Satsang Perspective

(For Beginners)









-:: Inspirer ::-

P.P. Shastriji Swami Shree Ghanshyamprakashdasji

-:: Publisher ::-

Shree Swaminarayan Gurukul Kandari

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Inspiration

This book is published by the divine inspiration of His Holiness Sadguru Shastriji Swami Shree Ghanshyamprakashdasji, the founder of Shree Swaminarayan Gurukul Kandari; whose life is decorated by the virtues of saintliness, whose method of worship is pure and reigns supreme, who beholds the knowledge of the soul and the knowledge of the form of God as it is, and who is working night and day to help teach others about the supremacy of Bhagwan Swaminarayan.



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The Author



Preface

Bhagwan Swaminarayan manifested on this Earth, not only to establish moral conduct, but to adhere to each and every wish of His saints and devotees. Along with fulfilling the wishes

of His saints and devotees, He performed many divine incidents that showed the lost, the way back to Akshardham. He performed these divine miracles as a child, in his teenage hood and in His adulthood as Bhagwan Swaminarayan.

Bhagwan Swaminarayan brought 500 saints with Him from His divine abode, Akshardham. Each of these saints exemplified the true way to please and attain God through their life. They compiled numerous scriptures to cultivate human life. Bhagwan himself inscribed the Holy Book of Shikshapatri, a code of conduct for all followers. It works like a manual for human behavior.

Following the same lineage, by the inspiration of Pu. Guruji (P.P. Sadguru Ghanshyam prakashdasji Swami) this book has been written by Parshad Shri Ajitbhagat especially for the younger generation of the 21st century. Bhagat's effort will help the kids of new generation to understand the fundamentals of the Swaminarayan sect and the supremacy of Bhagwan Swaminarayan through some selected divine incidents published in this book. The Basic Icons of Hinduism, like Dhruv, Prahlad etc. are simultaneously described to mold the better generation. This is book has versatile usage to build up the base of our Satsang. Next part of this book will be coming soon to our Satsang.

I hope, the readers of this book will be pleased by this humble effort. May Supreme Bhagwan Swaminarayan and Pujya Guruji bestow his ennobling blessings on all who have helped in making this book and to all readers.

Pu. Suvratvallabhdasji Swami

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May they earn the
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Ghanshyam Charitra



Divine Incidents of Bhagwan Swaminarayan's Childhood

After the birth of Ghanshyam, the environment and the villagers of Chhapaiya began to change. Ghanshyam displayed unseen powers and miraculous wonders that convinced people that not only was he God but that he was the Supreme God. With such feats, Ghanshyam changed the minds, hearts and souls of many.

1 Birth of Ghanshyam

It was the night of April 2nd, 1781 (Indian calendar *Chaitra Sud 9, Samvat Year 1837*) in the beautiful little village of Chhapaiya, in Uttar Pradesh, India. The whole village looked enchanted with its beautiful greenery, tropical birds, animals and tropical trees. At 10 o'clock there was a gathering around the home of Dharmadev. Children were dancing and cheerfully playing amongst themselves. Various people were bringing garlands of flowers, silken clothes and ornaments to celebrate the divine miracle which was about to take place. What was the reason for all this celebrating? The reason was that the Supreme Lord was going to manifest in the home Dharmadev(Father) and Bhaktimata (Mother). The time was 10:10 P.M. when the divine miracle took place. A newborn baby came into this world but it was no ordinary baby; it was the supreme Lord Himself. The divine light coming from the newborn filled the home of Dharmadev and Bhaktimata. The radiant light coming from the baby touched and filled the hearts of all who had His darshan (sight). After having the darshan, everyone started to dance and sing with excitement. They sang…

"Dharmagher aanand bhayo, jay bolo Ghanshyamki;
Chhapaiyama laal bhayo, jay bolo Ghanshyamki;
Bhakt ke Bhagwan bhayo, jay bolo Ghanshyamki;
Hathi ghoda paalkhi, jay bolo Ghanshyamki."

This is the hymn villagers sang which illustrated that Dharmadev and Bhaktimata had a newborn son named Ghanshyam in the village of Chhapaiya.

The celebration continued on throughout the night and demigods also came to have the darshan of Ghanshyam. They showered Him with flowers and chandan (sandlewood). This is a glimpse into the story of how Ghanshyam was born.

Moral: One should remember such divine incidents to develop affection for god.



Exercise 1:

1. In what village was Ghanshyam born in?
2. On what date was Ghanshyam born on?
3. What was the reason for the celebration?
4. Who came to shower Ghanshyam with flowers and chandan?
5. What were the names of the mother and father of Ghanshyam?

Did You Know?

At the age of 14, Nilkanth Varni visited the enchanting Lake Mansarovar located at a height of 14,950 feet in Tibet.

2 Engulfed in Flames

It was the 6th day since the birth of Ghanshyam. All the villagers adored Ghanshyam and found Him remarkable at such a young age. However, a demon called Kalidatt despised Ghanshyam because of His spectacular wonder and planned to kill the child-God. He sent his most senior demoness, Kotara, to kill Ghanshyam. Kotara came and stood near Dharmadev's home. She waited for Ghanshyam to be left alone yet as soon as she came near Ghanshyam to kidnap Him, Ghanshyam looked at her and suddenly light appeared from His eyes. Kotara started to burn and was engulfed in flames within seconds. She started to scream very loudly "I am burning !, I am burning !" Thus shrieking and struggling to extinguish the flames she died on the spot. All the



villagers gathered around the home of Dharmadev and were speechless and frightened to see her dead body. Soon after all were at peace after having darshan of Ghanshyam.

Moral: One should not build any kind of enmity(hatred) towards God or the devotees of God.

Exercise 2:

1. How old was Ghanshyam when Kotara came to kill Him?
2. Who sent Kotara to kill Ghanshyam?
3. What came out of Ghanshyam's eyes when He saw Kotara?
4. What did Kotara scream when she was engulfed in flames?
5. What ultimately happened to Kotara?

Did You Know?

When Nilkanth Varni reached Muktinath, Nepal he performed stern penance and meditation standing on one leg for two and a half months without food or water.

3 Multiple Forms

Bhaktimata had decided on having Ghanshyam's ears pierced when He was seven months old. It was the auspicious day of Sharad Purnima(full moon). Bhaktimata took Ghanshyam outside and sat Him on a platform across a tamarind tree. Bhaktimata called a man to have Ghanshyam's ears pierced. The man approached Ghanshyam with a needle and gently tried to hold His earlobe. As soon as he gripped Ghanshyam's ear, an ocean of light radiated from Ghanshyam, which temporarily blinded the man's eyes. He became quite frightened and began to scream.

Ghanshyam pulled back the light and disappeared from the platform. Bhaktimata looked around for Ghanshyam but could not find Him. Then she saw Him sitting on a branch of the tamarind tree. Bhaktimata called Rampratap(Ghanshyam's older brother) and requested him to bring Ghanshyam down from the tree at once. Rampratap started to climb the tree anxiously to bring Ghanshyam down. As soon as he was near the branch he was surprised to find Ghanshyam had disappeared.

Rampratap climbed down from the tamarind tree. He started looking for Ghanshyam and to his surprise, Ghanshyam was seated in Bhaktimata's lap. Then when he looked up at the tamarind tree, he saw Ghanshyam sitting on the branch of the tree! Astonished beyond belief for some time, Rampratap understood that he had just seen Ghanshyam in two separate places at the same time. Bhaktimata, Rampratap and the man who had come to pierce Ghanshyam's ears were all in wonder. Then Ghanshyam made His form on the tamarind tree disappear and then pleaded to Bhaktimata that, "I shall have my ears pierced only if you give me

something delicious to eat." Bhaktimata agreed and gave Ghanshyam some sweets to eat. Thereupon while sitting on Bhaktimata's lap Ghanshyam had His ears pierced.

Moral: God's powers are unfathomable beyond anyone's imagination.



Exercise 3:

1. How many forms did Ghanshyam take at the same time?
2. What happened to the man when he was about to pierce Ghanshyam's ear?
3. Where did Ghanshyam appear when He disappeared from the platform?
4. Who came to get Ghanshyam down from the tree?
5. What did Bhaktimata have to give Ghanshyam in order for Him to get His ears pierced?

4 A Test to See the Future

One time, Dharmadev was sitting and thinking about how the sage Markanday Muni came to see Ghanshyam and predicted that Ghanshyam's future was very bright and that he would become famous all over the world. So thinking about this prediction, Dharmadev thought only three kinds of people become famous in the world: kings, the wealthy, and saints. 'What will Ghanshyam grow up to become?' Thinking this he decided to test Ghanshyam.

So one day Dharmadev placed 3 different items next to each other on a low table. The items he placed were a sharp dagger, a gold coin, and a holy book. The sharp dagger represented a King, the gold coin represented the wealthy, and the holy book represented a saint. Then Dharmadev carried Ghanshyam and placed him in front of the items. To one's knowledge, most children like bright and shiny objects but not Ghanshyam. He



picked up the book and pretended to read it. Both Dharmadev and Bhaktimata were amazed and pleased with Ghanshyam's choice. Dharmadev was convinced that Ghanshyam would become someone great; someone who would change the course of history for all mankind.

Moral: By choosing the book, Ghanshyam shows that education is the best way to become prosperous in society.

Exercise 4:

1. What 3 items did Dharmadev set on the table?
2. What type of people did the 3 items represent?
3. What did the sage predict about Ghanshyam?
4. What did Ghanshyam pick from the three items?
5. What was the name of the sage who predicted Ghanshyam's future?



Did You Know?

Shreeji Maharaj successfully loosened class orthodoxy which was occasionally a source of discord in society. His divinity and teachings eradicated ego of class and status in the satsang fellowship.

5 Walking on Water

One afternoon Ghanshyam and His younger brother, Ichchharam, and a group of friends went to Meen Lake. All of them played many games in the water and underneath the banyan tree. Before they knew, it became very dark and then it started to rain very heavily. Ghanshyam and His friends thought the rain would subside but it continued on and became worse as time passed. Thunder and lightning disturbed and scared the small children. Ichchharam and the other kids started to cry. As the storm got worse the lake began to swell rapidly and within a short time the surrounding areas were flooded. All the children asked Ghanshyam, "How will we go home in these flooded waters?" Ghanshyam told all of the children not to worry. Then Ghanshyam told Ichchharam to walk behind him holding onto his shoulder. Ghanshyam instructed the others to follow in a similar manner; one behind the other, then Ghanshyam remarked "We shall walk on the water with ease."

So they started to walk, holding on to each other's shoulders. Before they knew it, they were walking on water by the grace and divine power of Ghanshyam. They walked across the water and quickly reached the other side. Dharmadev, Bhaktimata and the other parents witnessed this spectacular phenomenon. They were astonished to see the children walking on water behind Ghanshyam. By seeing this event, all the parents bowed respectfully to Ghanshyam, believing Him to be God Himself.

Moral: One should keep patience even in the time of distress and have faith in God.



Exercise 5:

1. What lake did Ghanshyam and His friends visit?
2. How did Ghanshyam and the children cross the flooded waters?
3. What was the name of Ghanshyam's brother that came with Him to play?
4. Who saw Ghanshyam and the other children walking on the water?
5. What started to happen when Ghanshyam and His friends were playing?

6 The Evil Kalidatt

All the children loved playing with Ghanshyam and even more than that Ghanshyam loved playing with the children. One day Ghanshyam's friends came running to Him, calling Him to play. They all went to the mango orchard which was east of Narayan Sarovar Lake. As they were playing, the evil Kalidatt arrived there. Kalidatt hated Ghanshyam because he was afraid that when Ghanshyam grew older, He would become powerful and would be loved by all. So with cruel intentions, Kalidatt decided to kill Ghanshyam. In the past, he had sent his evil servant, Kotara to kill Ghanshyam but due to her failures he decided to kill Ghanshyam with his own hands.

Kalidatt came and saw Ghanshyam sitting underneath one of the mango trees. Kalidatt had mastered the art of black magic. Chanting some powerful spells, he made the sky very dark. Then with another spell Kalidatt created a severe cyclone which brought heavy rains. The children became frightened and hid themselves in the hollow of a banyan tree. The cyclone was so fierce that it ripped trees out of the ground and threw them far away. With a terrifying crash, some large branches from the mango tree fell right underneath where Ghanshyam was sitting. Kalidatt laughed in triumph, thinking that Ghanshyam was crushed underneath!

Kalidatt then started to look for Ghanshyam's body underneath the heavy branches of the mango tree. To his surprise, he found Ghanshyam underneath the branches without a scratch, smiling innocently. Seeing this sight Kalidatt became very angry and frustrated. Then he picked up a large branch and just as he was about to strike Ghanshyam, the cyclone that was going around pulled Kalidatt into its middle. The strong winds hurled Kalidatt

into the trunk of the mango tree. Kalidatt died on the spot.

With the death of the evil Kalidatt the cyclone passed. All of Ghanshyam's friends came out of hiding just to see that Ghanshyam was giggling with joy underneath the tree. Dharmadev and Bhaktimata came and found Ghanshyam to be alright and picked him up and took him safely home.

Moral: Being the enemy of God will result in misfortune and disaster.



Exercise 6:

1. What was the name of the evil demon that came to kill Ghanshyam?
2. Why did he want to kill Ghanshyam?
3. What happen to Ghanshyam when the heavy tree branches fell on top of him?
4. What happened to Kalidatt?
5. How did Kalidatt make the cyclone and the weather so dark and rainy?

7 Punishment to the Mischievous Monkeys

One day Ghanshyam was sitting in the courtyard of His home eating chapatti and yogurt. A mischievous monkey leapt down from a tree, snatched the chapattis from Ghanshyam's plate and leapt back on the tree. Ghanshyam stretched out His hand caught the monkey by it's tail and threw it off the tree onto the ground. The monkey screamed with great pain. On hearing this, a group of other monkeys came running and surrounded Ghanshyam. Dharmadev saw this act by the mischievous monkeys, so he went inside the home to get a stick to scare away the monkeys. Dharmadev feared that the monkeys might harm Ghanshyam.

In the meantime Ghanshyam took as many forms as there were monkeys. Then each of Ghanshyam's form ran after a monkey. The monkeys became distressed on seeing so many forms



of Ghanshyam at one time. Ghanshyam hurled some monkeys; He pulled some monkeys by the tail, while He snatched the others by the ears. All of them shrieked and ran away. Then Ghanshyam made all of his other forms disappear, becoming one again.

Soon after, Dharmadev came out with a stick to punish the monkeys, not knowing that Ghanshyam had already scared away the monkeys. He was delighted and puzzled to see how Ghanshyam had gotten rid of all the mischievous monkeys in such a short period of time.

Moral: Never steal something that doesn't belong to you.

Exercise 7

1. What did Dharmadev do when he saw Ghanshyam in trouble?
2. What did Ghanshyam do when He was surrounded by the mischievous monkeys?
3. What did the monkey steal from Ghanshyam's plate?
4. Where was Ghanshyam sitting?
5. What did Ghanshyam do to the monkey who stole His food?

Did You Know?

On December 31st, 1801, Shreeji Maharaj manifested the mahamantra 'Swaminarayan' in Fareni.

8 Here, There, Everywhere

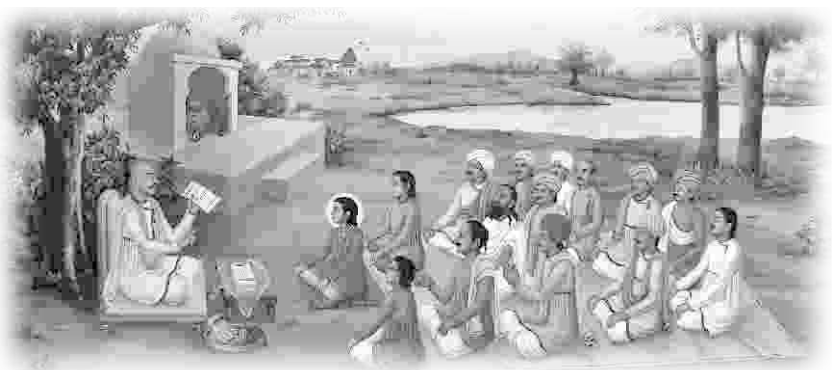
Dharmadev had taken his family to Ayodhya and Ghanshyam had just turned 6 years old. Ghanshyam liked to visit different temples in Ayodhya. In a short time, He memorized where all the temples were located. He especially liked Hanuman Gadhi temple and Ramji temple. So, at one time, Ghanshyam went to the Hanuman Gadhi temple. There, a holy saint was narrating divine incidents from Ramayan. Ghanshyam was wholeheartedly engrossed in the stories for some time and did not notice that it was nightime. He had forgotten that He had to return home.

At home, Dharmadev and Bhaktimata were worried that Ghanshyam had not come so they sent Rampratap (Ghanshyam's older brother) to find Ghanshyam and bring him home. Rampratap knew where to look to find Ghanshyam. Rampratap soon found Ghanshyam in Hanuman Gadhi temple. He told Ghanshyam "Everyone is worried, please come home." Ghanshyam replied, "Please go have darshan at the Radha Krishna temple nearby. By that time I will be ready and then we will go back home." So Rampratap went to have darshan at Radha Krishna temple. There, narrations from the Bhagwat were taking place. With great surprise Rampratap saw Ghanshyam listening there as well. Rampratap was astonished. He had just left Hanuman Gadhi where he saw Ghanshyam. Rampratap again called Ghanshyam and requested Him to come home with him. Ghanshyam replied, "Please go and have darshan at the Shiva temple, then we'll go home together."

Rampratap then went to the Shiva temple. Even there he saw Ghanshyam, very eagerly listening to discourses. Rampratap was confused and surprised at what he had seen at the 3 temples.

He thought to himself that Ghanshyam can't be everywhere. He thought at first, 'Something must be wrong with my eyes.' So to make sure this time Rampratap went very close to Ghanshyam to check if it was really Him, and yet again it was Him. So finally both Ghanshyam and Rampratap went home slowly in the dark, but for the longest time Rampratap's mind was in a whirl. He could not figure out how Ghanshyam was in all of the 3 temples he went to.

Moral: One develops innumerable qualities by listening to the narrations of God.



Exercise 8:

1. Who came looking for Ghanshyam when it turned dark?
2. How many forms did Ghanshyam take in total?
3. Name the three temples Rampratap visited and saw Ghanshyam?
4. What two temples did Ghanshyam especially like going to?
5. What kinds of discourses were taking place in Hanuman Gadhi temple?

9 Slabs of Stone Floating

Dharmadev and Bhaktimata and their three sons Rampratap, Ghanshyam and Ichchharam along with Suvasinibhabhi left to go to Ayodhya. On their way there, they had to cross the river Saryu to get to the other side. The river was very wide and deep. To reach the other side people had to take a boat however that day, only one boat was available and it could only take a few passengers at a time. Nevertheless, the river bank was crowded with people waiting to cross. Ghanshyam requested the boatman to lend them the whole boat. The boat man replied, "You will have to pay more if you want to reserve the whole boat. Are you willing to pay more?" Ghanshyam replied, "We will not give you more. We will only pay the regular fare." On hearing this the boatman refused the proposal, so Ghanshyam asked His family to follow him.

Ghanshyam took them to a nearby bank where there were some large slabs of stones. Ghanshyam asked His mother, father, Suvasinibhabhi and Ichchharam to sit on one of the bigger slabs. Ghanshyam and His older brother, Rampratap, sat on a smaller slab together. When Ghanshyam sat on the smaller slab, it began to float. Then as Ghanshyam touched the bigger slab, it also started to float and began to move across the water like a sail boat. People standing on the bank of the river were astonished to see the amazing sight of slabs of stone moving across the water like boats. All the people were convinced that Ghanshyam was God Himself. The two stones soon reached the other side and Ghanshyam and His family proceeded to Ayodhya.

Moral: When it comes to God, price should not matter.



Exercise 9:

1. What river did Ghanshyam and His family have to cross to get to the other side?
2. What village was Ghanshyam and His family going to?
3. Name the family members that were with Ghanshyam?
4. What happened to the slabs of stones when Ghanshyam touched them?
5. What had Ghanshyam requested from the boatman?

Did You Know?

In a short span of 6 years, (1822-1828) Bhagwan Swaminarayan astonishingly constructed 6 impressive temples in Gujarat, India.

10 Fishes Brought Back to Life

One day in Chhapaiya, Ghanshyam and his friends Prag, Madhav and Veni went to Meen Lake to swim. A banyan tree stood on the bank of the lake. The boys changed their clothes in the shadows of the tree. While changing, Ghanshyam's eyes fell on a lone fisherman in the middle of the lake. He was tall, dark and had a very muscular body. The fisherman was catching fish and putting them into a basket. Ghanshyam saw a huge pile of fish in the basket. By seeing the basket full of dead fish Ghanshyam became disheartened. So Ghanshyam wished for the fishes to become alive again. In the blink of an eye, all the fishes came back to life and leapt back into the water.

Realizing that Ghanshyam was behind this, the fisherman became very angry and rushed towards Ghanshyam to teach him a lesson. Ghanshyam saw arrogance in the man, and thought this proud man's arrogance must be dissolved or else he will continue killing innocent creatures. So Ghanshyam took the form of Yam Raja (King of Death) and stood up to the fisherman.

The appearance of Yam Raja was very disturbing. Yam Raja had blood-red eyes and long teeth that came out of his mouth. He was big and strong and had 18 arms and each arm held a different kind of weapon. The fisherman became terrified and began to tremble at the very sight of Yam Raja. Yam Raja showed him the vision of hell and the punishments that awaited him. Then the demons in hell gave the fisherman a thrashing. The fisherman's bones started to ache and he screamed, "Please save me, please let me go!" The fisherman realized his mistake and pleaded for forgiveness. He took a vow never to kill hence forth and prostrated

before Ghanshyam. With kindness Ghanshyam blessed him and let him go.

Moral: Never kill any living creatures, or else one will meet with great miseries and punishments.



Exercise 10

1. What did Ghanshyam see in the middle of the lake?
2. What form did Ghanshyam take?
3. What happened to the basket full of dead fish?
4. How many arms did Yam Raja have?
5. What happened to the fisherman when he saw the vision of hell?

Nilkanth Charitra



Divine Incidents of Bhagwan Swaminarayan's Teenage-hood

Ghanshyam Maharaj renounced His home and undertook a pilgrimage throughout India for 7 long years. During this time, He was known as 'Nilkanth Varni'. He traveled over 12,000 kilometers bare foot. His adventures reflect an amazing story of austerity, compassion, service, determination and bravery. The sole purpose of Nilkanth Varni's travels were to revive the fallen people of society and to revive the holy places of pilgrimage.

1 Pibek's Defeat

From Sirpur, Nilkanth Varni traveled to Kamakshi. In a small village near Kamakshi lived a Brahmin. The Brahmin was very virtuous in his early days but once, he came into contact with some evil people who completely changed his personality. The Brahmin started to eat meat and drink alcohol. He became a devotee of an evil goddess. He started to learn black magic and abuse others with his powers. He forced other saints to forsake their religious vows and made them his disciples. Then he taught the converted saints black magic to disturb and torment others.

Nilkanth was resting outside a village in a small garden. Some other saints were also resting there as well. In the evening, Pibek found out there were saints resting in a small garden nearby the village. He rushed towards the garden. Pibek had the intention of turning them into his disciples.

As soon as Pibek reached the garden he told all the saints including Nilkanth to break their religious vows, erase their chandlos, and become his disciples. The saints began to tremble but Nilkanth remained calm and collected. Nilkanth told the saints to stay calm and to keep their religious vows. Nilkanth showed His bravery by going up to Pibek and sitting before him and further challenged Pibek to try to hurt Him. Pibek became angry and told Nilkanth to back down. He told Nilkanth that he was merely a small child and that he has defeated great saints and kings in the past.

Undaunted, Nilkanth challenged Pibek once again. So in order to frighten Nilkanth, Pibek took a hand full of grains and murmured some spells and as soon he threw them on the ground, a big banyan tree near Nilkanth died instantly. Nilkanth started to

laugh. Enraged, Pibek told Nilkanth, "Now I will show you my real powers." So Pibek again took a hand full of grains and murmured some powerful spells and threw them to the ground. Soon a cloud of smoke formed and several frightening ghosts appeared from the smoke. They tried to hurt Nilkanth but could not do anything. Pibek commanded them but they stood still, and then the ghost turned and started to attack Pibek. Pibek's anger became out of control and he called upon the black dreadful demon named Bhairav. Bhairav came rushing towards Nilkanth, but could not do anything, and instead started to attack Pibek with his trident. Pibek began to vomit blood and soon fell unconscious.

On seeing this Pibek's disciples prayed to Nilkanth to pardon him. So Nilkanth looked at Pibek and he regained consciousness. Again, Pibek became enraged and called upon the evil spirits of Mahakali and Maruti to kill Nilkanth. The evil spirits came and bowed down to Nilkanth. They rebuked and asked Pibek, "Why do you want us to fight with the Supreme Lord Himself?" Soon after, the evil spirits gave a strong thrashing to Pibek. Finally,



Pibek was hurt badly and had learned his lesson. He came to the feet of Nilkanth and pleaded for forgiveness and said "You are the Supreme Lord, out of arrogance I tried to defeat You. Please forgive me for my arrogance." Nilkanth replied "I will only pardon you if you promise to give up black magic and become a devotee of God." At once, Pibek promised Nilkanth and soon, after both Pibek and his disciples became staunch devotees of God. They also recieved blessings from Nilkanth Varni.

Moral: Beware of evil people, they will derive you from the path of God.

Exercise 1

1. What happened to the banyan tree when Pibek casted his spell on it?
2. Who did Pibek call upon at last when he got very frustrated with Nilkanth?
3. How did Pibek become evil?
4. What did the ghost do after appearing from the cloud of smoke?
5. What did the evil spirits of Mahakali and Maruti ask Pibek?

Did You Know?

In 1802 Ramanand Swami ceremoniously appointed 21 year old Sahajanand Swami as the head of the satsang fellowship.

2 Sages of Navlakha Mountain

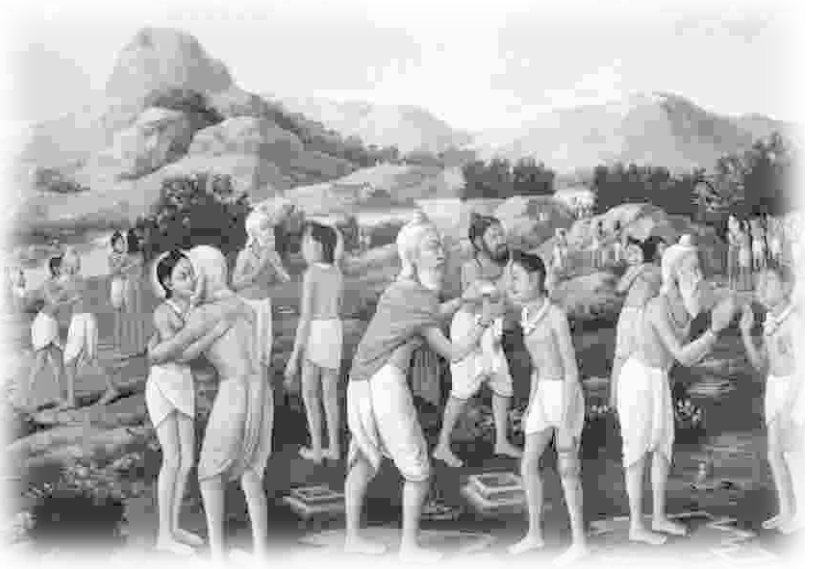
On His journey, Nilkanth approached Navlakha Mountain. 900,000 yogis were living on this mountain. All the yogis were 'self-realized' and had been performing penance for thousands of years on this mountain. Day and night the yogis remained engrossed in the worship of God. One morning, while all of the yogis were seated in mediation, a divine voice was heard from the sky. In a sweet tone it said "The Supreme Lord Himself has manifested on this earth and is coming to give you His darshan (sight). By having His darshan all of you will be redeemed." On hearing this inspiring voice the yogis became delighted. All the yogis started preparations for the reception of Nilkanth Varni. Some began to weave garlands of flowers for him; others prepared nice garments for Him.

Nilkanth started to climb the Navlakha Mountain. Again a divine voice was heard from the sky that told the yogis, "Tomorrow at dawn you will have the darshan of the Supreme Lord. By his darshan alone all of you will attain liberation and reach Akshardham."

The following day, Nilkanth finally reached the top of the mountain. On having the darshan of Nilkanth the yogis experienced immense joy. They all honored Him by giving Him fruits and garlands. Demigods and deities came and showered flower paddles from the sky. By seeing the 900,000 yogis warm welcome, Nilkanth assumed 900,000 forms and embraced each and every yogi. He fulfilled all the wishes of each and every yogi. The 900,000 yogis kept Nilkanth with them for three days and pleased Him with their services. At last the yogis requested

Nilkanth to forever reside in their hearts. Hearing this Nilkanth granted them their wishes and then departed from the mountain.

Moral: God is present everywhere and can assume as many forms as He desires.



Exercise 2:

1. How many yogis resided in the Navlakha mountains?
2. How many forms did Nilkanth assume to embrace the yogis?
3. What did the divine voice from the sky tell the yogis?
4. How did the yogis welcome Nilkanth?
5. What did the yogis request from Nilkanth Varni?

3 The Ungrateful Sevakram

Nilkanth Varni was traveling from Venkatadri to Setubandh Rameshwar. While traveling, Nilkanth encountered a saint by the name of Sevakram. Sevakram studied the Shrimad Bhagwat and other scriptures. However, it so happened that during his journey he became ill. He had 1000 Rupees full of gold coins with him but since he had no one to nurse him he began to cry. Nilkanth Varni had pity on him, and told him that he would serve him.

Sevakram was extremely ill, due to this he was unable to walk any further. So out of compassion Nilkanth prepared a 1-½ foot tall bed from banana leaves. Sevakram was suffering from dysentery and was passing blood, so Nilkanth would serve Sevakram by washing his clothes. For food, Sevakram would give Nilkanth enough money to buy supplies like sugar, salt, ghee and grains that would suit only one person. Nilkanth would bring the ingredients, cook the food that Sevakram preferred and then serve him. As for Nilkanth Varni, he would go to the village nearby and beg for meals. On some days Nilkanth would not receive any food so he would have to fast, sometimes for days at a time. Despite this Sevakram never once told Nilkanth that 'I have enough money, so cook for the both of us.'

After serving the sadhu for two whole months, he started to recover. So then Nilkanth and Sevakram started back on their journey to Setubandh Rameshwar. Sevakram made Nilkanth Varni carry twenty kilograms of his belongings even though by that time Sevakram was capable of carrying everything on his own. So realizing that Sevakram was ungrateful; Nilkanth abandoned Sevakram's company.

Moral: We should always appreciate favors done by others or else God would not be pleased with our actions and we would be considered ungrateful.



Exercise 3:

1. How much money did Sevakram carry with him?
2. What was Sevakram suffering from?
3. What did Nilkanth Varni make for Sevakram to rest on?
4. How did Nilkanth acquire food?
5. In the end what did Nilkanth do?

Did You Know?

Out of the 262 vachanamruts, 184 were delivered in the village of Gadhada.

4 Encounter with Bhairav

It was the night of Janmastmi and Nilkanth was traveling through a dense forest. He sat under a banyan tree for some rest. Bhairav(a demon ghost) encountered Nilkanth with his army of a thousand ghosts. Bhairav looked very dreadful. He was very tall, had blood-red eyes, had a broad face, a sharp beard and held a trident. The reason why Bhairav encountered Nilkanth was because the banyan tree that Nilkanth was meditating under was the demon's home!

While Nilkanth was resting, Bhairav made a frightening noise to wake up Nilkanth. What Bhairav didn't know was that Hanumanji was in the service of Nilkanth at that time. So hearing the frightening noise, Hanumanji countered, by making a roar that frightened the thousand ghost army. Nilkanth Varni opened his eyes an saw Bhairav standing in front of him. Bhairav immediately ordered his ghost army to go and kill Nilkanth and Hanumanji. The ghosts tried to attack Nilkanth but Hanumanji stood in front of Nilkanth. So the ghosts first attacked Hanumanji but they failed. Hanumanji gave all one-thousand ghosts a severe thrashing. Finally, it was Bhairav's turn to take down Hanumanji. As Bhairav came rushing with his trident Hanumanji took a larger form and became double the size of Bhairav, and with one single blow, Bhairav fell to the ground. Recognizing he was outmatched, Bhairav and his ghost army ran away with terror. Hanumanji again took his original form and came in the service of Nilkanth Varni. Nilkanth became very pleased by the devotion and faith that Hanumanji displayed.

Moral: There is no greater feat than to engage one's self in the service of God and his saints.



Exercise 4

1. Who came to aid Nilkanth Varni?
2. Why did Bhairav want to attack Nilkanth?
3. How many ghosts did Bhairav have?
4. What was the auspicious day in which this event took place?
5. What was the outcome of the fight between Bhairav and Hanumanji?

5 The Outcome of Greed

After traveling all around India, Nilkanth made his way to Mangrol. Nilkanth was sitting by a step well on the outskirts of the village. Meanwhile a village merchant came there. His name was Govardhan Sheth. He saw Nilkanth Varni and like a magnet he was attracted to his divine personality. He thought of giving some food to the celibate as part of the death ritual of his aunt. Then Sheth bowed down to Nilkanth and with folded hands asked if He would like something to eat. Nilkanth agreed and told Govardhan to bring him something.

Govardhan came and brought back some sweets for Nilkanth. Nilkanth took a little himself and then gave the rest to Govardhan Sheth as prasad. Then out of curiosity Nilkanth asked, "How did you get these sweets so fast?" Govardhan Sheth explained that today he had arranged a meal in memory of his aunt who passed away twelve days ago. So he explained the food was readily available at home. Nilkanth replied boldly, "Govardhan Sheth, your aunt is in Hell." Govardhan Sheth was taken back and appalled by hearing such words. He felt that Nilkanth was not telling him the truth. Govardhan questioned, "How can a devotee of Ramanand Swami go to hell? You're lying! She was a staunch disciple of Ramanand Swami. How could it be?" Nilkanth smiled and said, "If you don't believe me, than see for yourself."

As soon as Nilkanth looked at Govardhan, he went into trance. He saw the gates of Hell and his aunt who was suffering inside the various types of punishments. On seeing Govardhan she pleaded to him to save her from the misery. Govardhan was surprised and helpless. As soon as Govardhan awoke from the

trance he asked Nilkanth, "What sin landed my aunt in hell?" Nilkanth explained the whole situation in detail to Govardhan Sheth. Nilkanth said, "Your aunt had deceitfully stole Ramanand Swami's gold, given to her for safe keeping. And then when Ramanand swami told her to return the gold, she lied and said she didn't have it. This is the reason why she is in hell." Govardhan was shocked and recollected his memories to find that his aunt was greedy, but Govardhan didn't know that she would go as far as cheating her own spiritual master. Govardhan pleaded to Nilkanth to free her from the miseries of hell. With one thought, Govardhan's aunt was released from hell. By the grace of Nilkanth, she was born into the satsang fellowship. To become free from her sins, she performed severe austerities. Later, she attained ultimate liberation.

Moral: Compared to all sins, the sin of deceiving one's spiritual master is the greatest sin of all and one receives the worst kinds of punishments.



Exercise 5:

1. Why did Govardhan Sheth's aunt end up in hell?
2. In whose memory was the food made for and given to Nilkanth to eat?
3. What did Govardhan Sheth see in hell?
4. Where did Govardhan Sheth's aunt go after being freed from hell?
5. Where was Nilkanth sitting when he met Govardhan Sheth?

Did You Know?

A prostitute from the village of Jetalpur asked Bhagwan Swaminarayan to grant her the seva (service of grinding wheat); hence, Bhagwan Swaminarayan permitted her and at the end, purified her soul and granted her ultimate liberation. This shows the mercy and greatness of Bhagwan Swaminarayan.

6 Unseen Strength

After arriving in Loj, Nilkanth Varni continuously kept himself engaged in menial services of saints and devotees. Due to his innate willingness to serve, many people considered Him to be a servant and forgot about his divine personality. One day, two devotees arrived from the village of Shil, located nine kilometers away from the village of Loj. They requested Muktanand Swami to send some saints to collect cucumbers for the saints and villagers of Loj. Muktanand Swami sent Shukanand Swami along with some devotees to collect the vegetables from Shil. Overhearing the conversation, Nilkanth asked Muktanand Swami if He could accompany Shukanand Swami on his way to Shil. Considering Nilkanth's lengthy journey which he had recently arrived from, Muktanand Swami replied, "Your body is not fit for this kind of service. Please rest here." However, Shukanand Swami told Muktanand Swami that it would be okay if Nilkanth came along. So Muktanand Swami agreed and sent Nilkanth with Shukanand Swami to Shil, along with a devotee named Deva Sheth.

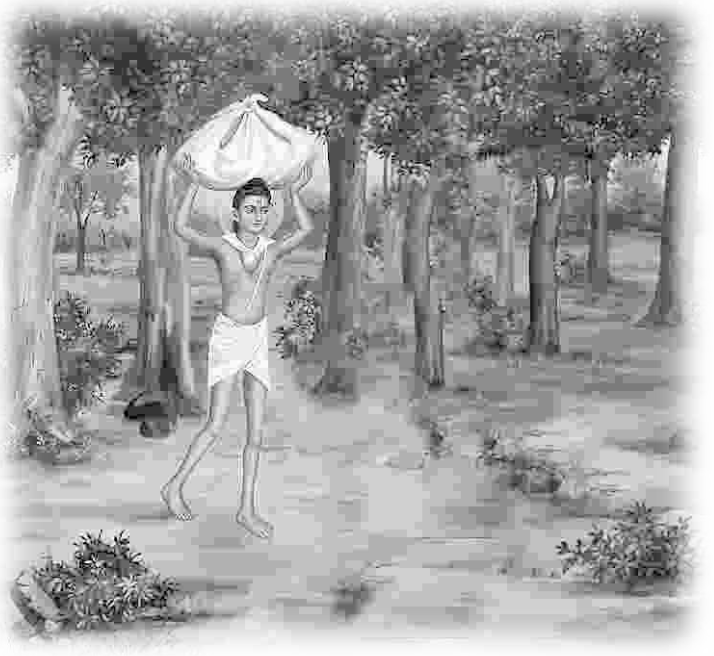
The devotees from the village gave 360 kilograms of cucumbers(793 pounds)! One of the devotees from the village brought a cart to help with transporting the cucumbers back to Loj. On seeing the cart, Nilkanth said to the devotee, "There is no need for the cart. Just bring a large piece of cloth and tie the cucumbers up within it." The devotees did so, and tied up the cucumbers into two bundles under the guidance of Nilkanth Varni. The heavier bundle weighed 320 kilograms while the smaller bundle weighed 40 kilograms. The devotees were quite surprised and wondered how such a heavy bundle could be lifted by anyone. The

surrounding villagers watched in amazement and questioned, 'Who will carry these bundles nine kilometers back to the village of Loj?' Nilkanth requested the devotees to lift the heaviest bundle onto His head. It took twelve devotees to lift the bundle simply to place it on Nilkanth's head. However, on closer inspection and to the great surprise of the devotees, the bundle did not rest on Nilkanth's head but instead remained suspended above His head in mid-air! Word quickly spread throughout Shil and the villagers who witnessed the miraculous feat were amazed by Nilkanth's strength. Deva Sheth carried the smaller bundle and set out with Nilkanth back to the village of Loj.

During the trip back to Loj, Deva Sheth eventually became exhausted by the weight of the 40 kilogram bundle. Seeing this, Nilkanth instructed Deva Sheth to stand on a nearby stretch of higher ground and place the bundle over His head. Nilkanth bared the weight of both bundles, knowing that Deva Sheth could no longer carry it by himself. Deva Sheth was astonished at Nilkanth's feat and could not stop thinking about the divine power Nilkanth was displaying before him.

Both Nilkanth and Deva Sheth finally arrived in Loj and Nilkanth set the load down behind the temple. Muktanand Swami saw that Nilkanth had just arrived from Shil. He then asked, "Who carried these bundles?" Deva Sheth replied with admiration, "It was Nilkanth Varni who carried both of these bundles from Shil." Hearing this, Muktanand Swami scolded Deva Sheth because he let Nilkanth carry such a heavy load. However, Deva Sheth then explained that the two bundles were suspended a finger's length in mid-air above Nilkanth's head the entire way from Shil to Loj. Muktanand Swami was astonished and proud of Nilkanth's great feat. Finally the two bundles were carried by sixteen saints into the temple.

Moral: Never doubt the strength or powers of God even though God may display human attributes.



Exercise 6:

1. How far was the village Shil from Loj?
2. How many cucumbers did the devotees of the village Shil give to take back to Loj?
3. How much did Nilkanth Varni carry over His head?
4. How did Nilkanth support so much weight above His head?
5. How many saints did it take to move the bundles into the temple?

7 Greed for Gold

Once there was a king who had a small kingdom in Nepal. Daily, this king would stand out on his balcony for many hours searching for saints who would pass through his kingdom. His motive was to find saints that knew how to produce gold through sheer will and learn the technique himself. When the king would spot a saint walking through his kingdom, he would send an invitation to them and treat them sincerely on their arrival. He would ask each saint to teach him the art of producing gold at will. There were many corrupt saints who would take advantage of the king's hospitality. The saints would ask the king, "Let us stay here for several years, and use your facilities. Then, you will have the power to produce gold at your will." Believing them, the king would then arrange for their stay and the corrupt saints would use the king's royal luxuries for years.

Due to his greed for gold, many false and corrupted saints made the king's kingdom their home. This situation persisted for many years. One day, as the king was looking out from his balcony, he spotted a child yogi in the distance. Impressed and drawn by this young yogi's divine glow, he sent his soldiers to fetch and invite him into his palace. The child yogi was none other than Nilkanth Varni Himself.

Nilkanth accepted the invitation and during his arrival at the palace, the king felt great peace in his heart. The king thought, "For many years, I have been inviting saints to my palace, and now I am almost out of luxuries. However, seeing this child, I feel now that he will fulfill my every desire." However, with greed on his mind, he asked Nilkanth to teach him the power to produce gold at will. Nilkanth replied, "No one can master this art in this age. You

have been misguided. Also, I am sorry to inform you but the saints living in your kingdom are not true saints. They have taken advantage of you and they have deceived you." Nilkanth then preached to the king that wealth, power and material pleasures are not the sources of true happiness. On listening to these preachings, the king felt enlightened and realized the folly in his greed and search for gold. He then removed the false saints from his kingdom. The king learned to experience peace and joy without the need for wealth, power and material pleasures. Nilkanth eventually left the kingdom and continued onwards with his journey.

Moral: One will never experience happiness by keeping Greed.



Exercise 7:

1. What was the main reason for the king to invite the saints into his palace?
2. What did the saints do after hearing the king's proposal?
3. Why was the king impressed by Nilkanth Varni?
4. What did the king learn about the art he sought for?

8 Encounter with a Wild Lion

In the middle of a dense forest in India, there was a small village. Outside of that village, there was a temple surrounded by a high well. On his journey, Nilkanth Varni happened to arrive at this small village. He stopped by a large tree nearby the village temple, laid out His ashan and sat down to rest. Soon, the mahant (temple head), exited the temple with several saints. They went to where Nilkanth was resting and asked Him if he would like to stay the night inside the temple, or at the village because it was not safe to rest outdoors. Nilkanth asked, "Why not here?" The mahant explained, "Every night, a fierce lion roams around in the same area where you are seated." If a man or cattle is seen outside it would be devoured by this ferocious lion. With great divinity, courage and confidence Nilkanth replied, "Then let it come here. I am not afraid of anything." By seeing the fearless personality of Nilkanth, the mahant was convinced that this was no ordinary boy. The mahant and his saints went back into the temple while Nilkanth peacefully rested underneath the tree. However, the mahant knew that the lion would still come, and so he waited and watched from the temple window.

Soon it was midnight and not even the moon's light penetrated the dense forest. Suddenly, a lion's roar was heard in the distance. Soon the lion, the mahant mentioned approached Nilkanth. Nilkanth, noticing the lion was approaching, Nilkanth raised His hand as if He was calling the lion. Looking through the window, the mahant was astonished. He wondered to himself, 'How could this be?' Nilkanth called the lion closer and closer to him. Slowly, the lion approached and when it was close enough, it stopped and sat by Nilkanth. The mahant thought that the lion

would rip Nilkanth apart with its sharp teeth and paws, but the ferocious lion had been easily tamed by Nilkanth.

Nilkanth gently stroked the lion's head. Soon, others heard about this event and climbed the temple's walls to have a glimpse of Nilkanth's feat. As dawn approached, Nilkanth instructed the lion to head back into its native home; the jungle. By His command, the lion left without uttering a sound. As soon as the lion had left, the mahant opened the gates of the temple and came running to where Nilkanth was seated. All the saints and devotees followed and then prostrated before Nilkanth. The mahant told Nilkanth Varni that, "From this day onwards, this temple is yours. You are our master, and we are your servants." Nilkanth humbly told the mahant that, "I do not wish for anything. I am on a mission that is far beyond anyone's intellect." With these words, Nilkanth disappeared into the jungle and continued on his journey.

Moral: Due to the divine personality of God, countless souls experienced bliss and attained ultimate liberation.



Exercise 8:

1. Where did Nilkanth sleep?
2. Why did the mahant ask Nilkanth to sleep inside the temple?
3. What was the animal that encountered Nilkanth?
4. What happened when it saw Nilkanth?
5. What did the mahant offer to Nilkanth after seeing Nilkanth's feat?



Did You Know?

Upon Shreeji Maharaj's departure to his own adobe (Akshardham), Shreeji Maharaj's horse Manki evaded food and 13 days later also left its own body to join bhagwan in his divine abode.

9 Change for the Better

After arriving in Loj, Nilkanth Varni would spend much time listening to the preachings of Muktanand Swami. Muktanand Swami was an excellent preacher and many devotees came from villages to listen to him. While listening, it was often the case that male and female devotees would sit together. One day, Nilkanth Varni saw this and felt great dismay in his heart. He did not enjoy this way of listening to Muktanand Swami's preachings. So, Nilkanth left the assembly, went to a different area and started a separate assembly with only male devotees.

Eventually, Muktanand Swami saw this and pursued Nilkanth in order to ask him what exactly he felt was wrong. Nilkanth explained to him that male and females are naturally attracted towards one another and by keeping a combined assembly of males and females, many problems would arise over time. Nilkanth told Muktanand Swami that many great saints, who lead divine, honorable and respected lives in society, are known to have fallen from their path of liberation simply from holding and attending combined assemblies. Nilkanth then requested to Muktanand Swami that to prevent such corruption and loss of morality in religion, it should be completely stopped. Nilkanth explained to Muktanand Swami that, "We are Naishthik-Brahmacharis(absolute celibates), so we should not touch, speak, or even look at any females. Only then will our mission remain pure, pious and free of any moral taints." Then, Nilkanth requested the female devotees to sit in a separate assembly, nearby the assembly of the male devotees, so that they could also listen. This was the first change Nilkanth made that impacted the saints and devotees way of living.

Moral: In order to became happy one stood follow the code of conducts established by God.



Exercise 9:

1. Who was conducting the preachings that Nilkanth and all the devotees were listening to?
2. Why did Nilkanth leave Muktanand Swami's assembly?
3. What is the main problem in holding combined assemblies?
4. What has happened to great saints who have held and participated in combined assemblies?
5. What was the new rule Nilkanth made?

10 *Lending a Helping Hand*

While in Loj, Nilkanth was instructed by Ramanand Swami to embrace a pillar if He wanted to stay in his fellowship. Right away, Nilkanth embraced Muktanand Swami, meaning Nilkanth lived and remained in the fellowship according to the words of Muktanand Swami whose spritutal master was Ramanand Swami.

One day, to test Nilkanth's obedience, Muktanand Swami sent Him to Mangrol to help the saints who were running an almshouse. The almshouse was managed by Atmanand Swami. Nilkanth loved to serve and believed that giving alms to those in need was a great service. So by the command of Muktanand Swami, He started to serve in the almshouse. One day, Atmanand Swami told Nilkanth to store dry fruits(cashews, almonds, dry raisins) and sweets in a storage room. In the meantime, Atmanand Swami went to the village to distribute food packets to the poor. When Atmanand Swami left for the village, many people started to flood the almshouse. There was nothing left to give to the poor people except dry fruits and sweets which Atmanand Swami had told Nilkanth to store and not give away to anyone. However, due to Nilkanth's compassionate nature, He could not bear to see the poor people remain hungry, so he decided to give the dry fruits and sweets to them. The storage room was quickly emptied.

After returning from the village, Atmanand Swami asked Nilkanth where the dry fruits and sweets were. Nilkanth explained to Atmanand Swami that many hungry people came for food, so he had given all of it away. On hearing what Nilkanth had done, Atmanand Swami became angry. He immediately expelled Nilkanth Varni from the almshouse.

Nilkanth left and sat at the village outskirts by a step well. Meanwhile, Govardhanbhai Sheth arrived there and saw Nilkanth sitting alone. Govardhanbhai wondered why Nilkanth was seated there by Himself. After inquiring with Nilkanth, he learned of the situation. Then Nilkanth thought of a plan and told Govardhanbhai to bring materials to build a tent. Nilkanth's idea was to start His own almshouse to help the hungry people of the village. Soon, Govardhanbhai brought many supplies and quickly the tent was built. Govardhanbhai also brought food to give for the almshouse to give to the poor. The almshouse was open and people started to flood it. Seeing this, Atmanand Swami became jealous of the young teenage yogi. However, he did not understand the fact that the main goal for an almshouse is to distribute as much food as possible to those in need. Nilkanth lovingly served the needy and His popularity grew in the village. Muktanand Swami was pleased by Nilkanth's humble service.

Moral: To please God, one should help the poor, through any means possible.



Exercise 10:

1. What did Ramanand Swami want Nilkanth to do?
2. What did Ramanand Swami mean by 'embrace a pillar'?
3. What did Atmanand Swami order Nilkanth Varni to do?
4. What happened when Atmanand Swami went into the village?
5. How did Atmanand Swami react to Nilkanth Varni's actions?



Did You Know?

Before becoming the elite saint of Bhagwan Swaminarayan, Brahmanand Swami renounced 13kg of gold he adorn on a daily basis. Nevertheless, he relinquished his kingdom, wealth and property to please Shreeji Maharaj.

Saints & Devotees Charitra



Divine Incidents of Bhagwan Swaminarayan's Disciples

Just like Shreeji Maharaj, His saints and devotees showed wonders and brilliance while encounteing adverse circumstances. The devotees showed faith which further exemplified their greatness. The saints and devotees demonstrated the proper way to please Bhagwan Swaminarayan with their extraordinary devotion, behavior and bravery.

1 Gunatitanand Swami was Pleased

One day Gunatitanand Swami had come to a small village with a group of saints. They went to bathe in a nearby river. The water was so cold that none of the saints could bare the temperatures. When Gunatitanand Swami came out of the river, due to the extremely cold water, he became unconscious. There was a small family having the darshan of the saints from afar. The family consisted only of a mother and her two children and they were quite poor. To survive, they would cut wood and sell it to others for money. On seeing Gunatitanand Swami unconscious, the mother became worried and sent her small boy to help out swami. The family used to collect wood and sell it for money so they could buy food and clothes. She told her son to use the wood they had collected for that day and make a fire next to swami. This way, the fire would gradually warm up swami's body and bring him back to consciousness. On hearing this command from his mother, the small boy asked, "Mother, what will we eat if we burn all of our wood?" The mother replied dearly, "Don't worry, we will find some way to get by but we have a chance to save swamiji's life". Convinced by his mother's words, the boy took all the wood they had and made a pile next to swami and started a fire. The heat from the fire warmed up swami's body and swami eventually became conscious.

Gunatitanand Swami asked his saints what had happened. The saints explained to him that the small boy brought wood and made a fire next to him, so that his body would heat up. Gunatitanand Swami was pleased by the boy's humane nature and told the young boy to ask for anything he wanted. The boy humbly replied, "My mother, sister, and I are poor and it is very hard for us

to get food, so please grace us with your kindness." Swami told the boy it would be done.

One day the king of that small village was walking in his garden. As he was walking, he spotted the poor family cutting wood. He saw the boy's sister and desired to marry her. Quickly, ceremonies were arranged and the sister eventually became a queen. Due to the connection the boy and his mother had they were able to live within the kingdom and share the luxuries of the kingdom. When the boy grew older he became the king's main leader and was rewarded with power and sovereignty. By the grace of Gunatitanand Swami, a poor family became very prosperous.

Moral: By the grace of a great saint, unwanted misery and misfortune are avoided and one attains happiness.



Exercise 1:

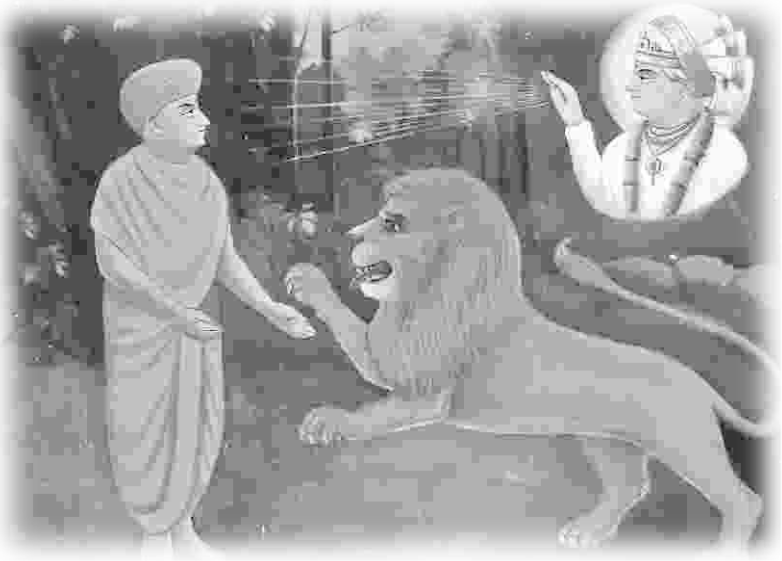
1. Due to what reason did Gunatitanand Swami become unconscious?
2. What did the boy do to make swami conscious again?
3. What did the family do to earn money?
4. How did the family become prosperous so fast?
5. What happened to the small boy when he grew older?

2 Akhananand Swami's Unique Encounter

With the command of Shreeji Maharaj, various saints would travel across India to different villages and cities in order to spread the Swaminarayan movement. The saints had to undergo many hardships while spreading satsang. Saints had to suffer from evil ascetics, robbers, ferocious animals and more.

Once, a great saint by the name of Akhananand Swami was traveling through a dense and dark forest. Akhananand was constantly engrossed in the form of God. He used to go where ever God took him. While traveling, he became lost in the dense forest. The road was so dense, even sunlight could not penetrate through the forest canopy. Help was nowhere to be found, and the nearest village were miles away.

As Akhananand Swami proceeded forward he was encountered by four ferocious lions. Swami thought to himself,



"Certainly, I may die today or in the near future, and one day or another I will go to the abode of God. Nonetheless, my body will provide food for these hungry lions." So instead of running, he went towards the lions and said, "Please, come forth." However, God always protects his devotees. So Bhagwan Swaminarayan, through his omniscient powers, prevaded into the lions and changed their thoughts. Suddenly, all four of the lions circulated around Akhananand Swami, bowed down and then left his presence.

Moral: Shreeji Maharaj protects his devotees even in the most adverse of circumstances. One just needs faith and patience.

Exercise 2:

1. How was the spiritual level of Akhananand Swami?
2. What did Akhananand Swami encounter in the dense forest?
3. What did Akhananand Swami think to himself?
4. What was the outcome of the scenario?
5. What role did Shreeji Maharaj play in saving Akhananand Swami?

3 Adbutanand Swami

It was the marriage ceremony of Kalyanji. Kalyanji of the village Kado, was a staunch and loyal devotee of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. As the marriage ceremonies commenced, Aja Patel, Kalyanji's uncle, received a letter from Shreeji Maharaj. Aja Patel's name was included within this letter. The letter stated that, 'All of you shall at once leave your homes and family, become saints, and go on a pilgrimage to Kashi.' Then at the end it stated, 'Whoever else reads this shall also do the same if they desire to please me.'

After the ceremonies, as Aja was about to leave, Kalyanji stopped him. Kalyanji asked why Aja was in such a hurry. Aja explained to Kalyanji about Shreeji Maharaj's letter. When Kalyanji read the letter and saw at the end what Shreeji Maharaj had stated to all who read this letter, an obsession arose in his mind full of vairagya (non-attachment). He broke his wedding bands and told his wife and family that he is going to become a saint. All the family members tried to explain to him that what he was doing was wrong but it didn't affect Kalyanji's mind. So along with Aja, Kalyanji immediately set out for Jetalpur where Shreeji Maharaj was residing at the time.

When he reached Jetalpur, he saw that all the devotees mentioned in the letter were present there as well. Shreeji Maharaj saw all the devotees listed in the letter, along with Kalyanji who was not on the list. Shreeji Maharaj asked, "Why are you here? Your name is not on the list." Kalyanji explained with great enthusiasm that, "Maharaj, towards the end of your letter you stated that, 'Whoever else reads this letter shall do the same as the other eighteen devotees.' So Maharaj, just to please you I have

come here leaving my family, home and possessions behind to become a saint." Kalyanji told Maharaj he completely gave up his marriage ceremonies. By hearing this, Maharaj became even more pleased. Shreeji Maharaj became so pleased that he made Kalyanji a saint right on the spot and named him Adbutanand Swami. Then Shreeji Maharaj sent the eighteen devotees mentioned in the letter back to their respective homes. Within some period of time, Adbhutanand Swami's two brothers came to take him back home but after they came to understand the greatness of Lord Swaminarayan, they also became saints. They were named Chaitanyanand Swami and Krushnanand Swami.

Moral: One should follow the commands of God while ignoring public ridicule and forsake one's wealth and family to earn the happiness of God.



Exercise 3:

1. How many devotees names were mentioned in Shreeji Maharaj's letter?
2. What did Shreeji Maharaj do on seeing Kalyanji had come to become a saint?
3. Even though Kalyanji's name was not listed, why did he still come to become a saint?
4. Where was Kalyanji when he read Shreeji Maharaj's letter?
5. Why did Shreeji Maharaj become so pleased upon Kalyanji?



Did You Know?

According to the Upanishads a person breathes around 21,600 times a day. It is broken up into two parts, day and night. Therefore, during the day we breathe 10,800 times and at night we breathe 10,800 times. Because it is not practical for us to chant the name of god during every breath, we should chant god's name at least 108 times. Every time we chant the mantra, its fruit is multiplied by a 100. Hence, if we chant it 108 times it will really equal to 10,800.

4 Eclipse Changed With a Single Thought

One time, Gopalanand Swami had arrived in the city of Vadodara. At that time a lunar eclipse was going to take place. An astronomer and a devotee of Shreeji Maharaj named Krushanaram Shastri were debating about the eclipse. The astronomer predicted the eclipse is going to take place the following day while Krushanaram opposed that idea and said there wouldn't be an eclipse. Both of them went to the king's assembly and took vows in front of the king. The astronomer said, "If the eclipse doesn't occur tomorrow I will cut my head off." Krushanaram said, "If the eclipse occurs tomorrow then I will cut my head off."

Later that night, Krushanaram looked at the scriptures thoroughly and found out that there would indeed be an eclipse of the moon tomorrow. Right away he went to the temple and explained the situation to Gopalanand Swami. Swami told Krushanaram that he had made a big mistake. Krushanaram explained how he had made a vow in front of the king and that he will have to die tomorrow. He also told swami that our satsang will be set back because the opposers are against our religion. He begged to swami to help him. Swami thought, 'If I save Krushananaram, then the opposers head will be cut, and if I save the opposer then Maharaj's devotee's head would be cut.' Then swami called the opposers and explained to them that there will be an eclipse tomorrow, but it will not take place within this hemisphere, therefore Krushanaram is also right. The astronomers stood up with anger and said, "No, the eclipse is going to take place here and your devotees head will be cut off!" They showed swami what was stated in the scriptures in detail and then rushed out of the temple. Then, with great confidence, Gopalanand Swami told

Krushanaram that the eclipse will not be seen here. He told Krushanaram to head home and rest.

It was the night of the eclipse and the time for the eclipse started. All the astronomers watched and after some time had passed, they were left wondering why they didn't see the eclipse here. They even sent some of their men 10 kilometers (6.2 miles) away to check in that part of the land but even to their avail, they saw nothing! No eclipse was seen. All the astronomers were surprised and told the king that there was an eclipse but to save Krushanaram's life Gopalanand had changed its position. This was how out of compassion, Gopalanand Swami saved Krushanaram Shastri's life.

Moral: By the grace of a great saint, one's fortune can be changed for the better.

Exercise 4:

1. What was the vow that Krushanaram Shastri took?
2. What did the scriptures state about the eclipse?
3. Where did Krushanaram Shastri and the opposing astronomer take their vow?
4. What event was going to take place that Gopalanand Swami changed?
5. How did Gopalanand Swami save Krushararam's life?

Did You Know?

The Shikshapatri is the essences of all scriptures making it authentic.

5 Test of Sunderji Suthar

As soon as Sunderji Suthar found out Maharaj had arrived, he galloped on his horse from Gondal to Bandhia. Maharaj was staying at Mulubhai's home. When he reached Mulubhai's home he took off his turban and fell at the feet of Maharaj. Maharaj inquired, "Who has come?" Sunderji replied dearly, "Your humble servant." Maharaj wanted to test Sunderji, so he asked, "What are the characteristics of a humble servant?" Sunderji replied, "One who does as he is told." Maharaj then said, "Shave your beard and mustache, become a saint, and go to Kashi on a pilgrimage right away."

Sunderji was a very bold devotee. He immediately called for a barber and had his head and mustache shaved. Then he put saffron clothes on, became a saint and fell at the feet of Maharaj. Then Maharaj turned to Dosabhai who was sitting next to him and asked if he remembered the time when Ramanand Swami told him to go on a pilgrimage of Kashi. Dosabhai said, "Yes Maharaj, I remember." Maharaj then commanded Dosabhai to immediately leave for the pilgrimage of Kashi with Sunderji without taking any extra clothes, walking barefoot. Dosabhai immediately bowed down at the feet of Maharaj and happily left for Kashi with Sunderji. Both of the devotees must have traveled three kilometers, when Maharaj turned to Muktanand Swami and asked about what he thought about his actions. Muktanand Swami replied, "Maharaj, there will be much trouble in the entire Kutch region. Dosabhai's home was our center for satsang activities in this region. Now we don't have any type of center."

Maharaj then commanded a horseman to call both of the devotees back. The horseman rode fast and met up with the devotees at a distance of three kilometers. He stopped and told them, "Maharaj has commanded to return immediately." Sunderji and Dosabhai then returned. Sunderji came and bowed down to

Maharaj. Maharaj asked again, "Who has come?" Sunderji replied, "Your humble servant." Maharaj once again asked, "What are the characteristics of a humble servant?" Sunderji replied, "One who does as he is told." Maharaj then said, "Remove your saffron clothes and put on the clothes of a householder." Sunderji once again put on the clothes of a householder. Then Maharaj became very pleased and gave prints of His divine feet on Sunderji's chest.

Moral: The best way to please God and his saints is to obey their each and every command.



Exercise 5:

1. What was Sunderji commanded to do by Shreeji Maharaj?
2. Who came with Sunderji on his journey?
3. Who swayed the mind of Maharaj to call back the devotees?
4. After Sunderji came back, what was he commanded to do by Shreeji Maharaj?
5. What did Maharaj give to Sunderji as a reward for his actions?

6 The Firm Faith of Galuji

Dharamsinh spurred on his horse from Vadtal and finally arrived at his destination of Dadusar. He made his way directly to Galuji's home. Galuji's mother opened the door, and told Dharmsinh that Galuji will return from the farm shortly. Finally, Galuji arrived at home and saw Dharamsinh with a letter. Dharamsinh explained that, "I have come from Vadtal and Shreeji Maharaj has sent me with this letter for you." After reading the letter Galuji was very excited and humbled by the letter. It stated, "On reading this letter, pack up all your belongings into a cart and come immediately to Vadtal to meet me, Shreeji Maharaj. P.S. Leave your mother at home, don't delay." Galuji immediately packed up all of his belongings and left for Vadtal without thinking about anyone or anything.

Later that night, Galuji's mother was alone in the empty home chanting the 'Swaminarayan' mantra with her rosary. After falling asleep, around 3:00 a.m. she was startled awake by a noise from the roof of her home and within seconds two men jumped in and took out their swords and asked for Galuji. Galuji's mother told the intruders that Bhagwan Swaminarayan had called him to Vadtal. The intruders were amazed and enlightened. They realized that Galuji was under the care of God. They thought that 'Only the all-knowing God knew our intention, that's why he called Galuji to Vadtal.' After a few moments, the intruders apologized for their behavior. They explained if Bhagwan Swaminarayan didn't call Galuji, then they would have looted and killed him. The intruders became eager to meet Bhagwan Swaminarayan and took refuge under him. A few days later, when Galuji returned home and heard the story from his mother, he was overjoyed. He thought to himself

that 'Bhagwan himself called me to Vadtal for my protection.' Galuji was very sincere and practiced devotion to please God throughout his life.

Moral: By following the commands of God, adverse circumstances and hardships are avoided.



Exercise 6:

1. Who came to deliver the letter from Shreeji Maharaj to Galuji?
2. What did the letter say?
3. Why were the intruders enlightened?
4. Who was present in the home alone when the intruders came?
5. What did the intruders decide to do after they found out that Bhagwan Swaminarayan had saved Galuji?

7 Kesar Miya

Everyone in the village of Vadhwan was discussing how Kesar Miya had changed his faith and allegiance. The entire Muslim community of Vadhwan was in shock. Yet, nobody ever tried to confront Kesar Miya because of his tremendous conviction of Bhagwan Swaminarayan's supremacy. He was the chief police officer of Vadhwan police station. He was well-known by the king and the royal family because of his noble character and commitment towards his duties. Finding out the Muslim community was in disapproval, he smiled contently. He knew no one had the courage to face him. Yet due to their degrading character in the community, the family members of Kesar Miya teamed up and tried to erase Bhagwan Swaminarayan name from the mind of Kesar. Kesar Miya was staunch and held his position. He explained to his family that, "After taking refuge under Bhagwan Swaminarayan, I have become free from many bad habits. So have I done something good or bad for my prestige and happiness?" The family was speechless yet relentless. So they continued on and told Kesar Miya that the whole Muslim community will sever all relations with him. Kesar Miya replied by saying, "Whether or not you keep relations with me is up to you but my relationship with the manifest form of God has been established." His relatives thought it would be easier moving a mountain than to shake the firm faith of Kesar Miya. They all left and never again disturbed Kesar Miya about worshipping Bhagwan Swaminarayan.

Moral: Firm faith like Kesar Miya can help one tackle even the most difficult of circumstances.



Exercise 7:

1. Why was the Muslim community of Vadhwan shocked?
2. How was the character of Kesar Miya?
3. What post did Kesar Miya have in the village of Vadhwan?
4. Who came to sway Kesar Miya's faith?
5. By taking the refuge of Bhagwan Swaminarayan, how did Kesar Miya become?

Did You Know?

Bhagwan Swaminarayan installed his own idol (Harikrishna Maharaj) in Vadtal on November 3rd, 1824.

8 Zamkuba's Determination

Zamkuba was the queen of Udaipur, a big city in Rajasthan, India. One day, while she was sitting in her palace, she heard from afar some people chanting the mahamantra 'Swaminarayan'. She quickly found two Brahmins chanting the mahamantra and inquired about whose name they were chanting. The brahmins explained, "We are chanting the name of the Supreme Bhagwan who has manifested on this Earth and is currently residing in Gadhpur, Gujarat." The brahmins described the life of Bhagwan Swaminarayan and the various miracles he has performed for his devotees. On hearing several of these divine incidents of the Lord, Zamkuba's desire to meet God greatly intensified. Though being the queen, she was aware that the king would not let her go. However, with a strong desire in her heart to meet the Lord, she decided to run away.

One night, when all were asleep, she fled the royal premises. She made a rope from her saris(traditional Indian garments for women), tied it to a balcony, and climbed down from the palace. She ran very fast and soon disappeared into the darkness. The next morning, the king found out his queen had ran away so he ordered his soldiers to track her. All the king's soldiers went looking for her on horseback.

In the distance Zamkuba could hear the approaching gallops of the horses, so she decided to hide. She knew that the soldiers would catch up to her and take her back to the king, so she took the only option left to her. She saw a dead camel's carcass and decided to hide within it. The carcass smelled terribly but due to her desire to meet God she hid in it for three long days. The king's soldiers went by the carcass several times but never thought to

check inside of it. She was the queen of Udaipur and the soldiers never considered the dead carcass as a hiding spot for the queen.

When she figured out the soldiers had left, she immediately started back on her miraculous journey. But the only problem was that she didn't know what direction Gadhpur was in. Along her journey, she met a brahmin who knew the way to Gadhpur. As they were traveling the brahmin found out Zamkuba's situation and learned that she had not eaten or drank anything for three long days. She had made a vow to herself that, 'I will not eat or drink anything until I meet Bhagwan Swaminarayan'. So the brahmin with his divine personality offered some food to the queen. Even though she had made a vow, to only eat and drink water after she had the darshan of Bhagwan Swaminarayan, the divine glow of the brahmin persuaded her to have some food.

Due to the long journey she was tired and quickly fell asleep after eating some food. When she woke up the next day she found herself on the bank of a river where some women were chanting the mahamantra 'Swaminarayan'. She looked around for the brahmin but could not find him in sight. When she inquired about where she was, she found out she was in none other than the village of Gadhpur. She took a bath and put on clean clothes and went to see Shreeji Maharaj.

After this long journey she had finally reached her destination. On having the darshan of Bhagwan she was speechless. Bhagwan then asked her if she recognized him. Zamkuba replied, "No Maharaj". Then Maharaj revealed to Zamkuba that He was the brahmin that she met along her journey." Hearing this, Zamkuba was quite surprised and deeply grateful. Bhagwan always praised about the immovable faith, devotion and determination Zamkuba possessed. Later Bhagwan changed the name of Zamkuba to Mataji and sent her to live with Laduba in Bhuj.

Moral: Unflinching faith and determination can take one to their destination (God).



Exercise 8:

1. Who was Zamkuba?
2. In what did Zamkuba hide in for three long days?
3. How did the brahmin help Zamkuba?
4. How did Zamkuba reach Gadhpur?
5. Who was the brahmin in disguise?

9 Rambai's Decision

Rambai was the daughter of a maid at Aliaya Khachar's residence. When Rambai's mother and father passed away, Aliaya Khachar took the responsibility of raising Rambai as a daughter. Aliaya Khachar was a staunch devotee of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. Aliaya Khachar was not married and remained a celibate his whole life. Aliaya would talk to her about the glory of Maharaj and His saints. By listening to such glories, she too decided to dedicate her life for satsang, just like Jivuba and Laduba.

Once Rambai got older, Aliaya Khachar started looking for a groom for her. Rambai found out Aliaya was looking for a groom so she approached Aliaya and told him, "You don't have to search for a groom for me. I have already selected a groom." Aliaya asked eagerly, "Who is he? I want to meet him." Rambai answered with confidence, "He is Bhagwan Swaminarayan." Aliaya thought she was joking and explained to her that, "I have a responsibility to get you married. So it is my wish as well as your late mother's wish that you get married to someone in our society. Rambai then asked Aliaya, "Why have you not married?" Aliaya Khachar was speechless and he suggested to Rambai that this issue must be consulted with Bhagwan Himself. So Aliaya Khachar wrote a letter to Maharaj explaining the dilemma. In his reply letter, Maharaj suggested to Rambai to get married and then dedicate herself to satsang. Once reading the letter, Aliaya Khachar was happy and told Rambai that, "Maharaj wishes for you to get married." She read the letter and agreed to get married.

In a short period of time, her marriage was arranged. During the marriage ceremony, Rambai asked the priest when the

ceremonies would conclude. The priest replied, "When you have done four rounds around the fire." When she finished her four rounds, she took off her bridal ornaments, gave it to the groom and said, "Brother, here are your belongings. I am going to dedicate my life to satsang." Aliaya Khachar was shocked and asked, "What are you doing?" Rambai took out the letter Shreeji Maharaj had wrote and showed Aliaya Khachar. She said, "I am doing just as Maharaj said, '…get married and then dedicate your life to satsang.' So now I've gotten married and I am going to dedicate my life for satsang." All her life Rambai remained unmarried and performed the devotion of Bhagwan Swaminarayan.

Moral: Dedicating one's mind, body and soul is the ultimate way to please the Lord.





Exercise 9:

1. Who was Rambai the daughter of?
2. What did Rambai decide to do after learning the greatness of Bhagwan and His saints?
3. What did the letter from Shreeji Maharaj say?
4. What did Rambai do after going around the fire four times?
5. What proof did she show Aliaya Khachar and what did it

10 The Devotion of Motiba and Laduba

One day, Motiba and Laduba were performing the puja of Thakorji (Idol of God). Their father Abel Khachar, came along and asked, "Why do you spend your time only after this idol? All day you feed this idol, give it a bath, and put it to sleep but what do you get out of it? So why don't both of you stop wasting your time and give away the idol to someone else?" Both of them replied that, "God resides and accepts our services." Abel Khachar replied, "If so, then show me a miracle from this idol or else I will punish both of you."

During the evening, Motiba and Laduba prepared a bowl of sweet milk for Thakorji. Then they folded their hands and prayed to Thakorji. "If we are your true devotees then please keep our reputation." After this prayer, they called Abel Khachar and told



him to stand in front of Thakorji. Miraculously, Thakorji drank all of the milk and threw the empty bowl at the feet of Abel Khachar. Seeing this unbelievable miracle in front of his eyes, he fell to the feet of Laduba and Motiba and pleaded for forgiveness.

Moral: God is not a mere statue but He is always present in all murtis (idols).

Exercise 10:

1. Of whom did Motiba and Laduba perform the puja of?
2. What did Abel Khachar think of Laduba / Motiba?
3. What did Motiba and Laduba pray for?
4. What did Thakorji throw at Abel Khachar?
5. What was the miracle that took place?

Did You Know?

Muktanand Swami is considered to be the mother of the satsang fellowship moreover Shreeji Maharaj also respected him as his spiritual master.

10 Family Members of Bhagwan Swaminarayan

- **Dharmadev:** Father of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. He was highly learned and respected by great spiritual scholars.
- **Bhaktimata:** Mother of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. She had pure devotion and was full of pious spiritual qualities.
- **Rampratap:** Older brother of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. He was like a father figure to Bhagwan Swaminarayan and was married to Suvasinibai.
- **Ichchharamji:** Younger brother of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. He always played together with Bhagwan Swaminarayan in his childhood.
- **Suvasinibai:** Wife of Rampratap and aunt of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. She was the daughter of Baldev.







- **Ayodhyaprasadji:** Son of Rampratap and the 1st Acharya of Ahmedabad Gadi. He was the older nephew of Bhagwan Swaminarayan.
- **Raghuvirji:** Son of Ichharam and the 1st Acharya of Vadtal Gadi. He was the younger nephew of Bhagwan Swaminarayan.
- **Bal Sharma:** Father of Dharmadev and grandfather of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. He was quite knowledgeable, devout and known for his pious qualities.
- **Chandan Masi:** Cousin-sister of Bhaktimata and aunt of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. She perceived the supremacy of Ghanshyam in the temple of Gonda.
- **Bashram Mama:** Brother of Bhaktimata and uncle of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. He brought Ghanshyam to the ceremony for His sacred thread ritual on his shoulders.

10 Noble Saints of Bhagwan Swaminarayan









- **Muktanand Swami (Mother of All):** Like the nature of a mother, Muktanand Swami nurtured saints and devotees with his compassion. He was an ideal saint with innumerable attributes. Bhagwan Swaminarayan often called Muktanand Swami his 'guru' (spiritual master).
- **Gopalanand Swami (Yogic Master):** Swami was an expert in the art of yoga and had mastered Astang-yoga. Before returning to Akshardham, Bhagwan Swaminarayan made Gopalanand Swami the head of the whole fellowship.
- **Brahmanand Swami (Master poet):** Swami was a born poet, who composed many poems and hymns. He was also an outstanding architect who constructed three grand temples(Vadtal, Junagadh, Muli). He also had a friend-like relationship with Bhagwan Swaminarayan.
- **Nityanand Swami (Renowned Scholar):** Swami had a thorough understanding of many scriptures, and he had complete spiritual knowledge. No one ever dared to debate against swami. He defeated all of his opponents in various debates he attended.

- **Nishkulanand Swami(Idol of Non-Attachment):** Swami was an ideal example of penance, renunciation and non-attachment. He has composed two essential scriptures for the satsang fellowship. The first scripture is 'Bhakta Chintamani' (the life history of Bhagwan Swaminarayan) and the second scripture is 'Nishkulanand Kavya'(composed of twenty-two small books).



- **Premanand Swami(Affectionate poet):** Swami was a natural born poet, a great singer and a proficient musician. While singing Premanand Swami would be deeply engrossed in the idol of God. By listening to one of Premanand's Swami hymns, one would also become engrossed in the form of God with great affection.



- **Gunatitanand Swami(Symbol of Faith):** Swami is very well known for his inspiring talks in 'Gunatitanand Swami Ni Vato'. The book is composed of talks narrating what kind of faith, devotion and knowledge one should have to attain God. Also, Gunatitanand Swami was the head of Junagath Mandir for most of his life.



- **Shukanand Swami (Secretary of Maharaj):** Swami was known as the right hand of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. Swami was very humble and obedient and used to write letters for Maharaj. He was one of four authors of the Vachanamrut.





- **Shatanand Swami(Great Author):** Swami composed 'Satsangijivan' - a divine scripture Narrating Bhagwan Swaminarayan's various life events/miracles. He also composed 'Shikshapatri Bhashya' which gives a description for each and every verse in the Shikshapatri. He also experienced 'Samadhi'(trance) and constantly remembered the divine form of God.



- **Devanand Swami(Outstanding Poet):** Swami wrote many hymns and kirtans describing the effects of keeping bad habits, the inescapable cycle of birth and death, the very scarce availability of the human life, etc. He was also an expert in playing the sarangi (an Indian classical instrument).

Did You Know?

Discourses that comprise the Vachanamrut began on November 21st, 1819 and concluded on July 25th, 1829.

10 Noble Male Devotees of Bhagwan Swaminarayan



- **Dada Khachar:** Was the king of Gadhpur and a trustworthy devotee of Bhagwan Swaminarayan.
- **Gordhanbhai:** Held an elevated spiritual state and was constantly engrossed in the form of God.
- **Parvatbhai:** Was constantly engrossed in the form of God and had the darshan of twenty-four incarnations of God.
- **Joban Pagi:** A fierce robber who was converted into a staunch and faithful devotee by the grace of Bhagwan Swaminarayan.
- **Uka Khachar:** Was constantly serving God and His saints with pure devotion and no desires.
- **Jinabhai:** A devotee from the village of Panchala who had firm devotion towards Bhagwan Swaminarayan.
- **Bhaguji & Ratanji:** The great brave parshads of Bhagwan Swaminarayan who were in His constant service.
- **Dinanath Bhatt:** Renowned scholar, postmaster and disciple of Bhagwan Swaminarayan.
- **Kesar Miya:** A Muslim that held allegiance and refuge towards Bhagwan Swaminarayan and was known for his faith, bravery. and faithfulness.
- **Galuji:** Native of the village Dadosar and a staunch devotee of Shreeji Maharaj, who persevered through the most difficult of Shreeji Maharaj's commands.

10 Noble Female Devotees of Bhagwan Swaminarayan

- **Jivuba:** Sister of Dada Khachar. She was a staunch and faithful female devotee who lived in Gadhada and had strong devotion for Bhagwan Swaminarayan.
- **Laduba:** Sister of Dada Khachar and a faithful female devotee who also possessed unparalleled devotion for Bhagwan Swaminarayan.
- **Rajba:** Cousin of Jivuba from the village of Vankiyaa whose love for Bhagwan Swaminarayan was immense. She remained a celibate all her life.
- **Ladhiba:** From the region of Bhuj, Ladhiba was a disciple of Ramanand Swami and held an elevated spiritual state. She preached to female devotees with efficiency.
- **Zamkuba:** The queen of Udaipur who forsaked her kingdom to please Bhagwan Swaminarayan. Her name was later changed to Mataji, by Lord Swaminarayan Himself.





- **Gangaba:** An affectionate female devotee from the village Jetalpur who had a great relationship with Bhagwan Swaminarayan.
- **Rambai:** A brave and staunch female devotee who dedicated her life to satsang and left behind her marriage ceremonies to please Bhagwan Swaminarayan.
- **Kushal Kuvarba:** The queen of Dharampur, who often invited Bhagwan, His saints, and devotees to her palace for various religious events which showed her hospitality and affection for Bhagwan Swaminarayan.
- **Raiba:** A native of the village Kundal and a disciple of Ramanand Swami. She was very affectionate towards Maharaj, His saints, and devotees and had an elevated spiritual state.
- **Meenba:** An affectionate female devotee from the village of Kariyani, who had an elevated spiritual state of knowledge.

Moral Stories

1 Dhruv

King Uttanpad had two wives and two sons. One day, the eldest son, Dhruv, was insulted as he tried to sit next to his stepbrother, Uttam. He was chastised and was told not to sit on the King's lap unless he proved his worthiness and displayed his devotion through penance. Dhruv wasn't pleased to hear this and made a decision to go to the forest to please Vishnu Bhagwan.

He encountered Naradji along the way who explained to him that the forest was much too dangerous for such a small child to travel in. He explained that animals were fierce and the weather was unpredictable in the forest. Dhruv was undaunted by these words and told the great sage that he would undergo these strict conditions in order to please God. Naradji was quite pleased on hearing this and was impressed at Dhruv's resolve. Dhruv soon reached a place in the



forest known as 'Maduyan'. He performed strict penance by standing on one leg and in that position, prayed to God for five continuous months.

Vishnu Bhagwan was greatly pleased by Dhruv's penance and decided to appear before Dhruv personally. He told Dhruv of how pleased he was for undertaking such a difficult penance and would grant him a wish. Dhruv requested from Bhagwan to shower him with good blessings. Vishnu Bhagwan granted him this wish and Dhruv finally achieved his goal. He had met with God himself!

When he returned he was welcomed with great honors. Later in life, Dhruv became a King and served his people devoutly. He is still remembered today for his great characteristics and is referred to as the North Star as God himself gave him that position in the sky as a blessing.

Moral: Determination and unwavering faith on a course of action can lead to success.

Did You Know?

Bhagwan Swaminarayan promoted equality for women to practice their spiritual education and worship destroying the barrier of discrimination between the males and females.

2 Satyakam

Satyakam was the son of Jabal. Satyakam long had a wish to study so he decided to leave his home and search for a Guru (spiritual master). He made his way to the ashram of Gautam, a sage, and asked to be his pupil. Gautam asked Satyakam about his family. Satyakam didn't know much about his family with the exception of his mother. So he returned home to ask his mother about his family history.

His mother Jabal, told him to tell the Guru his name, and his mother's name, simply what he knew already. He returned to the Guru and told him all he knew. Gautam then explained to Satyakam that before he could teach him, Satyakam would need to herd four-hundred weak cows from the ashram and that he could not come back until there were one-thousand cows. Satyakam left with the cows without saying a single word. Theie he looked after the cows with love and care.



It took him several years to raise them to reach one-thousand but he did so ensuring that every single cow was quite healthy. Upon returning to his Guru he saw that the Gods and deities were quite pleased with the extraordinary level of dedication he displayed. He was then blessed with boundless knowledge and reached a state of enlightenment. He was so much enlightened that Gautam could see such light emanating from Satyakam's face. He accepted him as his pupil and blessed him with Brahmavidya(Self-Realization). Today, Satyakam is a symbol of dedication, devotion, love and service towards his guru.

Moral: Following the words of a guru without any hesitation can give one great fruits.

Did You Know?

A kanthi is a symbol of our 'sharnagati' to god. Sharnagati means surrendership to god. A kanthi reminds us that god is with us at all times and protects us from all evil influences.

3 Eklavya

During the Mahabharat period, there was a tribal chief who begot a young boy named Eklavya. Eklavya was interested in learning the skill of archery, so he learned from the only teacher he could find, his father. One day, Eklavya came upon a man named Dronacharya. at that time Dronacharya was teaching archery to the princes of Kuru and Pandav. Eklavya, with his fond interest in archery, approached Dronacharya and sought instruction from him. Dronacharya explained to him that he would only teach boys of the Brahmin and Kshatriya classes, and turned Eklavya down.

Eklavya then decided to learn on his own. However, he first constructed an image of Dronacharya from clay, and then practiced archery in front of it every day. Eventually, he became adept at archery. While training one afternoon, a dog approached him and disturbed him during his usual practice. Such was his skill that he shot five arrows into the dog's mouth



and the dog was silenced without any harm at all. Dronacharya and his students were passing by that area and found this dog with five arrows in its mouth, though it was completely unharmed, they word quite surprised. They then quickly found Eklavya practicing archery nearby. They were perplexed by Eklavya's skill. Eklavya prostrated before the approaching Dronacharya, who then saw his idol in clay nearby. He quickly realized that Eklavya had selected him as his Guru without his acknowledgement.

Dronacharya became angry that Eklavya had learned archery without his permission. Eklavya understood what he had done and asked Dronacharya what he should give him. Dronacharya instructed him to give him his right thumb. Without any hesitation, Eklavya took out his knife and cut off his right thumb, and then placed it at the feet of his guru, who was quite surprised. This was the level of devotion Eklavya had for Dronacharya.

Moral: Determination and confidence can help one earn the blessings of the great.

Did You Know?

The punya (merit) from donating one crore (10 million) cows is less than one sixteenth part of the fruit attained by observing one Ekadashi fast.

4 Nachiketa

There is an inspiring story in the Upanishad about a little boy named Nachiketa. He was the son of Udalak Rishi. Udalak Rishi organized a yagna to please the deities. It was customary in those days to donate cows to Brahmins at the end of the yagna. Udalak Rishi was a miser(cheapskate) and he donated old and weak cows to the Brahmins. None of the cows yielded any milk, which disturbed Nachiketa. So he asked his father about it, "Father, to whom would you give me in charity?" This made his father very angry, but he decided not to say anything. When Nachiketa repeated the question, Udalak Rishi lost his temper and said, "I give you to Yama." Yama is the king of Yamapuri (hell). Hearing this Nachiketa went to Yama's kingdom. It was his father's command. It would not be proper for him to disobey his father. 'I should fulfill his wish,' thought Nachiketa, even if it means leaving home.



However his father realized his mistake and tried to stop him but Nachiketa did not stop. He reached Yama's kingdom and was told by Yama's guards that he had gone out for three days. Nachiketa decided to wait at his doorstep till he returned. He waited for three days, without any food or water ! Yama returned on the fourth day and saw little Nachiketa at his doorstep. He felt pained for keeping a Brahmin waiting without welcoming him, without food or water. It was a sin

not to welcome an atithi (guest) at the doorstep. He scolded his wife Yami for not welcoming him. Both rushed around the house to serve Nachiketa. One went to fetch water and the other brought a mat for him to sit on. Yama, still did not feel completely satisfied in serving him so he told Nachiketa, "Dear child, I have offended you by keeping you waiting for three days. To wash my sin away I request you to ask for three boons (wishes)."

Nachiketa declared, "My first wish is, when I return home may my father welcome me lovingly. My second wish is to grant me the knowledge by which I can be worthy of living in the heavens. My third and last wish is to grant me atma gnan (knowledge of the soul)." Yama granted the first two boons immediately and tried to convince Nachiketa to give up his third wish. He offered him gold, pearls, coins, horses, elephants and even the happiness of Swarg (heaven) instead. "No, I do not wish for anything else," replied Nachiketa firmly. Finally, Yama granted him the third boon and Nachiketa was enlightened with the knowledge of the soul.

Nachiketa inspires us to be kind to all creatures, to respect one's parents, to be strong willed to do something one has decided even in the face of difficulties and or obstacles and to seek for eternal happiness.

Moral: Respect and follow ones parents and elders.

5 Hanuman

Long ago, a great and long war was waged against Ravan, the King of Lanka. During the height of the war, Ravan's eldest son Indrajit, shot special arrows at the great heroes of the war, among them was Ram and Laxman. This left the heroes temporarily unconscious. During this time, the King of Bears, Jambuvan, regained consciousness and sought for Hanuman. Hanuman appeared before Jambuvan, waiting for instructions. Jambuvan asked Hanuman to fly to the distant North and return with the mountain of medicine. The medicine from this mountain was such that they could help the heroes regain consciousness.

Hanuman flew to the north, faster than a blink of an eye. As he neared the unconscious heroes, the very smell of the mountain was carried over, drawing the heroes back into consciousness. Hanuman had lifted this entire mountain on his own. Such was his strength and devotion. However, its smell also brought the evil back to life. Therefore, King Ravan, upon seeing this ordered his



soldiers to throw his previously fallen soldiers back into the sea, and so they would be lost forever.

Because of these extraordinary actions, the war ended in the heroes favor. As it ended, Hanuman carried the good news back to Sita, Ram's wife. Sita was so pleased on hearing the news, she gave an extremely precious pearl necklace to Hanuman. Hanuman graciously accepted the necklace and then proceeded to pluck each pearl from the necklace. As Sita and others watched, Hanuman asked if Ram could be found within each and every pearl. Hanuman then said that if Ram was not to be found within them, he would have no need for such a necklace. This is the level of devotion that Hanuman possessed for Ram.

Moral: The extraordinary devotion of hanuman is an example for all to follow.

Did You Know?

The dandvat (prostration) is a symbol of reverence to Bhagwan and is performed by males. The following component of the body makes a proper dandvat. (Feet, Knees, Chest, Hands, Speech, Eyes, Forehead, and Mind)

6 Mirabai's Love For Shri Krishna

Approximately 500 years ago, the kingdom of Rajasthan was the land of warriors, sages, sadhus and kings. It was at this time Princess Mirabai was born. Her mother passed away when she was very young and her father, Ratan Singh, was very occupied with the kingdom. Growing up at her grandfather's palace; Mirabai was deeply devoted to Krishna Bhagwan. After Mirabai's grandfather passed away, her uncle became the new king. He arranged her marriage with Prince Bhoj Raj, the eldest son of Rana Sanga of the Rajput kingdom of Mewar. This was the most prominent and powerful Rajput kingdom in the early 16th century. But Mirabai was not interested in the status, rich silks and jewels that her new family had to offer. She was interested instead, in performing bhakti (devotion) of Shri Krishna, whom she referred to as 'Giridhar' soon after, she got married to the prince. Mirabai's new family viewed her intense devotion to God as a problem. She refused to worship her husband's family goddess because she only knew of one God, Shri Krishna Bhagwan. To offer her devotion to Shri Krishna Bhagwan, she would sneak out of the palace and go to the village mandir. Her father-in-law was not happy with this and tried to kill her with a poisonous drink. Not knowing it was poisonous, she drank the entire glass. But her love and devotion to Shri Krishna was such that God saved her from the effects of the poison. When her father-in-law passed away, Mirabai was coroneted as the queen. Even as the queen, she continued to visit the village mandir. It was at this mandir that Mirabai met her guru, Raidas, who further inspired Mirabai's devotion. Raidas was deeply moved by her devotion. He gave her an ektaro (musical instrument) as a gift, which she played when she sang her kirtans.

Due to this, she was subjected to even more hardship and punishment. After her husband died, Mirabai locked herself in a room. The difficulties became unbearable and began to come in the way of her devotion. She then decided to leave the palace for good and set off on a pilgrimage to Mathura, Vrundavan and Dwarka. Mirabai was a born poet. She expressed her deep devotion to Shri Krishna. With her ektaro in hand, she sang hundreds of kirtans that were full of humility love and dedication. Even today many people still sing her kirtans. Although she was a queen, she traded all her riches to worship Shri Krishna Bhagwan.

Moral: The devotion of god has more worth than any riches or people in this world.



7 Shravan

A sage by the name of, Shantunu lived with his wife. They begot a son they named Shravan. Shravan served devoutly to his blind parents and tended to their every need. His life was very much centered on devotion towards his parents. One day, his parents told him that they had little time left, and they wished to go on a pilgrimage across India's holy land. Shravan, loving his parents as much as he did, agreed immediately and made a special carrier for them. Together, they left the village and he carried them on this special carrier across India. One day, they reached the outer regions of the village of Ayodhya. It was in this village that Shri Ramchandra Bhagwan was born. Shravan left them on the special carrier and went to fetch water for them at the nearby Saryu River. However, on attempting to fill his small pot with



water, an arrow struck him in the chest. A King nearby was hunting for deer and accidentally shot the arrow through his chest. The King's name was Dashrath. He had thought young Shravan was a deer drinking water from the river. Shravan was in great pain and King Dashrath dreaded hearing the shrill from Shravan's voice. He approached the dying Shravan and was very much upset at this sight. He begged for forgiveness.

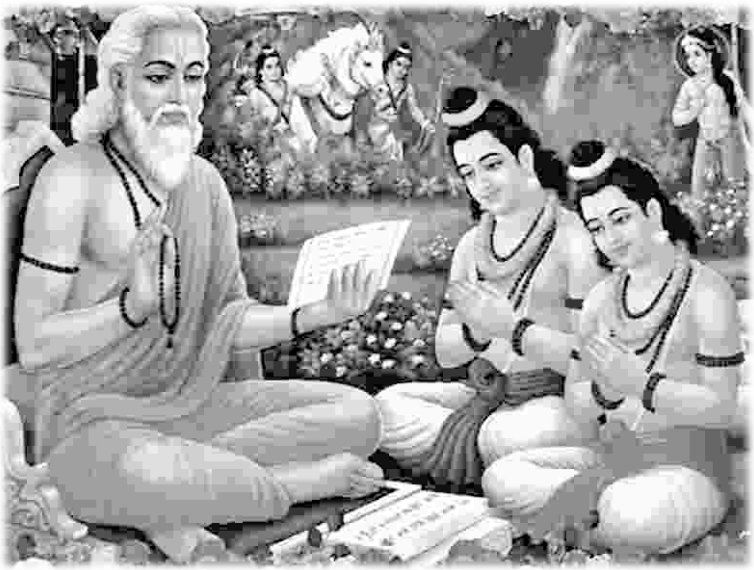
Shravan told him that his parents were very thirsty and needed water. He asked if the King could take a pot full of water for them and then immediately passed away. King Dashrath brought this pot of water to them and told them of their son's death. Shravan's parents grieved very much hearing this tragic event. King Dashrath lifted the carrier and took them to their son's body. Shravan's parents were very upset. King Dashrath begged to them for forgiveness. Shravan's parents told the King that they did not want to curse him but that all things were in God's hands. However they also told him that because of their pain, the King will soon grieve for his son, and then it came true. King Dashrath also died later, and longed for his son Ram.

Moral: Take care and love one's parents as if they are God.

8 *Valmiki Rishi*

During Treta Yug, a time thousands of years ago, a man named Ratnakar lived in the forests along the banks of the holy river Ganga. Ratnakar was a cruel hunter and a fearless thief. Everyone was afraid of Ratnakar. When he walked in the forest, even the birds would fly to their nests, and the animals would look for a place to hide. One day, Ratnakar was hiding by the side of a forest pathway, waiting for a victim. Along came the great sage Naradji, who was walking peacefully, admiring the beauty of the forest and singing kirtans in praise of God. Ratnakar jumped out in front of him and demanded, "Hand over all you have or else!"

With love flowing from his eyes, Naradji said smilingly, "My dear son, all that I have are these rags I wear. If you want them, you may take them!". Naradji's fearlessness surprised Ratnakar. As Ratnakar gazed in Naradji's eyes, his cruel mind melted.



Naradji saw this transformation and lovingly explained to Ratnakar how stealing and killing animals was very sinful. He reminded Ratnakar that although his family was eager to share the fruits of his bad actions, they would not share his sins. Upon this realization, Ratnakar fell to Naradji's feet and asked for forgiveness. Naradji taught him to recite the holy name of Ram. Ratnakar sat down in the forest and continued chanting with closed eyes. His concentration was so deep that he remained in meditation for years. In fact, he sat there so long in meditation that an anthill grew all around him! One day Naradji came that way and carefully cleared away the anthill. With a kind smile, Naradji declared Ratnakar a sage, "As you are now reborn from a 'Val-mika' (ant-hill), from now you'll be known as Valmiki. With tears of joy in his eyes, the sage Valmiki began his new life. He built an ashram near the river Ganga that provided refuge to Sitaji, wife of Shri Ram Bhagwan. It was at this ashram that Valmiki rishi composed the Ramayan!

Moral: No matter how sinful one maybe the chanting of God's name purifies one's soul and one attains an highly elevated spiritual state.

Did You Know?

Our soul is born and reborn in one of the 8.4 million species of life forms until the cycle of life and death is broken resulting in liberation.

9 Bharat

Dushyant, the King of Hastinapur, raised his son Bharat, with his wife Shakuntala. Shakuntala had been raised by a Rishi named Kanya, who also had a wife. Dushyant came upon Kanya's ashram after a day of hunting in the forest and saw Shakuntala. On seeing her, he immediately became entranced and quickly fell in love with her. Likewise, Shakuntala also fell in love with Dushyant. After marriage, Dushyant was forced to leave, but promised to return and take her to Hastinapur. One day, Shakuntala was lost in her thoughts and failed to serve the Rishi, Durvasa. Durvasa became very angry and cursed her, telling her that the one she was thinking of would one day forget her. As a result of this curse, Dushyant forgot Shakuntala and didn't recognize her. She grieved very much and desired to live elsewhere. Shakuntala then began to live in the ashram of Marich. There, Dushyant didn't know that she gave birth to a son who she named Bharat. This young child was quite brave, dauntless and was often found playing with lion



cubs. Now, Dushyant did not know of his son, and also had forgotten his love for Shakuntala. One day, when passing the Ashram of Marich, he saw this small child being playful with the lion cubs. He was quite fascinated by this young child's ability to play such fondly with lion cubs. Suddenly, Shakuntala also arrived there and Dushyant then realized that Bharat was actually his own son. He was so overjoyed that he immediately embraced Bharat with great love. Dushyant, remembering Shakuntala, took them both to Hastinapur where Bharat became a famous king. India is actually referred to as Bharat as the country is named after him.

Moral: Love has no obstacles, limits or boundaries.

Did You Know?

Pradakshina is circumambulation (walking) in a clockwise manner around a shrine or murti of god. It is performed to symbolize that god is the center point of our life.

10 Prahlad

Once upon a time there was an evil king named Hiranyakashipu (which means "dressed in gold") who demanded that everyone should worship him as a god. He thought of himself as the 'Lord of the universe', but his son Prahlad would only worship the great God Vishnu. The king tried to force his son to bow down to him, but Prahlad refused. The king ordered his army to kill his son, but Prahlad called upon Lord Vishnu in turn the soldiers lost their strength. Then the king had him thrown into a pit of poisonous snakes, but again Prahlad called on Vishnu and survived. The king tried many ways to kill the boy, but every time Prahlad called on Vishnu he was saved from an adverse circumstance. In the end, the evil king called on his sister Holika to carry Prahlad into the flames of a bonfire. She had been promised that she had a gift from the gods that would save her from being burnt. The evil Holika burst into laughter as the flames began to rise



around her and Prahlad. But again he called 'Vishnu, Vishnu!' and the power of Vishnu was so great that Prahlad was protected while Holika was burned to that. Hours later, the king came to watch the dying fire. No courtier dared to warn him what he would find. There on the mound of ash sat Prahlad. 'God saved me', said Prahlad, simply. 'I'm sick of your God', said the King. 'Where is this God, then? See if he'll save you from me.'

The king drew his sword. 'God is everywhere,' said Prahlad. 'He is in the fire, in the water, in the wind and the grass, even in that stone column behind you.' With that the column broke in two. Out came God but his shape was strange. The upper part of his body was that of a lion and the lower part was of man. He was neither man nor animal. He lifted the king, carried him into the palace and placed him on his lap. Then he killed him with a single swipe of his great claws. Lord Vishnu than made Prahlad the king and he ruled wisely and well ever after.

Moral: There is no better spiritual endeavor then to have stauch

Did You Know?

In his incredible 7 year journey, Nilkanth Varni barefooted traveled over 12,000km and visited 187 places.

10 Scriptures of the Swaminarayan Religion



1.Shikshapatri - is the only divine gospel written by Lord Swaminarayan himself consisting of two hundred and twelve verses. The Shikshapatri was written in Harimandap at Vadtal on February 11th, 1826. The Shikshaptri is a guide to show one how to live a prosperous life. It is the code of conducts laid down by Lord Swaminarayan for all to follow.



2.Vachanamrut - is the essence of ancient Indian wisdom as told by Bhagwan Swaminarayan and compiled by his four contemporary scholarly saints (Muktanand Swami, Gopalanand Swami, Nityanand Swami, Shukanand Swami) from 1819 to 1829. It contains practical and philosophical answers to the sincere enquiries of all types of aspirants regarding life in this world and the life after. Each dialogue includes a reference to the place, date, time and a vivid description of Bhagwan Swaminarayan's attire. The compiled text, read and approved by Bhagwan Swaminarayan, renders it a unique authenticity among Hindusim's many sacred texts. There is 262 chapters in the Vachanamrut.



3.Bhaktachintamani - contains 164 chapters written by Sadguru Niskulanand Swami in the village of Gadhpur in Samvat 1887 . This book is written in the language of Gujarati and is sung like a gospel. This book is verified by Lord Swaminarayan himself. This book contains

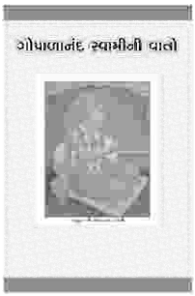
divine incidents of Lord Swaminarayan and his saints and devotees. Each and every line in this book has a relationship with Lord Swaminarayan himself. This is a genuine feature of this book.



4.Satsangijivan - is the authorized biography of Lord Swaminarayan. The book contains information on the life and teachings of Lord Swaminarayan. It was written by Shatanand Swami and completed in 1829. Satsangijivan comprises of 19,387 Shlokas(verses) among 360 chapters, in 5 volumes. It incorporates: the constitution of the Sampradaya, the details of festivals, rituals, vows of the disciples and elaborates philosophical principles and the life of Lord Swaminarayan.



5. Gunatitanand Swami Ni Vato - is a set of quotations and sayings by Gunatitanand Swami. It was documented in the mid 19th century, while Gunatitanand Swami was the head of Junagadh Mandir for 40 years. Swami used to give preachings for hours together on high philosophy but in such a very simple, practical and impressive way, that all were spellbound. There is 5 chapters which contain a total 941 talks.



6.Gopalanand Swami Ni Vato - is a set of quotations and sayings by Gopalanand Swami. Gopalanand Swami revealed numerous divine feats throughout his human life; these are narrated in this scripture. His scholastic prowess was unparalleled, and explained the complex philosophy of the Lord during his discourses, which are retold here. By his talks, there was a change of heart even of wicked persons and they

were inspired to live a noble life. There are 3 chapters which contain a total 517 talks

7.Harililamrut - contains information on the life and teachings of Lord Swaminarayan. It contains 10 long chapters (Kalash) and is written by Acharya Shri Viharilalji Maharaj. This book is written in the language of Gujarati and is sung like a gospel. This book contains divine incidents which were told by saints and devotees who experienced the presence of Lord Swaminarayan and were told to Acharya Shri Viharilalji Maharaj who then later wrote the book. Nevertheless, the incidents which are not described in other scriptures are described in detail in this book. Making this book very authentic.



8.Nishkulanand Kavya - this big volume contains 22 smaller books. These books namely are Purushottam Prakash, Sneh Geeta, Vachana, Vidhi, Saar Siddhi, Bhaktinidhi, Haribal Geeta, Hriday Prakash, Dhirajkhyan, Harismruti, Chosathapadi, Managanjan, Gunagrahak, Harivicharana Arjivinaya, Kalyan nirnay, Avatar Chintamani, Chinha Chintamani, Puspa Chintamani, Lagna Shakunavali, Yamadanda, Vritti Vivah and Shikshapatri Bhashya. All these books are of great eminence. By reading such works by Nishkulanand Swami one develops firm faith in god and realizes the glory of god and the ekantik sadhu. This book helps one walk on the path of salvation helping one stay beyond the force of maya(illusion).



9.Muktanand Kavya - is a collection of 24 books written by the mother of the fellowship Sadguru Muktanand Swami. This book is written



in the language of Gujarati & Hindi and is sung like a gospel. One can sharpen one's spiritual understanding by reading this book. Some of the main sub-books are Panchratnam, Dharmakhyan, vivekchintamani, Satsang Shiromani, Sati Gita, Uddhav Gita, Avadhutgitam.

10.Haricharitramrut Sagar - is the ocean of nectarine episodes of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. The dazzling name echoes the sublime nature of this scripture. Considered as the authoritative biography of Bhagwan Swaminarayan, an eye-witness account, its staggering length of eighty thousand sakhis (a system of poetic versification), making it over three times the length of the Ramayan. In 1858 Adharanand Swami, himself an artist and sculptor, but not a poet by any means, commenced the mammoth versification of the Haricharitramrut Sagar from Muktanand Swami's Khardas. Divinely inspired, he composed the sakhis, akin to that of the Ramayan, in Hindi. The work comprises of twenty-eight chapters, beautifully named as purs - waves, each divided into tarangs - ripples, in consonance with the sagar's (ocean's) imagery. Bhagwan Swaminarayan's teachings, were immortalized during His life in these scriptures. Haricharitramrut Sagar is the largest religious scripture in the whole world in the language of Hindi.



10 Gems from Vachanamrut



1. **Service**: By engaging one's senses in the service of God and His saints, one's mind becomes purified.
2. **Importance**: There is no saint like this in the entire universe and there is no other God besides this Maharaj.
3. **Affection**: Maintaining profound love towards the Ekantik saint (God-realized / Self-realized saint) opens the gateway to liberation.
4. **Meditation**: Just like an iron nail that is firmly affixed to an iron surface can never be separated, similarly one's mind should be fixed firmly on the idol of God.
5. **Affection**: Affection for anything other than God is itself Maya (illusion).
6. **Devotion**: Extraordinary bhakti (devotion) is achieved by serving an eminent spiritual saint.
7. **Faith**: Greatness is due to one's faith in the manifest form of God and the observances of his commands.
8. **Refuge**: Accepting the firm refuge of God is the single greatest endeavor amongst all spiritual endeavor for pleasing God.



9. **Greatness**: However grave a sinner a person may be, if at the end of his life he utters 'Swaminarayan', he will be redeemed of all sins and will go to Akshardham.
10. **Liberation**: Having firm conviction in the manifest form of God is ultimate liberation.

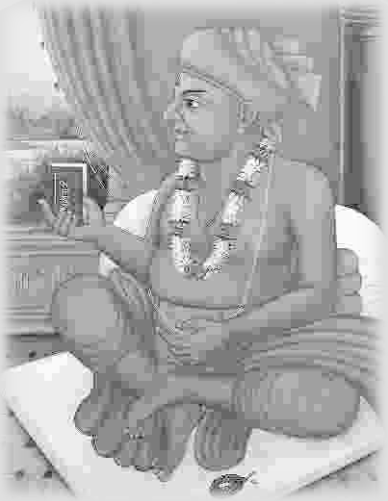
10 Gems from Gopalanand Swami Ni Vato

1. **Association:** Keep the association of an Ekantik Saint (God-realized / Self-realized) through our mind, actions and speech.
2. **Ego:** Egotism is the cause of life and death.
3. **Faith:** Having firm faith in God and following his commands can lead one to Akshardham.
4. **Meditation:** One should learn to engage one's senses in the form of God.
5. **Affection:** One should keep the force of constantly developing more and more affection towards God daily.
6. **Non-attachment:** The one who doesn't need anything remains eternally happy.
7. **Meditation:** The main principle of all the scriptures is to constantly meditate upon the form of God by realizing oneself to be the soul.



8. **Happiness:** There is no happiness except in the form of God.
9. **Liberation:** To keep faith in the words of a Satpurush is called Moksh Buddhi (intelligence of one's liberation).
10. **Desire:** To become the best in the spiritual world, one must eradicate one's desires for this materialistic world.

10 Gems from Gunatitanand Swami Ni Vato



1. **Awareness:** Whatever time we forget God consider that time wasted.
2. **Association:** Such a Ekantik saint may hit one with boots but will still take them to Akshardham; others may give one a comfortable bed to sleep on but will send them to hell.
3. **Chanting:** What should one do when worried? Answer: Chant, 'Swaminarayan, Swaminarayan', so all of one's problems would be resolved.
4. **Great saint:** One may engage in many spiritual endeavors without overcoming one's desires but desires can be easily overcome by the grace of a great saint.
5. **Wisdom:** A shadow cannot be caught, similarly material desire also cannot be fulfilled. Therefore, happiness is experienced when spiritual wisdom is attained.
6. **Great saint:** When the jiva (soul) attaches itself to the great saint, then all its faults are dissolved and his virtues are gained.
7. **Scriptures:** Scriptures are the effect and the great saint is their cause.
8. **Great Saint:** Everything is gained through the ekantik saint; therefore keep him as main.
9. **Satsang:** When one embraces satsang no miseries remain.
10. **Satsang:** True satsang is one's close association with God and the God-realized saint and the rest is known as half-satsang.

10 Shloks with Meaning

Varni Vesh Ramaneeya Darshanam |
Mand Haasa Ruchiran anam Bhujam ||
Pujitam Suranaro Tameir Muda |
Dharmanandanam Aham Vichintaye ||

Meaning:

O! Lord, you are a Varni (a young celibate) your darshan (divine vision), your charming smile and your strong arms are extremely pleasant and satisfying. You are worshiped by the gods and all of human kind. O! Son of Dharmadev I meditate on you with great affection.

Tvameva Mata Cha Pita Tvameva |
Tvameva Bandhuscha Sakha Tvameva ||
Tvameva Vidya Dravinam Tvameva |
Tvameva Sarvam mama Deva Deva ||

Meaning:

O! Supreme Lord, only you are my mother, father, relative and friend. You are my knowledge and wealth. You are my everything.

Nijashritanam Sakalartihanta |
Sad-dharma Bhakte ravanam vidhata ||
Data Sukhanam Mansepsitanam |
Tanotu Krishno Akhil Mangalam Nah ||

Meaning:

May Lord Shree Krishna, reliever of all miseries of His disciples, protector of Bhakti with Dharma and bestower of all desired happiness, shower His blessings on us all.

Shree Vasudev Vimalumrit Dham Vasam |
Narayanam Naraktaran Nama Dhyeyam ||
Shyamam Shitam Dhwebhuj Meva Chatur Bhujam Cha |
Twam Bhakti Dharma Tanayam Sharanam Prapradye ||

Meaning:

O! Supreme Lord you reside in a divine abode which is free of all miseries. Your name Narayan is capable to free us all from the torments of hell if chanted with love. In your divine abode your complexion is shyam (like rain-cloud), your form is peaceful, with two arms and sometimes four arms. O! Son of Bhakti and Dharma, I surrender myself to your lotus feet.

Gurur Brahma, Gurur Vishnu, Gurur Devo Maheshvarah |
Guru Shakshat Param Brahma Tasmai Sri Gurave Namah ||

Meaning:

Guru is verily the representative of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. He creates, sustains knowledge and destroys the roots of ignorance. I salute such a Guru.

Om Saha Navavatu |

Saha Nau Bhunaktu |

Sha Viryam Karavavahai |

Tejasvi Navadhi tamastu Ma Vidvisavahai |

Om Shaantih Shaantih Shaantih ||

Meaning:

May the Supreme God Protect us both together; may He nourish us both together, May we work conjointly with great energy; May our study be vigorous and effective; May we not mutually dispute or may we not hate any.

Om! let there be Peace in me!

Let there be Peace in my environment!

Let there be Peace in the forces that act on me

Matri devo bhava, Pitri devo bhava

Meaning: Treat your mother and father (parents) as God, i.e. the divine agency.

Om asato Ma Sadgamaya |
Tamaso Ma jyotir-gamaya ||
Mrtyorma mrtam Gamaya |
Om santih shaantih shaantih ||

Meaning:

Lead us from the unreal to the real
Lead us from darkness to light
Lead us from death to immortality
Om peace, peace, peace

Prasang majaram pasamatmanah kavayo viduhu |
sa eva sadhushu krito moksh dwaramapavritam ||

Meaning:

If a person maintains profound love towards the God realized saint just as resolutely as he maintains profound love towards his own relatives, then the gateway to liberation (Akshardham) opens for him.

Bhava Sambhav Bhiti Bednam,
Sukhsampat Karuna Niketanam |
Vrata Daana Tapah Kriya Phalam,
Sahajanand gurum bhaje sadaa ||

Meaning:

O! Lord you are my only liberator from the clutches of birth and death(reincarnation), you are my only giver of eternal happiness, you are the root source of Karuna (compassion). You are the merit of extreme austerity, donation. O! thee Lord Supreme I worship your lotus feet with great love.

10 Kirtans with Meanings

Arti

Jay sadguru Swami, (Prabhu) jay sadguru Swami,
Sahajanad dayalu, balvant bahunami…jay (1)
Charansaroj tamara, vandu kar Jodi, (2x)
Charane shish dharyathi, dukh nakhya todi… jay (2)
Narayan Narbhrata Dwijkul tanudhari, (2x)
Pamar patit uddharya, aganit narnari…jay (3)
Nitya nitya nautam lila, karta Avinashi, (2x)
Adsath tirath charane, koti Gaya Kashi…jay (4)
Purushottam Pragtnu, je darshan karshe, (2x)
Kal karmathi chhuti, kutumb sahit tarshe…jay (5)
A avasar karunanidhi, karuna bahu kidhi, (2x)
Muktanand kahe mukti, sugam kari siddhi….jay (6)

Meaning

- All glories, All glories to my eternal master! Swami Sahajanand is very merciful powerful and has a lot of names. (1)
- With folded hands I pay my obeisance to the Lotus Feet of Shree Sahajanand Swami. One's all miseries are gone by simply surrendering to His Lotus Feet. (2)
- The divine brothers Nar-Narayan have taken birth in the Brahmin family as human beings. He is the liberator of helpless and fallen souls, uncountable men and women. (3)
- Lord Swaminarayan, who is Avinashi, (eternal) is daily performing new and pleasing pastimes. His lotus feet represents all the pilgrimages, and they are more auspicious then millions of tirths (pilgrimages) combined together and

Kashi (holy place).(4)

- Whoever will have a glimpse of this Supreme Lord who is present amongst us today, will conquer over time and karma, and will cross over this ocean of misery along with his whole family. (5)
- Lord Swaminarayan, who is the Ocean of Mercy, has bestowed a lot of mercy this time. And due to that I, Muktanand Swami, declare that attaining liberation has become very easy. (6)

Sant Param Hitkari

Sant param hitkari, jagat mahi (1)
Prabhupad pragat karavat priti,
bharam mitavat bhari… jagat (2)
Paramkrupalu sakal Jivan par,
harisam sab dukhhari… jagat (3)
Trigunatt firat tanu tyagi,
rit jagatse nyari… jagat (4)
Brahmanand kahe santki sobat,
milat hai pragat Murari…jagat (5)

Meaning

- Saints are the most beneficial in this universe. (1)
- They enlighten love towards the manifest form of God, and remove all religious hypocrisy. (2)
- Merciful on all the souls, saints remove miseries equivalent to God. (3)
- The true saint behaves Trigunatit (Beyond the 3 States of Rajogun, Tamogun, Satvagun) Saints, advocate customs which are entirely different from this world. (4)
- Brahmanand(Lord Swaminarayan's Saint) says by associating with such a saint one can attain God. (5)

Jamo thal Jivan

Jamo thal Jivan jau vari,
dhovu kar charan karo tyari, jamo (1)
Beso melya bajothiya dhali, Katora kanshanni thali;
Jale bharya chambu chokhali… jamo thal (2)
Kari katha ghauni poli; Meli ghrut sakarma boli;
Kadhyo ras kerino gholi…jamo thal (3)
Galya sata ghebar fulvadi, Dudhpak malpua kadhi;
Puri pochi thai chhe ghima chadhi..jamo thal (4)
Athana shak sundar bhaji, Lavi chhu tarat kari taji;
Dahi bhat sakar chhe jhajhi…jamo thal (5)
Chalu karo lavu jalhari, Elaychi laving sopari,
Panbidi banavi sari…jamo thal (6)
Mukhvas mangamta laine, Prasadino thal mune daine,
Bhumanand kahe raji thaine… jamo thal (7)

Meaning

- Please accept this thal, O my life. Please wash Your hands and feet, thus get ready to accept this prasad. (1)
- Please sit on this seat which is made ready for You. All paraphernalia like bowls, golden plate are arranged. Chamboo (flat based pot/flask, round at bottom narrowing at top) is rinsed clean and filled with water. (2)
- Chappaties are made from finest quality wheat. Milk is made by adding sugar candy in it and mango pulp is extracted from fresh mangoes. (3)
- Sweets like satha, gebhar, dudhpak, maalpoda are prepared. Along with is spicy preparations like phul wadi and kadhi. Soft puri's are made by frying them in clarified butter (ghee). (4)
- Various leafy and other vegetable preparations along with pickles are freshly served. Yogurt and rice with ample sugar candy is also served. (5)

- Please accept water from the jug for purification (washing hands) and then accept this pan (betal leaf) made of cardamom, cloves and betal nuts. (6)
- After accepting these mouth fresheners and distributing remnants to the devotees, please take your seat on this throne very happily. (7)

Kode Kode Ekadashi

Kode Kode ekadashi Kijiye re,
Evu vrat java nav Dijiye re... kode (1)
E vrat kare te dhanya manvi re,
Te to nahyo kotik var jahnavi re... kode (2)
Jene vachan pramane vrat adaryu re,
Tene karaj potanu sarve karyu re... kode (3)
Eno mahima munivar gay chhe re,
Avinashi malyano upay chhe re... kode (4)
Brahmanand kahe ema Hari rahya vasi re,
Kidhi Uddhav pramane ekadashi re... kode (5)

Meaning

- Observe the fast of Ekadashi with Glory(Kode) and delight (Kode), do not ignore to observe this fast. (1)
- The person observing this fast is fortunate/praiseworthy, and it is equivalent to bathing thousands times in the holy river Ganga (Jahnavi). (2)
- One who starts observing this fast on the command of a Satpurush, has nothing left to do (on the path of salvation). (3)
- Acclaimed saints sing the glory of Ekadashi, and it is one way to attain God. (4)
- Brahmanand says, god himself resides in this fast, according to the ritual in the Uddhav sect. (5)

Vandu Sahajanand

Vandu Sahajanand ras roop, anupam saar ne re lol;
Jene bhajataa chhoote fand, kare bhav paar ne re lol. (1)
Samaru pragat roop such dhaam, anupam naam ne re lol;
Jene Bhav Brahmaadik dev, bhaje tali kaam ne re lol. (2)
Je hari Akshar bramha aadhaar, paar koi nav lahe re lol;
Jene Shesh sahastra much gay, Nigam neti kahe re lol. (3)
Varnavu sundar roop anup, jugal charane name re lol;
Nakh shikh Prem sakhi naa naath, rah our maa rami re lol. (4)

Meaning

- I bow to Sahajanand the lord of raas-incarnate; the very essence of heavenly love the liberator of life's thrall. (1)
- I call to my mind the lord who has matchless names; worshipped by Shiv, Brahma & all other deities leaving their own desires. (2)
- Our Hari is the sustainer of the soul who is indestructible; None so far have been able to fathom the range of his powers. The shesha who supports this world sings his praise with his thousand tongues. The Vedas call him "Neti" (Never-ending). (3)
- I bow down to that pair of holy feet & vainly try to put in words that form of beauty who is indescribable. The full form that resides from head to toe in the heart of Premanand. (4)

Naman Hun Karu

Naman Hun Karu Vishwapalne,
Kargari Kahu Bhaktibalne. (1)
Araj Mahari Urma Dharo,
Vipat Mahari Shree Hari Hare. (2)
Avar Aashro Mahare Nathi,

Sarva Janne Shun Kahu Kathi. (3)
Kathankalma Aap Chho Dhani,
Sukhad Shyamla Muktna Mani. (4)
Amarna Pati Aash Tahari,
Rasik Rakhjo Laaj Mahari. (5)
Prantapal Chho Sarvana Prabhu,
Dindayal Chho Vishwana Vibhu. (6)
VImal Murati Urma Vaso,
Najarthi Prabhu Dur Na Thasho. (7)
Abhik Trasne Todi Nakhjo,
Brahmanandne Paas Rakhjo. (8)

Meaning

- I bow down to the sustainer of the universe, plead with folded hands, the son of Bhaktimata. (1)
- Hold my prayers in your heart Shri Hari and destroy my troubles. (2)
- I do not desire anything but you Almighty, what more can I say to the knower of everything. (3)
- In difficult times you are my master, giver of happiness and jewel among all the saints. (4)
- I rely on you Lord of all immortals, dear Lord help me maintain my character. (5)
- You are the sustainer of all and everyone's Lord, compassionate and creator of the entire universe. (6)
- Reside in my heart in your pure form; never go away far from my gaze. (7)
- Break the immense fear of life and death; always keep me near you my Lord. (8)

Mane Pyari Laage Murti Tamari

Mane pyaari laage murti tamari;
Ghanshyamji Mane pyaari laage murti tamari. (1)
Kumkumno chaandalo ne bhaal tilak vachche,
Haare tame bhaalo ne bhramana bhulaavi... Ghanshyamji (2)
Kaane kundal Hari ne maathe mugut shobhe,
Haare kanthe dhaari maanek jadi maala... Ghanshyamji (3)
Jaamo jariyaani paheryo soneri survaal chhe;
Haare tamari kede kasyo chhe kandoro... Ghanshyamji (4)
Murti ma magan thai charano ma chit dai;
Haare jay das Narayan vaari... Ghanshyamji (5)

Meaning

- I adore your Murti (idol of God); Ghanshyamji I adore your Murti. (1)
- Your beautiful red dot (kumkum) between the tilak (U shaped sandalwood symbol) portrayed on your forehead. (2)
- Charismatic earrings and alluring crown on your head, adorned with a necklace embeded with jewels are enchanting. (3)
- Dressed with Jariyaani Jaamo (a long tunic Indian traditional apparel decorated with flat beads), Soneri Suvraal (a pair of golden trousers which are tightly fit around the ankles); also adorned with Kandoro (Gold/ Silver waist band) Ghanshyamji. (4)
- Engrossed in Murti(Idol) with the assiduous attention in the feet (Lotus feet of Lord Swaminarayan); servant (Devotee of Lord Swaminarayan) Narayan gets rejoiced, Ghanshyamji. (5)

Manakiye Chadyare Mohan

Manakiye chadyare mohan vanmali,
shobhe rudi karama lagam rupali. (1)
Manigar sahune ke'chhe thao tyar,
muni varani padati ne asvar;

Vratpuri java karyo nirdhar. (2)
Kesar, beri, bodali ne fulmal,
tajan, tikhi, vangali no ghano tal,
Shobhe Ghana vala lagechhe maral. (3)
Premibhakt vinanti kare dodi dodi,
lohchumbaktulya vrutti Mutrima Jodi,
Nathijati darbharmanthi ghodi. (4)
Aagnya aapo ame jaie Vratpuri,
jao prabhu ram navami nathi duri,
Sevakdas Premanand hajuri. (5)

Meaning

- Maharaj is seated majestically in the saddle of His beloved Manki (Maharaj's horse). He has held its reins in His hands and has adorned Himself in all sixteen attires of beauty. (1)
- He has ordered all His saints and devotees to be seated on their horses, and to those who will walk alongside, to be ready to leave. (2)
- Swami has named the top quality breed of horses that His devotees and rulers used to keep. He has described the beauty of Maharaj amidst devotees seated on such prime breeds, as well as the saints and devotees prepared to walk their way to Vadtal. (3)
- All the devotees are magnetically attracted to this Murti of Maharaj, in a similiar manner to a bee attracted to its hive. Devotees are pleading to Maharaj not to leave them. (4)
- Sahajanand Swami has today accepted to seek permission to leave His beloved devotees. To please Maharaj, devotees gave up their personal desires and allow Him to leave, wishing Him a safe journey and requesting Him to come back very soon. (5)

Sarve Sakhi Jivan

Sarve sakhi jivan jovaane chaalo re,
Sheradiyuma aave latakanto laalo re. (1)

Eni shobha mukhe varnavi na jaay re,
Jene nigam neti neti kari gaay re. (2)
Roze ghode raajeshvar biraaje re,
Chhabi joi kotik kandarp laaje re. (3)
Malya aave maha munina vrund re,
Tema shobhe taare vintyo jem chandra re. (4)
Shuk Sanakaadik utam yash gaave re,
Nrutya kare Naarad veena vajaave re. (5)
Nij sakha chamar kare lai haath re,
Aa jo aavya Bhumaanand na Naath re. (6)

Meaning

- My dear companions! Let's go and see the gait of the Lord coming in our streets. (1)
- Even the Vedas have difficulty in describing Him and therefore how could we describe His beauty with our speech. (2)
- Even the glamour of countless cupids would feel bashful when they see Maharaj seated on the 'Roza' horse. (3)
- Just as the moon sits in the middle of stars, Shree Hari glamorously sports Himself in the midst of munis (saints) . (4)
- At the same time, in the heavens, Naradji (the Lord's messenger) is playing his musical instrument, the flute; and ascetics such as Shuk and Sanakaadik are singing praises of the Lord's excellence. (5)
- One of Maharaj's devotee is fanning Him with a hand fan. Bhumanand swami is confirming with respect and affection that the Lord of the universe has come on this earth. (6)

Aksharna vaasi vaahlo

Aksharna vaasi vaahlo aavya avani par,
Navkhand dharti ma swami, chhataraya chale raaj. (1)
Avani par aavi vahle satsang sthaapyo,
Hari jan ne kol, kalyan no aapyo raaj. (2)

Paanche vartmaan paade baaiyo ne bhaaiyo,
Harijan sange kidhi, saachi sagaaiyo raaj. (3)
Baaiyo dekhine bhaaiyo chhetera chaale,
Padi vastu koinee, hatthe nav jhale raaj. (4)
Devnaa dev vahlo dhaam na dhaami,
Pragat prabhu nu naam, Sahajanand Swami raaj. (5)
Premanand no vahlo anandkaari,
Potaana jaan ni vahle, laaj vadhaari raaj. (6)

Meaning

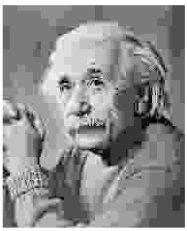
- The One above all, who resides in Akshardham has come down to this Earth. He is the creator of the nine planets of the solar system. He is far apart in greatness from all the incarnations that have come before Him. There is no such form as great as His. (1)
- He has given His devotees the opportunity by showing the way to reach His heavenly abode. This showed immense mercy to His devotees. He had said to His devotees that He will honor the promise. (2)
- All His devotees, male and female fully observe the 5 vartmans(vows) to a high and strict manner. Devotees of Shree Hari treat each other like their close family. (3)
- When males see females they keep distance with respect. Devotees do not take anything that does not belong to them, regardless of their personal circumstances. If the devotees are such pious souls, what can be said of their God? (4)
- He is the lord of all deities and the master of all abodes and is manifest our almighty Sahajanand Swami. (5)
- Premanand Swami gives this answer by saying that God of all Gods, the ruler of the heavenly abode, the all pervasive Lord is Sahajanand Swami. He is my God; the giver of happiness. Further, by teaching us how to follow the five sacred vows with reverence, He has increased the respect of all his devotees, making the Swaminarayan Sampradaya the greatest sect. (6)

10 Quotes to Remember

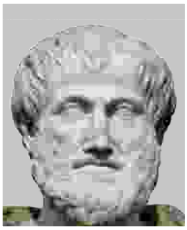
1. Always bear in mind that your own resolution to succeed is more important than any other.
- Abraham Lincoln



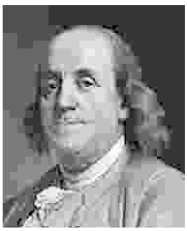
2. We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them.
- Albert Einstein



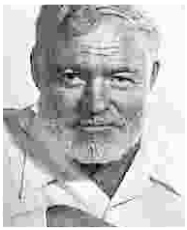
3. The roots of education are bitter, but the fruit is sweet.
- Aristotle



4. Remember not only to say the right thing in the right place, but far more difficult still, to leave unsaid the wrong thing at the tempting moment.
- Benjamin Franklin

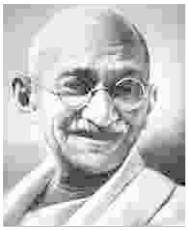


5. Courage is grace under pressure.
- Ernest Hemingway





6. My fellow Americans, ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country.
- John F. Kennedy



7. You must be the change you wish to see in the world.
- Mahatma Gandhi



8. Be faithful in small things because it is in them that your strength lies.
- Mother Teresa



9. Be not afraid of greatness: some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them.
- William Shakespeare



10. Success consists of going from failure to failure without loss of enthusiasm.
- Winston Churchill

Sentences to Remember Daily

1. Time, old age, and death never waits for anyone, so perform devotion as much as possible.
2. Whatever sins one commits, one has to deal with its fruits, so be aware.
3. Without your own efforts, you are never successful.
4. Without good conduct, good thoughts never flourish in one's mind.
5. Never make anyone miserable, if possible give them happiness.
6. Always look at our own faults.
7. Learn to distinguish between good and bad
8. My home is not my home, but a temple of God.
9. Humanity is the birthplace of all religions.
10. Our intelligence becomes pure by satsang.
11. Keep three things clean always: behavior, finances and social dealings.
12. Always try to protect yourself from bad company, selfishness and criticism.
13. Lust, anger and greed are the gates of Hell, so renounce them.
14. Always remember why we have taken this birth and how we can get rid of the cycle of life and death.
15. Devotion and salvation are the two ends of the same stick.
16. Without enthusiasm, no project can be successful, so be enthusiastic.
17. Whenever you are disappointed in life, read the holy scriptures of God and His saints.
18. Live life in such a way, that others learn from it.
19. The best solution for purifying the heart is having a pure vision.
20. Always keep the mind stable and God-centered.

Guru Parampara

- **Sadguru Ramanand Swami-** the founder of the Uddhav Sampraday and the spiritual master of Lord Swaminarayan.



Sadguru
Ramanand Swami

- **Sadguru Muktanand Swami-** known to be the mother of the Swaminarayan sect and is endowed with the top most qualities of saintliness. Shreeji Maharaj also considers pujya swami to be his guru.



Sadguru
Muktanand Swami

- **Sadguru Adharanand Swami-** the author of Harichatriamrut Sagar the largest scripture in the Swaminarayan sect and the world in the language of Hindi.

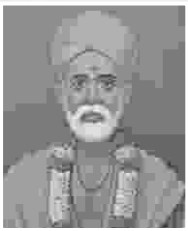


Sadguru
Adharanand Swami

- **Sadguru Haripriyadasji Swami-** the one who had deep affection towards god and had constant enthusiasm in his heart, to please God and his devotees.



Sadguru
Haripriyadasji Swami



Sadguru Vaikunthcharandasji Swami

- **Sadguru Vaikunthcharandasji Swami-** the one who had the inclination of servitude and showed bravery throughout his life.



Sadguru Narayanswarupdasji Swami

- **Sadguru Narayanswarupdasji Swami-** the one who constantly traveled through countless villages promoting the supremacy of Shri Hari. Also who was embellished with the virtues of wisdom and fortitude.



Sadguru Nandkishordasji Swami

- **Sadguru Nandkishordasji Swami-** the one whose behavior is humble and pious and through his inspirational life thousands were encouraged to walk on the path of god. Nevertheless the one who gave us the gift of Pujya Guruji.



Sadguruvariya Ghanshyamprakashdasji Swami

- **Sadguruvariya Ghanshyam prakashdasji Swami-** whose life is decorated by the virtues of saintliness, whose method of worship is pure and reigns supreme, who beholds the knowledge of the soul and the knowledge of the form of God as it is, and who is working night and day to help teach others about the supremacy of Bhagwan Swaminarayan.

Question/Answer Regarding Bhagwan Swaminarayan's Life

1. In which country and village was Bhagwan Swaminarayan born in ?

1. Bhagwan Swaminarayan was born in the village of Chhapaiya (in Koshal Desh near Ayodhya) in North India.

2. What was the exact date and time Bhagwan Swaminarayan was born on?

2. Bhagwan Swaminarayan was born on *Chaitra sud 9, Samvat 1837* (10:10 P.M.) (2nd April, 1781 A.D.).

3. In which caste was Bhagwan Swaminarayan born into?

3. Bhagwan Swaminarayan was born into the caste 'Sarvariya Brahmin'.

4. Who gave the name 'Ghanshyam' to Bhagwan?

4. The name 'Ghanshyam' was given to Bhagwan by Bhaktimata and the ladies of Chhapaiya.

5. How many names were given to Bhagwan by Markandey Muni?

5. Markandey Muni gave three names to Bhagwan: 'Hari', 'Krishana', and 'Harikrishana'.

6. What was the name given to Bhagwan while traveling in the forest and who gave that name to Him?

6. While traveling in the forest, Bhagwan was named 'Nilkanth Varni' by various saints and rushi munis.

7. How many names were given by Bhagwan's guru, Ramanand Swami? Name them.

7. Ramanand Swami gave two names to Bhagwan: 1-Sahajanand Swami, 2-Narayan Muni.

8. Who gave the name Sarjudas to Bhagwan?

8. Pujyapad Muktanand Swami gave the name Sarjudas to Bhagwan.

9. Who gave the name 'Swaminarayan' to Bhagwan?

9. Bhagwan gave the name 'Swaminarayan' to Himself.

10. In total, how many names did Bhagwan Swaminarayan have?

10. Bhagwan Swaminarayan had a total of 9 names.

11. What are the 9 names of Bhagwan?

11. 1-Hari, 2-Krishana, 3-Harikrishana, 4-Ghanshyam, 5-Nilkanth Varni, 6-Sarjudas, 7-Sahajanand Swami, 8-Narayan Muni, 9-Swaminarayan.

12. Who told the ladies of Chhapaiya that Swaminarayan Bhagwan was Bhagwan himself?

12. Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh came and told the ladies of Chhapaiya that Swaminarayan Bhagwan was Bhagwan Himself.

13. How many years did Bhagwan Swaminarayan live in Chhapaiya?

13. Bhagwan Swaminarayan lived in Chhapaiya for 3 years.

14. At what age was Bhagwan Swaminarayan given His 'Yagnopavit'?

14. Bhagwan Swaminarayan was given His 'Yagnopavit' at the age of 8.

15. On what date did Ghanshyam leave his home to travel in the forest?

15. Ghanshyam left His home in the early morning on *Ashadh sud 10, Samvat 1849* (28th June, 1792 A.D.).

16. At what age did Ghanshyam go into the forest for travel?

16. The age of 11 years, 3 months and 1day.

17. How many years did Nilkanth Varni travel in the forest?

17. Nilkanth Varni traveled in the forest for 7 years, 1 month and 11 days.

18. In which year did Nilkanth Varni arrive in the village of Lojpur for the first time?

18. Nilkanth Varni arrived on *Sravanam Vad 6, Samvat 1856* in the early morning at the step-well of Lojpur for the first time.

19. On what date did Nilkanth Varni meet Ramanand Swami for the first time?

19. Nilkanth Varni met Ramanand Swami at the village of Piplana on *Jeth Vad 12, Samvat 1856* (19th June, 1800 A.D.) for the first time.

20. In which village did Bhagwan Swaminarayan take 'Mahadiksha' (Initiation)?

20. Bhagwan Swaminarayan took 'Mahadiksha' in Piplana on *Kartik Sud 11, Samvat 1857*.

21. How long did Sarjudas stay with Muktanand Swami before meeting Ramanand Swami?

21. Sarjudas stayed with Muktanand Swami for 10 months and 6 days before meeting Ramanand Swami.

22. In which village did Bhagwan Swaminarayan succeed Ramanand Swami?

22. Bhagwan Swaminarayan succeeded Ramanand Swami in the village of Jetpur and became the head of the Sampraday (fellowship).

23. What was the age of Bhagwan Swaminarayan when he became the head of the Sampraday?

23. Bhagwan Swaminarayan was only 21 years old when he became the successor.

24. When did Bhagwan Swaminarayan succeed Ramanand Swami?

24. Bhagwan Swaminarayan succeeded Ramanand Swami on *Kartik Sud 11, Samvat 1858* (16th October, 1801 A.D.)

25. How long did Bhagwan Swaminarayan stay with His guru, Ramanand Swami?

25. Bhagwan Swaminarayan stayed with Ramanand Swami for 1 year, 5 months and 16 days.

26. Which two boons did Bhagwan Swaminarayan ask for when he succeeded His guru, Ramanand Swami?

26. Bhagwan Swaminarayan requested, 1-"If it is the fate of my devotees to receive the pain of one scorpion sting, then let Me have the pain of millions of scorpion stings, but my devotees should not suffer that pain" and 2-"If it is the fate of my devotees who are on the path of salvation, to suffer from hunger and poverty, then in their position I should suffer but devotees should never be in shortage of food and clothes." These are the two boons that Bhagwan Swaminarayan asked His guru to grant Him.

27. Where did Bhagwan Swaminarayan introduce the mahamantra 'Swaminarayan'?

27. Bhagwan Swaminarayan introduced the mahamantra 'Swaminarayan' in the village of Fareni.

28. Whom did Bhagwan Swaminarayan first tell to chant the mahamantra 'Swaminarayan'?

28. Bhagwan Swaminarayan first told Shitaldas to chant the mahamantra, 'Swaminarayan'.

29. What happened to the devotees when chanting the mahamantra 'Swaminarayan' in Fareni?

29. By chanting Swaminarayan all the devotees had 'Samadhi' (Trance) and they saw Akshardham(Divine abode of Bhagwan Swaminarayan).

30. What did Bhagwan Swaminarayan show to the devotees and to the atheists in Dhoraji?

30. Bhagwan Swaminarayan showed Akshardham to the devotees, and Hell to the atheists in Dhoraji.

31. In which town did Bhagwan Swaminarayan perform samadhi to the fishes and turtles?

31. Bhagwan Swaminarayan had performed samadhi to fishes and turtles in the village of Sardhar.

32. In which form did Bhagwan Swaminarayan give His darshan to in Sardhar?

32. Bhagwan Swaminarayan gave His darshan in the form of Krishna in Sardhar.

33. Whose souls were sent to Akshardham by Bhagwan Swaminarayan from Sardhar?

33. Bhagwan Swaminarayan sent the souls of insects to Akshardham from Sardhar.

34. In which town did Bhagwan Swaminarayan give samadhi to children?

34. Bhagwan Swaminarayan gave samadhi to children on the bank of the river Ghela at Gadhada.

35. What boon did Bhagwan Swaminarayan give to the place of pilgrimage, Shahastradhara?

35. Bhagwan Swaminarayan told Shahastradhara in Gadhpur that, "I will live here in a divine form."

36. Why did Bhagwan Swaminarayan go to take prasad at Junagadh without an invitation?

36. Bhagwan Swaminarayan went to Junagadh without an invitation because Ambashankar and his wife Baubai in Junagadh had made a wish in their minds, that, 'If without invitation, Swaminarayan comes to our home to take prasad, only then we will consider Him to be God.'

37. What phenomenon did Bhagwan Swaminarayan show in the village of Kariyani ?

37. Bhagwan Swaminarayan made the sound of a flute through a stone in Kariyani (even today that stone is in that village).

38. What boon did Bhagwan Swaminarayan give in Sarangpur?

38. Bhagwan Swaminarayan gave the boon in Sarangpur that, "Whoever will die in this village, 'Yamdoots' (demons) will not take their souls to hell.

39. What boon did Bhagwan Swaminarayan give in Kundal?

39. Bhagwan Swaminarayan gave the boon to Ram Patgar in Kundal that, "Whoever will die in this village will obtain eternal salvation."

40. To whom did Bhagwan Swaminarayan give drinking water to, by turning salt water into sweet water?

40. Bhagwan Swaminarayan turned the salty water into sweet water and gave it to Lalji Suthar (Nishkulanand Swami) to drink.

41. Who saw Bhagwan Swaminarayan in many different forms during Dabhan's Yagna?

41. Vadtal's robber Jobanpagi, who came to steal Manki, saw Bhagwan Swaminarayan in many different forms at each stable during Dabhan's Yagna.

42. During the yagna of Dabhan, by taking various forms, in which village did Bhagwan Swaminarayan give His darshan?

42. During the yagna of Dabhan, Bhagwan Swaminarayan took various forms and gave His darshan in Khambhat, Sorath, Vadtal, Aadhoi and many other villages.

43. How many temples did Bhagwan Swaminarayan construct? Give the names in ascending order of construction.

43. Bhagwan Swaminarayan constructed 6 temples; 1-Ahmedabad, 2-Bhuj, 3-Vadtal, 4-Dholera, 5-Junagadh, 6-Gadhapur.

44. How many forms did Bhagwan Swaminarayan take on the swing at Gnanbaug, Vadtal?

44. Bhagwan Swaminarayan took 12 forms on the swing at Gnanbaug, Vadtal.

45. In which village of pilgrimage did Bhagwan Swaminarayan install His own idol with His own two

hands?

45. Bhagwan Swaminarayan installed His own idol, Harikrishna Maharaj, with His own two hands in Vadtal.

46. In which place of pilgrimage did Bhagwan Swaminarayan install the idol which measurements of all body parts are exactly equal to Bhagwan Swaminarayan's manifest form?

46. Bhagwan Swaminarayan installed the idol named 'Gopinathji Maharaj' at Gadhpur

47. Where did Bhagwan Swaminarayan establish His two Acharyas?

47. Bhagwan Swaminarayan established His two Acharyas in Vadtal.

48. Where did Bhagwan Swaminarayan write the Shikshapatri?

48. Bhagwan Swaminarayan wrote Shikshapatri in Vadtal.

49. Where did Bhagwan Swaminarayan go to Akshardham?

49. Bhagwan Swaminarayan went to Akshardham from Gadhpur at 12:00 P.M.(afternoon) on Jeth Sud 10, Samvat 1886.

50. How many years did Bhagwan Swaminarayan stay on this earth?

50. Bhagwan Swaminarayan stayed on this earth for 49 years, 2 months and 1 day.

Question/Answer regarding General Knowledge About Our Religion

1. What are the six pillars of satsang?

1. 1-Temples, 2-Scriptures, 3-Saints, 4-Idols, 5-Acharya, 6-Devotees

2. Who was Ramanand Swami?

2. Ramanand Swami was the guru of Bhagwan Swaminarayan.

3. Where was Ramanand Swami born?

3. Ramanand Swami was born in Ayodhya.

4. What was the name of Ramanand Swami's guru?

4. The name of Ramanand Swami's guru was Ramanujacharya.

5. How many redemptive virtues does God possess?

5. 39 redemptive virtues.

6. How many attributes does an Ekantik saint possess?

6. 30 attributes.

7. What were the original names of the parents of Bhagwan Swaminarayan and by what names were they known by?

7. The original name of Bhagwan Swaminarayan's mother was Premvati but was known by the name, Bhaktimata. The original name of Bhagwan Swaminarayan's father was Devsharma and he was known by the name, Dharmadev.

8. Who were the parents of Dharmadev?

8. The father of Dharmadev was Balsharma and the mother of Dharmadev was Bhagyavati.

9. Who were the parents of Bhaktimata?

9. The father of Bhaktimata was Krushanasharma and the mother of Bhaktimata was Bhavani.

10. How many brothers did Bhagwan Swaminarayan have? What were their names?

10. Bhagwan Swaminarayan had two brothers. His elder brother was Rampratapji and His younger brother was Ichchharamji.

11. What are the five religious vows for devotees?

11. 1-Cannot steal, 2-Cannot eat meat, 3-Cannot drink alcohol, 4-Cannot perform adultery, 5-Cannot eat from an improper person or place.

12. What are the five religious vows of saints?

12. 1-Lustless, 2-Greedless, 3-Control of taste, 4-Egoless, 5-No Affection for anything except God.

13. What are eight types of murtis (idols) God resides in? What is the ninth type?

13. 1-Stone, 2-Wood, 3-Metal, 4-Earth/Sandalwood Paste, 5-Engraved Drawings, 6-Sand, 7-Gems, 8-Mental, 9-The Ekantik Saint.

14. What four categories does the Hindu caste system consist of?

14. 1-Brahmins, 2-Kshatryias, 3-Vaishyas, 4-Shudras

15. In how many parts did Bhagwan Swaminarayan divide His throne? Who were the first Acharyas established on these thrones?

15. Bhagwan Swaminarayan divided His throne into two different parts. 1-Vadtal Gadi, 2-Ahmedabad Gadi. The first selected Acharya for Vadtal Gadi was Raghuvirji Maharaj and the first Acharya selected for Ahmedabad Gadi was Ayodhyaprasadji Maharaj.

16. Who succeeded Bhagwan Swaminarayan as the central head of the entire fellowship and was made in charge of both of the Acharyas?

16. Sadguru Gopalanand Swami.

17. What are the eight factors of influence?

17. 1-Place, 2-Time, 3-Action, 4-Company, 5-Mantra, 6-Scriptures, 7-Initiation, 8-Meditation.

18. What are the six physical/emotional Urmies (sensations)?

18. 1-Thirst, 2-Hunger, 3-Grief, 4-Infatuation, 5-Old Age, 6-Death.

19. How many types of the devotion are there? Name them.

19. There are 9 types of devotion. 1-Sravanam, 2-Kirtanam, 3-Smaranam, 4-Pada-Sevanam, 5-Archanam, 6-Vandanam, 7-Dasyam 8-Sakhyam, 9-Atma-Nivedanam.

20. What is 'Sravanam' devotion?

20. Listening to the divine incidents and actions of God, devotional songs, the virtues of God, and the supremacy of God is called Sravanam devotion.

21. What is 'Kirtanam' devotion?

21. Singing the devotional songs of God and performing prayers to God is called Kirtanam devotion.

22. What is 'Smaranam' devotion?

22. Chanting the name of God, while remembering God is one's heart is called Smaranam devotion.

23. What is 'Pada-Sevanam' devotion?

23. Serving the lotus-like feet of God, and remembering the lotus-like feet of God in one's mind, is called Pada-Sevanam devotion.

24. What is 'Archanam' devotion?

24. Worshipping God by offering flower garlands, clothes, ornaments and performing aarti of God is called Archanam devotion.

25. What is 'Vandanam' devotion?

25. Vandanam means bowing down before the feet of God. For male devotees, one should perform the Shastang-dandavat, where the eight components of the body touch the ground (Feet, knees, Chest, Hands, Speech, Eyes, Forhead and Mind). For female followers, one should perform Panchang-dandavat, where five components of the body touch the

ground (Feet Hands, Speech, Forhead and Mind). While performing these forms of prostration, one should chant the mahamantra, 'Swaminarayan', in one's mind.

26. What is 'Dasyam' devotion?

26. Obeying the commands of God, being the servant of God is called Dasyam devotion.

27. What is 'Sakhyam' devotion?

27. Worshipping God as a friend is called Sakhyam devotion.

28. What is 'Atma-Nivedanam' devotion?

28. Dedicating the mind, body and soul, completely to God, and performing religious activities only to please Him, is called Atma-Nivedanam devotion.

29. What are the places of pilgrimage?

31. Places where God has visited and made Holy, such as rivers, lakes, forests, mountains. Various saints and devotees come to visit, purify themselves, and have the darshan of these places.

30. What is the meaning of 'Vasana'?

30. A desire in the mind to enjoy 'Vishays'(materialistic pleasures), previously seen, heard, or indulged in. Also, to enjoy vishays that have not been previous indulged is also called Vasana.

31. Who can be called an 'Ekantik Bhakta' of God?

31. A person who has no desire except God and offers bhakti to God, realizing himself to be 'Brahmarup' (the Soul).

32. What are the 5 gravest sins?

32. 1-'Brahma-hatya' (killing a brahmin); 2-'Madya-tam' (drinking alcohol); 3-'Suvarnani Chori' (stealing gold or money); 4-'Guru-stri no sang' (having illicit relations with the wife of one's guru); 5-'Charmahinosang' (company of one engaging in any of the previous four sins). One who commits any of these sins will be consigned to suffer misery in hell.

33. What are the four 'Antahkarans'?

33. Mind, intelligence, conscience, ego.

34. What is the duty of the mind?

34. To raise good/bad thoughts.

35. What is the duty of intelligence?

35. To make decisions.

36. What is the duty of the conscience?

36. To continuously think (thoughts).

37. What is the duty of the ego?

37. To think thoughts of 'I-ness'/'My-ness'.

38. Name the three bodies the soul is attached to.

38. 1-'Sthool' (gross), 2-'Sukshma' (subtle), 3-'Karan' (causal).

39. What is the 'Sthool' (gross) body?

39. The physical body.

40. What is the 'Sukshma' (subtle) body?

40. The mental body (mind, intelligence, conscience, ego).

41. What is the 'Karan' (causal) body?

41. Storage of one's karmas (good/bad deeds), which is the cause of rebirth.

42. What are the 4 kinds of evil people one should never associate with?

42. 1-'Kuda-panthis', 2-'Shakti-panthis', 3-'Shushka-vedantis', 4-'Nastiks'

43. What is a 'Kuda-panthi'?

43. A person who causes another person to falter in his religious vows and makes one impious.

44. What is a 'Shakti-panthi'?

44. A person who forces another to consume meat, alcohol and deflects him from his code of conducts.

45. What is a 'Shuskhma-vedanti'?

45. A person who claims that the abode of God, His divine form and the forms of God's incarnations are all false.

46. What is a 'Nastik'?

46. People who only believe in 'Karma' and deny the existence of God.

47. How many different life forms are there?

47. 8.4 million life forms.

48. What two things should one completely abandon to transgress God's Maya?

48. 1-Laziness, 2-Infatuation.

49. Give a description of God's divine abode, Akshardham.

49. Divine, luminous, intimate, indivisible, without a beginning and an end, and full of bliss.

50. How many temples did Bhagwan Swaminarayan construct Himself?

50. Bhagwan Swaminarayan constructed 6 temples Himself.

51. On what date was the opening ceremony of Ahmedabad temple?

51. The opening ceremony of Ahmedabad the temple was on *Samvat 1878, Fagan Sud 3, Sunday.*

52. On what date was the opening ceremony of Bhuj temple?

52. The opening ceremony of Bhuj temple was on *Samvat* 1879, *Vaishakh Sud 5*.

53. On what date was the opening ceremony of Vadtal temple?

53. The opening ceremony of Vadtal temple was on *Samvat* 1881, *Kartak Sud 12*.

54. On what date was the opening ceremony of Dholera temple?

54. The opening ceremony of Dholera temple was on *Samvat* 1882, *Vaishakh Sud 13*.

55. On what date was the opening ceremony of Junagadh temple?

55. The opening ceremony of Junagadh temple was on *Samvat* 1884, *Vaishakh Vad*.

56. On what date was the opening ceremony of Gadhpur temple?

56. The opening ceremony of Gadhpur temple was on *Samvat* 1885, *Aaso Sud 12*.

57. Who is the main deity of Ahmedabad temple?

57. The main deity of Ahmedabad temple is Nar Narayan Dev.

58. Who is the main deity of Bhuj temple?

58. The main deity of Bhuj temple is Nar Narayan Dev.

59. Who is the main deity of Vadtal temple?

59. The main deity of Vadtal temple is Laxminarayan Dev.

60. Who is the main deity of Dholera temple?

60. The main deity of Dholera temple is Madan Mohanji Maharaj.

61. Who is the main deity of Junagadh temple?

61. The main deity of Junagadh temple is Radha Raman Dev.

62. Who is the main deity of Gadhpur temple?

62. The main deity of Gadhpur temple is Gopinathji Maharaj.

63. What is called 'Satshashtra'?

63. Scriptures that explain the form of God and Dharma, Bhakti, Gnan and Vairagya.

64. What is called 'Asatshashtra'?

64. Scriptures that state God doesn't have a form and criticizes the incarnations of God.

65. By chanting which mantra can one reach Akshardham?

65. The mahamantra, 'Swaminarayan'.

66. What four attributes need to perfected in order to be a singular devotee?

66. 1-'Dharma' (code of conduct), 2-'Bhakti' (devotion), 3-'Gnan' (knowledge), 4-'Vairagya' (non-attachment).

67. What is 'Dharma'?

67. Dharma is code of conduct (rules) given by Shri Hari for all devotees to follow.

68. What is 'Bhakti'?

68. Devotion of God along with His greatness, in simpler terms, love or affection for God.

69. What is 'Gnan'?

69. The knowledge of the 'atma' (soul). Knowledge is simply believing, 'We are not the body, we are the soul.'

70. What is 'Vairagya'?

70. Detachment from all things in the universe except for the form of God.



The Process of Doing Puja

The scriptures state, devotees of God should go to sleep at 10 p.m. and wake-up two hours before sunrise. By getting up early in the morning, your strength, intelligence and life expectancy increases. Before getting out of bed one should sit up and meditate in one's heart upon the form of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. While meditating one should chant the mahamantra 'Swaminarayan'. Also one should remember great saints and devotees before starting the day.

1. The process of becoming physically pure:
   - One should brush one's teeth by sitting/standing in one place
   - Then one should take a shower using pure water by chanting God's name
   - Then one should put on a dhoti and shawl for performing puja.

     Note: These processes are mentioned in the Shikshapatri by Shreeji Maharaj.



2. The process of performing Puja:
   - In order to perform puja, one must sit on ashan (piece of cloth) made from wool or cotton facing North or East
   - Next, just like taking a shower purifies the body; by doing aachaman, one's mind and soul becomes purified, so one should perform aachaman.
3. The process of doing Aachaman:

   Note: Have a cup of filtered water and spoon for the next two steps.

- First place the right hand thumb on the right hand middle finger's center. Then using your left hand pour a small quantity of water with the spoon in the right hand and sip the water without touching one's mouth. Recite the mantra as given below. This should be done 3 times.
  First Aachaman mantra - Om Narayanaya Namah
  Second Aachaman mantra - Om Vasudevaya Namah
  Third Aachaman mantra - Om Vishnuvae Namah
- Then one should take water in the right hand as instructed above and pour the water on the ground (to purify the area from any evil spirits).
  Note: After doing aachaman 3 times, rinse your hands with water from the cup and then dry your hands.

4. The process of doing Tilak-Chandalo:

Note: To make sandalwood paste, just take a drop of water and rub the sandalwood with water. Slowly it will turn into paste (This can be done in our left hand or on a circular piece of stone)



- All male devotees should do a 'U' shaped tilak
- And inside it, in the center, a 'O' shaped chandalo
- There are 4 areas one must do tilak chandalo
  - Forehead - Use sandal wood paste for the 'U' shape and red kum-kum (powder) for the chandalo. And while doing the tilak chandalo chant, 'Om Vasudevaya Namah'.
  - Chest - Use sandal/wood paste for both tilak and chandalo and chant 'Om Shankarshanaya Namah'.
  - Right arm - Use sandal wood paste for both tilak and chandalo and chart 'Om Pradhyomanaya Namah'.

- Left arm - Use Sandal wood paste for both tilak and chandlos and chant 'Om Anirruddhya Namah'.

5. Performing mental worship:

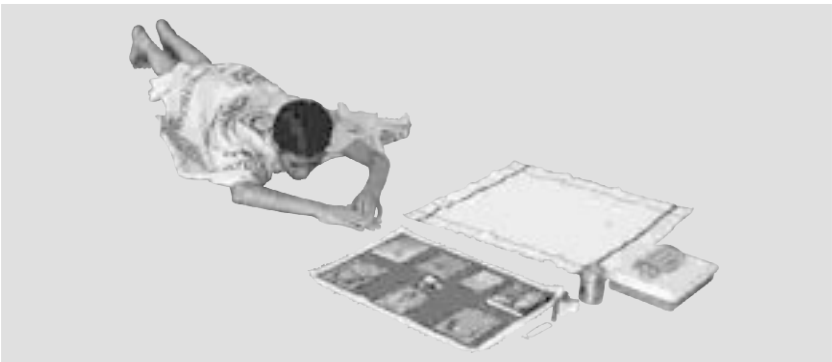


- In this step One should wake up Maharaj, give him a bath, provide him with garments, and offer him food. (Please refer to the Process of Mental Worship, page 143).
- Next after performing mental worship one should set Maharaj's ashan and should organize each murti according to its fixed position. Then one should invite Bhagwan to one's puja by reciting the following verse:

"Uttish to tishtha Govinda! Uttishtha Garuda Dhvaja; Uttishtha Kamalakanta trailokyae mangalam kuru. Agachha bhagavan dev, sva sthanat Parmeshvar; aham pujam kariyashmi, sada tvam sanmukho bhava."

(Meaning- This is an invitation mantra. A person performing puja should recite this mantra to invite Shreeji Maharaj to one's puja. The meaning of this mantra is "Oh Lord Swaminarayan, the son of Dharmadev, the ocean of mercy, the giver of ultimate salvation, please come to my puja. You are the ultimate doer of everything. Please come my Lord from are Akshardham. Please come and accept my puja")

6. After inviting Maharaj to one's puja, one should do at least 5 malas (spin the rosary) while sitting down and should focus one's mind on the idol of God. Then one should do mala standing on one leg (right leg crossed over the left leg) and both hands up in the air. Then one should circle around one's puja (clockwise manner). Do this at least 6 times. Next, do 6 dandvats (for males) or panchang (for females) to God. Then



after sitting back down one should rinse one's hands with water and then ask for forgiveness to Maharaj in case, if any mistakes were made while performing his puja. To do this, recite the following verse:

"Aparadh sahastrani kriyante ahornisha mayaa;
dasoy miti mammatva kshamashva Purushottama."

(The meaning of this mantra is "Oh Lord Swaminarayan, please forgive me for all my aparadh (sins/mistakes) I may have done during the day and night. I am full of ignorance. Please accept me as your servant, and forgive me.)

7. After reciting this verse one should pray to God and thank him for everything he has given us. Then one should end one's puja by reciting the verse which departs Bhagwan from one's puja and back into one's heart.

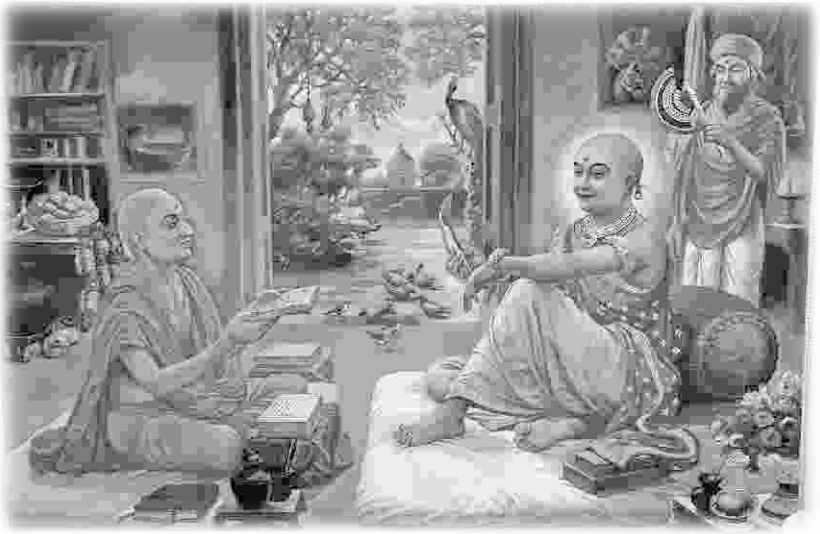
"Sva sthanam gaccha Devesha, puja madaya mamkim;
Ishta kama prasi dhyartham punarag manaya cha."

(The meaning of this mantra is "Oh Lord, I bid you goodbye, Thank you for coming to and accepting my Puja. Please do come again tomorrow and accept my invitation.")

8. After reciting this verse one should read 5 verses from the Shikshapatri. Then one should pack up one's puja and bow down before God, one's parents and family members. Only after puja, and bowing down to parents, one can take prasad.

Note: This is how one should start their day to live a stable spiritual life. Just like breakfast is considered to be the most important meal of the day, and is taken in the morning to energize one's day, puja should be performed in the morning to vitalize one's spirituality throughout the day.





The Process of Mental Worship

According to Gadhada Last Chapter-23rd Vachanamrut, Shreeji Maharaj states that a devotee who offers mental worship benefits tremendously and deep affection for God arises in one's heart. Daily, one should perform mental worship through one's imagination. One should daily perform five mental worships throughout the day according to its fixed times.

1. Early morning mental worship during puja (5-7 AM):

Imagine that you are in the service of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. Imagine that He is sleeping on a nice soft bed. Then one should wake up Maharaj by singing devotional morning hymns. Once he wakes up, help Him clean his teeth and then have him take a nice bath by using warm or cold water according to the weather/season. One should wash his body with nice scents and soaps. After He is finished taking a bath, help him dry his body and then offer nice garments and ornaments according to the weather/season. Then one should offer Maharaj a nice fragrant garland. Next, one should offer him breakfast. Note: one should offer Maharaj whatever item one likes. After Maharaj is finished taking breakfast, one should perform his *arti*. Then one should do Pradikshina (circulations around Maharaj) and prostrate before Him. This is the first type of mental worship, which should be performed during morning puja.

2. Afternoon mental worship (12:00 PM):

It is time for lunch so one should request to Maharaj to come take lunch. Next one should help him take off his ornaments and have him sit on a golden throne. Then place a golden table in front of Maharaj. Serve whatever you prefer or like to Maharaj on a golden plate. Then let Maharaj eat the food that you have offered.

After Maharaj is done eating, one should help wash his hands and mouth. Then offer him water and mouth fresheners. After helping Maharaj wash up, have Maharaj rest on a soft silken bed. And imagine one's self massaging Maharaj's legs. This is the way one should perform afternoon mental worship.

3. The mental worship for waking Maharaj (4:00 PM):



It is time to wake up Maharaj from his afternoon nap. So with grace and delight, gently wake up Maharaj. After Maharaj wakes up, help wash and dry His face with a soft towel. Then perform worship through offering Him nice flowers. Offer fruits and juices to His delight. After Maharaj is done eating, offer Him water. Then offer a seat on a golden throne and have His darshan. This is the way to wake up Maharaj in the afternoon.

4. Evening mental worship (7:00 PM):

It is time to give Maharaj dinner. Before dinner one should perform arti and prostrate before Him. Then one should have Maharaj sit on a golden throne and place a golden table in front of Him. One should serve the food one likes to Maharaj. After Maharaj is finished taking food, then offer Him water and mouth fresheners. One should imagine Shreeji Maharaj seated on a divine golden throne in a big assembly full of saints and devotees giving discourses. Imagine all the devotees engrossed in the talks and one is also seated in the assembly listening to the divine discourses by Maharaj. This is the way one should perform evening mental worship.

5. Mental worship for putting Maharaj to sleep (9:30 PM):

During the evening, one should offer milk and dry fruits to Maharaj. After Maharaj is done taking food one should have Him sleep on a nice soft bed with soft pillows and a blanket according to the season / weather.

Note 1: If one cannot remember the times for each mansi puja, then one should put an alarm on one's phone or electronic device to help one with performing mental worship from time to time.

Note 2: When performing these mental worships, one should try to find an isolated place where there is little or no distractions, to help one concentrate more on God.



Ghanshyam Charitra
Answer Sheet for Exercises

Exercise 1:

1. Chhapaiya
2. April 2nd 1781 or Chaitra Sud 9, Samvat year 1837
3. Supreme God has manifested in the form of a baby
4. Demigods
5. Dharmadev and Bhaktimata

Exercise 2:

1. 6 days old
2. Kalidatt
3. Very hot light
4. "I'm burning, I'm burning!"
5. She died

Exercise 3:

1. Two forms
2. Divine light came from Ghanshyam and the man became temporarily blinded.
3. On the tamarind tree
4. Rampratap
5. Sweets

Exercise 4:

1. Dagger, gold coin, holy book
2. Dagger - king, gold coin - the wealthy, holy book- sadhu
3. That he would become famous all over the world
4. The holy book
5. Markanday Muni

Exercise 5:

1. Meen Lake
2. They walked across the water
3. Ichchharam
4. Dharmadev, Bhaktimata and the other villagers.

5. It started to rain heavily

Exercise 6:

1. Kalidatt
2. Because he knew he would grow up to be powerful and strong
3. Nothing
4. The cyclone hurled him into the tree trunk and he died
5. Magic spells

Exercise 7:

1. He went inside to get a stick
2. He took as many forms as there were of monkeys
3. Chapatti
4. The courtyard
5. He stretched his arm and grabbed the monkey and slammed him to the ground

Exercise 8:

1. Rampratap
2. 3
3. Hanuman Gadhi, Shiva Temple, Ramji Temple
4. Hanuman Gadhi, Ramji Temple
5. Ramayan

Exercise 9:

1. Saryu River
2. Ayodhya
3. Dharmadev, Bhaktimata, Rampratap, Ichchharam, Suvasinibhabhi
4. They began to float
5. For a separate boat

Exercise 10:

1. Lone fisherman
2. The form of Yam Raja
3. They came back to life and leaped back into the water
4. 18 arms
5. He received a thrashing and became very afraid

Nilkanth Charitra
Answer Sheet for Exercises

Exercise 1:

1. It died instantly
2. Pibek called upon Mahakali (evil spirits) / Maruti
3. By the company of evil people
4. They did not attack Nilkanth, they started to attack Pibek
5. "Why do you want us to fight with the Supreme Bhagwan Himself?"

Exercise 2:

1. 900,000
2. 900,000
3. The voice told the yogis that God himself will give darshan to you at dawn and redeem all of you
4. With fruits and garlands of flowers
5. To forever reside in their hearts

Exercise 3:

1. A 1000 rupees full of gold coins
2. Dysentery
3. A bed made from banana leaves
4. By begging for it in a nearby village / sometimes fasted
5. Nilkanth Varni abandoned the company of Sevakram

Exercise 4:

1. Hanumanji
2. Because the banyan tree Nilkanth was resting under was the home of Bhairav
3. 1000 ghosts
4. Janmastmi
5. With one blow Hanumanji made Bhairav scream in agony and made him run away

Exercise 5:

1. She lied and stole Ramanand Swami's gold
2. The passing of Sheth
3. He saw his aunt being punished
4. Badrikashram
5. By a step well

Exercise 6:

1. 9 kilometers (5.5 miles)
2. 360 kilograms (793 pounds)
3. All 360 kilograms (793 pounds)
4. Through His strength, the bundles were suspended over His head
5. 16 saints

Exercise 7:

1. To learn the art of producing gold at will
2. They would take advantage of his hospitality and use his luxuries
3. Due to his divine glow
4. He found out this art cannot be learned in this age
5. Wealth, power and sensuous pleasures

Exercise 8:

1. Underneath a tree
2. Because of the wild lion that roamed the area
3. A wild lion
4. The lion sat down and Nilkanth Varni stroked His head
5. His whole temple

Exercise 9:

1. Muktanand Swami
2. Because of seeing the co-assembly
3. Male and females naturally attracted to one another and it is a distraction
4. They have fallen from their path of Religion

5. He separated the female devotees and made them sit far from the saints and male devotees from the assembly

Exercise 10:

1. To embrace a pillar
2. To live according to the words of Muktanand Swami
3. To store the dry fruits and sweets in the storage room
4. Many poor people came to the almshouse, so Nilkanth Varni gave away all the dry fruits and sweets to the poor
5. He expelled Nilkanth Varni from the almshouse



Saints and Devotees
Answers Sheet for Exercises

Exercise 1:

1. Because of the severe cold
2. He started a fire next to Swami
3. They sold wood
4. The sister became the queen of the king and the family shared the luxuries
5. He became the king's main leader in charge

Exercise 2:

1. He was constantly engrossed in the idol of God
2. 4 ferocious lions
3. He thought this body is going to die one day and that his body would provide food for the lions
4. The lions circulated around Swami, bowed down and left
5. He changed the intentions of the four lions

Exercise 3:

1. Eighteen names
2. He made him a saint and named him Adbutanand Swami
3. Because towards the end of the letter it stated, "Whoever else reads this shall also do the same as the eighteen listed above"
4. At his own wedding ceremony
5. Because he broke his wedding ceremony and instantly came to become a saint

Exercise 4:

1. If an eclipse occurs my head should be cut off
2. An eclipse of the moon (Lunar eclipse)
3. In the king's assembly
4. It shows the eclipse was going to take place

5. By changing the position of the eclipse

Exercise 5:

1. Become a saint and travel to Kashi
2. Dosabhai
3. Muktanand Swami
4. To take off the saffron clothes and put on clothes of a householder
5. The prints of his divine feet on his chest

Exercise 6:

1. Dharamsinh
2. The letter to Galuji said to pack up his belongings and immediately come to Vadtal
3. Because they saw Bhagwan to be all knowing because he called Galuji to Vadtal immediately
4. Galuji's mother
5. They wanted to take the refuge of God and meet him

Exercise 7:

1. Because Kesar Miya changed his faith / allegiance.
2. Was committed towards his duties
3. Chief police officer
4. His own family
5. He became free of many bad habits

Exercise 8:

1. She was the queen of Udaipur
2. A dead camel's carcass
3. By providing her food and guiding her to Gadhpur
4. She fell asleep and when she woke up she was in Gadhpur
5. The brahmin was Bhagwan Swaminarayan himself in disguise

Exercise 9:

1. The daughter of a maid who served Aliaya Khachar

2. Decided to dedicate her life to satsang
3. It suggested for Rambai to get married
4. She took off her bridal ornaments and told the groom she is dedicating her life to satsang
5. Shreeji Maharaj's letter (get married and then dedicate your life to satsang)

Exercise 10:

1. Thakorji (Idol of God)
2. He thought they were wasting their time
3. To have Thakorji to keep their reputation
4. The empty bowl of milk
5. Thakorji drank the bowl of milk in front of Abel Khachar and threw the bowl at his feet

Glossary

A

Aachman: a process to purify one's mind/soul during morning puja
Acharya: head or leader of a fellowship (sect)
Ahinsa: non-violence through mind, action and speech
Akshardham: the highest abode (the divine abode of Supreme Lord Swaminarayan); It is vast, immeasurable and all pervading
Almshouse: a house that distributes food, clothes, etc. for the poor and needy
Arti: Hindu-ritual of waving lighted wicks before the idol of god
Ashan: cotton or woolen cloth to sit on
Ashtang Yoga: system of yoga comprising eight progressive steps leading ultimately to union with god
Atma: the soul
Avatar: incarnation

B

Brahmachari: one who practices brahmacharya (celebacy) and remains engrossed in God
Brahmacharya: prescribed as eight-fold abstinence from associating with the opposite gender (celebacy)
Brahmarup: a state of self-realization as the soul
Brahmin: the first of four Hindu caste system principal groups
Buddhi: intelligence

C

Chandlo: small round mark made from kum-kum (vermillion powder) applied in the center of the forehead
Chappati: circular wheat bread
Charitra: divine incident or actions of God.
Charnarvind: God's holy feet

Chintamani: a divine stone that fulfills all of the wishes of its possessor

D

Dandvat: prostration before God, or His saints for male devotees
Darshan: having the sight of God's idol or saints/devotees
Devi: female deity or demi-goddess
Dharma: code of conducts (rites)
Dhoti: traditional indian garments for males woren mainly for performing puja
Diksha: initiation
Dysentary: diarrhea, where one passes blood

E

Ekantik: one possessing an elevated spiritual state, who posseses the attribuates of Dharma, Bhakti, Gnan, Vairagya
Ekadashi: 11th day of both bright and dark halves of the month regarded as a day of fasting and abstinence

G

Gadi: diocese
Gnan: spiritual knowledge
Guru: spiritual master

J

Jogi: one who practices yoga

K

Kanthi: double-threaded necklace made from tulsi beads
Kirtan: singing of devotional poems written praising the appearance, qualities, acts and glories of God

M

Mahant: leader of a temple
Mala: rosary that consists of 108 beads
Mansi: form of worship in which one performs puja, arti, thal, garments, etc. to God mentally
Maharaj: King, used for Lord Swaminarayan during His

manifestation on Earth

Mahamantra: divine word having divine spiritual power when chanted

Maya: illusion, anything that takes one away from the worship of God

Moksha: liberation; where one becomes free from the cycle of birth and death and attains Akshardham

Mukta: liberated soul

Mumuksh: person seeking liberation

Murti: idol of God; revered and worshipped

N

Nischay: definite decision

Niskam: absolute celibacy / desireless of all objects

Niyam: normal and spiritual disciplines (vows)

O

Omniscient: all-seeing/all-knowing

P

Panchvishay: the five sense objects of enjoyments from the 5 senses (sights, smells, tastes, sounds, and touch)

Panchang: prostration before saints and God for female devotees

Parshad: bodyguard / servants.

Prasad: food sanctified after offering to God

Pradakshina: circumambulation around the form of God, in a clockwise manner

Puja: daily worship

S

Sadguru: a high ranking saint, Self/God realized saint

Sampradaya: fellowship

Satsang: Association of the truth / keeping company of saints and scriptures.

Satsangi: one who practices satsang

Satya: truth

Seva: serving God and His saints through mind, body and soul
Shikshapatri: a code of commands written by Lord Swaminarayan Himself for all followers to abide by

T

Thakorji: idol of God
Thal: food devotionally offered to god as a form of devotion
Tilak: U-shaped symbol of sandalwood paste applied to the forehead, arms, and chest

U

Upasana: philosophical understanding of the nature of god

V

Vachanamrut: 262 discourses compiled by four saints that are the very principals and fundamentals spoken by Shreeji Maharaj Himself
Vairagya: detachment from the world and its material pleasures
Vasana: sub-conscious inclination/desire to indulge in materialistic pleasures
Vishay: material objects indulged in by the soul via the senses
Vivek: ability to discriminate between truth / untruth

Y

Yagna: sacrificial worship performed in vedic tradition
Yogis: celibates that practice yoga



Remember we are human beings. Bhagwan has made religious principles, morals & ethics for mankind. They are not made for animals. Animals live a meaningless life, while humans have a meaning to their life.

School studies are important, because without school education and religious knowledge a person does not completely develop in life. Both are necessary for complete development. Only a person, who has school education and religious knowledge, knows how to live a good life, respect parents and family. Nevertheless, associating with the right company can be a very big turning point in one's life depending on the kinds of friends one makes.

"One should abstain from bad company, it has ruined many kid's lives."

Also, the internet and television is very beneficial for studies, but one should be aware of its dark side. It's not the fault of television and internet, but it is the fault of the person who misuses it. Be cautious and don't poison your mind by filling it with filth.

Pujya Guruji





