hell. According to Shri Hari's blessings, Dadabhai was reborn in a Brahmin family in Vadodara. Kashibai, his wife, was also reborn in a Brahmin family. Dadabhai was born as the son of Lakshmiram Bhatt and was given the name - Kashinath Bhatt. Later, Kashibai - Dadabhai's wife was again married to Kashinath & became his wife in this new birth as well. Lakshmiram's family were staunch followers of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. So, Kashinath and his wife also became staunch devotees of Shri Hari and they worshiped Him by obeying each of His commands. Finally, at the end of their life, they reached the divine abode of Akshardham.

37. Shobharam Saved

Krupanand Swami and other santo were traveling in Burhanpur and the surrounding areas to teach the righteous way of life according to our holy fellowship. Meanwhile, they arrived at the outskirts of a village. They sat under the vicinity of a tree near the road. Their intention was to preach satsang to anyone that came to them. However, only a few fortunate people went close to have their darshan and blessings.

After bowing down, the people sat down in front of the saints. They were greatly surprised when they heard that the santo came from Gujarat and didn't possess any kind of money, extra clothes, food grains etc. They were more impressed when they found out that the saints followed complete celibacy by avoiding any type of contact with the opposite gender.

Krupanand Swami began to deliver sermons full of wisdom. Swami explained precisely as to how rare it is to get this human birth. The flow of his talk was fluent and the art of articulation was interesting. Due to this, everyone listened to Swami's talks attentively. Moreover, each word of Swami was saturated with his pure saintliness which was enough to touch the heart of listeners. Those divine words were so powerful that they could change the lives of thousands, When Swami concluded his discourse after finally narrating the pain & tortures of the hell, all of the listeners fell down to Swami's feet, weepping to get relieved from the miseries of hell. Then, Swami assured them by reciting the Supremacy of Bhagwan

Swaminarayan. He showed them the easiest way to get rid of the miseries of hell "The easiest way is to accept the shelter of the Supreme Lord." Then, he narrated many incidents of how Shri Hari had protected his devotees at the time of death by bringing them to his divine abode Akshardham.

“But, how can we get the shelter of the Supreme Lord Bhagwan Shri Hari?" questions came from the people. “Simple! If you follow his code of conduct, you are said to be his followers. In this way, you can be the devotees of the Supreme Lord." Krupanand Swami replied. Then, he explained the code of conduct, the life-style of a devotee, the method of satsang etc. to them. By listening to such precise knowledge, many people became ardent devotees of Shri Hari.

Among them, two brothers - Shamjibhai and Pitambarbhai also accepted satsang. They were from the merchant family and had a brother named Shobharam. Shobharam was older than Shamji&Pitambar but he did not accept satsang.

As devotees, Shamji&Pitambar woke up early in the morning and after having a shower, they engaged in the meditation and devotion of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. Moreover, they gave up eating onion, garlic etc. In this way, their routine life totally changed.

Shobharam did not accept such sudden changes in his younger brothers - Shamji and Pitambar. So, he strictly told them to stop such devotion and stop going to the saints for satsang. He even told them to not keep company of the other devotees. He

also spoke ill of satsang and warned them that if they still engage in satsang, he will beat them." However, ignoring his warning, Shamji and Pitambar continued to go to the saints for satsang.

When Shobharam found out that his brothers still went for satsang, he beat them cruelly. On the other hand, Shamji and Pitambar tolerated all types of torments from their elder brother. They tried to convince him that they are not doing anything that would decrease their family reputation nor are they doing anything that is against the law. They are just doing satsang - devotion to God. That's not at all harmful or disturbing for any individual."

Shobharam's cruelty melted due to the calmness of his brothers. Once, Shamji and Pitambar insisted that he should come with them for satsang. At first, Shobharam hesitated but then, he finally agreed to go with them to the saints.

All three brothers came to the Saints. Shamji and Pitambar performed dandavats to Krupanand Swami and the other saints. Shobharam didn't do anything and simply sat down. Shamji introduced Shobharam to Krupanand Swami. Swami talked to him regarding human birth and how difficult, and rare it is to obtain it. He also spoke about the purpose and goal of human birth.

However, Shobharam did not grasp these talks by heart. He did not consider them as important for his ultimate goal of life. As confusion remained in his mind, Swami changed the flow of his talk. He then began to narrate the tortures given in hell to

deserving people. He narrated in detail the gory scenes of hell. Merely by listening to the description of hell and Yamduts, Shobharam went into samadhi where he found himself in the hell. Before he could think where he was, many Yamduts rushed towards him. He was severely beaten by those frightening Yamduts. He pleaded "please forgive me. Why are you so unkind with me? Please have some mercy upon me."

One of the Yamduts replied, "You fool! You have pained the devotees of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. Your brothers engaged in Satsing and you beat them? You have pained them physically and mentally for no reason and thus, we are now giving you its real fruits. You will be tortured in this hell." By saying, the Yamduts threw him in another torture chamber and began to beat him mercilessly.

Here in front of Krupanand Swami, Shobharam's physical body was trembling even though it lay unconscious. Shamji and Pitambar witnessed this and prayed to Swami Swami! Please have mercy upon him. What happened to him as he lay unconscious? Why was he trembling?" Krupanand Swami said, "Don't worry about it. He's in samadhi and God has sent him to hell. There he was pained by theYamduts. But as you have requested, he will be back to his body soon."

After a while, Shobharam returned to his consciousness. He was profusely weeping and his body was sweating. He fell down to Krupanand Swami's feet. By holding Swami's feet, he pleaded "Swami! Please protect me. Please save my life. They will kill me. I'll never betray satsang or devotees. Please forgive me for my past."

Swami patted Shobharam's back & head to console him. Swami said, “Nothing wrong will take place with you. Bhagwan Swaminarayan is so kind that nothing wrong ever happens to his devotees. You should start doing his bhajan. "

Shobharam asked in a broken voice, "But What's the fate of mine if I do bhajan of Swaminarayan? Can it relieve me from the miseries of hell? What will I attain in my life after death?" Swami began to explain to him the eternal happiness of the divine abode of Akshardham. He narrated how Shri Hari's Saints & devotees have saved numerous souls from hell. “If you do his bhajan, Shri Hari will undoubtedly come to take you to his Akshardham." Swami assured him.

Shobharam asked, "How is Akshardham?” and Krupanand Swami happily narrated to him the divine abode of Akshardham. Swami described "There is a mass of divine light worth millions of suns & moons. Amidst that divine light, there are millions of divine *muktos*. And in the center of that group of mukto, there rests a divine throne - a special decorative ornate seat - of the Supreme Lord.

While listening to the narration, Shobharam fell unconscious. He once again entered into trance. He reached the divine abode of Akshardham. There, he experienced the divinity and eternity of Akshardham and the divine form of Shri Hari. He also witnessed numerous avatars praying to the Supreme Lord while standing with folded hands. Shobharam stayed there for some time and enjoyed the divine happiness which simply cannot be described in words.

When he returned to his body-consciousness, he seemed extremely happy. However, he could not explain his joy and inner peace. But, he seemed very happy. He bowed down to Swamiji in appreciation and became a devotee of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. He talked to others about what had happened to him during both of the Samadhis. He accepted, "I have never seen nor heard such miraculous things. I am extremely fortunate to have received such eternal happiness. Really, this Satsang is the greatest amongst all spiritual streams." From that day up to his last breath, Shobharam lived the life of a staunch faithful devotee of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. Moreover, he even inspired others to join the satsang.

38 Small Child Surprises All

A brahmin named Narayanjibhai lived in Burhanpur. He lived a pure brahmin life-style; righteous, simple and religiones. On every auspicious days, similar to other brahmins, Narayanji also used to visit houses to bless people. In turn, he received some offerings which were known as '*bhiksha*' from the people. In bhiksha, he would receive grains, flour, sugar, ghee etc. Through this bhiksha, Narayanjibhai fulfilled his family's need for groceries. Only a few times, he would receive some money from the people along with the bhiksha. Even though Narayanji was satisfied by what he received, he had no savings for his future. He was eager to do work but was unable to get any job that would be suitable to his brahmin status.

Therefore, He decided to go towards the wealthy state of Gujarat. He thought, "in Gujarat, the people are so kind in nature and religious so they will definitely help him." In this way, seeing a great future in Gujarat, Narayanji left his family in Burhanpur and went towards the west. After a few days of walking, he arrived at a nearby town. He first lodged himself at the town guesthouse and visited house to house begging for some bhiksha. Meanwhile, he came into contact with some devotees of Bhagwan Swaminarayan and became touched by the humble, pious behavior and life-style of those devotees.

He gradually started spending more and more time with the devotees. He also joined them during their satsang assembly. There, he learned who Bhagwan Swaminarayan is

and much more about the code of conduct of the devotees and saints in satsang. He started liking satsang and didn't even realize how and when he himself became a satsangi! He changed the *tilak* on his forehead and started to wear a *kanthi*. Also, he began worshiping Lord Shri Hari. Moreover, as he gradually became a devotee, he started to earn more money. His savings increased. When he was satisfied with his money, he returned to his home in Burhanpur. Here, he taught Swaminarayan Satsang in his family and in the village. Due to his teachings, many villagers also became satsangis.

With the passing of time, Narayanji also passed away. Bhagwan Swaminarayan himself came to take him to Akshardham. Even though Narayanji's wife was also a devotee of Lord Shri Hari, she worried for her & her young son's future as they had to live without Narayanji now. However, the devotees helped them financially. So, Narayanji's widow & his son remained firm in Satsang. Narayanji's son, Hariram was only 6 years old and even at such a young age, he was graced with the power to experience Samadhi.

Once, Hariram entered samadhi and reached the divine abode of Akshardham. He was within a mass of divine light. while his body remained unconscious. There was a divine light everywhere and amidst the light, the murti of Shri Hari was present.The Supreme Lord Shri Hari was sitting on a golden ornate seat. Millions of divine muktos surrounding him were standing with folded hands. He felt as if Shri Hari was calling him nearby waving his hands.

Hariram felt Shri Hari calling him near by waving

his hand. Hariram wished to be there and in no time, he was there in front of Maharaj. Shri Hari lovingly talked to him. Hariram was extremely happy to see Maharaj and felt elated and excited. Shri Hari told him to do the darshan of all of the muktos. The very next second, Hariram felt as if he was personally meeting each of the muktos one after another. Meanwhile, Shri Hari showed him that his father Narayanji was also there amongst those muktos. Hariram became overjoyed. He embraced his father and talked to him for a long period of time. In actual sense, the muktos in Akshardham have the same appearance as that of Maharaj himself and no one can differentiate between them. But, only due to Shri Hari's wishes, Hariram was able to see and recognise Narayanji - his father.

This way, Shri Hari showed Hariram his father in Akshardham. When Hariram returned to his body consciousness, he was still in a very happy mood. In his childish language, he narrated everything that he had experienced in Akshardham during samadhi. However, only the satsangis accepted it as the truth. The other non-believers did not agree. They said, “We will believe it only if we get proof or evidence of your samadhi."

Then they told him, "We will believe your samadhi is true, if you go again and ask your father a question on behalf of us. If your answer is true, only then will we believe that your samadhi is true."

Hariram agreed with their proposal. He asked, “What

do you want to ask my father?" One of his father's friends spoke. Ask your father, “Me and my brother went to a village along with your father. Why did we go to that village? What happened there? Also, what was the village name ? Now you can go into the samadhi. If your samadhi is true, you will return with the answers to my question."

Hariram sat for the samadhi. He remembered the form of Shri Hari and prayed to him to let him enter the samadhi. The prayer was immediately answered. Now, Hariram was in a state of trance. He reached Shri Hari in Akshardham. After doing darshan of Shri Hari, he requested to see his father, Narayanji. He narrated the reason for his arrival. Shri Hari granted his wishes and the very next moment, Hariram was in front of his father. Hariram asked the questions to his father that were asked to him by Venkatram.

Hearing that, Narayanji narrated the incidents in detail. He said, "me, and the two brothers - Venkatram and Gnaneshwar once went to the village of Badalpur. We went there to eat freshly roasted raw green grains known as “ponk”. All three of us enjoyed it a lot. In return, we encountered the forest tribe on our way. We could not avoid the route as there was no other way to return and the forest tribe could not understand our language. They wanted something from us. But, as the conversation did not happen due to language problems, they took all of our clothes. So, without any clothes on our bodies, we entered the village area at night. It was our luck that no one had seen us in such a situation. So, this incident, no one knows besides us three. So, now you (Hariram) can go

and tell Venkatram and Gnaneshwar what I have told you."

Hariram returned from samadhi. Venkatram and Ganeshwar were waiting for Hariram, especially for the answers of their questions. As Hariram opened his eyes, Venkatram immediately asked, "Did you see your father during Samadhi?" Hariram replied, " Yes, and I also asked your questions to him. He narrated the whole incident to me in detail. By saying so, Hariram began to explain what he had communicated with his late father - Narayanji. He narrated the event of going to the village of Badalpur to eat ponk and how they were robbed by the forest tribes.

Venkatram immediately stopped him to speak further. Every detail was not to be disclosed. Thereafter, Venkatram admitted he was wrong to understand Hariram and especially his devotion for his Lord Bhagwan Swaminarayan to be false. He accepted and declared, "Hariram is a true devotee of God and his God - Bhagwan Swaminarayan is the Supreme Lord which is why such miracles happen. Such a divine incident takes place only and only where the Supreme Lord resides." By saying this, he even bowed down to the little boy - Hariram.

Gnaneshwar also understood the greatness of Bhagwan Swaminarayan and his devotees. Both of them decided to join the satsang fellowship.

Coincidentally, Krupanand Swami and Gunatitanand Swami were traveling to that region of Burhanpur. So, the devotees brought the two brothers to where Santo had stayed.

Venkatram and Gnaneshwar were introduced to Krupanand Swami. Both fell down to Swami's feet and asked for forgiveness with tears rolling down their eyes. They confessed that they had shown their disbelief for Bhagwan Swaminarayan and His devotees. However, they also admitted that "from the time we have witnessed Hariram's Samadhi, we firmly believe that Bhagwan Swaminarayan is the Supreme Lord and His devotees are also the greatest amongst all others. Krupanand Swami and Gunatitanand Swami became pleased with their confession and ritualistically initiated both into the holy fellowship.

In this manner, two non-believers converted into firm devotees by the supreme power of Shri Hari shown to them through a child devotee - Hariram. Many such incidents happened in the satsang of Burhanpur on a regular basis as Shri Hari is ever present with His pure and sincere devotees.

39. Rescued From The Dacoits

Burhanpur was sanctified with the frequent visits of Swaminarayan saints. Mostly, Krupanand Swami and Gunatitanand Swami visited Burhanpur. Due to Santo's regular visits to Burhanpur, many families joined the holy fellowship of Swaminarayan Satsang. Even though Swaminarayan Satsang was new for them, they worshiped the Supreme Lord with unflinching faith. Therefore, without having any kind of worries, the devotees remained ever joyful and worshiped Shri Hari with great devotion Most of the devotees were of middle class family but they believed themselves to be the richest as they had attained the Swaminarayan satsang. In the satsang assembly, they narrated and listened to different life-episodes from the life of Shri Hari & His saints. They recalled the memories of festivals celebrated in the presence of Shri Hari and thousands of saints and devotees. Not only did they remember those celebrations, but they also meditated upon them. In this way, the memories of Shri Hari became fixed in their minds. In this manner, the devotees of Burhanpur engaged in worship, remembrance and meditation of Shri Hari along with the process of manana and nididhyas. The result was that they could see the form of God in all three states - waking, dream & deep sleep.

Moreover, instead of engaging in worldly talks, they all shared their experiences of God with each other. In this way, they experienced Shri Hari with them in his divine form. That was their daily chore - to worship, remember, experience and

also, share the experience with others. Many devotees had obtained an advanced stage in their devotion and thus, they were graced with the power to reach samadhi to enjoy the divine bliss of Akshardham. Over all, some of the devotees experienced Shri Hari in samadhi and the rest of them in their dream, but there was no one left out in experiencing such divinity.

Once, one of the senior devotees presented an idea to go to Gadhada for the darshan of Shri Hari. All of the devotees happily agreed. The same day, they completed all the arrangements for the long journey because in those days, the people had to travel by horse, bullock-cart and other means. They collected groceries, utensils for cooking, clothes, money, new rich clothes & jewelry for Shri Hari etc. The next day, very early in the morning, they began their journey towards Gujarat. They had all their belongings packed in thick cloths and put on their carts. They were traveling in two groups : one male devotees group and the other was the group of female devotees. All the devotees were traveling with joy because in their mind, they were eager for the darshan of their beloved Shri Hari. At night, they stayed in any of the villages, cooked their food, offered it to God, took prasad & while remembering the form of Shri Hari they retired to sleep. They woke up early in the morning and after taking shower, performed the puja of Shri Hari, and after having breakfast, set out on their journey. While on their way, they sang Kirtans, did mansi puja at appropriate times, chanted the mahamantra Swaminarayan, sang dhun while clapping ecstatically. This way, after some days, the group of devotees arrived at a jungle. The path to

Gujarat passed through the dense jungles but, without having fear, the bhaktosentered the jungle with the remembrance of the holy form of God. However, the jungle, being a secluded place, was home to a group of dacoits. They kept their eyes on every one who passed through that path. When they found out that the group of devotees were passing through the way, they traced them while hiding themselves in the woods. When time came, all of a sudden, they emerged from the jungle and cordoned the group of devotees. By showing weapons and threatening them, they looted all of their belongings, horses, utensils, groceries, clothes & jewelry. Moreover, they tied the hands of the devotees on their back and forced them to walk with them like prisoners. When they reached the dense forest, the devotees talked with each other, "Do not fear for anything. There might be some fault in our devotion. Due to that, we are in trouble. Now, be careful and remember the form of Shri Hari with pure devotion. He is so compassionate and he will soon come to rescue us."

When the devotees were talking in this way, Shri Hari appeared there in his divine form. He was not alone, there were many *parshads* and devotees with him. They all were on their horses. With the command of Shri Hari, the parshads began to beat each of the bandits. Some of them tried to escape. But they were all stopped from all directions by the parshads. The devotees' hands were untied. Shri Hari instructed them to collect their belongings. The devotees collected their belongings and made sure that nothing remained with the robbers. However, the parshads did not stop beating the dacoits. Finally, the robbers' hands were tied

in the same way they had tied the devotees. Shri Hari said, " Bring this group of bandits to the city. We will hand them over to the king." The leader pleaded, "Please forgive us! We only perform such deeds to feed our families! From now on, we will do as per your wishes." Shri Hari felt pity upon those helpless bandits and told the parshads to release them. Shri Hari said, "Go ! But do not engage in such sinful activity again." By bowing down to Shri Hari and asking for forgiveness from the devotees, the robbers left for their houses.

On the other hand, Shri Hari, the parshads, and the group of devotees passed through the same path and crossed the jungle area. When they reached the village where the devotees had planned to stay for night, Shri Hari and the parshads disappeared. In this way, Shri Hari divinely came to protect his devotees from the bandits. The devotees realized that Shri Hari appeared in the jungle and joined up to the village in his divine form and only to save them and after finishing his task, he disappeared along with parshads. They were talking about Shri Hari's glory among themselves. They said, "This is one of the greatest miracles we have witnessed and experienced. If Shri Hari did not come to release us from the bandits, what would have happened to us?

A few days later, they arrived at their final destination. They did darshan of Shri Hari and forgot how tiring their long journey was. Shri Hari asked, "Did you safely arrive or were there any difficulties along the way?" The devotees narrated what had happened en-route. They said, "You saved us by coming with your parshads." Shri Hari also agreed, "Yes! It

was me who rescued you." The devotees, with tears in their eyes, appreciated Shri Hari's compassion. They prayed “Hey Maharaj, besides you, who would take care of us? Only you are the protector of your devotees. If you were not there, we would have been killed. You saved us and kept us alive." In this way, Shri Hari, using his divine powers, protected the group of devotees of Burhanpur.

40. Swaminarayan Mantra - A Medicine

The region of Nimad is situated in the state of Maharashtra near the border of Gujarat. There was a small village in that region by the name of Sarsod. The villagers, even though residing in small homes, lived happily. In that village, there was Ramjibhai Patel who was suffering from an unknown disease. At that time, medical science was not available in India like that of the present day. The ancient Ayurveda - the ancient medication system was destroyed by the British Government. Poverty prevailed everywhere. Due to such economical and social factors, the society was deeply affected by various types of superstitions.

Due to all these problems, Ramjibhai Patel had spent much more than required to cure his disease, but all was useless. No herbal medication could cure his pain. Ramji, as a result, fell to the methods of superstition but nothing worked. He even performed many vrats (religious vows) to propitiate some evil deities such as Bhairav but instead of it being cured, the pain increased.

He also followed one of his friends advice and fed many ascetics, sanyasis, bawas, forest based renunciants, etc. but his pain did not decrease. Gradually, his pain increased day by day. The lines of worries & tension were easily seen on his face and behavior. He was totally upset and gave up all hope of living anymore and simply awaited his death.

In such a pitiable situation, Ramjibhai was hopelessly passing his days in pain and grief. At that time, the saints of

Bhagwan Swaminarayan were traveling in the same area. Once, they visited the village of Sarsod. The villagers requested them to visit Ramjibhai as he was feeling severe pain in his body. Saints, with the help of the villagers, entered the house, Ramjibhai was sitting in a chair. When he saw the saints at his home, he got up with much effort and with the help of villagers, and fell down at the feet of the saints. He grabbed their feet tightly and pleaded to the saints to relieve him from his physical pain.

He prayed while sobbing uncontrollably, "I'm feeling severe pain in my body. Please do something and relieve me from this pain. You are my only hope. Please do not leave me in this situation. I am at your refuge. Please, please, please...do something." Afterwards, when he stopped sobbing, the saints began to talk and console Ramjibhai. By listening to talks from the saints, he felt great comfort in his body. Saints said, "If you want to be ours, you have to be initiated in this fellowship." Ramjibhai agreed and the saints gave him some drops of water into his right palm and spoke a verse. The saints instructed to repeat after them. Ramibhai did as directed. Finally, when the recitation completed, he was instructed to put the drops of water on the earth. Thereafter, the saints explained the five religious vows to him - not to drink alcoholic drinks, not to steal. not to eat meat, not to engage in illicite sex and to not eat food prepared or given by impious people.

The saints also gave him the Swaminarayan Mahamantra to chant as many times as he could. Ramjibhai

accepted the saints' advice. Also, the Saints instructed him to give up all worldly tasks and only chant Swaminarayan Swaminarayan. " He agreed to do that as well. The saints became pleased and blessed him. "Whether you live long or not, your liberation is confirmed if you chant the mahamantra Swaminarayan." They added, "When you will be on your death -bed, Bhagwan Swaminarayan will come and take you to His divine abode of Akshardham." In this way, the saints taught him the method of devotion and after giving him blessings, they left the village.

From that day, Ramjibhai retired from all worldly activities and engaged himself in chanting mahamantra Swaminarayan as he was taught by the saints. Day by day, Ramjibhai engaged more and more in the remembrance of Shri Hari while chanting Swaminarayan. Finally, the death of Ramjibhai was near. At that time, Shri Hari appeared there in the outskirts of the village. Shri Hari was not alone. He came along with many saints and devotees. Some villagers found a group of hundreds of people at the entrance of the village and asked "Who are you? Where do you come from? Shri Hari himself replied, "I am Swaminarayan. I have come to see my devotee, Ramjibhai. We do not want to stay in the village. We will be staying here on this farm. Later, we will go see Ramjibhai."

Many villagers came to see Maharaj and the group of saints & devotees. They had never seen such a large group of people near their village. Shri Hari blessed all those people by giving them his darshan. After some period of time, Shri Hari came to Ramjibhai's home. Ramji got up from his bed and bowed down to Shri Hari. He became elated by getting the darshan of

Shri Hari. He also saw the two saints who had initiated him into the satsang fellowship. By doing their darshan, Ramji remembered those words of the saints, "At the time of your death, Bhagwan Swaminarayan will come to take you to His divine abode of Akshardham." Tears of happiness rolled down from his eyes. Shri Hari told him, "Ramji! We have come to take you to Akshardham." Ramjibhai quickly became ready to go and he left his body and joined with Maharaj & the saints. His physical body remained soulless. The relatives, villagers all were watching in bewilderment at what was taking place. They couldn't believe their eyes. They bowed down by their heart to Bhagwan Swaminarayan, his saints & his devotees. After that event, all of them talked to each other, "We thought that Bhagwan Swaminarayan, his saints and his devotees had come in their real forms and that they would stay for a few days. If we knew that they were in their divine forms, (not in physical body) we would grab their feet and not let them go anywhere. But, now that time has passed. The great opportunity of their darshan for a few minutes was enough to bless us." Then, they all became devotees of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. In this manner, Shri Hari showed such miracles thousands of times at different villages & towns in different ways, according to time and place. No one is able to write about all of those incidents.

41. Quarrelsome Aunt

In North India, there was a small Village of Dhuva where many devotees of Bhagwan Swaminarayan lived. Even though the village was very far away from Gujarat, saints of Shri Hari traveled there. The saints worked extremely hard to establish and spread the Swaminarayan movement. Thus, in the village of Dhuva, satsang flourished due to frequent visits of the saints. The devotees of the village rarely had the chance to have darshan of Shri Hari. Yet, they worshiped the Supreme Lord with a singular mind and advanced in satsang.

One such devotee was Bindabhai. Bindabhai was a blacksmith by occupation. So, while doing his work in his business-place, he remembered and chanted the Swaminarayan mahamantra. However, at home, to worship Bhagwan Swaminarayan was very difficult. The reason was his aunt. She was very bad by nature and did not like Binda worshiping Bhagwan. Even though Bindabhai did not disturb anyone in his family or village, his aunt always spoke harsh words for him and Lord Swaminarayan. In addition, she quarreled everyday with Bindabhai for no reason. That happened because of two main reasons: one, her bad nature and the other, her intense dislike for Shri Hari. She did not even believe in Bhagwan Swaminarayan or His divine Satsang. Thus, she believed that if she goes against her nephew and the satsang without any reason, Bindabhai would give up his devotion after becoming tired of her.

She did not even allow him to eat or drink peacefully.

When Bindabhai returned from his work and sat for his meal, she began to speak ill about satsang and Bindabhai. However, Bindabhai's tolerance was of such a high level that we would not utter even a single word. He did not argue or tried to prove anything because he knew that it would be a waste of time. Therefore, in such an adverse situation, Bindabhai steadily continued to worship Lord Shri Hari. On the other hand, Bindabhai's aunt continued to hate the satsang and Shri Hari. Even when she became old, she did not stop but rather continued more and more of her malignant activities.

However, as time passed, her death was near. At the time of her death, Yamaraj's attendants arrived. No one but her could see the dreadful Yamduts. Their appearance was enough to terrorize her. Even a lionhearted person would become horrified by seeing their appearance. They were black like darkness, extremely frightful, intense wrathful, hungry like lions, and upheld dangerous weapons in their hands. When she saw the horrific scene of the Yamduts coming towards her, she had no idea what to do to escape. She was well aware of the fact that nobody can escape from death.

Hence, realizing her death in front of her eyes, she remembered all the devas, deities, gods & goddesses, bawas, and ascetics. But, none of them came to save her soul. On the other hand, the hungry wild animal-like Yanduts came closer and closer. She had realized that no one could save her from going to hell. She started feeling great remorse, I have mentally tortured my nephew and a devotee of God for no reason. I did not worship God and one who did, I hated him.

Shame on me." In this way, she apologized to Bindabhai in her mind.

Suddenly, she was reminded that she had also spited Bindabhai's God - Bhagwan Swaminarayan. She also asked for forgiveness with a lamenting heart "Bindabhai'sBhagwan Swaminarayan! Please forgive me for my bad nature and ill words for you and your devotee." She had not even completed her prayer and when she merely said the word 'Swaminarayan', the Yamduts stepped back and stood far away. In this way, she found the way to save her soul from the miseries of hell. She rapidly started chanting Swaminarayan --- Swaminarayan. She understood & realized that if God's name has the tremendous power to stop the Yamduts, what's left to say about the power of that Supreme Godhimself.At the last moment of her life, she realized the supremacy of Lord Shri Hari.

Shri Hari, being the most compassionate Bhagwan, forgot and forgave all her misdeeds and personally appeared there in front of her. Seeing Bhagwan present there, the Yamduts run away immediately.

Shri Hari came in his divine chariot. Along with him came many parshads with their horses. The divine mass of light coming from Shri Hari's murti was so equivalent to that of infinite suns and moons. However, the brightness was not harmful at all. Instead, the mass of divine light was extremely pleasant.

Thereafter, Shri Hari provided His darshan to all -

Bindabhai's family, relatives and the villagers. Bindabhai's aunt, feeling great remorse, started to pray "Oh! The Most Compassionate One! Oh! The Supreme Lord of Lords! You did not look at my sins and instead of giving me the punishment in hell, you saved me. There is no one like you!"

Shri Hari, pleased with her prayer and merely by His own wish, returned to Akshardham with the soul of Binda's aunt. The family members, relatives & villagers, all witnessed this incident and believed themselves fortunate as they had Shri Hari's divine darshan and they were able to witness such a divine miracle of Shri Hari.

42 Power Of Celibacy

In the village of Dhuva, there lived Thakurdas and his wife Dhanubai. They were staunch devotees of Bhagwan Shri Hari. Thakurdas was a blacksmith who was well-reputed in the region. However, they believed their devotion for Shri Hari was the only reputation for them. They did not have any desires for worldly name and fame. Their only desire was to spend more and more time in devotion. From early morning, they began their day with the remembrance, meditation & worship of Shri Hari. Also, their day would end with the meditation of Shri Hari. In between, most of the time, while doing other work, they longed to perform the devotion of Shri Hari as soon as possible. However, due to the work, they couldn't satisfy their thirst.

Once they were sitting during leisure time after finishing their dinner. As per their daily routine, they read a portion of the Scripture and discussed it. The scripture glorified the devotees' who had renounced family relations and surrendered everything to God.

After reading this, they started cursing their busy lifestyle, due to not being able to spare more time for devotion. Suddenly, Thakurdas got a new idea in his mind. Thakurdas said, "We are alone in the family and by the grace of God, we have no successors to our lineage. Therefore, why do we need to work to earn more money? We have enough money to survive until our last breath. Thus, I'm thinking of retirement. Yes! permanent

retirement from all worldly tasks. No business, no job, no work, only one thing to do - devotion and remembrance of our beloved Shri Hari."

Dhanubai was listening to the ideas given by her husband - Thakurdas. She gently asked, "Can I express my vision?" Thakurdas replied, " Yes, please." She began, "I agreed with your idea of taking permanent retirement even in our mid -age but, I'm thinking even more than that. I'm thinking that if you will agree with me, we will follow the vow of celibacy along with retirement." Thakurdas happily agreed with her idea.

Then, they both engaged in making plans for their retirement. Thakurdas agreed, “we will not touch each other. " Dhanubai added "We will not stay even for a moment in one room. " Thakurdas: "We will not speak with each other." Dhanubai spoke again, "The whole day we will chant and remember the holy name of God - Swaminarayan." Then, she added, “If accidentally or for any reason, we touch even the clothes of each other, we will perform a fast on that day. If we have to speak with each other, we will not eat anything on that day. Also, when I'm in a room you have to remain outside on the veranda. When you need to be in, I will sit out." Thakurdas agreed with all of the conditions regarding their vow of celibacy.

For the last time, they touched each others' feet and said Jay Swaminarayan. They prayed to the Supreme Lord for the protection of their great vow. From the next day onwards, they followed the vow of celibacy perfectly. Most importantly, they avoided the contact of each other - verbally, physically

and visibly. The other devotees knew very well about the vows in our satsang and how many householder devotees followed the vow of non-lust. Such house-holder devotees are known as '*Sankhyayogi*' and the rest are known as *Karmayogi*. Thus, many devotees understood the glory of Thakurdas and Dhanubai who were following the vows of 'sankhyayogis'. They showed great respect for Thakurdas&Dhanubai. They helped them in all ways possible to support their devotional progress.

As many days passed of them following the vow, the other villagers also found out that Thakurdas and his wife were living celibate - life. Thereafter, those who were devotees of Shri Hari inspired themselves to increase their level of devotion towards Shri Hari just like Thakurdas and Dhanubai. On the other hand, the non-believers started to criticize them by saying, "Look at these two people! They became renunciants and started living an ascetic life. Why did they get married in the first place if this is what they wanted to do?" Some of them said, "We also wanted to become Satsangis but now we have changed our mind because if we become devotees of Swaminarayan, we will have to live such an ascetic life."

In this way, many different rumors became prevalent within the village. Whenever such people found any devotees trying to explain the glory of Swaminarayan fellowship, they would sass by talking about Thakurdas and Dhanubai. In reality, such people did not want to become satsangis but just said that to spite Thakurdas and Dhanubai. The devotees could not reply

in any way to their line of reasoning. They just prayed to Shri Hari that He would shower His mercy upon all and purify their intellect.

In turn, Shri Hari, the most compassionate of all, had decided to do something. He divinely appeared in the village of Dhuva. He enabled his form to be visible to all villagers as He came on a chariot with MuljiBrahmachari assisting Him. First, Shri Hari divinely came to the house of Thakurdas. He stood in front of Thakurdas&Dhanubai. They both fell down to Shri Hari's feet and bowed down again and again. Shri Hari paused them and blessed them by putting His hand on their head. Now, they both requested Shri Hari to sit on a decorative cot. Shri Hari sat on the cot to please them. Thakurdas and Dhanubai, sat on the floor with their hands folded.

Thakurdas & Dhanubai were both wishing in their minds if Shri Hari could say something. Immediately, Shri Hari said, "I am pleased by your extreme devotion in regards to following the vow of celibacy. Now, from today, your vow is completed. You should live as Karmayogis like the other devotees. If you follow the code of householder devotees I will consider it as great as the vow of Sankhyayogis! So, from today, follow the Karmayogi life-style - the life of a devoted householder."

Thakurdas & Dhanubai agreed to His words. Shri Hari disappeared along with MuljiBrahmachari from the house of Thakurdas. He then went to houses of other devotees in the village. He blessed many devotees by giving His darshan. They all became overjoyed by getting such divine darshan of Shri Hari along with MuljiBrahmachari. The devotees were elated

due to the presence of their beloved Bhagwan Swaminarayan in His divine form because they all lived too far from the lands of Gadhada and due to the long distance, they had very few chances of performing Shri Hari's darshan.

Shri Hari also met some of the non-devotees who were spiting the devotees and spreading false rumors.. His divine presence was enough to cater to the questions and false accusations. In turn, the non-devotees also bowed down to Shri Hari and asked for forgiveness. Shri Hari blessed them. Thereafter, Shri Hari sat on the divine chariot with Mulji Brahmachari and proceeded towards the outskirts of the village. After a while, Shri Hari, along with the chariot, disappeared from the sight of everyone. The devotees and non-devotees stood with their eyes in surprise as if they had witnessed a divine miraculous incident. After Shri Hari's disappearance, the nonbelievers went to the devotees & asked for forgiveness. Finally all of the villagers went to the house of Thakurdas and asked for forgiveness by saying, we were wrong to disbelieve your devotion, Bhagwan Swaminarayan, your Satsang, your vow of celibacy. We are very fortunate that because of your devotion and your vow, Shri Hari divinely appeared and gave us His darshan. This is undoubtedly a rare and divine incident.

43. Believe It Or Not

In the village of Dhuva, there lived another such staunch devotee of Bhagwan Her name was Gangubai - a daughter of one of the blacksmiths in the village. The village of Dhuva was a remote village and so little far from the city area. The village was surrounded by woods. Most of the people would walk to the woods frequently. They collected and cut firewood. However, no one cut a tree. They used only branches which fell from the trees. The devotees of Shri Hari also collected the firewood from the woods. The difference between devotees and non-devotees was that the devotees did with the remembrance of Shri Hari and non-devotees did without remembrance of God.

Once, Gangubai along with the other female of her age went to the forest. There they went only to collect firewood. Gangubai had a heart of devoted devotees. so, she was keeping Shri Hari always in her mind. Without remembrance of Shri Hari, she did not pass her time. Whether she was free or busy with her work, she never forgot Shri Hari. That was the advancement of her devotion for Shri Hari.

Gangubai was collecting firewood while affectionately singing Kirtans for Shri Hari. She was doing her work of collecting the firewood mechanically and through her mind and heart, she was engrossed in devotion to Shri Hari. While singing devotional songs related to Shri Hari her voice choked due to her emotion and her sentiment filled with the memories of Shri Hari. Tears of affection rolling down from her eyes.

Though she was collecting firewood while singing, she forgot herself. She didn't know what she was doing ,and where she was.

Shri Hari wished to grace her with his divine darshan. Shri Hari appeared there in the woods in the same appearance she had in her mind. Shri Hari was in milk white clothes, with a pink-rose garland around his neck. The pink and white color decorative pagh on his head. The Strings of pearls and baby-rose were hanging from either side of the pagh. Shri Hari enabled all of the females who were collecting firewood with Gangubai to see his divine form. However, Gangubai was not aware of His presence as She was constantly looking at Shri Hari in her devotional heart. Thus, the other females were doing Shri Hari's darshan with their physical eyes, whereas Gangubai was also enjoying the darshan of Shri Hari's same divine form through the eyes of her heart.

So, even though Shri Hari was present there she continued her devotional singing. Shri Hari also signaled other females not to distract her. Instead, Shri Hari also joined in singing with her.

After a while, Gangubai came in a sense and found Shri Hari there. She asked the other female where did Shri Hari come ? Before anyone could reply, Shri Hari said, "Gangubai,I've been here since the time you were singing. Gangubai was doing Shri Hari's darshan with full concentration while beholding the form within her heart. The other females also join in doing Shri Hari's darshan with devotion.

However, due to intense yearning for the darshan of Shri Hari Gangubai was totally engrossed in Shri Hari while doing His darshan she forgot her existence again. Moreover, due to Shri Hari's wish, she even forgot her body conscious and entered into the state of Samadhi.

She was now in divine places without her body. Shri Hari had shown her different divine abodes of God - such as the abode of Golok, the abode of Vaikunth, the abode of Shweta Dwip etc. After showing those different abodes of different deities such as Shri Krishna Shri Ram, Shri Vasudev etc. Shri Hari brought her to the divine abode of Akshardham. There, she found the same divine form of Shri Hari which she had seen in the woods. Moreover, She also did darshan of countless divine mukto of the Akshardham amidst the mass of divine light. There she felt extreme divine bliss & happiness which she had never experienced before in her life.

There was a divine light everywhere and the many different rows of divine muktos were standing facing towards Shri Hari. Shri Hari was sitting on a golden throne which was in the center of divine muktos, the atmosphere was totally different from the earth which could not be described by anyone.

The speech can not be able to describe the serenity, divinity, divine happiness, the divine mukto or their master - the Supreme Lord Shri Hari. Gangubai desired to stay there forever. But, Shri Hari denied her request and instead immediately sent her back to her body. There she found she was in the woods with the village female. She tried to see Shri Hari who was present there before she entered the samadhi.

But, the village female explained to her that Shri Hari disappeared after she became unconscious. Thereafter, Gangubai narrated to them that she was not unconscious. She was in Samadhi due to the grace of Shri Hari. Then, she narrated What she had experienced during her journey in Samadhi. She had recited the names of different divine abodes she had visited during samadhi.

Merely by listening to the talks of Gangubai all women of the village also felt happiness - the eternal joy. Moreover, due to the darshan of Shri Hari they also wished to become the follower of Shri Hari's divine Satsang. Gangubai explained to them the code of conduct for satsangi. Thus, all females also accepted the satsang as their way of life-style. They also include the devotion to Shri Hari in their daily chore.

Thus, a virtuous devotee can change the thousand hearts into devoted hearts. Gangubai's true and pure devotion had converted many hearts to the devoted and dedicated for the devotion of Shri Hari. In this manner, Shri Hari had shown his divine power and manifested in the woods and disappeared after concluding His task. His divine incident was enough to paint millions of hearts with devotion for him.

44. True Form Of Relations

The village of Dhuva was a treasure of great devotees. Initially, there were only a few devotees in the village who worshiped Shri Hari. Gradually, other villagers also joined the satsang fellowship. One such family who worshiped Shri Hari from the beginning was the family of Buddhi Sharma & his brother, Madari Sharma.

They were brahmin by caste and did their business with equal partnership. However, they always kept Satsang more important than their business and relations. Buddhi Sharma & Madari Sharna both understood the glory of all the devotees. Moreover, they understood the glory of each other as well. So, even in their business, they behaved with each other like they behaved with the other devotees.

Once upon a time, they had to bear a heavy loss in their business. Due to that, both of them forgot that they were devotees and became angry at each other. They blamed each other for the loss in business. Buddhi Sharma said, “It's your fault! Only you are responsible for this." "Yes, there's no one beside me who works & takes decisions in this business. Every time something goes wrong, it's me. Every time you blame me and I do not reply. But today, I am not going to let you talk like that. It's not my fault. You also took the same decision and agreed with me. At that time Madari was right & when results come it's Madariwho is at fault! How could you possibly even dare to blame me?" Madari Sharma also expressed his anger.

In this way, they argued for some time and then departed for their house. Both of them became extremely disturbed due to their annoyance for each other. At home, they could not feel ease or peace. After some time passed, Buddhi Sharma calmed down and thought positively, "Why did I speak such harsh words against my brother who is a devotee of Shri Hari?" "My brother - Madari is a great devotee of my Lord Swaminarayan." In this way, Buddhi Sharma repented a lot for his misdeed of becoming angry upon a devotee." He became emotional and tears rolled down from his eyes. He prayed to Shri Hari "Oh! Maharaj! You are the protector of your devotees. You are the dearest of your devotees. I have given pain to your devotees by my angry words. Please grant me forgiveness as I have committed a grave sin by giving pain to your devotee. I'm the most degradable of all. Even though I'm not worthy of being given forgiveness, please curse me with misery as punishment."

In this way, Buddhi Sharma became extremely emotional and his voice choked up. He sobbed uncontrollably. Thereafter, Buddhi Sharma realized that he should perform Mansipuja as it was time for dinner. He closed his wet eyes to perform mansi puja but tears still dripped out of eyes. He was meditating on the form of God. He invited Maharaj for dinner. He saw the beautiful divine form of Shri Hari coming towards him. He also found a mass of divine light surrounding Shri Hari's form.

As Shri Hari was coming close to him in mansi puja, Buddhi Sharma was feeling the mass of divine light even in

his physical awareness. Suddenly, he opened his eyes and was stuck in astonishment. The divine mass of light was not only in the mansi puja, but in front of his eyes. The divine light covered the house of Buddhi Sharma and in the middle of the light he found his beloved Shri Hari in his divine form. Buddhi Sharma couldn't utter any words due to his great surprise. He simply got up and bowed down to Shri Hari's feet. The tears of his regret converted into tears of joy. He requested Shri Hari to sit & stay for a while.

Meanwhile, he completed preparations for dinner and requested Shri Hari to grace him by taking his meal. Accepting his request for a meal, Shri Hari prepared himself for the dinner by washing hands.

Shri Hari sat on a seat for a meal. In front of him, a nice dish, bowl, spoon, glass of water etc. were placed. First, Buddhi's wife came and served *dudhpak* in the bowl. Then, she provided the other eatables such as *puri*,*shak*, *bhajiya* etc. Shri Hari joyfully ate to please his devotees.

While eating, Shri Hari catered eternal wisdom to them. Shri Hari said, "Buddhi! You are my devotee, so I wish to tell you the truth. In this world and in the life after death, no one but the devotees are our true relatives. See, as a devotee of God, you should never keep enmity towards any other devotee of God." Seeing that Shri Hari's dish was half empty, Buddhi's wife got up and lovingly served some more food according to Shri Hari's wish.

Shri Hari continued, "I would be greatly pleased if my

devotees would stay together without any conceit of egotism. In business, profits and losses are meant to take place. But due to that, one's satsang relationship should not be degraded. If that happens, my devotee would be hurt in his heart and due to that, I do not become pleased. So, if you want me to remain happy and be forever pleased with you, you should live according to my advice." Meanwhile, Shri Hari finished the dinner and washed his hands. Buddhi Sharma gave mukhwas to Shri Hari. While Shri Hari was having the mukhwas, Buddhi Sharma confessed, "Maharaj! It was my fault that I became angry upon your devotee & my brother - Madari Sharma. Please forgive me for my grave mistake. I did that due to my greedy nature. Avarice led me to perform such a thing. Now, I promise you that I will never repeat the same mistake." Shri Hari smilingly blessed him, and his wife and sat on the other seat in the living room. Meanwhile, the other devotees of the village of Dhuva also came to the darshan of Shri Hari. Shri Hari graced them as well.

Then, Shri Hari disappeared from Buddhi Sharma's house. Everyone who had witnessed the incident realized Shri Hari's divinity. They talked amongst themselves regarding Shri Hari's visit in his divine form. In this manner, Shri Hari manifested divinely in Buddhi Sharma's house and graced him with his darshan & wisdom.

45. Fruits of Firm Faith

In the village of Dhuva, there lived a devotee named Lukibhai. He was a blacksmith and worked very hard. In addition, he was a very staunch devotee of Shri Hari which meant that while doing his work, he always remembered the divine form of Shri Hari in his mind. At home, he lovingly offered his devotion to Shri Hari. In all types of situations, Lukibhai never breached any commands of Shri Hari and his saints. Once he had accepted Satsang for his life, he never faltered from it.

He never minded what the non-believers spoke for him. In such events, he thought "Let them do what they are doing. They are enjoying rumors in this life but afterwards, will be sent to hell. Also, since I'm a devotee of God, I shall definitely go to the abode of God." In this way, he had firm faith in Shri Hari that Shri Hari would come along with his saints & devotees and take him to his divine abode of Akshardham. He believed firmly that when the last moment of his life comes and he has the darshan of Shri Hari, he will receive the fruit of the devotion he has been performing for whole life.

Shri Hari, being the source of all divine powers, was well aware of the devotion performed by Lukibhai. Therefore, at the end of Lukibhai's life, Shri Hari came to take him to Akshardham. Since Shri Hari allowed it, all the villagers saw Shri Hari & his saints coming to their village sitting in a divine chariot. The villagers were amazed to see such a chariot for the first time in their lives. However, only those who were the devotees of Shri Hari recognised that the chariot, Shri Hari,

saints, and the horses were divine and that they had come here to fulfill a special purpose.

Shri Hari directly went to the house of Lukibhai and the rest followed the chariot. Lukibhai became very surprised as he found Shri Hari & saints inside his house. He could not believe his own eyes. He began to offer his obeisances to Shri Hari and the saints for blessing him in such a manner.

Saints also became pleased with Lukibhai's devotion. Shri Hari was offered a nice seat to sit on and the saints also sat on their respective seats. Lukibhai felt ecstasy as he performed Shri Hari's darshan. He sat on the floor in front of Shri Hari with folded hands.

After a while, Shri Hari said, "Lukibhai! We are here today to take you with us to Akshardham. Are you ready to go with us?" Listening to such loving, affectionate words from Shri Hari, Lukibhai replied promptly, "Maharaj! You do not need to ask me for anything. I'm yours! You are my master. Just command what I have to do. I'm ready to follow your commands. It's my great fortune that you have personally come to take me with you. "

Then, Shri Hari said, "Let's go! Leave your body and join us." Immediately, Lukibhai left his mortal, physical body and joined Maharaj and the saints.

Everyone, Lukibhai's family members, relatives, the villagers, the devotees witnessed the incident. Lukibhai went with Shri Hari and the saints while boarding a chariot. Within no time, Shri Hari and the saints disappeared with Lukibhai's

soul. The villagers who were non-believers received a great deal of surprise seeing Shri Hari's divinity and Lukibhai's devotion. They were talking amongst themselves, "There are many people living in the village. There were many who died and encountered Yamduts and were sent to hell. We have never seen such a divine incident where God himself comes at the time of his devotee's death and takes his soul with Him. This divine incident proved that Bhagwan Swaminarayan, His Satsang, and His devotees all are true. Otherwise, such a divine event is simply not possible.

46. Ghosts - A True Incident

In the village of Dhuva, a teenager came into contact with the devotees of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. Being influenced by satsang, he decided to strive for the liberation of his soul. His name was Prannath. His father, Kesarbhai was not a devotee of God and he did not believe in God. However, the good part was that he never disturbed Prannath in worshiping Supreme Almighty Bhagwan Swaminarayan.

Prannath had received a line-drawing portrait of Shri Hari from another devotee. He worshiped that form of Shri Hari believing that it is Maharaj himself. In addition, Prannath was very virtuous as he always wished and longed for the association of a Satpurush. He frequently visited the houses of devotees to obtain wisdom regarding satsang. He understood that the devotees of Shri Hari are his only true relatives. Also, through the association of the devotees, Prannath had acquired all the virtues of a true devotee. He desired for no worldly things such as opulence, fame etc. His only desire was to please God and to uphold the company of devotees. The other villagers of his age passed their time in worldly enjoyment whereas Prannath spent his time in devotion, worship, and remembrance of God.

Due to his true devotion and pure heart, Shri Hari wished to provide him His divine darshan. Thus, Shri Hari once appeared in his house in His divine form. Prannath was amazed by the sudden flash of light. Shri Hari was standing in front of his eyes amidst the mass of divine light. Prannath was

delighted by the divine darshan of Shri Hari. His joy rolled down from his eyes in the form of tears. Thereafter, he quickly offered a special seat with a cushion to Shri Hari and he sat on the floor in front of Shri Hari. He performed puja of Shri Hari using various traditional things. Thereafter, he prayed to Shri Hari to fulfill his one inner wish. Shri Hari gave a smile and indicated the approval for his wish. Prannath happily got up and went inside the other room. He promptly returned with a dishpan and a fine white fabric. Shri Hari asked, "What do you want to do with a dishpan?" While putting the dishpan near Shri Hari's feet, Prannath replied ''Maharaj! It's vermillion mixed with water. I have brought it so You can grace with the imprints of your divine feet. I have been worshiping the form I received from another devotee, but I am longing for your footprints. Therefore, please fulfill my desire."

Shri Hari soaked the soles of His feet into the vermillion paste and then placed them on the white fabric. Then, he lifted his feet for a while as Prannath took away the fabric and put it aside for drying. Quickly, Prannath washed Shri Hari's feet with clean water and dried them with a hand towel. Prannath's eyes couldn't believe what he saw. He was overjoyed to receive the *charnarvind* imprint of Shri Hari. All those who were present there did Shri Hari's darshan with much adoration & devotion.

Prannath then prayed to Shri Hari "Oh! Maharaj! You have specially come for me. Currently, you are staying in Gadhada but, only to fulfill my wishes, you divinely appeared here. This is all due to Your boundless mercy!" Shri Hari replied,

"Prannath! It's my nature that I only manifest to fulfill the wishes of my devotees. I always try to satisfy all of the wishes of my true devotees." Saying this, Shri Hari disappeared.

Prannath's father, Kesarbhai, as mentioned earlier, was not a devotee of God. He believed in a different religious belief which was totally different and in opposition to the philosophy of the Swaminarayan fellowship. Many years passed Kesarbhai's death awaited him. At the time of his death, he found Yamduts coming towards him. The moment frightened him but before the Yamduts could grab him, he escaped from the Yamduts & due to his intense worldly desires, became a ghost. After assuming the body of a ghost, he invisibly stayed at home.

As a ghost, he would sometimes make scary noises. Sometimes, he spoke a language that no one could understand. Even then he mostly remained invisible to all, sometimes, he produced frightening noises day and night which frightened the house members. However, Prannath was not phased by any of this because he firmly knew that the Supreme Almighty Bhagwan Shri Hari is the all-doer & without His wish, nothing can be done.

Many days passed, and once upon a time, Kesarbhai's ghost entered into his wife's body. Due to that, her expressions, behavior, and speech changed. While staying in her body, the ghost once spoke in front of the villagers, "Only Bhagwan Swaminarayan is the true Supreme Lord. Moreover, he is the one who remains divinely present in Satsang. So, if anyone seeks their ultimate liberation, they should accept Him as the

Almighty Supreme God."

Someone asked, "But, who are you? Why should we believe your words?" Immediately, the ghost replied, "I am Kesarbhai- the father of Prannath. I became a ghost and am staying in this house. Right now, I have entered my wife's body to inform you that I'm the ghost of Kesarbhai." He added "Not only me, but all those who followed the same fellowship as I have also become ghosts." Then, he gave advice "Whoever wants to be happy in this birth and the life after death, should believe that all the avatars, places of pilgrimage, religious vows, code of conducts etc... are true and worthy of respect. Also, one should become a devotee of God and worship Bhagwan Shri Hari. They should also listen to Prannath's discourses because he is a very pious and devout devotee of Shri Hari. Moreover, due to his devotion and his constant chanting of the mahamantra Swaminarayan, I will be relieved from this ghost body and attain liberation as I'm now going to the divine abode of Akshardham.

Thereafter, the ghost left her body due to which she started behaving normally. The villagers who had witnessed this incident, discussed Lord Shri Hari's greatness amongst themselves and departed with the resolve to worship Shri Hari throughout their lives

47. Holi with Shri Hari

In the village of Dhuva, satsang was growing rapidly. More and more people joined, some inspired due to the miraculous incidents, and some by devotees' pious and devoted lifestyles. Now, the devotees realized the need of a place of worship-the mandir. The senior devotees discussed and decided to build a small mandir in the village so they could celebrate all of the festivals.

After building a mandir, the devotees' devotion reached a new level. Just as the sky has no limits, their devotion knew no limits. Daily, they started their day by visiting the mandir and ended it with the darshan and katha varta during evening time. In addition, the devotees gathered in the mandir on the day of festivals such as the Janmashtami, Ram Navami, Shivratri, Diwali Holi, etc. In this way, all the festivals were celebrated with great joy and with celebration.

Once, on the day of Holi, the villagers were playing holi without shame. The male & females were spraying color and dirt at each other while speaking vulgar - bad words. They used abusive words for each other. In this way, the men and women shamelessly enjoyed the festival of holi.

The devotees of God did not take part in such dirty celebrations. Instead of going with them, they came to the mandir and began to chant dhun. Then, they discoursed relating Bhagwan Shri Hari. On the day of Holi, the devotees decided to celebrate the festival at the temple as that was the day of Bhagwan Nar-Narayan's birthday. They collected a large

amount of gulal (the holi color-powder.) and brought some herbal water-color. Firstly, they sprayed & sprinkled some color on Bhagwan's murti in Mandir and then, with the sanctified color &gulal, they played outside the Mandir. Knowing it was the day of God's birthday, they sprinkled the herbal color water upon each other. All of the devotees' faces & clothes became red due to the gulal.

However, the great difference could be seen between the two groups. The villagers played in the same way but while speaking abusive words and the men and women played together. On the other hand, the devotees played holi while chanting the holy name of God and while singing *dhun* & *Kirtans*. Moreover, they played in separate groups and not together. Their playing was infused with the remembrance of God. One could sense divinity in their celebration.

Shri Hari, watched all of this while remaining in Gadhada. Thereafter, He assumed a divine form and appeared in the village of Dhuva. He appeared directly where the devotees were playing. Shri Hari, without saying anything, joined the devotees in the celebration. Along with the devotees, Shri Hari also clapped and sang dhun. In addition, he also sprayed color & gulal on the devotees. In return, the devotees also sprayed Maharaj's clothes with gulal& color. Due to that, Shri Hari's white clothes turned into different colors. In this way, Shri Hari played holi with His devotees to give them eternal happiness. The devotees, while playing the holi, performed Shri Hari's darshan and along with the devotees, the other villagers were also able to do Shri Hari's darshan.. The

devotees explained to them, "Shri Hari, while staying in Gadhada, has appeared here in His divine form. So, whoever wants to do his darshan, please do! As time passed, Shri Hari suddenly disappeared.

The devotees became very sad. They asked each other “Where did Shri Hari go?" One replied, "Just a moment ago, He was playing with me." The other said, " He was clapping with me. " Someone said, "He was standing in front of me & I wished to embarrass him by spraying Him with color and gulal." While discussing in this way, all of the devotees lamented for Shri Hari. The wise among the devotees said, “Please listen! Do not lament more. Instead of becoming sad, we should understand and feel that we are very fortunate because Shri Hari came to us in His divine form and granted us His darshan. Also, we should realize that this is the divine miracle of Shri Hari and it is Shri Hari's grace upon us that we could experience this incident.”

Similarly, there were many other divine incidents that took place in the village of Dhuva. Many times, Shri Hari would come to a devotee's house in his divine form and eat some food. At the other devotees' home, Shri Hari divinely appeared & gave a garland. Some devotees were granted His divine darshan while performing devotion. Some of them experienced that Shri Hari came divinely during the dhun and clapped with his hands.

In addition to that, Shri Hari came at the time of the devotees' death, to take them to Akshardham. Nishkulanand Swami writes, "We have attained such a Bhagwan who is always

present in satsang and performs such divine incidents for us. So, without lamenting for anything, happily worship the form of Shri Hari to enjoy the real bliss of Satsang. Shri Hari is like a *chintamani* and *kalpavruksh*. Due to his compassion, whatever we wish for, we will definitely attain it."

48. Jibhai's Warning

There lies a village named Gudel in the region of Bhal in Gujarat. In Gudel, lived a devotee of Shri Hari named Ji bhai. Jibhai was born in the Kshatriya caste which is popularly known for their valor and victorious fights. He was a senior & respected in the village as a chief. Though he was very humble with the saints & devotees. It is stated in the scriptures that a true Kshatriya person always protects cows, brahmins & saints. As a devotee of Bhagwan Shri Hari, despite being a Kshatriya, Jibhai maintained kindness, & humbleness along with his valor. He could chant the Swaminarayan-mantra with a rosary in his hand and also use weapons like sword, spear etc.

Once the other villagers were outside for a social event and Jibhai was the only one present in the village. The group of thieves decided to raid the village and rob jewelry, golden coins, cash money etc. from the village. They were well aware of Jibhai'svalor which is why they came as a group and attacked the village. They had different weapons such as swords, spears, bows & arrows etc. They came at the darker stage of twilight so that they could easily escape. Their attack on the village was indeed a well plannedone..

It was the time of evening *aarti-stuti* and Jibhai was deeply engrossed in his devotion to Shri Hari and the other tribesmen were out of the village. Listening to the commotions outside, Jibhai immediately looked out his window. His eyes couldn't believe what he saw. Jibhai immediately realized what's

going on and while praying to Shri Hari, he prepared himself with a shield and weapons. Thereafter, he immediately left his home.

He was alone, yet with courage of his Kshatriya blood, he roared like a lion in front of many thieves. He warned them, "If you want to save your souls, leave the village at once!. Otherwise you will have to stay here forever with your dead bodies". Listening to the warning & seeing that Jibhai was alone, the thieves released arrows on Jibhai from three directions. It was like a rain of arrows. However, Jibhai was alert with his shield to protect himself. However, it was difficult to save himself as the arrows were coming from all three directions. But, Jibhai was a trained warrior so he was able to easily protect himself. While protecting himself, Jibhai also shot his arrows towards the thieves. His aim was so sharp that it struck the thieves' body. In this way, one after another, the arrows pierced most of the thieves. Many were injured severely, and many died on the spot. Those who were injured ran away to save their lives.

Thereafter, Jibhai was returning to his home victorious. Suddenly, an arrow came from the back side and injured him on the head. Though he was injured, Jibhai looked back and found the thief who remained hidden the whole time. Jibhai replied to him with an arrow and sent him to hell. The arrow pierced the chest of the thief & he died in an instant. Being injured badly, Jibhai returned home. He remembered the form of Shri Hari. He was wounded severely and his family members immediately clogged the wound with clothes and bandaged it afterward. Jibhai then laid on his bed. He did not

give any importance to his pain & injury. Instead, he remembered Shri Hari with joy.

Due to long-going treatment, Jibhai was stuck in his bed for fifteen days. Even though he had severe pain, he didn't complain even once. All the time, he just chanted the Swaminarayan mantra. His only desire was to do darshan of Shri Hari and thus, Shri Hari appeared in front of him in His divine form.

Seeing Shri Hari, Jibhai forgot about his pain & wounds. When he saw Shri Hari, he tried to get up to bow down. However, Shri Hari stopped him by putting His hand on Jibhai's shoulder. Shri Hari lovingly said, "Jibhai! You should get some rest." Jibhai said, "Maharaj! It is your grace upon this poor fellow. You Yourself came to me! I am not worried about my pain." While saying this, his voice became choked with emotions and he just folded his hand with tears coming out of his eyes. Shri Hari became pleased and said, “Jibhai! you do not need to live in this condition anymore. I'll come again after three days to take you to my divine abode of Akshardham”. Jibhai gladly listened to Shri Hari's words and thanked him with folded hands.

From that day onwards, every second felt long lasting to Jibhai. It was not because of his injury, it was only to enjoy the eternal bliss & company of Shri Hari & his saints in Akshardham. According to his promise to Jibhai, Shri Hari, on the fourth day, became ready with ten muktos. First Shri Hari came to the nearby village of “Vad-gam”. There, they appeared on horses as if they were going to go somewhere and were

just stopping by. Shri Hari gave darshan to the devotees of that village. The devotees requested Shri Hari to stay for a night in the village. Then, Shri Hari revealed that He has to go to take the soul of Jibhai to his Akshardham.

Shri Hari & the muktos then arrived in the village of Gudel. Shri Hari granted his darshan to many villagers. All the villagers & relatives of Jibhai were struck in astonishment by seeing Shri Hari in his divine form. Shri Hari was amidst divine light surrounded by all of the muktos. The relatives and family members of Jibhai requested Shri Hari to come inside the home while offering their obeisances to Shri Hari. Shri Hari & muktos dismounted from the horses & entered the house. Shri Hari went near the bed of Jibhai. Jibhai was informed that Shri Hari was there. He opened his eyes to do darshan of Shri Hari.

The eternal joy could be easily seen in his eyes. When Shri Hari ordered him to leave the body, Jibhai said, “Jai Swaminarayan” to all & instantly left his mortal body. Then, Shri Hari & the muktos disappeared with the soul of Jibhai. All of the villagers, family members & relatives of Jibhai said to each other "We have never listened to nor seen such a method of leaving the body & going to the divine abode of God. Today, for the first time, we have witnessed this miraculous divine incident. Truly, Bhagwan Swaminarayan is the Supreme Lord of Lords.

49. Kandas Convinced

There was a devotee named Kashidas who lived in the village of Bochasan in the region of Charotar. Shri Hari first visited the village when he was traversing through the lands of India as NilkanthVarni. Kandas was Kashidas' father and previously, He had the darshan of NilkanthVarni.

Once, Maharaj had celebrated the unique festival of Shakotsav at Sura Khachar'sdarbar in Loya. Devotees had arrived from far away to take part in the festivals. Kashidas had also come with a group of devotees. They watched Shri Hari himself busily cook the brinjals (vegetable). During this incident, Maharaj wiped his turmeric covered hands on His white dhoti. Also, because of the heat and His physical labor, He was drenched in sweat. Seeing Maharaj's such human-like appearance, the mind of Kashidas began to doubt Shri Hari's divinity. However, Shri Hari & Sadguru Shri Muktanand Swami talked to him and convinced him of Shri Hari's Supremacy.

Kashidas became convinced but his father, Kandas was not fully convinced. From the time he saw NilkanthVarni, he believed Shri Hari as a great saint like Shukji, or the Sankadiks but he could not perceive Him as the Supreme Lord. Due to Kashidas's affection & conviction towards Him, Shri Hari visited the village of Bochasan many times. However, Kashidas's father, Kandas continued to offer devotion to other deities, as he revered Shri Hari as only a great saint.

Once, Kashidas asked his father, "With what feelings do you venerate Shri Hari? " Kandas replied, "My son, I firmly

believe that He is no ordinary man, but He is a great saint like Shukji, Sankadik, Narad." He then asked, "What's your perspective for Him?" Kashidas replied, "Shri Hari is not like the great saints. He is the Supreme Lord of Lords. The great saints seek for his darshan." Kashidas tried in many different ways to explain the Supremacy of Bhagwan Swaminarayan but Kandas was not ready to change his own beliefs. Therefore, after a long conversation between them, Kandas said, "Kashidas! What you said is applaudable. You might be right. Shri Hari might be God Himself." But his unspoken intention was understood by Kashidas. Kandas was not yet fully convinced. Thereafter, Kashidas went on with the hope that he could one day, convince his father. He prayed to Shri Hari and the saints with his pure heart "Oh! Maharaj! Oh! Santo! Please take care of my father's satsang. Only you are capable of making him understand the reality, divinity & true glory of God."

Many days passed and one day, Kandas received divine darshan. In that divinity, he saw millions of saints within a divine mass of light. He saw some of them as if they were like that of Naradji, many others like that of Shukji, many like that of Saunak& other sages. Also, he found some saints were like that of Valmiki Rushi. Moreover, he witnessed a group of 88 thousandsRushis in their luminous divine forms. By perceiving such divinity in Swaminarayan saints, Kandas was dazzled. Then, he realized that if the saints of Lord Swaminarayan are this divine, what is there to say about the greatness of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. His belief that Swaminarayan is like a great sage got washed away. He realized the greatness of Shri Hari as the Supreme Lord of

Lords. Afterwards, Kandas bowed down in front of those millions of Swaminarayan saints. He could not express his joy, he prayed, "You saints are the greatest of all &Bhagwan Swaminarayan is the Supreme Lord. You have manifested solely to liberate souls like me. Please be merciful and forgive me for my misunderstanding."

After that divine incident, Kandas began to worship Shri Hari believing Him as the Supreme almighty God. Also, He firmly started to give respect to the saints of Shri Hari. In addition, he even understood the glory of his son - Kashidas because his son's understanding was greater than his own. In this manner, Shri Hari showed His divine power which led Kandas to become a staunch devotee of Shri Hari and worship Him by believing Him as the Supreme God.

50. House of Ghosts

The village of Meghva is in the Charotar region of Gujarat. Many devotees lived in this village. However, some of the people of the village did not like Swaminarayan fellowship and the devotees. Not only that, but such people harrassed the devotees in all possible ways. These evil minded people did not fear God or the punishments of hell. Among such ill-intended people, Narrottam and Nagardas were two grave sinners as they spited the devotees day and night. They were both teenagers, and wealthy. Due to this, they did not fear anyone.

Due to their sin of maligning the devotees of God, when time came, ghosts encountered and captured their body. Narottam was possessed by six different ghosts. Two of them were the spirits of those who lifted heavy loads in their human birth. The other two spirits were of lower class people. Of the remaining two, one of them was the ghost of a Muslim and the sixth one was the spirit of a Khatri. All of these ghosts resided in Narottam's body and took over his soul. Due to this, Narottam could not behave normally. When the ghosts of the two laborers prevaled in his body, Narottam lifted and moved heavy loads from one place to another without any reason. No one could believe that he could lift such heavy loads. But, this was only possible because of the evil spirits of workers who had possessed him.

Similarly, when the Mulla – the Muslim ghost entered the body and worked, he asked for non-vegetarian food.

Narottam's family never ate non-vegetarian food. So, they became extremely worried about Narottam's different behavior. Moreover, when he was taken up by the two lower class spirits, he asked for impure and stale food. The ghosts asked through Narottam for food that was strictly prohibited to eat even during adverse situations. Tired by this, the relatives of Narottam were finding solutions to relieve him from the possession of ghostly spirits. They tried to hide this incident to save their respect in the village, but due to such abnormal behaviors of Narottam, everyone in the village knew that he was captured by the evil spirits due to his sinful acts. However, that was not the end of the incident. When the spirit of Khatri came to action, he spoke "Haiso.... haiso...." In this way, for Narottam and his family, this became an unbearable misery because there were a total six different spirits of ghosts living in a single body. So, whoever came to an action, Narottam behaved accordingly. The ghosts overpowered the control over his body & mind.

On the other hand, Nagardas was also possessed by a unique ghost. That ghost's appearance was weird. It did not have his head upon its torso. That ghost was more dangerous than the ordinary ones. It was known by the name 'Khavish'. Nagardas was severely tortured by the Khavish. Due to the pain, Nagardas could not live happily during the day nor could he sleep peacefully at night. People of the village understood that Nagardas was possessed by the ghost because he harassed the devotees of Shri Hari. Nagardas also realized his mistake. In addition, one more person who was a colleague of Narottam and Nagardas was also possessed by ghosts as he also engaged

in harassing the devotees of Shri Hari.

In this way, when all three gathered, the ghosts acted differently. One ghost wished to sleep the person, the other ghost made the person cry, the other ghost did not allow the person to sleep, one ghost shook the person while crying. In this manner, all three friends who had pained the devotees of Shri Hari were now being punished and tortured by the ghosts.

Their relatives tried many different ways to relieve them from the ghosts. They even hired some black magic knowers. They used their spells & charms on all three possessed bodies. But, all their practices were futile. The money spent was wasted. Finally, the relatives decided to stop the spell charming rituals. Finally, they decided to go to Vadtal. They thought that Bhagwan Swaminarayan was their only hope because these three were possessed by the ghosts due to their sins against the devotees of Bhagwan Swaminarayan.

The relatives reached vadtal for the darshan of Shri Hari along with the three ghost-possessed friends. Shri Hari was sitting under a mango tree near the bank of lake Gomati. The saints & devotees sat in an assembly in front of him. The relatives came to that place with the three possessed individuals.

All of them offered their obeisances and prostrations to Shri Hari & bowed down to him. Then, they sat near Shri Hari & prayed, "Oh ! Lord of all Lords! You are the Supreme Lord! You are our only hope. We are here to take your refuge. Please forgive us for our bad-deeds and accept us into your holy

fellowship."

Shri Hari just smiled at them in approval of their request to join them into the fellowship. Merely by His approval, the ghosts immediately came out. Due to Shri Hari's divine persona, the ghosts couldn't stay there for a moment. They immediately ranaway. Not only that but they couldn't dare to enter the bodies ever again. Narottam, Nagardas and their friend, all three were freed from the bondage of the ghosts due to Shri Hari's causeless mercy. The three just shed tears and asked for forgiveness again and again. They all became devotees of Shri Hari and took an oath to strictly follow the five religious vows. All those who came from the village of Meghva returned to their village after becoming devotees of Shri Hari.

The villagers also became greatly surprised when they found out that Narottam, Nagardas & their friend were relieved from the possession of the ghosts. They realized the glory of Swaminarayan Bhagwan and believed that without Him, the evil spirits would not have left their prey and would have eventually killed them.

51. Saved The Brahmin

In the region of Charotar, there is a village named Mumadha where a Brahmin by the name of Ishwar lived. He learned and worked to perform various rituals on auspicious occasions. Once, he breached his Brahmin code of conduct. Due to this, seeing its chance, a Brahmrakshas entered his body. A Brahmrakshas is the ghost of an impious brahmin. For instance, when an impious brahmin dies with worldly desires in his mind, he becomes a ghost, known as a Brahmrakshas.

Now, Ishwarbhai was possessed by the ghostly spirit and he had to act according to the wishes of the ghost. The ghost did not allow him to perform any of his daily rituals nor was he allowed to perform his daily routine. Thus, he was not able to live his life normally. Moreover, he could not eat, sleep, walk, sit, or drink happily.

Not only Ishwar but his family members were also disturbed and felt the horrors of the ghost. Someone suggested setting up a constant scriptural recital to keep the ghost away. In turn, the family agreed to do so. They arranged a pious brahmin to recite scriptural hymns in sanskrit. The brahmin started to recite hymns in sanskrit.

However, everyone was surprised when the ghost also recited the same hymns in Sanskrit while residing in Ishwar's body. This was because the brahmarakshas was also a well educated brahmin in his previous life. He was proficient in different faculties of Sanskrit and to recite the hymns in Sanskrit was not difficult for him. Moreover, it was not ready to leave

Ishwar's body which failed the family's plan of the constant recitation of scriptural hymns. This left the family members extremely disappointed.

One of the villagers suggested taking Ishwar to Bhagwan Swaminarayan. He said “Shri Hari is your only hope! If there is someone who can do anything in this case, it is none other than Bhagwan Swaminarayan himself. The relatives of Ishwar wished to bring him to Shri Hari in Vadtal. But when they found out that Shri Hari had left for Jetalpur, Ishwar and his family reached Jetalpur.

In Jetalpur, Shri Hari was sitting in an assembly of Saints and devotees under a tree. The discourses were going on and the Saints and devotees were listening with full attention. The family came to the assembly with Ishwar. They stayed a little far from the devotees and bowed down to Shri Hari. Ishwar even couldn't come closer to Maharaj as he was possessed by the ghost. The reason for this was that ghosts are not able to bear the presence of God or His satpurush. But, when Shri Hari concluded the discourse he looked at Ishwar with an eye of compassion which allowed him to come closer to Shri Hari.

While sitting in front of Shri Hari, the ghost of Brahmrakshas requested Shri Hari, “I'm now surrendering my self to you. You gave me birth in a Brahmin family. I learnt all of the scriptures. Yet due to my worldly desires, I had to become a ghost. But, now that I have received your darshan, I'm fulfilled. So, please forgive me for my misdeeds." He bowed

down again and again and said, "Oh! Lord of Lords, please tell me where I should live and where I should go." Shri Hari gave a smile and replied, "You can go to these saints and live happily in their company." The ghost countered, "But, My Lord! How can I even go near them? Their saintly vibrations do not allow me to be near them. I feel a burning sensation even if I dare look at them."

In reply, Shri Hari said, "Go to Badrikashram. There you will get the darshan of Shri Nar-Narayan. Thereafter, the Brahmarakshas left Ishwar's body and after bowing to Shri Hari, disappeared within the sky. No one in the assembly could fathom as to where it went. In this manner, Shri Hari, merely by his darshan, sent the ghost to Badrikashram and relieved Ishwar from its possession. That day onwards, Ishwar started behaving like the other normal beings. He bowed down to Shri Hari and said "You have given me a new life. Otherwise, I wouldn't be alive today. Thank you very much for that." The family also became happy by seeing their Ishwar back to normal and they all became staunch devotees of Shri Hari.

52. How Is This Possible?

In the town of Jetalpur, there lived a female named Raibai. She was possessed by a female ghost which was extremely aggressive. Raibai was given extreme pain by the ghost. Moreover, the family and villagers were also harassed by it and everyone was fed up.

Different from the other ghosts, this ghost performed weird and scary actions while staying in Raibai's body. Sometimes, Raibai, possessed by the ghost, took out all of the clothes from the cabinets and brought them with her but no one knew where. After five of ten days, the same clothes would be scattered here & there near the cabinets in a torn and dirty condition. The blood stains could be seen on the clothes & on the floor. The family would become horrified in such conditions. Due to all this, everyone in the home lived with the fear of death.

Once the ghost in Raibai brought all of the utensils from the kitchen. Some of these utensils had cooked food within them. Again the same thing happened, no one knew where she kept the utensils. After five days, the ghost threw the utensils one after another in the kitchen. Some were totally broken, some had heavy dents, the glasswares were broken, and scattered on the kitchen floor. Some of the vessels were filled with boiling blood and with disgusting odors. Also, the wall was stained with blood in a horrific way. In this manner, the ghost turned the family house into a haunted - house.

Once, the ghost decided to do something different. She

carried a young buffalo weighing about 750 pounds and put the buffalo there in the attic! Everyone who had witnessed this was surprised! No one could believe that a human could carry such a heavy buffalo. The family and the villagers had trouble bringing the animal down from the attic. By such scary and weird behavior of Raibai, (due to the ghost possession) everyone was extremely annoyed.

One of the devotees suggested bringing Raibai to Shri Hari. He suggested “He is the Supreme Lord! In his presence, any type of ghost would have to leave her body.” After some days, Shri Hari arrived in Jetalpur. Raibai was brought to the assembly in front of Shri Hari. On behalf of Raibai, her family members requested Shri Hari to relieve her from the ghost possession. Shri Hari said, "First of all, she should take a vow to follow the code of conduct prescribed for devotees." Raibai agreed and accepted satsang by taking the vows. Immediately, the female ghost left Raibai's body. She fell down at Shri Hari's feet and paid her respects. Then, she became a staunch devotee of Shri Hari & worshiped Shri Hari up to her last breath. The family also joined the satsang fellowship. In this way, Raibai was freed from the clutches of the female ghost.

53. Uncommon Behavior Explained

There was a town named Amod in the region of Kanam. There lived a Brahmin devotee by the name of Dinanath Bhatt. Though he was a devotee of Bhagwan Swaminarayan, he remained doubtful regarding His divinity. He doubted it due to kusang.

Nirvikalpanand was a sadhu who upheld jealousy against Muktanand Swami when he won the debate in Vadodara and Shri Hari praised him. Due to his envy and jealousy, he could not accept Muktanand Swami's greatness. Due to that, he left satsang and started traveling village to village to misguide the devotees. However, he did not succeed in his mission. Once, while traveling, he arrived in Amod and approached Dinanath Bhatt. There, he misguided him and led him against Bhagwan Swaminarayan.

Then, Dinanath Bhatt started imagining human-like traits in all of Shri Hari's actions. He threw away his kanthi and even stopped doing tilak-chandlo. Even though he was a great Sanskrit scholar, he could not uphold his faith in God. When he came into contact with kusang, he even forgot his own experiences regarding the divinity of Shri Hari.

Nirvikalpanand taught him, "Even though you are a great scholar and a prominent devotee, your name has not been mentioned in the Shikshapatri. On the other hand, Mayaram Bhatt is not a scholar and yet, his name is written in the Shikshapatri. You are worthy of being noted in the Shikshapatri instead of Mayaram Bhatt." In this way, many other arguments

and doubts were inserted in Dinanath Bhatt's mind by Nirvikalpanand.

Due to this negativity in his life, the evil spirits had been waiting to enter the family of Dinanath Bhatt for a long time. However, they had not entered or harassed the family of Dinanath Bhatt until he was a devotee of Shri Hari. Now the ghosts had a chance as Dinanath threw away his Kanthi. But still, the ghost could not enter his body, as Dinanath had previously worshiped Shri Hari by making sanskrit hymns relating to His glory. However, the ghost could easily enter the body of his daughter Jamuna.

The ghost possessed Jamuna. The ghost would not let her live peacefully. Jamuna became totally out of control. She herself did not know what she was doing. Sometimes, she would take furniture out of the house without any reason. This would horrify the guests who come to the house because all they would see is things moving on their own.

Sometimes, she brought out all the clothes from the cabinets & threw them onto the floor. Sometimes she laughed aloud at midnight when everyone in the house was sleeping. Listening to the creepy noises, everyone would wake up with fear and tremble all night long.

Moreover, in the morning, when her mother was cooking lunch, the ghost would disturb her as well. Sometimes, it threw dust and dirt into the meal. If the food was not ready, the ghost added small stones & litter into half cooked or uncooked food. Moreover, the ghost would add dirt and impurities into the milk, yogurt, ghee etc.

Even the family members received blood instead of water when they turned on the water faucet in the kitchen. Such were the miseries caused by the ghost while residing in the body of Jamuna. Due to this pain & torturing, Jamuna felt depressed. Even the family members were annoyed and could not bear all this.

Dinanath Bhatt was a scholar in Sanskrit and was highly reputed in society so how could he tolerate such an adverse condition? He tried in many different ways to free his daughter from ghost's possession. But, none of his ideas worked. Finally, he remembered Bhagwan Shri Hari. He thought, "Now, Bhagwan Swaminarayan is the only hope." However, his mind countered, “Would he accept my request, I am no longer his devotee."

Finally, feeling hopeless, he decided to visit Shri Hari. He arrived at Gadhada along with his daughter Jamuna. He bowed down to Shri Hari, and prostrated before him. He explained to Shri Hari about his daughter's ghostly possession. He prayed to Shri Hari, "Please, forgive me for my mistakes and look after my daughter. She has been possessed by a ghost and because of that, she is being tortured, pained and punished. She can not sleep, stay awake, eat, drink or do anything properly. Now, You are our only hope.” He then pushed Jamuna towards Shri Hari's feet and said, "Maharaj! From today, she is your devotee. Please accept her into the satsang fellowship. She will worship you and follow each code of conduct in satsang. Please protect her soul!" He could not speak any more as his voice became choked with emotion. He was crying for having doubted Shri Hari.

Shri Hari consoled him but also asked, "You are a Brahmin and Brahmins are worthy of being respected similar to deities, so, how is it possible for a Brahmin daughter to be possessed by a ghost? "Dinanath Bhatt, even though he was a Sanskrit scholar, he was not able to give any answer. He only said with folded his hands, “Maharaj! Without your refuge, without your devotion, and faith even the high-caste Brahmins are unable to do anything. So, please forgive me. You are the most compassionate of all. Please take some pity upon me and accept me into your satsang again.'' Dinanath began sobbing immensely.

Shri Hari finally accepted Dinamath Bhatt and his family into the Satsang fellowship. He forgave the misdeeds Dinanath Bhatt had performed to oppose satsang and Shri Hari. Right at that time, due to Shri Hari's wish, the ghost immediately left the body of Jamuna and cried loudly.

This whole event was witnessed by many devotees who were present in Gadhada. In this manner, Bhagwan Swaminarayan showed His supreme powers and established his Supremacy in everyone's heart. This indeed is a miraculous incident noted in the Bhaktchintamani by Shri Nishkulanand Swami.

54. Dug His Own Hole

In the town of Visnagar, there lived many brahmins. Some of them were devotees of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. Even though most of the brahmins were well-educated, some of them were jealous of Shri Hari and His devotees. Amongst such oppositors, Shobharam was the leader.

Shobharam was a brahmin but not a devotee of God. He did not believe in any form of God. Instead, he harassed the devotees. He was well reputed amongst the society and had developed political relations with the government officials. He used his political relations to oppose the devotees. He always thought about how he could tease & harass the devotees of Bhagwan Swaminarayan more and more. Also, according to his preplanning, he greatly maligned God & His devotees. He excommunicated the devotees from the brahmin community just because they had joined the Satsang fellowship. Due to that, the devotees were forced to live a socially solitary life. No one from the society had any form of relation with the devotees.

However, the group of devotees did not become discouraged. Instead, they worshiped God more lovingly than ever. Shobharam could not bear the happiness which the devotees experienced from the devotion of Shri Hari. Seeing that, he became more envious than before. He wished to provide more pain & harassment to them.

To fulfill his wishes, Shobharam used his political relations and bribed the officers. Due to that, the innocent

devotees had to suffer a lot & passed many days in prison without being at fault. Watching the devotees in jail, Shobharam would express joy. He would laugh loudly and speak ill of the devotees of God. Later, even when the devotees were released by the grace of Shri Hari, Shobharam did not stop criticizing them.

Most of his days passed in criticizing Shri Hari and the Satsang fellowship. Once, some devotees felt pity for Shobharam and explained the glory of Shri Hari to him. They said "Shobharam! Lord Swaminarayan is God Himself. His glory and prowess are supreme. He enables people to experience samadhi. He also performs miracles everywhere. He propagates the pure Vaishnav traditions of devotion to God. Therefore, stop criticizing him and seek shelter unto Him. He will grant you liberation by forgiving your misdeeds."

But, the evil minded Shobharam did not accept the devotees' advice. Instead, he roared, "If Swaminarayan really is God then why does he not punish me when I have been criticizing him in public?" When the devotees tried to explain Shri Hari's nature of forgiveness to him, Shobharam spoke out, "If he really is God, why has nothing wrong happened to me despite the fact that I have been maligning Him?" The devotees suggested “You should wish for something good from God." In reply, Shobharam reacted in anger, “I openly challenge your God! If Swaminarayan is God, may I become blind within eight days." The devotee said, "Why are you asking for such misery?" Shobharam boasted, "I don't care. Let it be." The devotee did not say anything and left.

Three days passed and Shobharam boasted in public,

"See! I have challenged Swaminarayan to make me blind but nothing has happened to me yet." After saying this, he would laugh. Shri Hari, who is like a chintamani, gives whatever fruits one asks for and immediately, that became Shobharam's last day to see the world.

On the fourth day, he lost his sight completely and became blind. By this incident, Shobharam realized his mistakes and apologized to the devotees & Shri Hari through his mind. But it was too late. The other people who knew about the incident learnt a lesson and realized the glory of Swaminarayan as the Supreme Lord of all Lords.

55. Remorse Leads To Compassion

In the city of Bhuj, Sundarji Suthar was a great devotee of God. He was a senior amongst all other devotees. Moreover, he was also a senior & trustworthy officer in the state. Due to his official duties, he had to engage in most of the political & social affairs. However, the other dignities and business tycoons he dealt with were non-believers and materialistics. In turn, the company of materialistic persons gradually ruined the spirituality of Sundarji Suthar. He spent most of his time in the company of such materialistic people which directly affected the time he spent for satsang. In the beginning, he was cautious, but later, he distanced himself from satsang.

When he reached his old age, his body could not work properly. He barely performed his daily hygiene duties with the help of others. He could not even get up from his bed without help.

Day after day, he felt worse than before. Finally, he reached the physical & mental condition that he could not keep control of his sleep, dream & waking condition. Sometimes, he went into a deep sleep state. Thereafter, within a short time, he woke up and suddenly again went into deep sleep. He would yet again wake up and suddenly begin to speak regarding the political affairs and matters related to the state. In this way, he did not get peace and instead, during his dream or half-sleep state, speak regarding the job he had performed during his life. However, when he woke up fully, he would feel remorse for his mental condition. He repented because his mind was engaged

in worldly affairs even during his last days. Sundarji would say to himself, "There is no other fool greater than me. Even though I had attained Shri Hari & this Satsang, I forgot them & only engaged in worldly affairs throughout my life. Shame on me. "

He prayed to Shri Hari with an emotion filled voice, "Oh! Maharaj! You are the most compassionate. You are the uplifter of wretches like me. I have made a great mistake. Please have mercy upon this poor soul and grant him your darshan." Thereafter, he started sobbing uncontrollably and could not speak any further.

Shri Hari heard his prayers and being extremely compassionate, appeared in front of Sundarji's eyes. Sundarji became elated by getting such divine darshan. His tears of anguish converted into tears of joy. In his feeling of joy, he began to pray to the form of God standing in front of his eyes. He saw the universal form of God known as the "Virat" form. The form was decorated with many divine ornaments. Celestial garlands and garments were apparent on the form and many divine scents were smeared over his body. The form was extremely radiant. If thousands of suns were to rise at once into the sky, their radiance still wouldn't resemble the effulgence of the Supreme Lord in that divine form.

The divine form that appeared in front of his eyes, was in fact the God Himself. Sundarji knew about this. Thus, bewildered and astonished, his hair standing at an end, he bowed his head to offer obeisances, and with folded hands, began to pray to the Supreme Lord Shri Hari "Oh Lord of Lords!

Please be gracious to me. You are the supreme Lord worthy of being worshiped by every living being. Thus, I fall down to offer you my respectful obeisances and ask for your mercy. Just how a father tolerates the mistakes of his son, please tolerate the wrongs I may have done to you." Saying this, tears flowed down from his eyes.

Sundarji also got the divine darshan of numerous saints and devotees of Shri Hari. They were all in their divine luminous form. He pleaded them, “I did not understand the glory of satsang and wasted my whole life in business & social gatherings. Familial life is based solely on self interest. I have made the biggest mistake of negating my spiritual life for the sake of worldly relations. All of my worldly relations & relatives have proved useless for me because no one has come to rescue me from the bondage of this world and provide me eternal happiness.”

Then he thought in his mind, “What's done is done. What's gone is gone. But now, my Maharaj and my saints & devotees are here for me. I'll die soon and go with Maharaj to His divine abode of Akshardham. By saying the last Jai Swaminarayan to all, Sundarji closed his eyes forever. Everyone could witness that Sundarji sat with Maharaj in a divine plane and that he departed for his eternal journey to Akshardham. In this way, Shri Hari, according to his promise, came at the time of his devotee's death and took him to Akshardham. This is the Supremacy of Bhagwan Swaminarayan.

56. Merits Of Darshan

In the village of Kariyani, Shri Hari and his santo stayed for many times. Shri Hari had performed many different charitras in this village. Due to frequent visits of Shri Hari & His saints, many of the villagers became devotees of Shri Hari. Only a few ill-minded people remained in the village who did not join Satsang.

The people of Kariyani had the darshan of Shri Hari many times. Some did darshan with devoted minds while somenon-believers did it just as if they were looking at ordinary people. However, Shri Hari is very divine and the fruits of His darshan were given to both types of people - devotees & non devotees.

For the devotees, the merits of darshan worked immediately in the form of increasement in devotion. On the other hand, for the non-believers, the merits of Shri Hari & His saints' darshan worked at the time of their death.

For instance, one Kathi named Manshiyo lived in the village. He was a non-believer and had performed many types of sins throughout his life. Once, he was sitting outside of his house in a joyous mood but He did not know that this day was his last day on Earth. According to his fate, his life was coming to an end and he found four Yamduts coming towards him. The appearance of the Yamduts was extremely scary. They were black in color, large and tall like mountains and their eyes were frightening red and orange. Also, when they opened their mouths, it was like a large cave in a mountain. Their teeth were similar to the large tusks of elephants. They possessed

dangerous weapons of their realm and all of them had four hands carrying different types of weapons. Notingly, two of them were coming while sitting on an iron - cart carried by male buffalos.

The rest of them were sitting on the male buffaloes. When they appeared near their prey, they dismounted from the buffalo and the cart. They ran towards Manashiyo and caught him in their clutches. First, they beat him and then ordered him to come with them. But before Manashiyo could do or say anything, they lifted him in their hands and returned back to their realm. In general cases, the Yamduts only took the souls of sinners but in the case of Manashiyo, the Yamduts took him along with his physical body. They were walking to their destination and beating Manashiyo on the way. Manashiyo was crying and shouting in pain and agony. However, he could not escape from the clutches of the Yamduts.

Manashiyo prayed to them while crying, “Please forgive me! Please release me or I'll die." Then, one of Yamduts said, "Why did you not become a satsangi. Why did you remain a sinner your whole life? In your village, you were able to easily perform darshan of Shri Hari & His saints, and still you remained a sinner? There is no one that can save you now!" Then, Manashiyo replied, "Yes, I have not performed any meritable acts my whole life but atleast I'm fortunate enough to have the darshan of Shri Hari. He is my only hope now. Besides him, no one can save me."

As Manashiyo remembered Shri Hari, the very next moment, Shri Hari appeared in His divine form. As Shri Hari

appeared, the Yamduts left Manashiyo on the streets and ran away. Manashiyo came back to his home. Due to the beating of the Yamduts, he was still shouting in pain. When the family members asked, he said, "Bhagwan Swaminarayan saved me! Otherwise, today I wouldn't even be alive. The Yamduts came to me, beat me and took me with them. Enroute, Shri Hari came in His divine form and due to His presence, the Yamduts threw me on the streets & ran away." In this way, as he narrated the incident, three hours had passed. At night, Manashiyo was sleeping on his bed and once again, he saw the Yamduts. This time they were present in reality and not just in his dreams. This time, there were nine of them. Immediately, they took Manashiyo, beat him, and carried him in their hands. They discussed "Let's exit this village at once because if he shouts, the villagers will wake up." The other said, "If the saints come here, we will have to run away."

After this discussion, they finally arrived out of the village. Suddenly, Shri Hari appeared there. The Yamduts speechlessly looked at each other in fear and trembled in their spots. Shri Hari scolded them in very strict words, "You fools! Why do you not understand?

Everyone in this village has had my darshan and the darshan of my saints. So, how dare you come to this village again? Don't ever even think about coming here or you will be punished harshly." While looking down, the Yamduts listened to Shri Hari's threat and asked for forgiveness. "Oh ! Lord of Lords ! You are the Supreme Personality. Please forgive us for our mistakes. We will not come here again. Please let us go." Shri

Hari blessed them as a sign of forgiveness and the Yamduts left immediately after bowing down to Shri Hari. Manashiyo had witnessed this incident in its every detail. He had listened in and kept the conversation of Shri Hari with Yamaduts in his mind. He narrated the whole incident to others. The devotees and his family members listened to him and praised Manashiyo's fate as he had the darshan of Shri Hari and was saved by him. From that day onwards, Manashiyo, along with his family, became a satsangi and followed each code of conduct and gave up all of his sinful activities & habits.

57. Saints To The Rescue

In the same village of Kariyani, lived a Tailor named Mavabhai. He was not a devotee of God. However, sometimes he had done sewing work for saints' clothes. Mavabhai did not want to work for the saints, but he feared the village chief - Vasta Khachar. This was because the saints used to reside in his *darbargadh.* VastaBapu was a great devotee of Shri Hari. When saints needed to repair something such as a Gaumukhi (Rosary bag), asan, puja bag etc. they would give the cloth to VastaBapu. Thereafter, VastaBapu called Mavabhai in his darbargadh and instructed him as to what work the saints needed to have done. Mavabhai would finish the work fearing the wrath of his chief, Vasta Khachar. Other than that, he did not believe in Bhagwan Swaminarayan or his saints.

Throughout his whole life, Mavabhai did not fear God. He engaged in many bad habits.

His only merit was that he had the darshan of Shri Hari & His saints, and that he put his skills to use for them willinglessly. Many devotees tried to convince him to worship God, but he did not accept advice from anyone. Living in such a situation, Mavabhai became old.

At the time of his death, he encountered three Yamduts. Merely by watching their scary appearance, Mavabhai lost his life instantly. The Yamduts caught his soul from his body and went back to hell with it. On their return, they encountered Shri Hari in the form of Saint. The saint asked the Yamduts, "Why have you taken this soul?" The Yamdut replied, "Oh! Saint of

the Supreme Lord! We have taken this soul because he was a non-devotee. Moreover, he did not worship Shri Hari and instead committed many sins. So, it is our duty, assigned by our Lord of death to bring this soul to hell. We will punish this soul in hell." The saint said “You can try in every way possible but I shall not let you go this soul to hell because he has worked for us.” The Yamdut requested, "Swamiji! This soul is not worthy of being released. He does not belong to you. Please let us perform our duties. The other Yandut said, ' Swamiji! He has worked for you only fearing the wrath of the village chief. So, please let us go." The saint said, "Even if he has worked out of fear, the merit of that work will definitely be given to him. So, there is no room for any more discussion. You can go now."

The Yamduts could not make any further arguments. They had to go empty handed leaving the soul back into its body. In this way, the Saint saved the soul of Mavabhai and gave him a new life.

When Mavabhai came back to life, he told everyone what had happened to him. Also he told everyone how he was saved by Swaminarayan Saint. In this way, Mavabhai experienced a miracle and became a devotee of Shri Hari.

58. Diseases And Evil Spirits

Trikam was a devotee of Shri Hari born in the Sathvara family. He lived in the village of Kariyani. Daily, he would worship Shri Hari with great love and affection. Moreover, he obeyed all the codes and conducts prescribed by Bhagwan Swaminarayan.

Once, a disease entered his body which was actually an evil spirit which had taken the form of a disease that killed people. Gradually, Trikam's health was deteriorating day by day and he gradually started losing his strength. First, his hands stopped working, then his legs, and afterwards, he lost his speech and finally, he died. The evil spirit in the form of the disease took the soul of Trikam and left the body. Trikam's soul kept on praying to Shri Hari, "Oh! Maharaj! Please come to me. Please come & bring me to your Akshardham. I'm waiting for you!"

Listening to the request, Shri Hari immediately appeared there in His divine form. He also took Mancha Khachar & Virdas in their divine form. Trikam's soul could have the darshan of Shri Hari and the bhaktos only due to Shri Hari's wish. Shri Hari scolded the evil spirit, "Why did you take Trikam's soul? He is a devotee of mine and belongs to me." Shri Hari added, "If you want to be safe, do not dare to enter any of my devotees ever again. Also, do not enter this village in the future if you wish good for yourself."

Thereafter, Shri Hari stayed at Trikam's home for a while and then retired for Puribai's house. Maharaj told him "I will take Puribai with me instead of you." Trikam then told

everyone what had happened and also told them that Shri Hari has expressed his desire to bring Puribai to Akshardham soon. Those who doubted Trikam's talk had to believe it as true because when they went to Puribai's house, they found Puribai's dead body and also found her relatives mourning around her dead body.

Meanwhile, Trikam also arrived there and told the Puribai's relatives what Shri Hari had told him just a few minutes ago. He also told them what happened to him & how he was saved by Shri Hari. Listening to Trikam's talks, Puribai's relatives felt satisfied & stopped mourning the loss of Puribai as they knew she was in Akshardham with Shri Hari.

In this way, Shri Hari took the soul of Puribai to Akshardham with Him and saved the soul of Trikam.

59. Yamduts Remained Yelling

There was a merchant named Hemabhai who, along with his family members, did not believe in God. They did not believe in the Hindu philosophy of the different avatars of God. The family believed in other beliefs of religion. Though Hemabhai did not believe Shri Hari as the Supreme Almighty, he always watched Shri Hari and His saints pass by the street in front of his shop. Shri Hari & His saints' darshan is very rare for an ordinary soul, but to recognize God as the Supreme Almighty when He is in the form of a human is even more difficult..

Though Hemabhai was a good and a gentle person, he remained aloof from Shri Hari and His saints due to the bad company he used to keep. He followed and acted as per his family traditions and beliefs. His whole life, He worked to earn for his family. He never had time to engage in any type of devotion. He never worshiped God or visited Mandirs or sat with saints. Without the association of God or His saints, who could teach him what's good and what's bad? Who could tell him that he should worship God? Days after days, and years after years passed. Finally, his death was waiting for him.

Once, Hemabhai was sitting in his home. Suddenly, he was shocked by the appearance of the Yamduts. Many Yamduts came running towards him. Before he could react or think anything, they encircled him. Their appearance was very terrifying. They possessed maces in their hands. They looked gigantic, black in color and rested their mace on their bulky shoulders. Hemabhai was horrified by seeing such Yamduts.

Some Yamduts were saying ”Strike him! Beat him!” Other Yamduts said, "Fetch him out of his body while beating him!” When the Yamduts were discussing what to do with the soul of Hemabhai, Hemabhai was trying to remember his religious heads & others followers. However, nothing beneficial happened. On the other hand, Yanduts began to beat him with their maces. Hemabhai was shouting, "If anyone can listen to me, please protect me. They will kill me, please save my life." He shouted many times. But no one came to his rescue.

He became totally disappointed. He gave up hope of being rescued. He now remembered Shri Hari and His saints. He tried to recall the memories of Shri Hari & His saints passing in front of him when he used to be busy in his shop. All of a sudden, he saw Shri Hari and His saints coming towards him from the streets. Shri Hari had a metal stick in his hand. Shri Hari and the saints directly entered his house. They were now in front of Hemabhai. Just by the mere presence of Shri Hari and the Saints, the Yamduts were frightened. But before the Yanduts tried to flee away, Shri Hari began to strike them with metal sticks on their heads. The Yamduts were yelling due to pain and fled away. Hemabhai watched everything.

After protecting Hemabhai, Shri Hari and the Saints disappeared. Hemabhai could not forget the divine form of Shri Hari after that incident. However, he did not share this with anyone. Being beaten by Yamduts, He had to rest in his bed for many days. When he was relieved from the pain, he was eager to narrate what he had experienced during his encounter with Yamduts.

After he was feeling good, he called for his relatives.

He told them how he was saved from the clutches of the Yamduts. He also explained to them that their religious heads had failed to save him and merely by remembering Bhagwan Swaminarayan and His saints, he was saved from the clutches of the Yamduts. Listening to Hemabhai's talks, the relatives were excited to become devotees of Shri Hari.

Hemabhai said, "I myself have accepted Shri Hari as my only God. If you want to be his devotee, do not waste your time. We have lost half of our lives wasting our time in doing other things without worshiping Bhagwan Shri Hari. So, now begin to worship Him by believing Him as the Supreme Lord.

Accepting Hemabhai's suggestion, all of his relatives became devotees by accepting satsang rules through the association of Shri Hari's Saints. Nishkulanand Swami stated that such divine miracles happen everyday and will happen in the future as well. The reason for that is, Bhagwan Shri Swaminarayan is the Supreme Lord of Lords and He forever remains present in His divine form & in His Satpurush.

GLOSSARY

A

Agna : commandments, A divine command

Aarti-stuti : Himdu religious ritual of worship; a part of puja; a daily hymn performed at morning and evening time

Annakut : Many food items offered at the same time, especially on the new year's day to the idol of God

B

Bhaktachintamani : A sacred and poetic text composed by Nishkulanand Swami that describes the life of Bhagwan Swaminarayan in great detail.

Bhairav : An attendant of Shiva worshiped as God by some people for fulfilling their wishes

Bhawani : Hindu goddess

Berakho : Small rosary use as a tally counter for count rosary

Bhiksha : What one receives as a part of alms.

Bhajiya : An Indian fried dish made with gram flour and spices

Bawa : Ascetics who don't follow the code of conduct as prescribed in the scriptures. They tend to live misleading lives.

Bor : Indian berry fruit.

C

Chintamani : A wish-fulfilling jewel mentioned in Hindu scriptures. The equivalent of a philosopher's stone in western alchemy.

Charnarvind : Divine footprints

Charitras : Divine life episodes of either God or a Satpurush.

Chakhadi : A wooden sandal

Chandlo : A small, round red mark often applied at the center of the forehead.

Chamar : A fan made of a Yak's tail hair. Usually used in the service of God.

D

Dudhpak : A delicacy made of milk, sugar and rice

Dhun : God's holy name sung repeatedly as part of prayer.

Darbargadh : Formal residence belonging to a king,or a ruler with a central courtyard surrounded by rooms with balconies.

F

Farsan : Fried eatables made from gram flour and other pulses.

Fuldolutsav : Fuldol, also known as Pushpadolotsav, the festival of flowers and colors. On this day, devotees place the murti of Bhagwan in a hindolo made of colorful flowers, which is then gently swung by devotees.

G

Gaumukhi : A cover like bag made of fabric used to keep malas while rotating and chanting mantras.

J

Jalebi : A crispy pretzel-like sweet that is highly popular throughout the India.

K

Khes : A piece of cloth that is worn by men as a shawl to cover the upper body.

Katha-varta : Religious discourses

Kusangi : Refers directly to the individual who has deviated from the fellowship and spreads negativity to others about it.

Kaustubh : A divine jewel believed in the Hindu scriptures to be the most valuable ratnam in the whole world. A symbol of divine authority.

Kodari : Also known as Kodo millet. A great source of balanced nutrition.

Kirtans : A tradition that originates from Indian religions in which the devotees chant prayers and sing hymns in praise of the god. The chanting is often accompanied by musical instruments and acting performances.

Kanthi : Double-threaded necklace, usually made of tulsi beads. Received by satsangis upon initiation into the satsang fellowship, and worn as a sign of their affiliation to God.

Karmyogi : A householder devotee who abides by the injunctions prescribed for the householder devotees.

Kalpvruksh : Also known as kalpataru. A wish-fulfilling divine tree in Indian-origin religions such as Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, and Sikhism.

M

Makar Sankranti : A festival dedicated to the deity Surya (sun). Also known as Uttarayan - kite flying day.

Muktos : Liberated soul. A resident of any of the divine abodes of God.

Mukhwas : Mouth freshener, commonly consumed after meals.

P

Puri : Deep-fried bread made from whole-wheat flour.

Penda : A rich, creamy sweet that is similar to burfi.

Pagh : A cloth that is tied around the head to form a turban-like headgear.

Prasadi : Sanctified food; also referred to things used by Shri Hari.

Panchangpranam : A method to offer obeisance to God used by female devotees.

R

Rotlas and dal : A type of dish - usually consumed for dinner within the Gujarati community..

S

Shak : Cooked vegetables with spices and edible oil. Usually eaten with puri, roti etc.

Swarg : The realm of Indra.

Sarvopari : One who is the Supreme. The Supreme Lord Swaminarayan.

Sati pratha : A Hindu practice, now mostly historical, in which a window sacrifices herself by sitting atop her husband's funeral pyre and buns to ashes.

SankhyaYogi : A householder who observes the vows of celibacy even while residing in the household.

T

Tilak : A marking of one's devotion and allegiance to God. Notably worn on the forehead in the form of a U- shaped mark of sandalwood paste.

U

Upasana : The philosophical understanding of the nature and form of God.

V

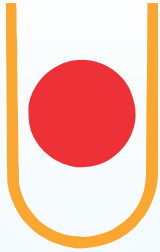
Vaidya : An ayurveda physician

Virja : A divine river in the abode of Golok(the divine abode of lord Shri Krishna)

Y

Yamduts : The attendants of death-God (Yamaraj)

Yamraj : The death-God





Shree Swaminarayan Mandir Loyadham

Among the various and vast villages of mother India, the village of Loya is noteworthy due to its touch of divinity. Supreme Almighty Bhagwan Swaminarayan descended from his divine abode 'Akshardham' and sanctified this remote and barren village by making it a nourishing pilgrimage. 200 years ago, Shreeji Maharaj was touring the remote lands of Saurashtra, with the vision to build great mandirs throughout the lands. Upon arriving in Loya, Sura Khachar, the village ruler, displayed the lavish green landscape of Loya to Shreeji Maharaj. Upon scanning the land thoroughly, Maharaj commented, "A grand temple will be built here in the future." In accordance, 200 years later, Pujya Guruji received a divine vision from Bhagwan Swaminarayan Himself to build a mandir in Loya.

Through inspiration empowered by faith, dedication, and persistence, Pujya Guruji has taken on this prodigious task of building a new shikharbaddh (spired) mandir in Loyadham. Shree Swaminarayan Mandir Loyadham, will be one of the most prominent & largest mandir in Gujarat, India.



Vairagyamurti
Sadguru Shri Nishkulanand Swami

Sadguru Shri Nishkulanand Swami was one of Bhagwan Swaminarayan's prominent saints. He was a virtuous renunciant who was primarily known for his inclination of vairagya. His hymns and kirtans describing the mortal nature of worldly pleasures, the inescapable severe pains and the sufferings therein, are so real and impressive that even a cruel, a vicious or a sinful would be inclined to the devotion of God.

He authored Nishkulanand Kavya, a book that is famous within the sampraday. The Nishkulanand Kavya comprises 22 smaller books. Each of these creations is unique in its prose and subject matter, ranging from the supremacy of Bhagwan Swaminarayan to the means of attaining moksha. Nonetheless, He is the author of 'Bhaktachintamani' which is centered around the life, work, and message of Bhagwan Swaminarayan.

Along with poetic and spiritual mastery, he was a skilled sculptor. He sculpted the central arch of Dholera mandir and designed an artistic 12 door hindola for Shreeji Maharaj in Vadtal. He lived his remaining life in Dholera Mandir and left this world at the age of 82.