Sadguru Muktanand Swāmi

(A Spiritual Odyssey Through His Remarkable Life)



: Inspirer :

His Divine Holiness Shāstri Shree Ghanshyamprakashdāsji Swāmi

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Pujya Thākorji Mahāraj





The very Thākorji which was served everyday by Sadguru Muktānand Swāmi, was passed down in the Guru Paramparā and now Pujya Guruji serves this Thākorji daily.

Divine Guru Paramparā (Lineage)

Sadguru Muktānand Swāmi



Known to be the mother of the Swāmināraya fellowship and is endowed with the top most qualities of Saintliness. Shreeji Mahāraj considered Pujya Swāmi to be His Guru.

Sadguru Adharānand Swāmi



His most remarkable work of writing Haricharitramrut sāgar (the ocean of God's divine pastimes) which contain even the most minute activities of Lord Swāminārayan. He depicted hundreds of drawings of Shree Hari and his saints.

Sadguru Haripriyadāsji Swāmi



He spread the transcendental knowledge of the *Vachanāmrit*, inspiring people to engage in the devotion God. He also possessed deep affection towards Lord Swāmināraya and held constant enthusiasm in his heart.

Sadguru Vāikunthcharandāsji Swāmi



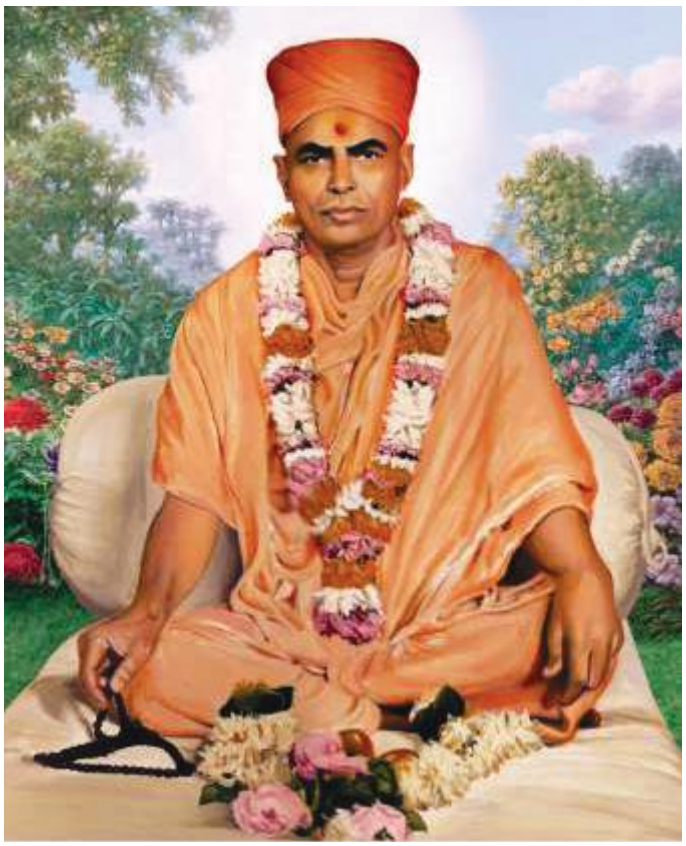
The one who had the inclination of servitude and showed bravery throughout his life. Swāmi's faith and bhakti in Shree Hari was unflinching and steadfast.

Sadguru Nārāyanswarupdāsji Swāmi



The one who constantly traveled through countless villages promoting the supremacy of Shri Hari. Also, who was emboldened with the virtues of wisdom and fortitude.

Sadguru Nandkishordāsji Swāmi



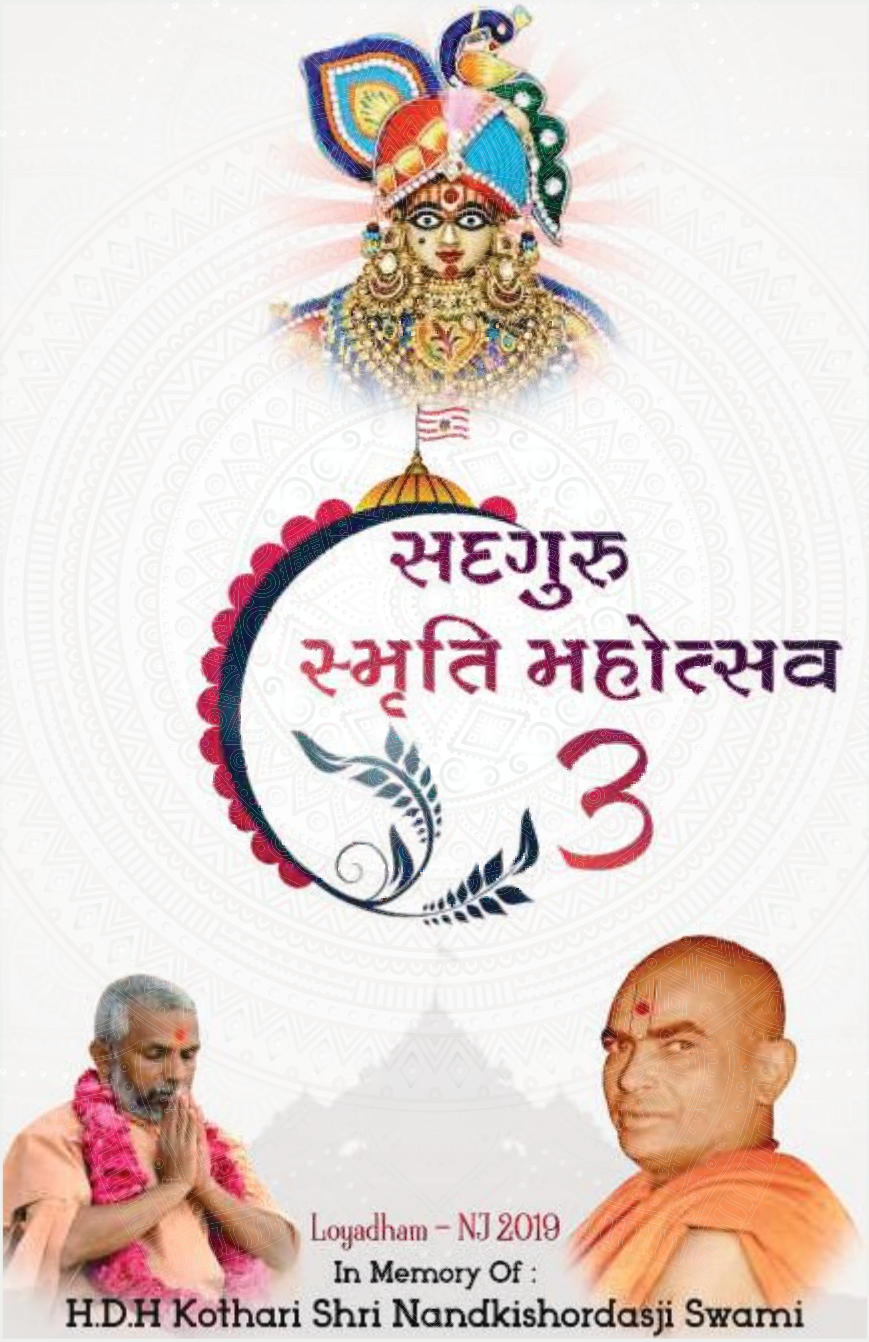
The one whose behavior is humble and pious. Through his inspirational life, thousands became encouraged to walk on the path of God. He also gave us the gift of Pujya Guruji.

His Divine Holiness
Shāstri Shree Ghanshyamprakashdāsji Swāmi (Pujya Guruji)



This book was published by the divine inspiration of Pujya Guruji, the founder of Shree Swāmināraya Mandir Loyādham and the seventh successor of Sadguru Muktānand Swāmi. His 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 Swāmināraya. Today, his image as a Sadguru continues to inspire, change and rejuvenate the lives of thousands of individuals.

This book is dedicated to Pujya Dada Guruji in whose memory Sadguru Smruti Mahotsav-3 will be celebrated in Loyadham- NJ.



ચૂંટણીમાં કોણ કોનાથી ઓછું ઊતરે?

સંપૂર્ણ ક્રાંતિ અને પરિવર્તન અમારા સંઘ - સમુદાયના પુરુષ દેહધારક પુરુષ, અર્ધાંગિની સંઘ !! ઓરલે અમારી સદ્‌ભાગ્યથી પ્રાપ્ત થયા. અદ્‌ભુત આદ્યશક્તિ "અનંતાંગા શ્રી માં" જેવોએ ને શુકમાર્ગ અવાજીએ !!

ગત જે આકાર (૬ અક્ષરિક,
પ્રથમ જે અક્ષરિક આકારાંત ।
"શુકમ જે શુકમ શુક્તિ", અક્ષરિક,
બાકી જે ઓરલેના આકા !!!

સદ્‌ગુ આંદોલન સંઘ આપ્યા બા જોડ બોરલે
"શુકમાર્ગ આદ્યશક્તિ"

સદ્‌ગુ આંદોલન દ્વારપાલ ચરિત્રના આધારથી
"શુકમાર્ગ આદ્યશક્તિ"

ત્રેતા યુગના ચરિત્રના ચરણ આધારથી
"શુકમાર્ગ આદ્યશક્તિ"

આપણે ચરમચક્ષુ જોઈએ તો ગુરુપદે આજે જે
"શુકમાર્ગ આદ્યશક્તિ"

આવા અનંત ગુરુજનોના બોરલે "શુકમાર્ગ શુક્તિ

એવા ગુરુજનોના શુકમાર્ગને અવાજી આ અવાજ
ઉપર અનંતકોટિના આશુ જે જોડ્‌ય બંગોરુ આ

"સદ્‌ગુરુ મુક્તસ્વામીજી સવાશો"

આ પુણ્યશ્લોક દાદા પુરુષશ્રી દાદાશ્રી સદ્‌ગુરુ અને સદ્‌ગુરુ જે પુરુષપદ કરવાનો, આપ્યું પુરુષના અક્ષરધામ અવતારના પાર્ષદ પદવિ. આપણે કરોડો ! જે આ પુરુષશ્રીનું જ્ઞાન આંતરોધ્વના કારણે અક્ષરધામ અવતાર. સવાશો અને દોઢસોવર્ષના પરિવારના આત્મ પુરુષાર્થ સંઘને - વડીલો દ્વારા થયું છે.

આ પુરુષશ્રીના સદ્‌ગુરુ કેવા - વિદેહ્યા આ અંતરોના આ અક્ષરધામ વડીલો જે પૂ. સવાશો જીવોના દીવ્ય ભાવના દર્શન કરો વડીલો. આ ઘણા આનંદો થયેલ અમારા !!

અક્ષરમોક્ષ દિવ્યમ દેહ્યમ પરમ પુરુષ પ્રાપ્ત સંબંધ સદ્‌ગુરુની સંગ્રહ અક્ષરમોક્ષ દિવ્યમ સ્વામી અવાશો સંઘો. જે પુરુષના વડીલો ઉપર સદ્‌ગુરુ અને ગુરુ-કૃપા જી સુદ્રઢ કૃપાવર્ષા થાય એવા જીવિત સવાશો સદ્‌ગુ કરોડિયાર્પિત !

વંદન સહ.
જીવિત જે મુક્તસ્વામીજી જો

દાસાનુદાસ દાસ દાસઅક્ષરપુરુષોત્તમ

જય સવાશિતાવાસ ધા.
તા. ૧૮-૪-૨૦૧૭
દોમાસિયા

Letter of Blessings by Pujya Guruji

Sadguru Muktānand Swāmiji played a role of a foundational stone in the sampraday(sect). Swāmiji was an eternally liberated soul, who was a senior prominent saint of the sampraday and was acknowledged as 'The Mother of the Satsang Fellowship'.

The ocean is superior among the lakes, the sky ranks supreme out of the elements, Motibā is the greatest among all female devotees, indistinguishably Mutkānand Swāmi is the greatest among all saints.

Muktānand māhāmuni is the senior and main bead in the saint-rosary of Sahajānand Swāmi.

Muktānand māhāmuni is the prime idol of servitude of Sahajānand Swāmi.

Muktānand māhāmuni is the topmost persona of devotional ecstasy.

Muktānand māhāmuni was revered as the Guru (spiritual master) by Bhagwān Swāminārāyan, the supreme Personality of Godhead.

Muktānand māhāmuni is our first Guru in our spiritual lineage.

For the very first time, a humble effort has been initiated by our dear Pārshad Rushi Bhagat to please Māhāraj and Sadguru, by compiling this English book based on the biography of such a great saint Muktānand Swāmi. The editing and research of this publication is rigorously executed by our dear Dhyan Swāmi, and the team of young sadhus and devotees of Loyādham Parivār.

It's an only hope, with the aid of this book the devotees either in our country (India) or in foreign countries maybe benefited to perceive the divine and glorious life of Pujya Swāmi Shri.

In the divine presence of Shri Hari, I hereby, would like to bestow my divine blessings to my dear disciple the author, Rushi bhagat, my dear disciple Pujya Dhyan Swami, and the entire team of young sādhus and devotees who made their generous and selfless contribution.

Servant of Shri Hari and Mukt Muni
Ghanshyamprakashdās
Jay Swāmināràyan
Date: 18-04-2017
Loyādham



Preface

Sadguru Muktānand Swāmi lived a sublime life that is the hallmark of excellence. His life is considered the epitome of saintliness and all of his characteristics are unique and universal in their own aspects. This divine soul appeared on the 7th day of the bright half of Posh, in Vikram Samvat 1814, to Ānandrām and Rādhabai in the village of Amarapur. Being so beloved to his parents, he was known as 'Mukund' throughout childhood.

By birth, he was quite different from others. Meditation and mandir visits were his most favorable activities. He was very intelligent and mastered scriptures in Sanskrit and other languages while simultaneously picking up the art of music. He also desired to abandon the householder life to attain to the Supreme Being. As Bhagwat Geetā has said:

तेषां सततयुक्तानां, भजतां प्रीतिपूर्वकम् ।
ददामि बुध्धियोगं तं, येन मामुपयान्ति ते ॥ भगवद्गीता १०/१० ॥

Meaning: To those whose minds are always united with me in loving devotion, I give the divine intelligence by which they can attain me. ***Mundak Upanishad*** has also stated the same in this verse:

यमेवैष वृणुते तेन लभ्यः, तस्यैष आत्मा विवृणुते तनुं स्वाम् ॥ मु.उ. ३/२/३ ॥

Thus one who is bestowed with divine knowledge can desire and attain to God.

Of course, his childhood was blessed by divinity. Finally, Mukund left his relatives and home in order to seek God. His search for a Sadguru and curiosity for the celibate life are

remarkable for all seekers of truth. He shifted through many Gurus until his thirst was quenched. Ultimately, his efforts were favored by meeting Shri Rāmānand Swāmi, an enlightened and prominent spiritual master.

"A person who has great desires would never be hindered, even if he were to face thousands of obstacles. That is a true form of desire." (Vach K.10) Mukund possessed such a true desire to reach his destination. Just as the holy river Ganga flows on and on to approach its final destination (the ocean), similarly, Mukund's search for a true Guru continued until it reached fulfillment. He was not shaken at all through the journey, even by the heaviest of sorrows.

He wholeheartedly surrendered to Sadguru Rāmānand Swāmi and was initiated in an ascetic fold with the name, Muktānand Swāmi. He ardently followed each and every word of Sadguru Rāmānand Swāmi and as a result, became a prime disciple in a short time, and was appointed as a leader in the *Ashram* (Hermitage) of Loj.

Nilkanth Varni (Bhagwān Swāminārāyan), conducted a holy pilgrimage across India and met Muktānand Swāmi at this *Ashram* of Loj. He brought questions about the true nature of Jiva, Ishwar, Māya, Brahman, and Parabhahman. Muktānand Swāmi was the first to satisfy His questions with perfect and precise answers. On witnessing true knowledge and saintliness, God Himself was bound with his love and decided reside in the company of Muktānand Swāmi. It was an honest victory of Muktānand Swāmi's virtuous life.

Thereafter, Rāmānand Swāmi appointed a young Nilkanth Varni as a head of his Sampraday (sect). Muktānand

Swāmi , who previously remained like a Guru of Varni and was 22 years older than Varni, remained as an obedient disciple throughout his life. What a wonderful role Muktānand Swāmi played!

The contribution of Muktānand Swāmi is truly indescribable by words. He composed the song of Arti, which is presently sung everyday across the world. Similarly, he composed thousands of kirtans and created the Muktānand Kāvya (a collection of 28 spiritual texts). He has also written an astonishing commentary on the ***Brahma Surta***, the foundational text of the Vedic philosophy.

As a staunch scholar, he defeated stalwarts of knowledge in the city of Vadodara in the presence of Māhārāja Sayajirāv. He had even mastered music, was a brilliant vocalist of musical instruments, possessed the art of dance, and further defeated the great musicians of Gwaliair with a dance that created a drawing of an elephant by feet. As a true saint, Muktānand Swāmi's life is a divine lighthouse for innumerable souls.

The seeds of the magnificent satsang which were spread across Surat, Vadodarā, Ahmedabād, Umret, Bhuj,etc. were sown by Swāmiji. Swāmiji's ranging spectrum of talents and contributions led to the widespread cultivation of the philosophy of Bhagwān Swāminārāyan.

Muktānand Swāmi's caring nature was similar to the selfless love of a mother. Therefore, Bhagwān Swāminārāyan had rewarded him with the epithet, 'Mother of Satsang'. Truly Swāmiji's all-inclusive life sketch is hard to describe by ordinary

means alone. As the atoms of the Earth are countless, so are his virtues and works.

Even his disciplines were substantially considerable. His main disciple, Shri Ādhārānand Swāmi, compiled the Haricharitramrut Sāgar, which is one of the most significant of scriptures in the history.

Pujya Guruji, the seventh spiritual successor of Muktanand Swami's ascetic lineage, features the very same virtues and natures which Muktānand Swāmi carried while in physical form on this Earth.

Pujya Guruji aspires to publish Swāmiji's divine life in English. Pārshad Shri Rushi Bhagat has accepted this challenge and worked hard to complete this valuable work. Pujya Dhyan Swāmi, Pujya Ādhār Swāmi, Neel Bhagat(NY), Nilkanth Bhagat(VA) and the youths of Loyādham Mandir have also endeavored very hard for its completion. Shreeji Māhāraj and Pujya Guruji bless all who have helped in this publication.

Currently, there is not a single book in English about the complete life of Muktānand Swāmi. This is the first and foremost publication in English. We hope that the readers will be motivated to live a divine life. May this publication enrich and inspire readers to please Māhāraj and Muktānand Swāmi.

Shāstri Suvratvallabhdāsji
(M.A., Phil, Vedantācharya, Vyakaranācharya, Gold Medalist)
April 5th, 2017
Loyādham-NJ

Foreword

Writing about Gujarat's bhakti poets and religious communities is a difficult task for two reasons: first, very little is written about the region in modern literature, and second, its various cultural, linguistic, and theological streams make it difficult for any one person to really "know" the material. The Swaminarayan Sampraday stands out as one such exemplary tradition of import and complexity because it draws from a variety of such streams. And yet the community's own growth in the diaspora and the demand of those without is overwhelming. The voice from within the tradition responds to this interest with success. Parshad Rushi Bhagat's book on Muktanand Swami is an example of such literature from within the community.

This introductory publication is a response to the demand for information and analysis on the community's past and literature. The author's accessible approach will encourage many English speakers to learn about one of the Swaminarayan Sampraday's greatest poets and saints. Muktanand Swami not only shaped the poetic and performative corpus of the community but was also one of its theological, institutional, and liturgical framers. If there is anyone after the founder, Shri Swaminarayan, whose life can serve as an introduction to the community and the social climate of Gujarat in the nineteenth century, it is Muktanand

Swami. I thank Rushi Bhagat of Kandari Gurukul for taking on this necessity.

As someone who has written scholarly and popular works about this community and its founder, I also recognize that this is not a simple undertaking. It therefore cannot be perfect. His writing betrays the complexities of the project—a sign of an able communicator. I remember the first time I met Rushi Bhagat in Kandari, Gujarat for the inauguration of Muktanand Swami's Brahmasutra Bhashya Ratnam, a commentary on the Brahmasutra, compiled and edited by Sadhu Purnavallabhdasji. He was simple, easy-going, warm, and helpful. His writing style is a reflection of his own persona. It is this simplicity, warmth, and passion that will encourage others to continue exploring the great formative period of the Swaminarayan Sampraday. For this monumental stride towards educating others about the community and its key figures. I once again congratulate the sadhus of Loyadham Parivar, and specifically their Guru, Ghanshyamprakash Swami, for publishing and inspiring this introductory work on Muktanand Swami. I hope that similar publications on other bhakti poets will soon follow.

Yogi Trivedi
Adjunct Professor,
Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism
April 12, 2017

Acknowledgements

This book has become a reality with the kind support and help of many individuals. I would like to express my gratitude and indebtedness to those who assisted me.

Foremost, I want to offer this endeavor to Almighty Bhagwān Swāminārāyan for the wisdom he bestowed upon me, the strength, peace of mind and good health to finish this book regarding the divine life of Sadguru Muktānand Swāmi.

Nevertheless, My Pujya Guruji (H.D.H Shāstri Shri Ghanshyāmprakāshdāsji Swāmi), whose inspiration has always been a true guiding light in my life. His blessings are the very reason, why this book has become a reality. Nonetheless, his unconditional love and care has given me great support.

I am highly indebted to Pujya Shāstri Suvratvallabhdāsji Swāmi (M.A., Phil, Gold Medalist) for his guidance and constant supervision in developing this book. A special thanks to Pujya Shāstri Santvallabhdāsji Swāmi (Ph.D, Vedantacharya) who has given supportive guidance in the compilation, recommendation and observation of the book. I also express gratitude to Pujya Shāstri Purnavallabhdāsji Swāmi, for being the inspiration for the format of this book and helped me read the first proof checking of contextual matter. And also my deep gratitude goes to Pujya Brahmprakashdāsji Swāmi

(Kundaldhām) who shared the excitement of his rigorous discovery in the literature of the sampradāy. I would like to express my special gratitude and thanks to Pujya Shāstri Rasikvallabhdāsji Swāmi for his extensive research in the collection and designing category. Nevertheless, Pujya Ādhārvallabhdāsji Swāmi's fantastic art skills has given this book a new ambiance with vivid depictions of Shree Hari and Muktānand Swāmi.

My particular thanks to Professor Harendra Bhatt, who despite his rigorous schedule, took time to grammatically proof the book. Finally, I am honoured to have Adjunct professor, Yogi Trivedi (Columbia Journalism) write the foreword for this book.

Furthermore, Neel Bhagat(NY) & Nilkanth Bhagat(PA) made a great effort to proof and finalize this book with great determination making the book a good read for everyone.

My thanks and appreciations also go to all who have willingly helped me out with their abilities.

Parshad Rushi Bhagat
April 13th, 2017

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Shri Bharatkumar & Gitaben Patel

Loving Son

Paresh & Rita Patel

Son- Jimit
Daughter- Dhruvi

Zonang – India

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Despite the lotus origin from mud, its fragrance is completely unlike that of the dirt. Muktānand Swāmi was born through mysterious incidents in the life of Mahātmā Muldās.

About three hundred years ago, a great sage named Muldās lived in the village of Amareli in Saurāstra. This is a land known for the spirits of its saints, its valiant heroes, and chaste women. Muldās lived in an āshram (hermitage) that was always filled with devotional ecstasy. Many aspirants used to come there and listen to his divine talks.

Muldās was a great saint. He was born on the auspicious eleventh day of Kārtak Sud, 1731 (8 November 1674). His father was Krushnaji and his mother was Gangābai. When he was sixteen, he married Velubāi. Later, when he came into the contact of a saint named Jivandās, he achieved distinctive realization about 'momentary worldly happiness' and 'supreme bliss'. He took Sanyās and renounced all worldly affairs. Afterwards, his wife came to him, in an effort to take him back at Gondal yet Muldās was determined with his decision. He informed her of God's greatness and revealed the true perspective of the world. At last, she also became a renunciant.

The Carpet Swims

Muldās's devotion had a magical power and people even worshiped him as a God. Once upon a time, after completing his journey, Muldās proceeded toward the village Div. On the way, there was a bay where devotees stood to greet Muldās, whom they worshipped. It was notable that

there was not a single boat to cross this bay. The devotees had requested the province's king to provide a boat for Muldās many times but the king refused, to which the devotees expressed great disappointment.

Muldās knew of the situation. Without delay, he spread a carpet across the water. It surprised all with the way it floated across the surface. Muldās asked his disciples to sit on it and once all were seated on the carpet, Muldās chanted the name of God, to which the carpet began to move towards the other bank. Even the king's army witnessed this. Their eyes were wide with wonder, and they thought, 'Is he God or a saint?' Once the carpet arrived at the opposite side of the bay, the devotees fell at Muldās's feet and at that time, Muldās was welcomed and greeted by the king in a splendid way.

Revival of the Dead Cat

One day, Muldās went to Jāmnagar. He visited a devotee of Lord Krishna who was the ācharya (head) of the monastery. The ever-increasing glory of Muldās raised jealousy within the ācharya and instead of properly greeting Muldās, he exuded disrespect.

Muldās soon left the monastery. On his departure, he spotted a dead cat whose kittens were lamenting. Muldās took pity upon them. He brought the dead cat into the monastery, put it in front of the ācharya and said, “Ācharyaji! You prove yourself to be a great devotee and claim to be worshiped as God. Can you revive this cat back to life? These kittens will not survive without her.”

The Ācharya was confused. He said, “It is not proper to break the law of God.” Then Muldās said, “That is your artificial reason to escape from the challenge.” The Ācharya was prompted and said to Muldās, “If you will it,

let me see your power."

Muldās covered the dead cat with a cloth, took a pair of Kartāls (musical instruments) in his hands and started singing the name of God. After few minutes, he sprinkled water on the dead cat, and without any delay, the cat got up and ran away. All were stunned with this act of Muldās and Ācharya looked down in shame.

Among all such miraculous events in the life of Muldās, the story of giving life to a woman, Ratan, is a unique story. It led to the birth of a great saint of Bhagwān Swāminārāyan whom we call, Muktānand Swāmi.

It was two o'clock, on the quiet night of Purnima (full moon). People of the village of Amareli were sound asleep. Yet even after great attempts, Muldās could not sleep that night. It was an undisclosed sign of God to Muldās. He thought to chant Lord's name for some time, but he failed to be quite happy. At last, he decided to take a bath.

He started walking towards the well on the outskirts of the village where he used to bathe daily. He brought a rope and a water pot with him. There was complete silence. Not even the flow of the wind could be heard. The moon spread its cool and calm rays on the earth. Muldās chanted the name of God and proceeded towards the well. As he approached the well, a strange view came to his eyes. Muldās stopped. He was shocked and murmured, "It might be a ghost or a helpless woman." To confirm this, he tread quickly and realized that it was a woman gathering stones to commit suicide by falling into the well.

Without delay, Muldās ran swiftly to save her. In that moment, the woman spotted someone running towards her and moved quickly to hasten her attempt. Before she could reach the well, Muldās snatched the stones away from her hands.

"O Mahātmāji! Please, let me die!" she said forcefully, still rushing to the well while Muldās was preventing her from doing so. "My daughter! I am a sādhu. One who accompanies happiness is a selfish man and a quality of a true saint is to stay even in such miserable conditions. Therefore, by no means would I let you commit suicide."

"The only way to be happy is to commit suicide" she said while crying. Muldās consoled her. "No, my daughter! I will try my best to resolve all of your miseries." His loving and affectionate words pacified her violent behavior. Finally, Muldās slowly brought her away from the well and had her take a seat. Muldās put his hands on her head and asked, "My daughter, what is your name?"

"Ratan" she replied, while sobbing.

"Oh! It is a beautiful name. Ratna (a precious stone or gem) is used as an offering to God. Your life is most precious, like Ratan. Why are you wasting it?"

"Only suicide will end my sorrows. Even by simply trying to relieve my miseries, you will also be troubled." She sobbed as telling thus and washed the feet of Muldās with her tears. "Ratan! Your problems cannot be solved by committing suicide. Now, I am your father and you are my daughter. God will never forgive that father who watches her daughter commit suicide and does nothing. Without hesitation, tell me why are you trying to commit suicide. Open your heart to me." She was trembling from wailing and sobbing. Muldās broke the bindings of her heart with his warm and kind words.

She reiterated, "Mahārāj! I am a widow. My name is Ratan."

Muldās asked, "Which is the village of your husband and your parents?"

"Both are in Div," she replied.

“Oh really? I very often visited Div. There are my disciples who live in an āshram there,” Muldās shared.

“My life is not worth living. Please, let me die,” she cried.

“Ratan! Don't hesitate to speak to your father. It is my duty to prevent you from committing a great sin. And - if I will not do the right thing, I would be responsible for that. So frankly, tell me.”

Ratan explained, “Bāpu! Listen to me. I was born in Div. I had a brother and we were both loved by our parents. As time went by, my brother was married. Afterwards, I too married with a youth named Dhaneshwar. We were happy together but due to my dire destiny, my parents passed away and after a couple of days my husband also died. So, I became without any support, and my life became miserable.”

She continued, “In addition, before I could forget the pain of my husband's death, his family members asked me to leave the house and go elsewhere. These words shattered my heart. I thought to myself, is the human nature this selfish?”

“Ratan! What did you do then?” Muldās asked.

“Bāpu! I thought my brother would share some means of care. Thinking so, I left the house of my husband and went to my brother's house. In the beginning, they behaved well with me but after some days their conduct changed. I felt that I was a burden upon them. What could I do? I had no other option. They repeatedly taunted me. How long does a relation without love continue? One day my brother spoke out, “Ratan! We can keep you here for a few days but not for long.” I cried out and requested to him, “Brother! My husband's family members kicked me out, so I came to you for shelter and you say that you can't bear me. Now where can I go?”

Without listening to me, he kicked me out. Due to my misfortune, I cried for some time. Then, I ran to the leaders of the village but not even one helped and they said to me that this is because of my own bad luck and they can't do anything. At last, I sold my Mangalsutra and lived outside of the village in a small hut. Due to lack of money I met with miserable conditions. As a result of my poverty, many shameless youths looked at me with a misleading eye. I used to pray to God not to bestow any female body in such a miserable condition." She said to Muldās, trembling from the misfortune that had befallen her.

"Ratan! Don't hesitate. Tell me what happened thereafter." Muldās spoke.

"Bāpu! In such depression, on one deadly night, I became pregnant with a baby. And my life turned even more depressing. Bāpu! Today, I have a child of six months. The father of this child is well known in the village of Amareli. Bāpu! What is the meaning of living out one's existence in this way?"

After listening to this tragic story of Ratan, Muldās paused for a while and thought, 'She has committed a grave sin. But it is a duty of a true saint to turn a sinner into a righteous person. I can transform her by atonements.'

Soon she said. "Bāpu! Let me go to jump into the well!"

"No, my daughter! Suicide is a grave sin. This valuable human body should not be spoilt," Muldās implored.

"But what can I do?" Ratan blurted.

Muldās was pondering. "To pay the amount of the precious life of Ratan, I will have to give the price of my status and reputation. My disciples will insult me."

Muldās said calmly, "Ratan, tomorrow I will be engaged in preaching in the assembly of devotees. Will you come there and speak angrily, "O Muldās! Now what should I

do of this unborn child? You deceived the people a lot by wearing the clothes of saint. Your sin is crying aloud from the mountain peaks. Is this your religion?"

Ratan cried, "O Mahārāj! Why are you sending a sinner to commit more sins? O God! Save me. Protect me."

Ratan then gazed at the kindness of Muldās and said, "Bāpu! People would erode you like the vultures eat away dead things."

To this, he replied, "My daughter you don't worry about this and it is my command for you. Don't forget what I have said." With such serious words, the atmosphere calmed. The wind turned into still motion. Due to Muldās' insistence, Ratanbāi agreed.

Malicious Outrage

This incident is evidence to the interchangeability of this world. The motivations of people can shift quickly in the charges of their own ecstasy. It was the beginning of eighteenth century. The sun god was dispersing its warm rays on the earth and on the other side, Mahātmā Muldās was enlightening his disciples with the light of spiritual knowledge in an āshram. In a sudden moment, Ratan entered the assembly and spoke out, "Muldās! Now what will I do with this child? Your sin has come to haunt me at last. You are pretending on the world by wearing saintly robes. You have spoilt the life of this widow and now you are preaching on religious principles! At this instance, where can I take this child?" The assembly was shocked with these words as it reverberated through them like the flash of lightning. The murmurs could be heard around the room.

"What is this?"

"Is this real, or a dream?"

"Is she speaking the truth?"

One said, “Muldās is deceitful!” Others said, “No he is a great devil in the form of a saint!” Another whispered, “He is a sinner.” Muldās was still and sober and after awhile he uttered, “Ratan! You are welcome in this āshram but first clarify it in court that it is my child. May God, bless you.” The whole assembly at once got up by hearing such words. They assured one another that Muldās was a hypocrite and proceeded to rain abusing words on him.

Subsequently, Muldās agreed in court that he was the cause of her child. People gathered from all corners and rushed to beat Muldās, uttering harsh words, “Muldās is a devil in disguise of saint. Kill him. There may be other many hidden offenses and out of them, one has been proven.” They put many allegations on him. “He must be killed.” Thus, people surrounded Muldās's āshram. Some had sticks in their hands while others had stones. They brought Muldās garlands made of shoes. The leader of the village made him sit on a donkey backwards and a grand procession commenced from his āshram. Ratan followed him weeping, with her face gazing at the ground.

The children, men, and women were speaking obscene words, hissing and hooting all the while. People threw stones, mud, and cow-dung on Muldās and he faced a barrage of insults. Those were the days when Muldās was on the top of renowned personalities and now the same person encountered the embodied form of insult and hatred. He tried to pacify the crowd but no one listened to him.

Muldās did not have the slightest antipathy towards such a dim society, and even in the rain of insults, he remained content. Only the idea of saving the life of one or even two people motivated him to endure all afflictions.

In the end, the inhabitants led him out of the village. Afterwards, Muldās and Ratan both found the river bank, built a small hut, and fasted for several days.

"Be like the oil for those whose life-lamp is near to being put out. Be a guiding star to those feeling alone and to those who are feeling helpless. Live life as a universal remedy to those who are afflicted with personal miseries."

It rained slowly on a dark night. Both Muldās and Ratan were hungry on account of their four days fast. As a result, they were sleepless. Muldās thought, "How will I relieve and console Ratan and how can I make her life full of joy?" Suddenly, he perceived the sound of weeping nearby.

"Ratan! Why are you crying?" Muldās approached her and implored, "Ratan, you are habituated to endure difficulty. Tell me what caused you to shed tears today."

"Bāpu! It is understood that innocent people hate and insult you, but your disciples who were familiar with you, they do the same as the ignorant people. I cannot bear that. Bāpu! The pain of hunger is bearable but this!" She sobbed and could not speak further.

Though, Muldās controlled himself, he too burst into tears on hearing such devoted words. "O God! I never afflicted anyone. Instead, I relieved those who were troubled. O God! You are the only shelter for us."

The atmosphere darkened due to the weeping of Ratan and Muldās. Eventually Muldās thought, "My crying will cause danger for Ratan." He became calm and said, "My daughter Ratan! This world is like a wheel in which enemies become relatives and relatives turn to enemies. See, Kaikai, who was the dearest wife of King Dasarath, exiled Lord Ram and afterwards, she herself enthroned Ram in Ayodhyā.

Ratan! When I used to come to Amareli from other villages, my disciples would welcome me with flowers. Today, those same disciples were marked with a bad impression so they come with sticks and stones. Yet, when they realize the truth, they will return with golden flowers."

"Bāpu! All of this is because of me, so please let me go."

"To where?"

"To the well." said Ratan.

"Ratan," Muldās began, "To give you a new life, I will have to pay a great amount. Thinking so, I have taken your responsibility. And sometimes, responsibility becomes more dangerous than life. At the same time, know that a great human who has the armor of truth and character, will always respect that responsibility which is more important than life."

Occasionally, grocers would go to reside on the bank of the river. Some even heard the conversations of Muldās and Ratan. In the morning, they approached and asked for the reason behind being wrongly accused. Ratanbāi explained matters in detail. The grocers decided to relay these facts to the appointed group of five leaders in the village. Fortunately, one of the youths there, who was the real father of Ratan's child, came forward and confessed that he truly was the father, and not Muldās. The village leaders were overwhelmingly surprised and could only utter, "Is this the work of God or a saint!?"

Once again, a wave of pleasure spread across the entire village of Amareli. Those who insulted and criticized Muldās now spoke praises of him. The village residents and leaders approached Muldās with flowers and garlands. There was a great deal of joy on the faces of all.

"See, Ratan! As I had told you, it became true," said Muldās.

As it happened, people honored Muldās, worshiped him, asked him for forgiveness, and requested him to stay in Amareli for the rest of his life. Muldās accepted their request and the people were extremely delighted. Joyous, tranquil, and peaceful days unfolded in the village of Amareli.

Muldās and Ratanbāi visited the āshram. Muldās had a strong desire to bring forth her purity through the means of spiritual atonements. He said to Ratan, “You may live in this āshram, and take simple food. Wake up at 3 o'clock in the morning, clean this āshram, and chant the name 'Shree Krišna tvam gatīrmama' till noon. Eat one fist full of Jav (barley) boiled in Gaumutra. When you have finished your lunch, continue to chant. You may perform Arti in the evening and prepare food for the saints. Clean the utensils used by them, and then read the Holy Scriptures till midnight. Ratan! God is very kind, he will forgive you and surely you will be a pious devotee”

Ratan strictly followed all the instructions.

As the days went on, she became extremely slender due to following penance. Seeing this, for the well-being and nourishment of the child within her womb, Muldās said, “Ratan! From today, do not eat barley boiled in Gaumutra. Instead, consume simple foods enough to give your body strength.”

“Why?” Ratan asked.

“My daughter! All your sins have been washed away,” replied Muldās. With this, a look of delight breezed across her face.

Muldās was much anxious for the child, especially as whether it will be a boy or girl. One day, he prayed to God to bring a son instead of a daughter, so that he could take up future responsibilities of the āshram.

One day, a devotee came to the hut and voiced,

“Mahārāj! Ratanbāi has given birth to a daughter.” Hearing this, Muldās prayed, “O God! With the birth of a girl, you are responsible to get her married. I know you are doing all this in favor of your devotees. What you are doing is for the welfare of all living beings.”

Muldās went to Ratanbāi and said, “Ratan! Today you are fortunate that the divine companion of Shree Krishna has been born. As a result, Krishna will also descend on the earth and so, you will be the grandmother of Krishna”. Ratan felt thrilled on hearing these words. Then the baby was given the name Rādhā and gradually, Rādhā grew up.

Arrival of Ānandrām / Turning Point

“Anand! You studied well in our āshram but before you leave, I ask you for 'Guru Dakshina'. Are you ready?”

“Yes Gurudev,” replied Ānandrām.

“Give me a promise that you will be like the oil for those whose life-lamp is near being put out. You will be a guiding star to those who are friendless and to helpless people. You will be a universal remedy to those people who are afflicted by sorrow.”

“I promise,” said Ānandrām as he touched the feet of his Guru, and then proceeded towards Gujarat.

Ānandrām thought to visit holy places of pilgrimage. On his way, he came to Amareli, at which time, the sun was entirely set. He aimed to stay one night at the monastery and move on the next morning. Thus, he asked a fellow if he could reside at the āshram, to which he was pointed towards the āshram of Muldās.

Ānandrām found a few others inhabiting the monastery. It was a still and peaceful environment. Muldās was doing Mala (turning rosary beads while chanting God's name). Seeing a guest in his āshram, Muldās welcomed him

and asked, “What is your name? And where are you from?”

“Mahārāj! I was studying Sanskrit in Kāshī. After completing my education, I departed from my home. On my way, I desired to visit places of pilgrimage. Therefore, I was going to Somnath. Mahārāj! May I stay here for a night?” asked Ānandrām.

“Yes! of course. My āshram is made for serving the pilgrims. You might be hungry. Would you like some food?” Muldās then called out, “Ratan! A scholar has come to our āshram after learning Sanskrit from Kāshī. Please, prepare a meal and a bed to sleep on.”

Ānandrām went to bed after taking his meal. He thought while lying on the bed, “The fellow that gave me directions to this āshram was telling me about Muldās being an incarnation of God. I feel he was telling the truth. Muldās seemed to be patient and cool-minded and his face was very luminous. His darshan must be by the grace of Supreme Lord Somnathji.”

Quite unexpectedly at midnight, a divine light appeared in Muldās' quarters, and as Muldās opened his eyes, he saw Lord Krishna. Muldās at once stood up and prayed to God. God spoke in soft words, “Muldās! I am very pleased upon you because of your dedication for the true and because of the pure saintliness you hold within yourself. Ask whichever you like and it shall be granted.”

Muldās with his hands folded uttered in a humble tone, “O King of the Kings, Sustainer of the entire cosmos, Supreme Being, I ask nothing from you other than your satisfaction upon me, yet please guide the responsibilities of Ratan and Rādhā, as I have grown very old and I am engaged in your devotion.”

God smiled and said, “Muldās! After a few years, I will descend on this earth in human form with my Muktos

(liberated souls). So, arrange the marriage of Rādhā with Ānandrām. Then my intimate Mukt will take birth from Rādhā and with this fortune, both Ratan and Rādhā will be liberated." God then disappeared conveying this.

Muldās rejoiced and in the early morning, he quickly completed his daily routines and called Ānandrām to make the proposal for marriage. "Anand! You are well educated and well versed in Sanskrit, so I want to give my daughter to you." With the humble words of Muldās, Ānandrām felt very lucky that his marriage was to be arranged by such a Godly person and thus, he agreed with Muldās' proposition.

The marriage took place with a great ceremony. Muldās gifted the temple of Amarāpur, which he had led charge of, in order to engage its devotees in devotional worship. Muldās gave the documents to the surprise of Rādhā, both whose eyes were filled with tears. Muldās felt that he was losing a piece of his heart. Rādhā hesitated to leave the company of her compassionate father however, with blessings, she arrived in Amarāpur with Ānandrām.

It is an authorized fact that the earth is not vacant of any spiritual master. Time witnesses every auspicious moment and celebrates the birth of such extraordinary individuals. Thus, let us join ourselves in that celebration and obtain advancement in our sacred and devout lives.

Amarāpur is a tiny village near Amareli in Saurāstra region, where the mud houses, lush farms, fields, abundance of trees, serene lakes, cows, and lazily grazing buffalos made each morning of the tranquil village a wondrous sight.

Ānandrām and Rādhā resided in the temple of Lord Ram in Amarāpur. Their fame spread all around on account of their selfless service, pure devotion and honesty.

They would spend entire days performing devotion. People would come and listen to spiritual talks from Ānandrām. He would recite verses of Rāmāyan and explain to all listeners the essence of the scriptures in a very simple manner. The people were always impressed by his discourses.

Months passed and with them, Rādhā became pregnant. The divine light on her face increased due to her pure devotion towards God. She was engaged in chanting the holy name of God and in reading scriptures. Ānandrām used to talk of Ramcharitmanas to Rādhā.

On the very auspicious day of Posh Vad 7 in Samvat 1814 (31 January 1758), a beautiful baby was born. Ānandrām and Rādhā became much happy to see divine light on their child's face. The womenfolk of Amarāpur and

relatives, came to see the divine child and offered obeisance and gifts. They felt joy simply on seeing the child and tenderly embraced him. Ānandrām gave donations to the Brāhmins and also generously shared gifts and wealth with the womenfolk who had come to honor the newborn.

Ānandrām cast a horoscope from the presiding stars and constellations. He named his son, 'Mukund' (one who gives liberation) with regards to his beauty and luster.

Ever since the birth of Mukund, Ānandrām and Rādhā spent their days in great joy. Mukund was dearest to his parents, and won their hearts slowly but surely growing older everyday. His father taught him scriptures like Rāmāyan, Bhagwat and Geeta.

Mukund was born an artist in poetry and music. His enchanting attributes turned out to be a point of attraction to the villagers. He sang the verses of Rāmāyan in melodious tones and even those who gathered to listen to Ānandrām, would listen to Mukund.

Afterwards, Rādhā gave birth to a daughter. She was named Dhanbai.

Mukund and Dhanbai were brought up in a devotional and spiritually inclined environment. Dhanbai eventually married however, Mukund did not desire to join into worldly relations. He was engaged in the devotion of God at all times and he did not pay attention to worldly affairs. By observing Mukund's nature, his parents wished that he should enter into wedlock. They feared that Mukund would leave home and become a Sanyāsi. At the same time, Mukund had a singular desire for becoming a renunciant.

As he was reaching adulthood, Ānandrām and Rādhā found their wishes to be fulfilled, and got married.

Ānandrām frequently visited Amareli. Mukund also accompanied him. Muldās was pleased to see Mukund. He

knew very well of this child. He remembered the words of God. God had said to him that, 'My intimate Mukta will take birth to Rādhā and with this fortune, Ratan and Rādhā will attain Moksha.' Mukundas's face shared resemblance to the form of Supreme God, whom Muldās would see in meditation. Muldās found Mukund to be the nectar of his life, whose birth was for a unique purpose. Millions of people would attain supreme bliss through Mukund's inspirational life.

As Muldās held the role of guru, he would talk to Mukund about the knowledge of the supreme lord. Many times, Muldās would let him speak in the assembly and before his disciples.

One day Mukund said to Muldās, “Bāpu! This worldly relation hinders in my devotion. I have a highest goal of Brahmcharya (celibacy) to earn propitiation of God. I want to leave home in search of such a guru who would lead me to my destination. Please guide me.”

Muldās was amazed by Mukund's spirit of detachment. He recognized his potentiality and his single-minded decision to leave home. So, he replied, “My dear son! You have chosen a true path. As long as one is attached to worldly relations, one cannot completely please God. It is my request that before giving up your home, you must have permission from your parents.”

For Mukund, this would not be an easy task. He was both virtuous, and able to earn money. Suddenly, an idea came to him. He understood that no relation in this world is without self-interest and thought, “I should act as if I was mad and as there is no value for a mad person in the society. Then, I will be allowed to become a sanyāsi.”

Mukund started to behave as a crazed boy. Whenever anyone asked him anything, he would reply, “Howw...”, and

then proceeded to sing and dance, 'Rām gatātat maulī puli.'

People's view for Mukund changed. Very often, complaints were shared with Mukund's parents held hope that Mukund would take care of them in the future.

Eventually, Mukund stopped going home. He would sleep at someone else's house and would make other children cry in the absence of their parents. He would exchange the babies from cradles of others to other homes. When the mothers came to know that their babies have been exchanged, they would fight amongst one another. Meanwhile, Mukund kept on dancing and singing 'Rām gatātat maulī puli.' After some time, he would confess the fact that he had exchanged the babies, then people would rush to beat Mukund, to which he had no choice but to run away. Sometimes, he would surreptitiously spill water and milk in another's house and then run away. He would release the calves of others. The whole village was quite troubled due to his tedious behavior.

The villagers shared continual complaints to Ānandrām and Rādhā. They tried to make him understand but Mukund would say, “Howww” while singing and dancing.

At last, once they tired by listening to the complaints of villagers, with crying eyes his parents said, “Mukund! Please go elsewhere but do not stay in our house.” Then Mukund touched the feet of his parents and set out for an incredible quest in search of a true Guru.

Achieving perfection in celibacy is a challenging mission. It cannot be accomplished without the guidance of a Guru. Therefore, before fulfilling his mission, Mukund embarked on his first quest for a true Guru.

Mukund released worldly relationships and all hopes of bodily comforts. His face was full of joy but a question lingered as to how could he find a Guru who would lead him on the path of celibacy. He felt that it wasn't possible to achieve perfection in celibacy without the guidance of a true Guru.

Mukund asked around. After a little effort, someone informed that, there is an able monk in Dhāngadhrā whose name is Dwārkādās. He taught his disciplines about celibacy. Mukund hurriedly approached and was granted permission to live in his āshram where Mukund engaged in various devotional services.

A few days later, Mukund revealed his thoughts to have guidance for attaining perfect celibacy. Dwārkādās, who was a gentleman, could realize his intense desire and thought to show him the right path. He said, “Mukund! The perfection of celibacy which you are talking about is not in my hands, but I can show you another remedy. I will give you a recommendation letter. Bring it to Vānkāner in the āshram of Kalyāndās. Perhaps, he will show you the path of celibacy.”

Mukund humbly left Dhāngadhrā and proceeded towards Vānkāner. There, he met Kalyāndās who wore only one cloth and a Kaupin made from brass which was locked with a key given to one of his disciples. Mukund rejoiced when meeting him and received permission to stay there.

One day he asked Kalyāndās when he was in a good mood, “How can I achieve perfect celibacy?” All of sudden, Kalyāndās got up and took him to a solitary place and revealed his own story, “Forty years ago, when I was forty, I was on pilgrimage to Kāshī. There, I passed a few women who were pulling out water from a well. I asked the way of Ujjain to one of them. In that moment, she pointed me the way with a physical expression which even today I cannot forget. Therefore, to show you the way of celibacy is out of my capacity. But you do one thing - go to Sardhār. There is a famous saint named Tulsidās. He may fulfill your desire.” Mukund left disappointedly and departed the āshram towards Sardhār.

Mukund lived at Tulsidās's āshram. Tulsidās was delighted to have such an intelligent and industrious disciple. He eventually appointed Mukund as the head of the āshram. Tulsidās delegated all responsibilities to Mukund, deeming him worthy.

Mukund performed all of the activities with a pure heart, knowing that it was for the service of a Guru. He also spoke Kathā of Rāmāyan everyday while singing hymns in a melodious tone. The whole village was attracted by his discourses. On one of those profound days, Rāmānand Swāmi came to visit Sardhār.

Meeting with Rāmānand Swāmi

Rāmānand Swāmi wore a white dhoti, white khesh, a necklace of Tulsi beads around his neck, carried an unequal attitude, had arms and hands long enough to reach his knees, a smiling and luminous face, and brought an impressively imposing appearance.

Rāmānand Swāmi was a unique saint. He was known as the incarnation of Uddhavji, a staunch disciple of Lord

Krishna. People accepted him as the manifested form of God. He was completely freed from envious natures derived in the materialistic world. He led people onto the path of liberation and was followed by fifty staunchly renounced disciples.

He was also a famous speaker so people gathered to listen to him. Rāmānand Swāmi delivered eloquent speeches that people from all around would listen to, whether they were children, men, women, elderly, rich, or poor.

He delivered the essence of all scriptures as follows, 'In this world, the most valuable thing is this human body by which we can liberate our soul from the cycle of birth and death. Moreover, people attain the eternal bliss of God when they surrender everything even themselves to God. Always remember that peace lies at the holy feet of God. When one holds his feet with a pure heart, God bestows both bliss and peace. Furthermore, attachment for the body and bodily relatives is the cause of bondage which prevents us from seeking firm refuge of God. How strange is it? One may feel thrilling joy, with all facilities and comforts provided, with pompous clothes, and a magnificent status with full authorities to go anywhere. Yet it is death which brings ruin to everything. With this human body, what is important is to know God's greatness, to listen the words of scriptures and the talks of saints, and to see with the eyes the form of God. In short, to employ the body for the purpose of relating ourselves to God is the true value of this material body." The people were carefully hearing the nectarine words which flowed from the mouth of Rāmānand Swāmi."

One day, Mukund was surprised with such a sudden transformation of the people. He asked someone, "Why don't people come here in the morning to listen to Kathā?" The man replied, "Rāmānand Swāmi has come to this village, so

people go there and listen to him."

Mukund was an honest seeker of a true Guru. He was pleased to hear the name of Rāmānand Swāmi and desired to meet him. One day, he went to listen to Rāmānand Swāmi and experienced a great peace of mind, like a man who plunges into the cool stream of the Ganga River to escape from the torrid summer heat. Such type of bliss was one he had never experienced before. He observed the divine lustre on Rāmānand Swāmi's face by listening to his enlightening words. He was greatly impressed with these talks.

Just as a peacock dances rhythmically to the rains in month of Ashadh, Mukund's mind started dancing with joy at the peace he felt.

Mukund soon requested Rāmānand Swāmi to make him his disciple.

Rāmānand Swāmi inquired, "Which cast do you belong to and where do you live?"

"I am a Brahmin and I live at the monastery of Tulsidās," Mukund replied.

"Seek permission of Tulsidās and then afterwards come to me," said Rāmānand Swāmi.

Mukund worried on how to obtain permission from Tulsidās, who acknowledged Mukund as a magnificent personality in the āshram. Tulsidās would never think to give leave of such a trustworthy disciple.

Mukund suddenly came up with an idea. He was in charge of the distribution of food grains, oil and ghee, etc. in the āshram. So, he started to give to the poor more then they asked for in result, all of the valuable goods were finished in the āshram.

With such actions of Mukund, Tulsidās was enraged and spoke harsh words to him, but Mukund continued with his actions. After a few days, Tulsidās angrily said, "I do not

like such a disciple, so tomorrow you will take leave of this āshram and go elsewhere." Mukund said, "O Gurudev! Please forgive me or write me your permission letter so that I can live happily elsewhere." On hearing such gentle words, Tulsidās was convinced and wrote him a letter of permission. Mukund, with this letter in hand, went directly to Rāmānand Swāmi who was in the village of Bandhiyā at the time. Mukund handed over the letter and Rāmānand Swāmi was extremely pleased to see such a aspirant.

Severe Examination

Mukund requested Rāmānand Swāmi to give him Bhagavati Diksha (initiation as a sādhu) but Rāmānand Swāmi decided to examine his faith and devotion.

Rāmānand Swāmi was quite happy with the behavior of Mukund. As part of a test he said, "Mukund you are the son of a rich family. Besides that, you were the chief disciple of Tulsidās, the head of an āshram which holds great reputation on society. And you are habituated to eat delicious sweets and foods; on the other hand, I have none of these. And living with me is not an easy task because many so-called (fake) sādhus are always ready to trouble helpless sādhus like us."

On hearing this Mukund firmly said, "I wish to realize and also experience your glory and greatness, no matter how many hardships I will have to encounter. I have decided to become your disciple and to obey all your major or minor commandments."

Then Rāmānand Swāmi asked Mukund to work as servant at the home of Mulubhāi and never to desire for having his darshan until word was given.

Mulubhāi was a devotee of God, living in the village of Bandhiyā. He was a farmer and was financially weak. On one hand, he didn't have enough money to keep employers to

work in his farm. On the other hand, Mukund was spiritually broad-minded. He upheld the command of Rāmānand Swāmi and prepared to go live with Mulubhāi.

Mukund lived in a splendid way at the āshram of Tulsidās and was capable of speaking eloquently in assemblies on scriptures, and to teach others. He was adept in poetry and in singing but neither virtues good, nor bad vices, nor high position can obstruct one who has realized the greatness of God. As an obedient disciple of Rāmānand Swāmi, Mukund started working at Mulubhāi's farm.

Knowing that Mukund is not an ordinary person, Mulubhāi never assigned any work to him. Yet, Mukund himself volunteered and engaged in performing various services. Months passed in this way.

In comparison to others, Mukund became handsome as he reached adulthood. However, his complexion changed due to the hard work in the scorching heat. Mukund was very attentive to his duties and as a result, he sometimes rested in the farm, as the house was quite a distance away.

He would rise early in the morning, complete daily worship, go to fetch water, and clean the vessels. In the afternoon and evening, he would continue work on the farm. Whenever Mukund was thinking that he fulfilled his Guru's words, he felt relieved at the fatigue of the day and experienced a pulsating thrill of joy. In this way one year passed, but the message from Rāmānand Swāmi was yet to come.

Seeing such servitude nature and devotion, Mulubhāi was heartily pleased. He realized Mukund's devotion to be in excess of his own and thought, “By the command of his guru, Mukund is living here with me. Therefore, let me request to Rāmānand Swāmi to take Mukund with him.”

One day Rāmānand Swāmi traveled to the village of Bandhiyā. Mulubhāi revealed all matters about Mukund.

Rāmānand Swāmi was extremely pleased and decided to give Mukund initiation as a saint.

In the spring of the year of Samvat 1842 (3 February 1786), Mukund was extremely elated on hearing Rāmānand Swāmi's decision. Preparations had begun for the initiation ceremony at the village. On the very auspicious day of Vasant Panchami, Rāmānand Swāmi initiated Mukund and named him 'Muktānand Swāmi'. After the ceremony, Muktānand Swāmi prostrated before Rāmānand Swāmi and was then warmly embraced. He felt an unspeakable joy. From that day, the quest of finding a true Guru came to an end.

The next day, Rāmānand Swāmi called Muktānand Swāmi and said, “You and Devānand Swāmi go to Bhuj for further study of Sanskrit.” Though Muktānand Swāmi was already well-versed in Sanskrit, to fulfill the desire of Rāmānand Swāmi, he delightedly prepared to go Bhuj.

Within a very short time, and with his sharp intellect, Muktānand Swāmi learned everything. Soon, he received permission from his teacher and prepared to depart. With the power of his devotion to his guru, Muktānand Swāmi realized that Rāmānand Swāmi was residing in Loj. Therefore, he immediately went from Bhuj to Loj with a few other devotees.

Muktānand Swāmi reached Loj where Rāmānand Swāmi was preaching in an assembly. As Muktānand Swāmi, Devānand Swāmi and the devotees entered the āshram, they began prostrating. Rāmānand Swāmi got up from his seat, lifted them, and lovingly embraced all of them.

Then Rāmānand Swāmi asked Muktānand Swāmi to sit in front of him and inquired about his studies in Bhuj. Other devotees who came with Muktānand Swāmi, also relayed their experiences.

Muktānand Swāmi said, “Gurudev! These devotee's posses unflinching devotion towards God and they also have

pure love for saints. They had preserved a special room for our study and recommended to our teacher for us to stay and study there." Rāmānand Swāmi blessed all the devotees. Those devotees stayed in Loj for few days, and invited Rāmānand Swāmi to Bhuj before they made their way back.

Rāmānand Swāmi travelled in many villages including Piplana, Manavadar, Dhoraji, Bhadra, Kāriyāni, Kanthkot, Sardhār etc. Muktānand Swāmi accompanied him everywhere, and as per Rāmānand Swāmi's request, preached to devotees in the various villages.

Miracle to a Helpless Woman

Once, it so happened that a Kshatriya greedily made his daughter marry with a low-class person. As the years passed, her husband died and she returned to her father's house. Her relatives did not accept her and considered her as polluted by being married to low-class person. As a result, she had to face a barrage of insults. Therefore, she decided to shorten her life by taking poison. As she was preparing, she heard that a good saint had come to the village and thought that it would be better to have darshan of the saint before death.

Thinking so, she arrived to where Muktānand Swāmi was preaching in the assembly. He was talking about discrimination between true saints and false saints and reiterated the value of the human body. "This human body is most valuable. After millions of years, the soul receives a human body. It is an opportunity to come out from the cycle of birth and death. Even demigods desired to have a human birth in order to liberate their souls. One should not waste it in eating, drinking and frivolous joy."

He continued, "Suicide destroys all means of one's spiritual fruitful efforts. Dharma shāstras confirm that death

by such an act is sinful. It is hellish for those who leave their body by giving away the intake of food, consuming poison, jumping into fire, inflicting self-injuries with a weapon, strangulation, drowning oneself in deep water, or by jumping from a mountain or from a tall tree. Suicide is considered a very great sin; therefore, in all situations one should be patient and engage in devotion of God."

Those in the assembly could not realize why Muktānand Swāmi changed the topic but it did change the intention of the woman who had decided to commit suicide. As Muktānand Swāmi was talking, she told a devotee to relay a message addressing, "Swāmiji! Indeed, I was going to commit suicide today by drinking poison, but when I heard that a saint had come, I decided to arrive here for your darshan. Now, after listening to your enlightening discourses, I am determined not to take such aberrant steps."

The people were astonished and realized Muktānand Swāmi's greatness.

Thereafter, Rāmānand Swāmi went to Bhuj. He assigned all the responsibilities of all saints and the āsharm to Muktānand Swāmi.

Nilkanth's Arrival

Varṇi spoke out, "Even today I am relieved from the fatigue of seven years. I wandered across many places but nowhere could I find a humble, frank and knowledgeable sādhu like you."

The all-powerful God, to fulfill the desires of his devotees, took birth in the village of Chapaiyā on Chaitra Sud 9 of Samvat 1837 (2nd April 1781). After delivering transcendental pastimes in Chapaiyā and Ayodhyā, Ghanshyām left home at the very tender age of eleven, barefoot, wearing just a loin cloth. He had taken in one hand a mala and in the other hand, a kamanḍalu. He had worn a kanthi around his neck.

With such few possessions, Ghanshyām set out for a long journey of to travel throughout mother India. He traveled through dense forests, moved across deep valleys, and scaled the summit of high mountains in order to liberate millions of people and to re-sanctify holy places with the dust of His holy feet.

Due to severe penance, His body became very thin like a skeleton. His smiling face was luminous like the full moon of Purnimā. His arms extended to His knees, His throat was decorated with three lines like those on a conch shell, His shoulders and chest were broad, His head was beautifully formed, and His eyes were large. His limbs were symmetrically well-formed, and His complexion was tinged with a lustrous green, as a result the inhabitants of the jungle gave Him the name, Nilkanth Varṇi (A celibate whose complexion is green, by the name of Lord Shiva). His intelligence was unfathomable, His continence of the highest calibre, and His speech was deep in tone and very eloquent.

He possessed absolute knowledge of the Vedas and was the ideal follower of religious principles.

Nilkanth Varṇi travelled through the different places of pilgrimage across the country for seven years, one month, and eleven days. In the course of His spiritual odyssey, He had met prominent mahants, seen their lifestyle and understood their views on religion. Some refused to accept God, some turned humanism into a mockery, some merely remained steeped in addictions and some were interested mainly in wealth, women and other worldly things. Varṇi had seen various types of fake ascetics. He had come across ascetics who were experts in black magic and had seen them performing nefarious deeds.

He had not seen anybody with pure mind who could help one to realize God. He was in search of such a sādhu who could honor the rules of Vedic texts. These include five observances: egolessness, non-covetousness, celibacy, unconcern for taste, and non-attachment to relatives; and the ability to implement them through conduct, while inspiring others to follow the same.

Now this great search was coming to an end.

Varṇi arrived in Loj in southern Gujarat on the very special day of Shravan Vad 6 of Samvat 1856 (22 August 1799).

As Nilkanth set His holy feet on the soil of Loj, it was as if wings were descending on the earth. The rains of the months of July and August had saturated the land. The farms were of a lush green color. The crops of Jowār and millet were swaying in the breeze and droplets of rain were falling to make them yet taller.

At that time, the women of the village were going to the well to fill their pots with water. Varṇi was sitting in deep meditation on a stone slab beneath a tree, by the bank of the

well. He had already finished his ablutions. As soon as the women saw Nilkanth, they stood as if rooted to the spot. Their heart melted in the beauty of Varṇi. He had such an emaciated body yet there was a radiant with glow on his face. His face proclaimed renunciation of highest order. They started thinking, “How insensitive could be the mother who would allow such a young boy to take sanyās. He might have left home to escape the taunts of His sister-in-law.”

Their talks and the rattle of the vessels had no effect on Nilkanth. Varṇi was still in a meditative posture. The women left the place, but their hearts were attached to where Nilkanth was sitting.

After a while, a sādhu came to collect water for the āshram. He saw Varṇi and was attracted towards Him. Though the Brahmchāri was young, the glow on His face was very attractive. He waited for Varṇi to come out of dhyān but Nilkanth was totally immersed. After some time, the sādhu went to fetch water and after filling the vessel, he waited for the ascetic to come out of meditation.

Varṇi, knowing the sādhu to be a true spiritual seeker, opened His eyes. Immediately the sādhu drew closer and found Nilkanth's eyes enchanting, and His personality dazzling. The sādhu slowly inquired, “Brahmchāri! What is your name? Where do you come from? What are the names of your parents? Why did you renounce your home? Who is your guru?”

Nilkanth sweetly smiled at these questions. He said, “Sādhurām! An ascetic has no caste, creed, religion, place, country or relatives. One who redeems him from worldly ties is a true Guru. I am looking for such a guru.”

The sādhu thought the Brahmchāri was young but knowledgeable. He became happy on hearing such answers. With folded hands, he addressed Nilkanth, “Brahmchāri!

What you say is true but it is merely etiquette to ask such questions. Therefore, I am."

Nilkanth realized that the sādhu was a true seeker of salvation. So, He gave a brief account of himself. Then He asked, "Sādhurām! What is your name? Whose disciple, are you? To which Sampradāy do you belong to?"

The sādhu replied, "My name is Sukhānand. Our guru is Rāmānand Swāmi. We belong to the Ramanuj Sampradāy. His āshram is nearby and there are fifty sādhus living at that āshram."

"Is guru Rāmānand Swāmi there?" Nilkanth eagerly asked.

"No, currently he is in Bhuj. But his principal disciple Muktānand Swāmi is there. He is a great sādhu endowed with noble qualities." Sukhānand Swāmi continued after a pause. "Please, come to our āshram. We shall be honored to receive you. All of the sādhu in the āshram will benefit from your darshan and our senior sādhu, Muktānand Swāmi will surely be delighted with your arrival."

Varṇi was pleased by the sādhus's manner. There was wisdom and politeness and saintliness in his voice. Nilkanth Varṇi liked the sādhu but He did not like going into villages. He said, "Sādhuram! I always stay under a tree or in a secluded place."

Sukhānand Swāmi expressed disappointment on hearing this. He kindly said, "You are a great personality. With your darshan, the sādhus of our āshram will be fulfilled. Please sanctify our āshram otherwise, Muktānand Swāmi himself will come here to receive you." Nilkanth wanted to meet Muktānand Swāmi. He rose and told Sukhānand Swāmi, "Sādhuram! Let us depart. I would not want to trouble Muktānand Swāmi by making him come here."

Sukhānand Swāmi's heart was thrilled with joy.

Both reached the āshram. Nilkanth saw a sādhu at the gate who was the personification of humbleness. He offered pranām to Varṇi. Varṇi thought, “He must be Muktānand Swāmi.” Varṇi saw love in his eyes that could fill the entire universe. The observance of a Brahmchārya was mirrored on Swāmi's face.

Meanwhile Sukhānand Swāmi placed the pot in a room and came to Muktānand Swāmi. He said, “Swāmi! I met this Varṇi at the well. His luminous face and attractive features dissolved all my worldly desires. I experienced great bliss, so I brought Him here.

Muktānand Swāmi brought Varṇi into the āshram and held His hand. He asked Sukhānand Swāmi to bring an āsan for Varṇi but Varṇi sat on the ground, even when Swāmi brought an āsan for him. “The entire earth is my seat. Why honor the body with a special seat?” replied Varṇi.

These words awakened an inner feeling within Muktānand Swāmi. Then Varṇi narrated His wanderings and explained the absence of virtues among most of the sādhus He'd met. “Swāmiji! After seeing your āshram and the sādhus, my mind experiences great peace.”

After a while Nilkanth added, “Swāmi! Wherever I visited, I asked questions about spiritual knowledge and its principles. I have not met anybody who had true knowledge of philosophy. My questions are not difficult yet they are essential in order to understand the principles of true philosophical knowledge. Could you please answer my questions? Swāmi! What is the Jiva? Who is Ishwar? What is Māyā? And what is Brahm and Parabrahm?”

Hearing the questions, Muktānand Swāmi sunk into deep thinking. He felt the questions to be very profound. He had discussed these with Rāmānand Swāmi on several occasions, “Indeed it is your greatness that you are able to

ask such questions at such a young age. I would consider it is my good fortune if my answers satisfy you."

Thereafter Muktānand Swāmi with complete respect said, "O Varṇiraj! Rāmānand Swāmi knows the doctrine of these eternal elements; hence I will try my best to answer your questions by the knowledge which I have imbibed through his grace.

Muktānand Swāmi started to reveal the perspectives of the five eternal entities namely Jiva, Ishwar, Māyā, Brahm and Parabrahm.

"(1) Jiva (soul): - the very quality of the Jiva is that it is dominant of the body, totally different from three types of body; Sthul (gross), Sukhma (subtle), and Kāran (causal). Though self-luminous, it is embossed with the Kāran sarir (causal body) which causes birth and death in 8.4 million species of life forms in this world. The Jiva predominantly resides in the heart and pervades throughout the whole body. It is subtle like an atom, it is eternal, indestructible and formless. It is in bond of mundane desires due to past impressions. The Jiva is innumerable. Moreover, God resides in the Jiva as a witness."

"(2) Ishwar (Demigods): - like the Jiva, Ishwar has three types of bodies: Virat, Sutratma and Avyakrut, along with three conditions: Utpatti, Sthiti and Pralay. They have the power of creation, sustenance and destruction in its designed universe. Ishwars give people what they deserve according to their deeds and actions, with the exception of devotees, because devotees are under the special care of the Supreme Lord. Ishwars are controllers of the universe. They have freedom to assume any form and can know all human actions simultaneously. Nevertheless, they may rule over the universe, as they are under the power of Supreme Lord."

"(3) Māyā (Illusion): - Māyā is the power of God. I-ness and My-ness are mere qualities of Māyā. It has three modes, satvagun (goodness), rajogun (passion) and tamogun (ignorance). All the worldly activities are based on the influences of these three factors which determine the building structure of the next life for all living beings. By nature, it is non-sentient but because of the Jiva that resides in its womb, it is believed as sentient.

"(4) Brahm (liberated souls): - Brahm is truth and knowledge. It has two forms, sakar (personal form) and nirakar (without form). It is infinite. Brahm is ever engaged in the service of God in its sakar form. In its nirakar form, it pervades everywhere. As light is indifferent from the fire similarly, Brahm is inseparable from God. Brahm is not under the control of Māyā.

"(5) Parabrahm (God): - Above Brahm there is only one entity, Parabrahm, who is providing sources of energy to countless cosmoses simultaneously. He is eternally having a divine form which resembles the human body; two legs, two hands, two eyes, mouth, a head, and two ears, etc. Though He is in one place, He appears in different places in different forms according to necessities. God is the potential power of all existing substances. He is worth worshiping with the highest form of devotion. One can attain ultimate liberation by realizing Him."

Muktānand Swāmi explained such with his unfailing eloquence. Nilkanth Varṇi was impressed with Muktānand Swāmi's answers on these subtle topics.

He said, "Splendid, Muktānandji! Today, I am relieved from the fatigue of seven years. I am pleased to see you. I have travelled many places but until now, I had not found a sādhu as humble, frank and knowledgeable as you. I have asked these questions to many, but no one gave me such a

perfect answer, not to even one of my questions."

Muktānand Swāmi said, "Brahmchāriji! I have only explained to you what my Guru has taught me."

Nilkanth Varṇi was satisfied with the answers and observed humbleness and devotion towards Muktānand Swāmi, just as he would for Guru Rāmānand Swāmi.

Then Varṇi expressed his desire to meet Rāmānand Swāmi but Muktānand Swāmi longed to retain Varṇi for as long as possible at the āshram.

He said, "Brahmchāriji! There is a gulf and the route is very difficult."

Nilkanth understood Muktānand Swāmi's desire. He said, "As you wish."

Muktānand Swāmi jubilantly welcomed him to the quarters managed for his residence and requested other saints to take care of Nilkanth Varṇi.

Thereafter Muktānand Swāmi revealed the glory of Rāmānand Swāmi. As a result, Varṇi's eagerness to meet Rāmānand Swāmi increased. Muktānand Swāmi assured him that Rāmānand Swāmi would return soon, so Varṇi decided to wait.

Divine Association

Mayarām Bhatt said, "Sarjudās! Rāmānand Swāmi has conveyed that if you really want good association, you will have to be embrace a pillar." Very soon, Sarjudās embraced a pillar nearby. Suddenly, Mayarām Bhatt clarified, "It means that you will have to follow all the instructions of Muktānand Swāmi who is like the pillar of this Satsang."

One day Nilkanth Varṇi said to Muktānand Swāmi, "Swāmi! Indeed, I am much eager to meet Rāmānand Swāmi. How can I have his darshan?" Muktānand Swāmi replied, "O Varṇi! Gurudev is now traveling in Bhuj to fulfill desires of his devotees. He will come very soon and will also be happy to meet such a Brahmchāri like you."

Muktānand Swāmi had spoken so affectionately that Varṇi was convinced. Without displaying even, the slightest unhappiness, He cheerfully replied, "Do not worry Swāmiji! Until Rāmānand Swāmi returns, I will stay in your association."

Deep Roots of Brahmcharya

Varṇi was interested in discourses of scriptures. Muktānand Swāmi used to deliver his speech on 'Rāmcharitmānas' in a very sweet tone within the compound of Jivraj Sheth. The whole village would come there to listen. One day, Varṇi came along with Muktānand Swāmi. During the discourse, Varṇi felt ill. Therefore, he stood up to leave as the discourse reached its climax. Muktānand Swāmi requested, "Varṇi, the rule is that the audience should only get up after the conclusion of the discourse."

Varṇi replied, “I understand the rule but after renouncing the world, sitting in such a mixed audience of men and women during discourses creates a lapse in any renunciant's character. The practice of eightfold Brahmcharya is hindered by the contact with the opposing gender. A Sādhu specifically should not speak to, see, or touch women. This has been ordained by the Shāstras.” Varṇi shared this quietly and left the assembly. There was numbing silence by His sudden departure. Muktānand Swāmi continued his discourse but was greatly surprised when He saw that no one longer held steadfast attention.

The following day, Muktānand Swāmi went to deliver another discourse. Nilkanth accompanied him. When Muktānand Swāmi was about to begin the discourse Nilkanth got up and said, “O sādhus! It is not right for you to sit with women and listen to the discourse. Such conduct violates the dharma of saints. So please, come to the mandir. I shall deliver discourses to you.”

The sādhus rose and followed Varṇi. Muktānand Swāmi witnessed Varṇi's magnetic personality. Then, in appreciation of such a statement, Muktānand Swāmi tied the cord of his book and said, “Mothers, please forgive me, but hereafter, we shall not even speak, see, or touch the opposite gender.”

Then, he joined other saints, who went to listen to Varṇi's discourse. “For spiritual advancement, Brahmcharya is at the core. Without following the rules, one can never attain celibacy. Just as putting fuel near a fire raises the flames higher and higher, similarly, the association of women increases lustful desires. Brahmcharya is a limb of dharma. When this limb gets broken, the roots of worshiping God become rotten.”

Nilkanth Varṇi was inspiring the practice of absolute

celibacy. Even though Muktānand Swāmi was much older, was the chief disciple of Rāmānand Swāmi, and the most authoritative figure in the āshram, he still humbly listened to what Nilkanth Varṇi was saying.

Giving respect to another's virtues was Muktānand Swāmi's topmost quality.

Let us see an example of Muktānand Swāmi's respective attribute.

One day Nilkanth saw a hole in the wall of the mandir and asked the sādhus, “Why is this hole here?”

“If the coal embers become extinguished, then a fresh fire can be lit by borrowing embers from the neighboring barber's house,” one sādhu replied.

“Who provides the fresh fire?” Varṇi asked.

“The women of the house, who else?” said the sādhu.

This distressed young Brahmchāri. He went to Muktānand Swāmi and said, “Swāmi! This hole in the wall will one day breach the sādhu's dharma. It is not proper for sādhus to have such contact with women.” Saying so, Varṇi did not wait for Muktānand Swāmi's order but obtained some bricks and lime and covered the hole with His own hands.

Muktānand Swāmi thought that Varṇi was doing the right thing. Sādhus should observe rigorous Brahmcharya. No one in the history of spirituality had insisted it so fully.

Varṇi insisted to take revolutionary steps against the custom which was inherited, as well prevalent in society. Muktānand Swāmi quickly accepted His request which was for the welfare of thousands of people in the future.

The residents of the āshram began to appreciate Nilkanth and His ways. Nilkanth on his part was inclined to serve the saints. He would bring leaves and stitch them into plates, collect dung cakes and fuelwood for cooking, clean grains, fetch water and also cook food. He used to wash the

utensils after everyone had finished eating. Not only this but he would sometimes pick up the kāvad and go to neighboring villages for begging alms. The God of Gods did not hesitate to serve the saints and this revealed the abnormal greatness of these saints. Thus, He kept himself completely busy from early morning till late at night in the services of the āshram.

On several occasions, Muktānand Swāmi tried to restrain him from going to beg alms, but Varṇi would smile and say, “One has to earn one's food. Without working, a man becomes lazy. If the body is utilized in the service of sādhus, God will be pleased.”

Muktānand Swāmi, pleased with such answers, would approve Varṇi's principles.

Nilkanth's stay at the āshram made a distinct improvement in the level of moral and spiritual observance among the sādhus. So, as to make him stay with them, Muktānand Swāmi told him, “Varṇi! You are staying with us and Rāmānand Swāmi has asked that we keep your clothing like ours.”

Varṇi said at once, “Okay! I shall do whatever pleases you.” Muktānand Swāmi was happy on hearing this.

On the following day, he gave Varṇi the upper clothes and a long garment and said to him, “From today you will be called Sarjudās as you have come from a place where the Saryu River flows.” Then, Sarjudās bowed down and after wearing the garments, prostrated before Muktānand Swāmi.

Sarjudās had realized that without Muktānand Swāmi, it was not possible to have darshan of Rāmānand Swāmi. This in turn led to increased love for Muktānand Swāmi and Sarjudās served in the āshram with great enthusiasm.

Gradually, a few months passed. Sarjudās very often

reminded Muktānand Swāmi about the promises to meet Rāmānand Swāmi. Sarjudās was disheartened and shed tears often. Muktānand Swāmi tried to help him forget the physical separation of Rāmānand Swāmi and used to narrate his glory, “Our Guru Rāmānand Swāmi is the incarnation of Uddhav, who was a great devotee of Lord Krishna. When Shree Krishna desired to leave this mundane world, he thought to whom he should give transcendental knowledge? He considered only Uddhav to be qualified. Thus, he imparted transcendental knowledge to Uddhav. Krishna also said, “I know Uddhav is my soul. His glory is not even like an atom less than me.” Sarjudās! There is no difference between Rāmānand Swāmi and Krishna. I meditate on the form of Rāmānand Swāmi. God has manifested himself through Rāmānand Swāmi to redeem millions of souls.”

Sarjudās interrupted, “Swāmi! When you glorified Rāmānand Swāmi, my heart filled with love for him. I became more eager to see him. As you had previously said, that you can see Rāmānand Swāmi in meditation; you meditate on his form and I will focus my mind with your mind. So, I too will be able to see Rāmānand Swāmi.”

Muktānand Swāmi thought, “If it pleases Varṇi, then I should do it.”

Muktānand Swāmi sat in meditative posture and closed his eyes. He could see Rāmānand Swāmi. With his yogic power, Sarjudās linked his mind with Muktānand Swāmi's mind. Sarjudās was able to have darshan of Rāmānand Swāmi who mentally presented himself in front of Muktānand Swāmi. Sarjudās was overwhelmed with joy. Rāmānand Swāmi appeared in the glow of radiating light, like the full moon in a clear sky. He was medium in height, with a healthy body, and fair-skinned; his eyes were like the leaf of a lotus, with a prominent and broad forehead. There was the

love of Krishna in his eyes. He had put on a white Khesh and white Dhoti. His navel appeared deep and round and he had worn a double lined necklace prepared from Tulsi beads around his neck. He had also applied a vertical mark with Gopichandan and in the middle of it, a round mark of Kum Kum (red-powder) on his peculiarly broad forehead. An auspicious sacred thread was tied around his waist and he had a white turban on his head.

When Muktānand Swāmi came out of meditation, Sarjudās gave a graphic description of Rāmānand Swāmi. The present sādhus were astonished by listening on such an exact description from Sarjudās.

He answered spontaneously, "God has two forms; manifest and non-manifest. The glory of the darshan of the manifest form is much more than the glory of mental darshan. Only one who has realized the knowledge of the manifest form of God can see Him and attain ultimate salvation." Sarjudās proclaimed this essence from the holy Shāstra.

He wished to be the ideal gurubhakt.

A few days later, Sarjudās said to Muktānand Swāmi, "Swāmi! Allow me to go Bhuj, because there is still no message from Rāmānand Swāmi."

Muktānand Swāmi realized that Sarjudās could no longer be satisfied with further excuses. He proposed to write a letter to Rāmānand Swāmi. On A.S. 1856 Fagan Sud 5 (Saturday, 15th March 1800), he wrote a letter describing the matter about Sarjudās and requested on behalf of Sarjudās to give response as soon as possible. Thus, Muktānand Swāmi concluded the letter and asked Sarjudās to write a letter with his own hands to Rāmānand Swāmi.

Sarjudās realized the glory of Rāmānand Swāmi. He knew it could not be conveyed simply in words. However, to

carry out the command of Muktānand Swāmi he started writing. “O great among the devotees of God, all prosperities dwell in your services. You possess all saintly qualities which are only your property. In this age of Kaliyug, you have established devotion in the heart of the people. You are always victorious and an incarnation of Uddhav. I offer my obeisance at your holy feet. My name is Nilkanth Varṇi. I renounced my home at the age of eleven with the purpose to see God with these eyes. After making a pilgrimage to many holy places, I have settled in the association of your saints.”

Thus, he wrote about his own nature of renunciation and ended the letter with, “I will be happy only when I see you.” Sarjudās handed the letter over to Muktānand Swāmi.

Muktānand Swāmi took the letters and wrote the address. He selected a qualified messenger named Mayarām Bhatt. The Brāhman was trustworthy and was a devotee of Lord Vishnu. Mayarām Bhatt was told to inform Rāmānand Swāmi about Nilkanth Varṇi and his willingness to meet him. Without delay, the messenger left to deliver the letters to Rāmānand Swāmi.

Mayarām Bhatt reached Bhuj in seven days, and he found out that Rāmānand Swāmi was staying at the home of Gangaram, to which he eventually approached. The beauty of the house was enhanced by presence of Rāmānand Swāmi who was dressed in freshly washed clothes and decorated with sandalwood pulp. Incense burned everywhere and its fragrance permeated the air. There were devotees taking benefit of his darshan.

Mayarām Bhatt felt joy with Rāmānand Swāmi's darshan. He forgot his fatigue of continuous walking for seven days. He prostrated at his feet and handed over the two letters. Rāmānand Swāmi felt extreme joy when receiving them. He touched both the letters to his head and reverently

touched Sarjudās's letter to his chest.

Rāmānand Swāmi first opened Muktānand Swāmi's letter. As he was reading it, the joy in his heart was evident by the glow on his face. Slowly, his eyes were scanning each word so he would not miss a single word. Tears welled down from his eyes knowing Varṇi's performance of severe penance. Devotees were watching with amazement at the expressions on their Guru's face. They knew that Rāmānand Swāmi was beyond sorrow and joy. Then, why the flush of emotions?

After reading Muktānand Swāmi's letter, Rāmānand Swāmi opened the letter written by Sarjudās and began reading. The words reflected the form of Sarjudās. His words were divine and transcendental.

Rāmānand Swāmi glorified Nilkanth Varṇi before the devotees, "I am very glad to know the arrival of Nilkanth. For a long time, I have been waiting for Him. My mind is always absorbed in His thoughts. Now, I feel free from all responsibilities. Today, as a teenager, with the name of Varṇi, He has come to redeem souls regardless of their calibre or bad nature. Tears of joy streamed from his eyes.

After a while, he asked to a devotee to bring sugar crystals. Then Rāmānand Swāmi gave fistfuls of sugar crystals first to Mayarām Bhatt and said, "Bhattji! You have brought happy news today. I am offering you only this small token but Varṇi will give you much more. He will bless you with supreme happiness." Then he personally distributed the sugar crystals to all of the devotees.

The next day, Rāmānand Swāmi wrote a response to the letters of Muktānand Swāmi and Varṇi, and handed them over to Bhattji for delivery to Loj.

Bhattji prepared to leave. As he prostrated to Rāmānand Swāmi, Rāmānand Swāmi blessed him and the

Brāhmin began his journey back to Loj.

He soon reached there and offered the letters to Muktānand Swāmi. Muktānand Swāmi opened both the letters, touched them to his heart and started reading. The sādhus gathered around him. These were the words of Rāmānand Swāmi, “My dear saints! You are beloved to God because you serve the Brāhmins and the needy. So, I am pleased with your service. I pray to God to bless you with His supreme bliss. In addition, Varṇi has come there. Take care of Him. People will realize His glory in the near future that Varṇi does not belong to this world. Let Him teach astāng-yoga (eight folds of yogic practice) to the sādhus. I shall come in a short period of time.”

Rāmānand Swāmi responded to Varṇi's letter saying, “Take care of yourself. You have a lot of work to accomplish with your physical body. I will come there very soon, so do not be in a hurry to come here. Teach astāng-yoga to sādhus. As much as you are eager for my darshan, I am also for yours. I must still undertake some tours for the sake of satsang and to keep the devotees happy.”

Sarjudās was pleased to receive the letter written by Rāmānand Swāmi. He respectfully touched the letter to His eyes and forehead.

Sarjudās Meets Rāmānand Swāmi

In life, the moment very hardly comes that one meets one's beloved. The moments are harder that perpetuate love the same way, both before and after the meeting. It is only the spiritual world that can enhance love further and further, in both union and separation.

Sarjudās used to teach Yogic techniques to saints; Yam (self-control), Niyam (regularity), Āsan (the ability to sit in one posture for a long time), Prānāyam (breathing exercises), Pratyāhār (complete control over the senses), Dhyān (meditation), Dhārnā (constant focus of the mind on the object of meditation), and Samādhi (the destination; trance). He was an expert in teaching Yogic techniques. It is the quality of Supreme Lord that He has mastery in all kinds of knowledge and arts. Only He can utilize any particular art at any appropriate time.

Sarjudās felt joy to carry out the commands of Rāmānand Swāmi. The sādhus respected Sarjudās for His exalted position.

Now, in Bhuj Rāmānand Swāmi was also eager to meet Sarjudās. He reduced visiting other places and prepared to leave for Piplānā. Rāmānand Swāmi said to the devotees, “From now on, I will meet you in a different form,” and thus departed from Bhuj. The devotees with their eyes full of tears bid him farewell. As many realized the secret of his words, they burst into tears, some lost consciousness, while others were absorbed in thoughts of Rāmānand Swāmi.

On reaching Piplānā, Rāmānand Swāmi took station

at the home of Narsinh Mehta. Rāmānand Swāmi sent Kurji Dave, a Brāhman as a messenger, to Loj to inform Muktānand Swāmi of his arrival at Piplānā. He also invited them along with Sarjudās to Piplānā.

In the evening, Kurji Dave arrived at the āshram with a letter. As he entered the āshram, all the saints knew that Kurji Dave had brought good news. Everybody was happy on seeing him and were eager to know what the message said. The sādhus sat around the Brāhmins.

Muktānand Swāmi asked, “Kurji! What news have you brought?”

“Swāmi! It is good news,” Kurji replied.

“Then, please do not keep us waiting!” said Sukhānand Swāmi hastily.

When the Brāhmin saw the eagerness of the sādhus to hear the news, he deliberately delayed giving the message and asked them, “First, tell me what will you give me, if I would share with you good news?” “I will award you with a most precious gift,” Sarjudās said.

Kurji did not know the glory of Sarjudās so he was a bit surprised. Sarjudās added, “I shall bestow you eternal happiness.”

Then Kurji said, “Rāmānand Swāmi has arrived in Piplānā from Bhuj and he has invited you all to Piplānā.”

All were delighted on hearing the news. Muktānand Swāmi gave a valuable piece of cloth as a reward to Kurji. Other saints offered different gifts to him. Sarjudās, therefore, called Kurji and said, "I shall give you my Akshardhām (the highest abode of God).” Yet, Kurji Dave could not understand the significance of the word so without any consideration, he returned back to Piplānā.

Sarjudās became impatient to leave for Piplānā but Muktānand Swāmi said, “Sarjudās! It is not proper to walk in

the heat. Let the sun set. At night, we all will leave together."

Sarjudās waited for the sunset. It seemed to be the longest day ever for Sarjudās.

Muktānand Swāmi, Sarjudās, and all the other saints proceeded for Piplānā. They walked for the whole night.

Very soon Muktānand Swāmi came and said to him, "Sarjudās! What happened? Piplānā is far from here and you are already tired. Use your Yogic power and keep on walking." The words of Muktānand Swāmi infused immense strength to Sarjudās and they proceeded ahead toward Piplānā. Hereafter, throughout the entire journey, Sarjudās was leading the entourage. He had not feel behind.

They arrived at the village of Piplānā on the day of Jeth Vad 12, Samvat 1856 (18 June 1800). A golden sun appeared in the sky bestowing warm rays to Sarjudās, Muktānand Swāmi, saints and devotees.

Someone gave the news that Muktānand Swāmi and the sādhus had entered Piplānā. Rāmānand Swāmi came down from his seat and was visibly eager to meet them. Soon the group came into view. Sarjudās was at the head of the group. They started prostrating from a distance to Rāmānand Swāmi. Rāmānand Swāmi came running towards Sarjudās, lifted him and lovingly embraced him.

Rāmānand Swāmi felt the bliss of being free from the curse of Durvasā with the meeting of Nilkanth. He welcomed all the saints and devotees. Rāmānand Swāmi seated Nilkanth before him. All were then seated in front of Rāmānand Swāmi. Muktānand Swāmi also took his place. Then Rāmānand Swāmi inquired on their well being. All the while, he kept looking at Nilkanth.

Muktānand Swāmi noticed such affection for the first time. Even though Rāmānand Swāmi was meeting the saints and devotees, Muktānand Swāmi had never seen the joy he

witnessed that day, on the face of Rāmānand Swāmi.

Rāmānand Swāmi asked Muktānand Swāmi, "For how long has Nilkanth been staying at the āshram?" Muktānand Swāmi replied, "He arrived in the āshram on Shrāvan Vad 6 of Samvat 1856 (22 August 1799). Since he came to the āshram, he was most eager to meet you."

Then, Rāmānand Swāmi addressed Sarjudās and asked, "Brahmachārji, where have you come from?"

Sarjudās narrated His entire prior life. Then Rāmānand Swāmi asked again, "Where will you go from here, Brahmachariji?" Sarjudās replied, "I shall now stay here in your service. I do not want to go anywhere else. I shall carry out your instructions." Rāmānand Swāmi was immensely gratified to hear this.

Afterwards, due to the fast of the previous day of Ekādashi, all had lunch together. In the evening, Rāmānand Swāmi, Sarjudās, Muktānand Swāmi, Muljibhakt of Bhadra and Lāljibhakt of Shekhpāt went to take bath in the river. The demigods began to beat on drums and blow trumpets out of feeling of happiness and there was a shower of flowers from the sky. Everyone looked on in wonder and awe. Then, Rāmānand Swāmi said, "Just as a bath is taken at the end of a sacrificial performance, today all our sacrifices are concluded by the darshan of Nilkanth Varṇi. For that, we have taken this bath. Therefore, it is celebrated even by the demigods and deities."

Everyone expressed great delight and after bathing, returned to the residence.

Unusual Humility

Humbleness is considered to be the topmost virtue. Egolessness provides raw materials to become humble. Observing this in Muktānand Swāmi, Nilkanth Varṇi said, "I shall never be able to pay back Muktānand Swāmi for his obligations that he has rendered unto Me. I will remain eternally indebted."

Muktānand Swāmi, Sarjudās and the devotees lived with Rāmānand Swāmi. Dasherā and Annakut festival were celebrated in Piplānā. Sarjudās witnessed true religion being practiced by the sādhus of Rāmānand Swāmi. He decided to take Bhagvati diksha from Rāmānand Swāmi.

It was the most auspicious day of Prabodhini Ekādashi. Invitation cards were sent to the villages. The day of the ceremony quickly arrived. People began to arrive at Piplānā for the initiation ceremony of Sarjudās. Muktānand Swāmi was appointed as the head of all preparations for the celebration. The entire city of Piplānā was gorgeously decorated.

The following day, on Kartak Sud 12, A.S. 1857 (28 October 1800) the ceremony unfolded. A sacrificial fire was lit and Vedic hymns were chanted by learned Brāhmans. Sarjudās completed His morning ablutions and went to the river to take a bath, where after he wore white clothes and entered the yagnashāla. Muktānand Swāmi was seated beside Sarjudās. Then Rāmānand Swāmi began the procedure to administer Bhagvati Diksha. Unto Sarjudās, he put a double stringed kanthi made of tulsi beads around the neck, applied an urdhvapundra tilak and round kumkum chāndlo to His forehead, imprinted His arms and chest with auspicious marks, and recited a guru mantra to His ear. Thus,

Rāmānand Swāmi announced two names of newly initiated Sarjudās; “Sahajānand Swāmi' and 'Nārāyan Muni.” Everyone clapped with great reverberance. After the ceremony was over, Sarjudās prostrated before Rāmānand Swāmi, touched his feet and prayed, “O beholder of all good qualities! Today, I realized myself very fortunate to be initiated by you. I am satisfied with your darshan. I traveled in most sacred places of India, but I could not settle anywhere. Finally, I was influenced by the humbleness of Muktānand Swāmi and to the glorifications he shared of you. He did not let me go elsewhere. As a result, I could see today the form of God manifested before me. I shall never be able to pay back Muktānand Swāmi for his obligations that he has rendered unto me. I will remain eternally indebted. Retain me as a servant of your lotus feet.”

Rāmānand Swāmi smiled with these words of Sahajānand Swāmi.

Sahajānand Swāmi also prostrated before Muktānand Swāmi and touched his feet. After this, Rāmānand Swāmi warmly embraced him and said, “My dear Sahajānand! I know you are just playing a role of a disciple. In fact, you are great. Please, ask whatever you desire.”

Then Sahajānand Swāmi said, “I have no desires for worldly pleasures. If you are pleased, then give me such a blessing that as Lord Krishna accepts your service and gives His darshan to you, similarly, that He would accept my service and give me His darshan as well.” Rāmānand Swāmi was pleased and gave this blessing. Sahajānand Swāmi required no such blessings of any other entity but made this request to confirm that without the grace of a Sadguru, one can never attain God.

The next day, there was a grand assembly held in Piplānā. Rāmānand Swāmi was seated on an ornate and heightened seat. Sahajānand Swāmi had His place nearby Rāmānand Swāmi's seat. It was the first assembly after the initiation ceremony of Sahajānand Swāmi.

Rāmānand Swāmi spoke thus, “Dear saints and devotees! I used to say very often that I am only a drum beater; and that the real player will come soon. The real player is right in front of us. Worship Him with pure devotion. The first credit goes to Muk to Sahajānand Swāmi, Rāmānand Swāmi said, “Satānand Swāmi, for Sahajānand Swāmi being able to stay with us today. Therefore, make Him the pillar of this holy fellowship and obey all His commands.”

Further, addressinghajānand Swāmi! This whole satsang is yours. Hence you have accepted principles of 'Vishishtādvait', so continue to establish this movement.”

On hearing this, Muktānand Swāmi said, “Swāmi! Since childhood, Sahajānand Swāmi has held the knowledge of our principles. That is why he had asked me to reveal the form of Jiva, Ishwar, Maya, Brahm and Parabrahm.” With this, Rāmānand Swāmi smiled at Sahajānand Swāmi.

Afterwards, Rāmānand Swāmi began traveling in the Sorath province. He kept Sahajānand Swāmi with him, who at the time, reached the age of twenty-one. Rāmānand Swāmi viewed His unique abilities and desired to set Sahajānand Swāmi as His successor as quickly as possible.

Rāmānand Swāmi said to Muktānand Swāmi, “I have grown old and I desire to hand over the charge of my responsibilities to Sahajānand Swāmi. He is a qualified sādhu and detached from material wealth and status. Only He is fit to this throne but only when we do this with everyone's consent, will there be no obstacles.”

Muktānand Swāmi appreciated the suggestion and glorified Sahajānand Swāmi. Then, Rāmānand Swāmi told Muktānand Swāmi, “Arrange an assembly. Invite all the sādhus and devotees. Call Sahajānand Swāmi as well. I shall announce the happy news today.” Thereupon, Muktānand Swāmi immediately summoned both sādhus and devotees to the assembly.

He went to Sahajānand Swāmi and said, “Sahajānand Swāmi! Gurudev has called you to the assembly.”

Sahajānand Swāmi looked at Muktānand Swāmi and said, “Swāmi! I know that Rāmānand Swāmi wants to impart the responsibility of the satsang onto my head. I will not accept it. As I have told you, that after Rāmānand Swāmi's darshan, we would both retire and go to the forest for meditation.”

Muktānand Swāmi smiled on hearing this and said, “You are a great personality, beyond mind and intellect. You have the capability to bless others to transcend the influences of mind and intellect.” Thus, he held the hands of Sahajānand Swāmi and brought him to the assembly.

Sahajānand Swāmi's seat was arranged beside Rāmānand Swāmi. Sahajānand Swāmi hesitated to sit besides Rāmānand Swāmi. Then, Rāmānand Swāmi said, “I am just preparing to offer you a proper seat. Please do not hesitate to sit here.”

Then, Sahajānand Swāmi humbly accepted the seat. Rāmānand Swāmi said, “Sahajānand Swāmi! Today we have decided to install you in my place.”

“Swāmi! I am not inclined to accept the responsibility of the whole fellowship. This responsibility increases the chances of contact with wealth and woman, which are not fit for a renunciant,” Sahajānand Swāmi replied.

There was a numbing silence. Everyone's eyes were fixed on Sahajānand Swāmi. Rāmānand Swāmi said, “Sahajānand Swāmi! You should think for the good of saints and devotees who are devout and pure hearted. Wealth and woman cannot bind you. And you are able to guide one another. The renunciants and householders will become spiritually enlightened by your association. For the welfare of all, you will have to accept this responsibility.”

“But Swāmi--!” Sahajānand Swāmi interjected.

Before Sahajānand Swāmi could continue, Rāmānand Swāmi said, “You are God. And you have come to this Earth for the establishment of Bhāgwat Dharma. I came here to prepare the ground and establish this congregation for you. Now, it is your turn to take up the reins and establish Ekāntik Dharma by preaching the right conduct to the people.”

Sahajānand Swāmi felt that Rāmānand Swāmi is firm in his decision.

At once He rose, touched the feet of Ramanand Swāmi and declared, “Swāmi! I'll do as you wish.”

On this sentiment of Sahajānand Swāmi, the saints and devotees exuded great acclaim with the shouts of “Rāmānand Swāmi ni jai!” “Sahajānand Swāmi ni jai!” It spread tremendous happiness all around. Rāmānand Swāmi embraced Him and put his hand on Sahajānand Swāmi's head.

Rāmānand Swāmi's joy had no bounds. He called a meeting of senior saints and devotees and asked them to prepare for a grand function to mark the occasion of Sahajānand Swāmi's installation ceremony.

The warm rays of the sun warmed the heart of Rāmānand Swāmi and music emanated from flutes, with the flair of tanpurā adding to the festivities. The atmosphere in Jetalpur appeared divine, as if resembling Akshardhām. Rāmānand Swāmi offered Sahajānand Swāmi beautiful clothes and ornaments to wear. To fulfill the desire of Guru Rāmānand Swāmi, he accepted the dress. The installation ceremony was in full swing and all experienced divine joy in their hearts.

At last, Rāmānand Swāmi performed the ārti of Sahajānand Swāmi.

Thereafter Rāmānand Swāmi told all of the saints and devotees to obey the commands of Sahajānand Swāmi and to worship Him as God. He added, “I have arrived a little earlier like Ganesh, but Sahajānand is the master of all. He is Purushottam Nārāyan himself (Almighty God). Therefore, all

of you should act according to his command and worship Him devoutly."

Thereafter Rāmānand Swāmi asked Sahajānand Swāmi to demand a boon. Sahajānand Swāmi asked for two boons, “If any of your devotees has to suffer pain as from the sting of a scorpion, let me suffer that pain on my body and instead let your devotee suffer no such pain. Also, if your devotee is destined to have a rāmpatar (begging-bowl), let that rāmpatar come upon me, but may your devotee not suffer from shortage of food and clothing.” Seeing such a generous feeling of Sahajānand Swāmi, the eyes of all the devotees streamed with tears. Rāmānand Swāmi granted Him both of these boons. The festival was celebrated with great splendor.

Thus, on the auspicious day of Kartak sud 11, A.S. 1858 (16 November 1801), on the sacred soil of Jetalpur, Sahajānand Swāmi was enthroned as the definitive successor of the Uddhav Sampradāy.

Muktānand Swāmi's zeal was unbound on witnessing Rāmānand Swāmi's satisfaction. After about a month elapsed, and Rāmānand Swāmi thought, “Now, Sahajānand Swāmi has already been installed on the gādi. My work is over. I should no longer sustain this body.” With this thought, he went to the village of Fareni. There he told the devotees, “This body is mortal. Whoever accepts a body has to abandon it one day. The purpose for which I held my body has now been fulfilled. All of you obey Sahajānand Swāmi's command. He will protect you. He will remove all your hardships and miseries. He is mightier than anyone else. Therefore, do not worry.” Rāmānand Swāmi then, while sitting in meditation on his seat, left his mortal body and returned to Akshardham on Māgsar Sud 13, Samvat Year 1958 (Thursday, 17 December 1801).

"At present, even a sādhu like Muktānand Swāmi can be considered to be like God." As an actualizing event, these words were stated by the Supreme personality in 13th Vachanāmrit of Loyā, and have captivated the hearts of devout devotees.

Shree Hari Praised Muktānand Swāmi

Shree Hari said to Muktānand Swāmi, "Swāmi! You must travel to various villages around Gujarat. First go to Jalavad and thereafter, go to Dandhavya." Saying this, He lovingly embraced Muktānand Swāmi.

Then, Shree Hari added, "Swāmi! You are personified form of saintliness. You are greater than the deities of Brahmlok and heaven. People will benefit greatly from your darshan. You will be worshiped like God. People will be relieved from their separation with God through your darshan."

Hearing this, Muktānand Swāmi thought for a while and said, "Maharāj! I have no power. To follow your command is my first dharma (duty within code of conduct). I consider that person blessed to whom you issue orders. And today, you have ordered me to go travel to villages, therefore I am very much fortunate and blessed."

Shree Hari became happy on listening to his humble reply.

As Muktānand Swāmi was leaving, Shree Hari along with some pārshads and Jiva Khāchar, came to the outskirts of Gaḍhaḍā. Shree Hari came down from his horse and performed five pradakshinā. Then, He started to do dandvat to Muktānand Swāmi and Muktānand Swāmi tried to stop him. Shree Hari said, "Swāmi! Let me do only five dandvats. I

have never seen a saint like you in the entire universe. You tolerate insults, hatred, and many difficulties for the sake of my command. You have never claimed to become a Sadguru despite having all such spirituality positive qualities. This is your great virtue. So, you are worthy for dandvat." Saying so, He again started prostration.

Then, Muktānand Swāmi lifted him and folding his hands and said, "Maharāj! When countless of Axarmuktas (liberated souls of highest quality) are obeying your command, what is my value before them? I am merely a servant of your lotus feet."

Shree Hari embraced him heartily and bid him farewell.

One who is engaged in activities related to God and observes "panch vartmān" (five vows of saints) assiduously and obeys all the commands of God; such a saint is worthy of being worshiped at par with God. (Vach. Gaḍhaḍā, Last Chapter, 26)

In Vemārdi

Once, Shree Hari was residing at Gaḍhaḍā. Adbhutānand Swāmi came there with some devotees and said "Maharāj! These are very pious devotees who have come from Vemārdi. It's their humble request that you come to Vemārdi."

On hearing this, Shree Hari addressed the devotees and said, "My Guru, Muktānand Swāmi will come to your village. You may fulfill your desire to worship me by serving Muktānand Swāmi with all objects or materials you have preserved for my worship."

Then, Shree Hari told Muktānand Swāmi "Swāmi! You and Adbhutānand Swāmi are to travel to Vemārdi. The devotees of Vemārdi are pious. It is my command for you to fulfill the desires of devotees there."

By hearing this comment, Muktānand Swāmi became confused. He realized that the devotees will offer him ornaments and valuable clothes to wear. With folded hands he said, “Maharāj! If it pleases you, then I will go to Vemārdi, but it is not proper to accept ornaments as a sādhu.”

Muktānand Swāmi could not convince Shree Hari.

Then, Muktānand Swāmi departed for Vemārdi with Adbhutānand Swāmi and other saints. Bhaktibhāi Paṭel the chief devotee of Vemārdi and various devotees from other villages had gathered to welcome Muktānand Swāmi. They were pleased with the arrival of Muktānand Swāmi. They greeted all the saints with reverence.

Then, Adbhutānand Swāmi informed the devotees that, “Presently, Shree Hari is traveling in other villages for the happiness of many devotees. But seeing your love and devotion, Shree Hari was pleased. So, he ordered us to come to your village. He also said to you to worship Muktānand Swāmi on behalf of him and serve him as you would like to serve Shree Hari.”

The devotees were thrilled. Their joy and enthusiasm increased with the command of Shree Hari.

Next morning, the devotees prepared a beautiful swing under a banyan tree. They offered ornaments to Muktānand Swāmi and made him sit on a decorated swing. The devotees swayed the swing while the saints sang praises of Shree Hari and devotional songs.

Still, Muktānand Swāmi remained equal to his matchless saintly qualities.

In this way, not only one but eighteen days passed in this way, with Muktānand Swāmi on a swing, adorned with valuable clothes and ornaments. The devotees were content and did not ever feel absence of Shree Hari. Instead, He was still ever-present through Muktānand Swāmi.

In Vadtāl

It was near the end of the summer. The land all around thirsted for rain. Shree Hari was present at Gaḍhaḍā. One day, He departed for Vadtāl to fulfill the desires of devotees. He mounted Mānki accompanied by some Kathis at the time. They were given incentives of sweet mangoes at the end of the journey, to which they greatly looked forward to.

A few miles through the journey, the weather started roar violently with thunder. Due to strong winds, small dust storms were formed. The horses of the Kathis could not see through the low visibility conditions. As the storm worsened, Shree Hari ordered everyone to return to Gaḍhaḍā. There was a mystery behind this stormy weather, which only God knew Himself.

Shree Hari wrote a letter to the devotees of Vadtāl, "We had left Gaḍhaḍā to attend the festival of Bhim Ekādaśi. While on our way, we suddenly encountered a strong storm, and in result, the stones and dust struck the horses and visibility became quite poor. So, we were not able to arrive to Vadtāl on Bhim Ekādaśi. However, for benefit of others, Muktānand Swāmi will soon arrive there. Worship him with various ornaments and by seating him on decorated swing. Endow him with honor, reverence and devotion as you would for me." Jayanand Varṇi arrived at Vadtāl with the letter on the tenth day of Jeth Sud. At that time, Muktānand Swāmi was with a group of saints and devotees.

In the evening, a large assembly gathered under a large banyan tree together with saints and devotees. Kalidas, the chief devotee of that village, spoke with distress, "Shree Hari did not arrive. For the last ten days, we had been waiting for Him." At that time, Jayanand Varṇi gave the letter written by Shree Hari to Kalidas. It was read to the assembly with a wave of delight.

Listening to Shree Hari's words, all of the devotees became extremely happy but Muktānand Swāmi felt some disappointment. On the next day of Bhim Ekādaśhi, devotees prepared a beautiful decorated swing of flowers under the banyan tree and requested Muktānand Swāmi to sit, while wearing highly precious garments and ornaments. Muktānand Swāmi engaged his mind on the form of God and warmly took a seat on the swing. All the saints and devotees one by one worshipped Muktānand Swāmi with kumkum (red powder) and applied sandalwood paste on his forehead. They offered flowers and garlands and offered baskets of mangoes. In fact, devotees felt no absence of Shree Hari and experienced the same bliss of God's divine form.

The saints sang devotional songs accompanied by musical instruments before Muktānand Swāmi. After that, Swāmi delivered the intrinsic knowledge of God, "Sahajānand Swāmi is the Supreme Lord. He is independent. He gives happiness through the company of saints and devotees. God is always manifested in His devotees. We should be happy in obeying his commands."

Swāmi continued, "Dear devotees, I am an insignificant Sādhu. By God's command all of you worshiped me but I am the very lowest servant amongst you." Saying this, Swāmi took the holy dust of that place, and touched his forehead. The devotees viewed the glory of Muktānand Swāmi which was beyond anyone's comprehension.

In the same manner, Shree Hari had sent Muktānand Swāmi in the village named Pipri and devotees had worshiped him as God.

Once again, Shree Hari had planned to go to Tavra after celebrating the festival of Ramnavmi at Gaḍhaḍā. Then, Shree Hari said, "I will go to the Sorath region and Muktānand Swāmi will go at Tavra." Again, He wrote a letter

to the devotees, saying “You all should worship Muktānand Swāmi just as you would worship me.”

Muktānand Swāmi, even after receiving such high reverence and being viewed in such a highly-graded category, remained a 'servant of the servant' of God. This signifies the deep-rooted understanding of God's greatness in his heart.

Dhyan of Muktānand Swāmi

On one occasion, Shree Hari arrived beneath a tamarind tree and sat on a decorated swing. He gave a glimpse of himself by swaying on the swing and then joined in the assembly. He then sat on a throne in front of the saints and devotees.

Shree Hari posed a question. “All of you devotees, by my meditation and worship believe that you are attaining liberation. Yet, if I am not here, and you carry out the meditation of Muktānand Swāmi, will you attain liberation or not?”

All saints and devotees could not give a satisfactory answer to Shree Hari's question. So, they asked Shree Hari to give the answer himself.

Shree Hari said, “If you can't answer the question, then I ask the senior saints to get together to collectively find the answer.”

Shree Hari wanted to test their faith and devotion. All started pondering on the question but no one obtained the nectar of the question. Then, on behalf of all saints, Krishnanand Swāmi answered, “Maharāj! One who meditates upon anyone else besides your divine idol, should be considered misguided and his devotion should be considered unworthy. Such a life is wasted.”

Shree Hari smiled on hearing this and said, “Your answer has no evidence behind the holy scriptures. You have

not yet understood the meaning behind my original question. Listen, and let me explain the question in detail. Only through the knowledge of saints, you have understood who I am. When God is on the earth, he never says that, I am God. Through the saint's divine preaching we can understand who God is." Thus, Shree Hari explained the question.

Nityānand Swāmi understood the answer. He presented the answer in front of Shree Hari, "Maharāj! Through the holy scriptures and your spiritual discourses, we can find out that the saints who obey God's every command, who remember God's idol, who meditates on God's form, and remembers the divine incidences of God - those kinds of saints give ultimate liberation to countless souls. Parikshit, Prahlad, Dhruv, the sons of Daksha, achieved liberation by the preaching of Shukdevji and Naradji. This is elaborated in the scriptures. As God can give Moksha (liberation), his true saint also possesses the same authority. However, Kamsa, Shishupal, Putna, Ravana etc., had remembered God with the feelings of hostility and they still achieved Moksha. It is never heard that one is liberated through developing animosity with saints. By serving such a saint and by listening to his preachings, one can attain Moksha - but not by meditation alone."

Shree Hari agreed, and said "If one wants to be qualified for attaining ultimate salvation, in the initial stage, he has to keep the company of a Brāhminised saint through his mind. It is the remedy for being qualified to attaining Moksha. Also, saints should be equally worshipped by performing the same rituals."

Shree Hari realized, it wasn't fit to properly explain the answer at that time because the other devotees who were lacking true understanding were also seated in the assembly.

(Later, he explained it, as detailed in the 5th Vachanāmrit of the Vadtāl Chapter.)

"Just as one performs the mansipuja (mental worship) of God, similarly, if one performs the mansipuja of the ideal Bhakt along with God, by offering him the prasad of God, and prepare thal etc. - even if he is a low born devotee and was destined to become a devotee of the highest type, after two lives or four lives, or after ten lives or after hundred lives, he will become a devotee of the highest caliber."

Muktānand Swāmi had a clear and perfect understanding of all saintly disciplines and vows. He was also aware of clearing confusion so both the orders of God and saintly disciplines could be followed.

Inspiration from the Prostitute, Laxmibai

Shree Hari was happy to feed Brahmins. The Brahmins also by nature were fond of eating sweets. God is very kind who makes everyone happy by any appropriate means. He performed a great Yagna in which the Brahmins from all around were invited. The Yagna ceremony continued for eighteen days. The demigods of heaven were even seeking the opportunity of service, disguising as Brahmins and sages joined in the Yagna festival. All Brahmins, guests, devotees from various places had been sufficiently and satisfactorily facilitated. Shree Hari had engaged all in taking charge of various departments of the management of the grand Yagna.

Shree Hari was also impartial to women. Once, he distributed wheat for grinding to the women, and the women devotees also accepted the service with great enthusiasm.

There was a prostitute living in that village. Her name was Laxmibai. She thought that in her life, she had committed many sins, and had not performed even a single righteous deed. Now, there was a chance for her to serve the Lord. Thinking so, she approached Shree Hari but the devotees stopped her, trying to keep her away with a sense of disgust and aversion. When Shree Hari came to know about this he asked why they were not allowing her to come closer.

"Maharāj! She is a prostitute," replied a devotee

"Then what?" Shree Hari inquired.

"She is a sinner. By her coming here, the Yagna ceremony will become contaminated," the devotee said.

Shree Hari smiled at these words and said, "You all together cannot transform her to become purified, whereas she is able to make you contaminated?" Saying this, Shree Hari called her closer. She was thrilled on hearing this. Shree Hari asked what were her true desires. Then, Laxmibai, the prostitute said, "O Lord! You are the uplifter of degraded souls. Kindly, give me your blessings so, that I may not again foolishly engage in sinful activities. My Lord please excuse myself because I am the biggest fool. I committed great offences. I heard that you are God and you are performing a Yagna in this village. You've assigned many spiritual and devotional tasks to many women. Please grant me the same opportunity as others."

Thus, pleased by modesty of her heart, Shree Hari smiled beautifully and then gave a box full of wheat. A wave delight appeared on her face. She went to her home. She had a magnificent mansion in which many servants were working and could have assigned the work of grinding wheat to one of her servants. However, she did it by herself with great struggle and devotion. She spent the entire evening foregoing wheat and as she'd not ever performed arduous work in such a circumstance, and developed callouses on her hands.

The next day, she went to an assembly where Shree Hari was, and placed the flour at His feet. Everyone was surprised and wondered how it is possible to grind so much wheat in a single day. At that time someone said, "Maharāj! She might have made her servants ground the grains."

The Lord is omniscient and wanted everyone to see

her profound devotion. He asked Laxmibai to show her hands to the assembly and all were in wonder.

Then, she frankly proposed to Shree Hari, “O my Lord! It is my humble request. Please come to my home with your saints.” On hearing this Shree Hari felt a little embarrassed because she was considered as a well-known prostitute in Jetalpur but he knew that she was devoted to God. He simply smiled at her. Looking toward the assembly, He said to her, “I am very much pleased by your invitation. I must come to your home tomorrow. Prepare your house appropriately for welcoming the saints.” She was tremendously pleased and left to make preparations.

Everyone felt curious as to what would transpire the next day.

Shree Hari was accompanied by Muktānand Swāmi and other senior saints to visit the magnificent mansion. Yet, Muktānand Swāmi did not know where Shree Hari was taking him. Laxmibai was already waiting for Shree Hari and as she saw Him, she went forward, devotedly greeted Shree Hari, brought Him inside, and performed arti. Muktānand Swāmi was standing outside of the mansion. He was confused as to why Shree Hari took him to the place of a prostitute. Shree Hari asked him to come inside and asked him to sit comfortably.

Then, Laxmibai invited Shree Hari to sanctify her each compartment of the mansion. Shree Hari did so and finally, she was blessed by such that she would attain liberation as par with the rank of His mother, Bhaktimata.

Muktānand Swāmi has composed a kirtan, in which he has illustrated how Shree Hari made Laxmibai happy. In that kirtan, he considered himself Laxmibai, to receive close relation with the supreme and most powerful God.

Letter to His Sister

One day, Muktānand Swāmi's former sister Dhanbāi came to know that her brother has been initiated as sādhu and attained an exalted state of a Brāhminised saint. She desired to meet him and arrived at Gaḍhaḍā. By Shree Hari's command, she resided with Jivuba, who was a staunch devotee of God.

Staying there everyday, she used to have darshan of God, the association with female devotees, and listened to Muktānand Swāmi's talks in the assembly. She was happily engaged in devotion.

One day, Dhanbāi was singing the verses of Rāmāyan in a melodious tone. Muktānand Swāmi heard her familiar sound. He asked to a Parshād with surprise, “Who is singing Rāmāyan?” The Parshād replied, “She is the daughter of Ānandrām from Amarāpur.”

Hearing this, Muktānand Swāmi fell into deep thought.

After a while he spoke, “She does not know the manners of our sect nor she follows the rules of Satsang, so it is not worth to keeping her in our Satsang. Let her take leave from here.” This command of Muktānand Swāmi was sent to Dhanbāi. As a result, she was disappointed and requested to Shree Hari, “Mahārāj! I have come here with the purpose of getting Moksha. For that, I would follow all injunctions and rules of Satsang. So, please tell Muktānand Swāmi to give me permission for staying here and to preach to me so that I can attain and know the manners of worshiping God.” Shree Hari was pleased on observing her pure heart and noted that, “Though our saints don't speak to women, I will share with Muktānand Swāmi your request.”

Next day, Muktānand Swāmi arrived and took his place in the assembly. Then Shree Hari said, “Swāmi! Would you obey my command?”

"Yes, Maharāj! I will obey all your command except one," replied Muktānand Swāmi, to the surprise of Shree Hari.

Muktānand Swāmi was completely aware of the situation. This time, the relation between God and a devotee met with difficulty because a devotee never disregards the command of God.

Shree Hari said, "Swāmi! Whatever I order is my own intention."

"Yes, Maharāj! It is proper whatever you command but..." Swāmi interrupted. "Which element is bringing you confusion, Swāmi?" Shree Hari asked.

Swāmi considered this question and replied in a soft tone, "My Lord! You are everything for us. It is our duty to obey your command whatsoever it may be; please let me know what your command is."

Shree Hari said, "Swāmi! Your parental sister has come from Amarāpur. So, please preach to her. This is my order." Muktānand Swāmi felt like lightening was running through his mind. This order of Shree Hari put Muktānand Swāmi in a dilemma, so he debated as to what he should do. He uttered, "Maharāj! I cannot preach to her and break the rules of Satsang, nor I can talk to women in general. If I would break the vows of celibacy, I would be called a great sinner and a destroyer of saintly disciplines. Therefore, I can't obey your command today." On one side, there was the order of God, and on the other side, the precious vow of celibacy. He could not yet find a way to satisfy both. Shree Hari was also surprised by this reply of Muktānand Swāmi as it was conveyed with strong standing towards modesty and religion.

After a while, Muktānand Swāmi said, "Today, if you really want me to preach to her, I have an idea in which both are maintained - your command and celibacy. If you like, I

may tell you." Shree Hari asked, "What is the idea?"

"I would compose instructive songs. In that way, I will also be able to follow your command and she can also be preached to," Muktānand Swāmi replied.

Shree Hari liked and approved this idea. Thus, Muktānand Swāmi composed four interesting, instructive and knowledgeable kirtans of God.

"Mohan ne gamvāne iccho mānani tyāgo sarve juthi manni tek jo..."

It is said that when she read these four kirtans composed by Muktānand Swāmi, Dhanbāi resigned the worldly life and became a renunciant, all due to the superb compositions of Mukt Muni.

Artful Dancing

There are three aspects of music: singing, playing and dancing. An individual's intellectual personality may be adept in either one or two of these aspects but Muktānand Swāmi was a unique personality who was proficient in everything.

Shree Hari was residing at the home of Jobanpagi in Vadtāl. One evening, after prayer, Shree Hari asked the saints to bring musical instruments and to start singing devotional songs. Muktānand Swāmi, Brahmānand Swāmi, Premānand Swāmi and Devānand Swāmi started with accompaniment of tabla, sarangi, sarod, sitar etc.

The saints and devotees gathered to hear the devotional songs. Muktānand Swāmi's melodious tone accompanied by the sarangi captivated everyone's minds. His heart-rending love for God had pierced the hearts of all with ecstatic devotion. No one even noticed of how much time had passed. One by one, all saints were catching the opportunity to please Shree Hari by singing skillfully. An hour before midnight, Shree Hari stopped singing and said to Muktānand Swāmi, "Swāmi! Is there anyone who knows proper dancing? I will give him my silken reto if anyone does." Muktānand Swāmi realized it was an opportunity to please Shree Hari. His love for God is very exhilarating, filled with the greatest of virtues, which excels even the love of Gopis for Lord Krishna.

He tied rattles on his feet and held kartals in his hands, and wore an armlet of flowers. As he bowed to Shree Hari, Shree Hari got up and put a garland of roses around Muktānand Swāmi's neck. Brahmānand Swāmi then began

singing. Then, Devānand Swāmi harmonized by playing the tabla. Muktānand Swāmi closed his eyes, all the while absorbed in the form of Shree Hari. He took his long leg, lifted it up, stood on the front part of his sole and began to hop backward.

All were fascinated with this sole movement.

As Muktānand Swāmi danced, a very blissful musical sound was produced from the rattles. It appeared as an extraordinary feature of devotion. The movements of his legs, hands and a soft smile on his shining face combined to appear like a peacock dancing joyously when it rains. The drops of perspiration visible on his face appeared like a valuable gem in the cool and pleasing rays of the moon.

While Muktānand Swāmi was dancing, the astonished demigods gathered in the sky to witness swāmi's skillful display. Their eyes were absorbed in the artful dancing of Muktānand Swāmi and they contemplated his glory. They also exclaimed, “No one in the three worlds can dance like him.” This continued for half an hour and when he became very tired from dancing, he began to move slowly. After the dance upon viewing the ground where swāmi had performed his performance, a red colored, artistic picture of an elephant was depicted. He had made an elephant with his foot print while dancing at the same time.

When the saints stopped singing, Shree Hari got up, went to Muktānand Swāmi while exclaiming, “Marvelous, Marvelous!” and affectionately embraced him. Shree Hari was extremely pleased. He uttered, “Swāmi! Ask anything you like.” Although, he was physically tired, with such pleasing words he was filled with great enthusiasm. Folding his hands, he said, “Mahārāj! Give me such a boon that Just as I can see you in front of my eyes right now, I will be able to see you in front of my eyes forever. I have no desire for

anything except you. Let my mind be fixed on your form. Give me strength, so I can conquer my inner enemies like lust, greed, anger, etc. I seek to become humble, so that I can have more chances to serve even the smallest devotee. May my heart be filled everyday with fresh zeal in the service of saints and devotees. Oh, my Lord! If you are pleased, then please grant me this boon."

In fact, what Muktānand Swāmi has asked is the highest attainment of all spiritual endeavors. He already possessed these qualities. He simply wanted to demonstrate an example of a true spiritual seeker. Having heard this Shree Hari said, "Swāmi! In reality, you already possess these qualities. One whose mind is not contaminated with the dirt of material objects, he is qualified for such a glorified boon." Then, he embraced Muktānand Swāmi saying, "Swāmi! It shall be granted." Thereafter, Shree Hari showered his blessing upon all.

"From the day Rāmānand Swāmi told me,'This Sahajānand Swāmi is the Supreme Lord of Lords', I have never imagined that there could be someone higher than Him."

Sahajānand Swāmi is Lacking Nothing

It was winter time and the biting winds of winter penetrated the bones, making it unbearable. On such a morning, Muktānand Swāmi was performing his morning worship. Due to the severe cold, he had kept a fire-pan beside him to remain warm. At that time, Chaitanyānand Swāmi came to offer respect to Muktānand Swāmi. He bowed down. When taking a seat before him, Muktānand Swāmi took a piece of cloth from his bag, touched it to his eyes, and reverently placed it on his āsan of worship. This created a cloud of thoughts in the mind of Chaitanyānand Swāmi, which could not be controlled, and suddenly he asked, "What is this piece of cloth for?"

"This is the piece of cloth from Rāmānand Swāmi's Kaupin." Muktānand Swāmi replied.

Then, Chaitanyānand Swāmi said, "Swāmi! What is the need to keep and worship this cloth of Rāmānand Swāmi's kaupin? Is Shree Hari lacking something?"

Though, Chaitanyānand Swāmi had spoken openly, Muktānand Swāmi was not the least agitated or aggrieved. He had finest answer of his gratefulness toward Rāmānand Swāmi, "Swāmi, there is no deficiency in Sahajānand Swāmi, yet Rāmānand Swāmi was completely full of all perfection. It may be false what you are thinking, but Swāmi, this piece of cloth is concerned with a unique memory of my childhood.

When I left home at the age of fourteen to achieve perfect celibacy, I was in search of a Guru who could lead me on the path of God. I travelled from one village to the other; at last when all my expectations met with vain, I met Rāmānand Swāmi. Only with his darshan, I felt enlightened. I was relieved from the burden of my life. From that day, I decided to dedicate everything at his feet.

It is due to his grace, today I am able to recognize Sahajānand Swāmi as the supreme Lord Himslef. Swāmi! This piece of cloth is a symbol of my unforgettable quest in search of a true Sadguru. However, I had taken the way of celibacy at the tender age of fourteen, I observed many Gurus but I was satisfied only with Rāmānand Swāmi."

Thus, before Chaitanyānand Swāmi could speak any words, Muktānand Swāmi threw the piece of cloth into the fire-pan causing it to burn to ashes immediately. Chaitanyānand Swāmi was shocked, and out bursted "What have I done?"

Muktānand Swāmi continued, "Swāmi! From the day, Rāmānand Swāmi told me, 'This Sahajānand Swāmi is Parabrahm, Purushottam Narayan Supreme God', I am attached to only his most beautiful and attractive form."

Chaitanyānand Swāmi fell at the feet of Muktānand Swāmi and asked for forgiveness. The faith that Sahajānand Swāmi is the supreme Lord was permeated through Chaitanyānand Swāmi. His every pore straightened with the thought that anyone could have a doubt in his faith. In response, he took a pen and paper and composed four hymns of his concrete faith and devotion in Shree Hari.

"Chhandi ke shree Krishna dev aur kijo karu sev"

Anand Sanghediya

Anand Sanghediya was a staunch devotee of

Rāmānand Swāmi. He often engaged in spiritual discourses with Muktānand Swāmi and Parvatbhai of Agatrai. Thus, they would strengthen their faith in God by discussing for several hours. They had also vowed not to accept anyone else as their God, but Rāmānand Swāmi.

Afterwards, Muktānand Swāmi had the divine darshan of Rāmānand Swāmi during which he became convinced of Shree Hari's supremacy. So, he boldly began to declare this to all.

Once, Muktānand Swāmi was devotionally clipping Shree Hari's nails. Anandji saw and asked, “Swāmi! Why has your faith changed in Rāmānand Swāmi?” Muktānand Swāmi took this opportunity to convince Anandji of Shree Hari's glory. He said, “Anandji! Shree Hari is the Supreme Lord. I am convinced by Rāmānand Swāmi himself. You should also have faith in Shree Hari.”

However, Anandji was not convinced. “But Swāmi! Will I not lose salvation by believing in this talk?” said Anandji.

“If that feeling resides in your heart, I will take any negative consequences upon me,” said Muktānand Swāmi.

Muktānand Swāmi's response resounded with such complete conviction that Anandji also became convinced of Shree Hari's supremacy. From then, he lived with faith, conviction, service and devotion to Shree Hari.

God is Always with Me

One day, Muktānand Swāmi wandered for many hours, as if he was an arrow discharged from a bow without knowledge of its direction. His misdirection caused him not to encounter any villages and thus, he became totally isolated en route, where no man could venture. Muktānand Swāmi walked for a long time without a trace of water. He became very thirsty. He had to pass an extremely dense

forest filled with wild animals.

At last, he reached a gap in the forest where there was a river containing salty water. He could not quench his thirst and could not find a way to cross the river, nor turn back. Even in such conditions, Muktānand Swāmi was delighted with the thought that, "God is always with me, in case a wild animal would kill me, I will attain Akshardhām." He had no fear of death. He considered himself the atma, indestructible, eternal and blissful.

When he sat on the bank of the river, God appeared there in the form of a Brāhmin with a boat. He came near and asked, "Swāmiji! Who are you?" Muktānand Swāmi was amazed with the strange presence in such a place. He saw a Brāhmin wearing a dhoti and khesh. He said, "My name is Muktānand Swāmi. I am a saint of Sahajānand Swāmi."

"Swāmi! It seems that you are thirsty because your voice is tottering. So, first drink water." Then, the Brāhmin gave water to Muktānand Swāmi who filtered the water and then quenched his thirst with the nectar-like sweet water.

Then, the Brāhmin inquired about the destination and Muktānand Swāmi revealed the details. So, the Brāhmin went across the river with Muktānand Swāmi in the boat and together, reached the other side. Muktānand Swāmi thanked the Brāhmin after reaching the opposite bank side of the river. He started walking on the right path. As Muktānand Swāmi turned back to see the Brāhmin, there was neither the Brāhmin nor the boat. Then, Muktānand Swāmi realized that the Brāhmin was none other than God himself who had protected him in this adverse circumstance.

Sanctified Water

Motitravadi was a Brāhmin who lived in the village of Bhesjad. He was inclined towards devotion of Muktānand

Swāmi more than Shree Hari.

On one occasion, Motitravadi came to see Muktānand Swāmi in Gaḍhaḍā. At that time, Muktānand Swāmi told Sāntānand Swāmi, "Swāmi! Please go and check what Shree Hari is doing now." Muktānand Swāmi started talking to Motitravadi. Sāntānand Swāmi returned after some time. He said, "Swāmi! Maharāj is taking a bath now." Muktānand Swāmi turned to Motitravadi, held his hand and took him to the courtyard where the water after bathing of Shree Hari was passing through the drain. Muktānand Swāmi put his turban a side and sprinkled the water over his head. He told Motitravadi, "This water is purer than the water of Ganga. It can destroy the grave sins of our previous births."

Motitravadi thought, "When Muktānand Swāmi such a great saint realizes the glory of Shree Hari, He truly might be God," and so he also sprinkled the water over his head.

Muktānand Swāmi brought Motitravadi to Shree Hari. In addition, to his surprise, Motitravadi could see the divine form of God; his heart filled with love. He prostrated before Shree Hari. Then, he removed his necklace of Rudraksh beads and offered them to Shree Hari. Out of happiness he said, "When a saint as great as Muktānand Swāmi takes your bathed water over his head...Maharāj, I recognize that I am very insignificant before him. Please make me your follower."

Subsequently, he again prostrated to Shree Hari and Muktānand Swāmi.

God's Glory is Inconceivable

Once upon a time, Shree Hari arrived in the village Nadiyād along with senior saints and devotees. The devotees of that village came to Shree Hari as He started narrating the glory of God. After Shree Hari was finished, devotees came to where Muktānand Swāmi was sitting. Muktānand Swāmi

also revealed the glory of God. Then, devotees politely said, “Swāmi! We understood everything that you explained to us about the glory of God, but we feel Shree Hari's words are difficult to comprehend.”

Muktānand Swāmi explained to them, “I have been living with Shree Hari for many years, yet I could not understand his glory as it is. The scriptures reveal that his glory is inconceivable, unfathomable and infinite. How can it be realized with mere satsang of few minutes? Even the great demigods like Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva are not able to explain his glory as it is.”

Swāmi's answer satisfied everyone.

Ideal Gurubhakt

One day, Shree Hari was sitting in Axarordi at Gaḍhaḍā. Meanwhile, Muktānand Swāmi came there. He prostrated and sat before him. A devotee had brought 500 grams of rice for Shree Hari. Showing it to Muktānand Swāmi, Shree Hari said, “Swāmi! How many people can eat out of 500 grams of rice?

“Maharāj! You may feed as many people as you desire,” Muktānand Swāmi replied, to which Shree Hari said, “Swāmi! I think five people.”

“Yes, Maharāj! Certainly, five people can be covered with 500 grams of rice.” said Muktānand Swāmi, to which Shree Hari added, “Swāmi! Ten people could be covered out of 500 grams of rice.”

“Yes, Maharāj! You are right. Ten people can eat satisfactorily.” said Muktānand Swāmi

Shree Hari smiled and said, “Swāmi! I think that hundred people could be covered with 500 grams of rice.” Quickly Muktānand Swāmi said, “That's true. A hundred people easily can be fed.”

Shree Hari was smiling, while looking at Muktānand Swāmi. He said, “Swāmi! According to me, five hundred people can eat out of 500 grams of rice.” Muktānand Swāmi, folding his hands said, “Maharāj! If you say so, then five hundred people can be easily fed.”

Shree Hari smiled and asked, “Swāmi! How can you say that five hundred people can be covered out of 500 grams of rice?”

Muktānand Swāmi said, “You are God. Everything is possible for you. You can satisfy thousands of people out of 10 grams of rice.” On listening to this Shree Hari was pleased and said, “Swāmi! You are a true Gurubhakt.”

Sword or Handkerchief

Shree Hari was sitting under a neem tree in the courtyard of Dadakhachar's darbar. Shree Hari had a handkerchief in his hand. Then, Muktānand Swāmi came there and bowed. Shree Hari asked him, while waving the handkerchief and asked, “Swāmi! What is this in my hand?”

“A handkerchief, Maharāj!” replied Muktānand Swāmi

“No, Swāmi! It is not handkerchief. It is a sword,” Shree Hari spoke.

“Yes, Maharāj! It is sword,” said Muktānand Swāmi.

“Can't you see, Swāmi? It is a handkerchief,” Shree Hari added.

“You are God. You are able to do any miracle. You can convert a handkerchief into sword and a sword into handkerchief,” said Muktānand Swāmi.

Shree Hari was pleased with his reply and said, “I wish that everyone becomes like you. You have finest spiritual wisdom.”

The Glory of Association

The mere touch of a Paras on iron, either knowingly or unknowingly, turns the quality and value of it into that of gold. Iron will be appreciated with higher value. Its demand also increases day by day.

Like the sunlight, Bhagwān Swāminārayan's glory spread all around. He initiated saints and devotees alike. Even those who visited from out of state were impressed by His divine brilliance, in result many became attracted towards Him. Many were even initiated as sādhus. Bhagwān Swāminārayan currently had initiated two thousand saints as his disciples.

Once upon a time, Muktānand Swāmi raised aversion for a Hindustani sādhu who was violating saintly disciplines and he felt that he should be discarded from the Satsang fellowship for the betterment of others.

This consideration was not unknown to omniscient the Bhagwān. Shree Hari thought, “A great sādhu like Muktānand Swāmi knows the glory of one who is in our association. He must try to remove one whose nature is not good and instead, not remove him from association.”

Thinking so, to realize this and spread such a realization, Shree Hari ordered Muktānand Swāmi to learn Sanskrit at the monastery called 'Rāmmahel' in Dhāngadhrā.

By the command of the Supreme Lord, Muktānand Swāmi came to Dhāngadhrā. He was very well familiar with the situation indicated by Shree Hari. When he was in search

of a true Guru, he had visited that place.

The evil spirits in saintly robes were intoxicated by drinking wine, speaking obscene words and were concerned with attaining ultimate liberation. There were neither the talks of scriptures nor its disciplines. Those fake saints were only filling their stomach by the money given by innocent people and enjoying sensual pleasures. It was their only aim.

In the midst of such vicious sādhus, Muktānand Swāmi, who was pure and the embodiment of saintliness, became extremely puzzled. It was difficult to pass even a moment there. He could hardly pass one week. He suffered heart-rending separation from Shree Hari and the saints. He became so immersed in thoughts of God and saints as to be entirely unaware of the world around him, not even knowing, if it was day or night. He would lament with dripping eyes, "When will I be relieved from this ocean of this anxiety? How can I live without Shree Hari and His saints? This company of vairagis seems to me more painful than the suffering of hell. Where shall I go to find true saints?"

In these very moments, he composed a kirtan glorifying sādhus related to manifested God, "Mārā vālāji śu vālap diśe re..." A devotee from that village came to Gaḍhapur with this letter in the form of its composition.

Muktānand Swāmi in the last line, requested to Shree Hari that, "It feels to me the company of evil men is more painful than the miseries of hell." Shree Hari read the letter and at once, he sent a Parshād to bring him back to Gaḍhapur.

Muktānand Swāmi came in Gaḍhapur and after having darshan of Shree Hari and saints, he was very much

delighted. Shree Hari asked about the situation of Dhāngadhrā. Muktānand Swāmi revealed what he experienced there and explained the matter of vicious elements.

(In the 11th Vachanāmrut of the Vadtāl chapter, Shree Hari had ordered to regularly sing the composition of "Mārā vālāji śu vālap diśe re")

Convincing Paramchaitanyānand Swāmi

Once, on his way from Gaḍhaḍā to Ahemdabad, Shree Hari stopped at the village of Tavi in the Bhal region. On the bank of a lake, He prepared to have a shave. The barber started but Shree Hari felt his hand too heavy and rough. Realizing the risk, Jalamsihn Bapu of Devalily went quickly to his village on horseback and called his barber to complete the shaving. Afterward, Shree Hari took a bath and sat under a Pipal tree and began His discourses to the local people.

While the assembly was in progress, Purnānand Swāmi and Paramchaitanyānand Swāmi arrived there. Both were senior sādhus and arrived, standing at the back of the assembly. They stood for few minutes and waited to be called to the front but everyone was engrossed in the divine form of Shree Hari that nobody stood up to greet them.

This did not go unknown to God. Suddenly, Shree Hari posed a question in the assembly, "Has anyone of you seen the physical form of ego?" Nobody could figure out an answer to this unusual question. So, Shree Hari said, "Look, in the back, these two are the physical forms of ego." The words of Shree Hari had felt like lightning had struck the saints. It created a whirlwind of violent thoughts in their mind.

Purnānand Swāmi left the sādhu-fold and returned to

his home. Paramchaitanyānand Swāmi was initiated by Rāmānand Swāmi and was older than Shree Hari. He was also a good speaker. However, it was made a tradition that whatever objects or gifts the devotees wish to present to Shree Hari had to be first presented to Paramchaitanyānand Swāmi then to Shree Hari. Because of such respect and privileges, the seeds of ego sprouted within Swāmi and had developed into a tree. Some days later, there was a celebration in Gaḍhaḍā. Shree Hari was embracing the devotees. Paramchaitanyānand Swāmi also came along with his group of sādhus and began prostrating to Shree Hari but purposely Shree Hari did not look towards him.

Thus, being ignored by Shree Hari, Paramchaitanyānand Swāmi immediately left. Though Shree Hari's apparent rejection was an indication of a fault in Paramchaitanyānand Swāmi, as his ego prevented him from approaching Shree Hari for forgiveness. He made a firm decision to split from satsang and go elsewhere.

Ultimately, he decided to go to South Gujarat. So, as he set out, Laxmānnand Swāmi, Balbhadrānand Swāmi, and the other sādhus of his group began to follow him. Swāmi saw them and asked, “Why are you following me? You have become sādhus not for me but to please Mahārāj. I am going because of my egoistic nature. I try to overcome my ego. If you will come with me and speak ill about satsang, you will be at a great loss. So, please go back and do whatever Shree Hari commands you.” When Shree Hari came to know of this incident, he was pleased and praised Swāmi's faith and devotion for satsang.

Paramchaitanyānand Swāmi went to Dharampur and

stayed there with some bawas on the outskirts of the village. The queen of Dharampur, Kushalkuvarba had realized the greatness of saints. She considered her great fortune of having darshan of saints. One day, as per her daily routine, she came to wash the feet of saints, where Paramchaitanyānand Swāmi had been staying. Nevertheless, Swāmi refused to wash his feet due to the vow of brahmcharya (celibacy). The queen was very much impressed by Swāmi's steadfastness.

She invited him to stay in the garden near the royal palace and so Swāmi lived in the garden. The queen arranged to listen to Swāmi's discourses. She was touched on hearing the glory of Shree Hari. People began to refer to him as the Guru. On special occasions, the prince grandson of Kushalkuvarba, would honor Swāmi by taking him in a procession mounted on a decorated elephant. As time passed, the queen's faith in Shree Hari strengthened.

Shree Hari learn of Paramchaitanyānand Swāmi's activities. One day, Shree Hari called Muktānand Swāmi and said, “Swāmi! When an elephant is trapped, another elephant is needed to pull him out. So, please go to Dharampur and bring Paramchaitanyānand Swāmi back.” On Shree Hari's command Muktānand Swāmi left and arrived at Dharampur.

When Muktānand Swāmi arrived, Paramchaitanyānand Swāmi was seated on a decorated elephant in the procession. As Paramchaitanyānand Swāmi saw Muktānand Swāmi, he ordered the driver of the elephant to be stopped. Paramchaitanyānand Swāmi dismounted and prostrated to Muktānand Swāmi. Muktānand Swāmi embraced him. He

reminded him, that all the honors and reverence was due to Muktānand Swāmi to whom Shree Hari reveres as Guru.

Muktānand Swāmi warmly held Paramchaitanyānand Swāmi's hand and said, “Swāmi! Maharāj has called you to return back to him.” On hearing this Paramchaitanyānand Swāmi became overjoyed to know that Maharāj has not yet forgotten him. Then, he explained greatness of Muktānand Swāmi to the people and sent a message to the queen, “You are truly privileged that Muktānand Swāmi, by whose words I become sādhu, will sanctifying your state by staying here for one month. So, take this opportunity to serve him. I am ordering Maharāj to come back to Gaḍhaḍā, therefore I am leaving.”

Thereafter, Paramchaitanyānand Swāmi departed for Gaḍhaḍā. Muktānand Swāmi stayed in place of Paramchaitanyānand Swāmi. Through her association with Muktānand Swāmi, Kushalkuvarba was able to cultivate true spiritual insight, together with a genuine thirst for spiritual progress.

Peace of Mind

This little incident reflects the answer to the chaos; for spreading peace over the world in which Muktānand Swāmi plays an important role.

Once there was an assembly held in Gadhpur. Muktānand Swāmi asked Shree Hari, “Maharāj! What are the means to a peace of mind?” Shree Hari started narrating his life story. Thinking that Maharāj had misunderstood his question, Muktānand Swāmi asked again but Shree Hari continued the story of his life.

Then, Maharāj replied to Muktānand Swāmi, “Muktānand Swāmi! I was born in Chapaiyā. I performed many divine acts as a child, destroyed evil men and came to live in Ayodhyā. There, too I destroyed evil elements that were harassing me. Then afterwards, my sacred thread (janoi) ceremony was held, my mother and father passed away and I redeemed them. Thereafter, I left home to embark upon a pilgrimage of India to liberate aspirants. I travelled throughout India but nowhere did I see Dharma in its pure form and a true understanding of Bŕahm and Parabŕahma. Finally, after arriving in Loj, I found peace seeing you. I saw saintliness in Rāmānand Swāmi and traces of Bhāgvat Dharma in his Ashram.” Then, Shree Hari paused but Muktānand Swāmi's mind became more restless because he felt that Maharāj had not given him a solution to his question.

At that time, Nityānand Swāmi gently told Muktānand Swāmi, “Swāmi! Maharāj experienced peace when he first saw you, then don't you feel peaceful in his presence?”

Then Maharāj resumed, saying, “I met Rāmānand Swāmi.”

“Maharāj, I have asked you to show me the means to peace of mind.” Muktānand Swāmi interrupted.

Shree Hari sighed and said, “Muktānand Swāmi! The devotees of Gujarat desire for your association and discourses. You may leave for Gujarat. By discoursing the devotees, you will find inner peace.” Then, Shree Hari got up and left.

Both Muktānand Swāmi and Nityānand Swāmi got up. To relieve Muktānand Swāmi's distress Nityānand Swāmi said, “Swāmi! You are senior to all of us. You have a higher understanding than anyone of us. Still, it seems that you have not been able to understand the essence of Maharāj's words.”

“Swāmi! What essence do you mean? I asked Maharāj about how to attain peace and he talked about his life.” Muktānand Swāmi questioned.

“Peace lies in that,” Nityānand Swāmi explained. “By engaging one's mind in Maharāj's life-story, one will never experience distress. It is the golden means among all spiritual endeavors. So, to experience peace one should think of Maharāj's darshan, discourses and the incidents of his life. Shree Hari is the supreme God and the incarnation of all divine incarnations. One will experience joy only when such faith develops for him.”

Muktānand Swāmi listened to Nityānand Swāmi with rapt attention. Then he added, “What you say is true. Maharāj often says that peace lies at the holy feet of God. So peace lies in listening to and singing about Maharāj's life.”

As they were talking, a devotee named by Karimbhakt came and said, “Swāmi! You both are ordered to go to Kāriyāni tomorrow. I will come with you as the driver. And

Maharāj has also told to leave without having darshan in the morning. Then, Nityānand Swāmi said, “Swāmi! Maharāj has become sad for your repeated inquiry of peace. In addition, you had not realized what Maharāj wanted to say.”

The statement of Karimbhakt made Muktānand Swāmi think. He became sad. He could not even sleep at night with the painful thought of being separated from God. He was restless.

In the morning, Karimbhakt arrived with the cart. Both Sadguru saints departed for Kāriyāni. Still, he was sad. Having reached Kāriyāni, as Karimbhakt was about to return, Muktānand Swāmi begged to him to have his meeting with Shree Hari as soon as possible.

After reaching Gadhpur Karimbhakt said to Shree Hari, “Maharāj! When Lord Ramchandra exiled his beloved wife, Laxmanji his younger brother was specified to take her to the forest. Similarly, you appointed me to carry out such a task. Yet, Muktānand Swāmi has sunken into grief with your separation.

Having heard this, Shree Hari, said, “Karimbhakt! It happens that something is wrong. You go back to Kāriyāni and bring both the saints back tomorrow.”

The next day, Karimbhakt did so. Muktānand Swāmi asked forgiveness by folding his hands and said, “Maharāj! It was my fault. I could not understand your answer, so I inquired again and again. You are an ocean of compassion. Please forgive me.” There were tears in the eyes of Muktānand Swāmi. Seeing such humbleness, Shree Hari's eyes also filled with tears. He embraced Muktānand Swāmi and was very pleased upon him.

Becoming a Mendicant

It was an anomalous incident.

Once Shree Hari was living in seclusion from everyone. He kept Bhaguji and Dadakhachar in his personal service. No one was allowed to see or meet him. Bhaguji was guarding at the doorway of Dadakhachar's darbar.

The saints and devotees felt depressed for not seeing their Lord. They thought something wrong had happened. Shree Hari was not giving his darshan. They felt uncomfortable because they had no scope to please Shree Hari and one of the characteristics of a true devotee of God is that he cannot stay without the company of God for even a single moment.

Muktānand Swāmi who had deep rooted inclination of affection for Shree Hari, disguised as a mendicant. He was dressed in tattered cloth, wearing wooden sandals and carried a wooden staff and kamandalu (water pot). He also worn a rudraksh beads necklace, and applied a big mark of sandal paste on his forehead. He came before Bhaguji, who was guarding the room, as Shree Hari was sitting inside.

Muktānand Swāmi began dancing while singing the verses from Ramayan. As Shree Hari heard this, he asked Dadakhachar to check who has come. Dadakhachar came out but he could not recognize who it was. He went inside and said, “Mahārāj! A mendicant has come here.”

“No, the voice seems little bit familiar. Please confirm it,” said Shree Hari.

“Ok, Mahārāj,” and Dadakhachar went again. Still, Muktānand Swāmi was singing in a happy mood. Dadakhachar returned to Shree Hari. He said, “Mahārāj! He is a mendicant.”

“He is not mendicant but let me go there.” Saying so, Shree Hari went to where Muktānand Swāmi was singing and dancing but as Shree Hari appeared, Muktānand Swāmi kept on staring at him. Shree Hari's smooth white teeth were like a

row of jasmine buds, his dark eyes resemble two bumblebees that hovered over his lotus face. With graceful hands, no mortal or even celestial man or woman would equal his beauty.

Shree Hari recognized Muktānand Swāmi immediately. He uttered surprisingly, “O Swāmi! Is it really you?” Muktānand Swāmi joined his hands in supplication and pleaded, “Maharāj! You are life of all saints and devotees. If you will become indifferent, they will become disappointed. So please, Maharāj! Be kind. Have your grace upon us every day.” Then, Shree Hari said, “Swāmi! You are quite intelligent. Henceforth, I will not live in seclusion. Anyone who desires to meet, can come to me at any time.” Thus, everyone experienced the thrill of joy.

Festival of Vasant Panchami at Loyā

While Shree Hari was residing in Gaḍhapur, Surākhāchar (the chief of the village of Loyā), requested Shree Hari to celebrate the festival of Vasant Panchami and invite all the devotees and sādhus. Shree Hari was pleased with his request and gave His permissions for the celebration.

Shree Hari, with a group of saints and devotees, came to Loyā. Muktānand Swāmi also accompanied him. Surākhāchar had already prepared for everyone's arrival. The whole village was decorated with colorful ribbons, flags and with the leaves of asopālavā. The roads were cleaned and water was sprinkled over it. The main gateway was beautifully adorned. The village folks moved forward to receive Shree Hari. The vibrations produced by the greetings of love which filled the atmosphere, and were powerful enough to bring about a change of heart in every man and woman of the village. Shree Hari arrived with a grand procession. The sounds of drums and shahenāi filled the environment of the village with great zeal.

Shree Hari arrived at the darbār of Surākhāchar. Surākhāchar had sent the invitation to all his relatives and the neighboring villages of Nāgadakā. Sādhus and devotees had arrived in Loyā. All the devotees and guests were facilitated for staying at the bank of the river. Shantiba, the wife of Surākhāchar, had arranged food and the other objects for the well treatment of the guests and devotees. Seeing this, Shree Hari said, “Shantiba! How could you know that we are coming? Surākhāchar was in Gaḍhapur.” Then, Shantiba said with her hands folded, “Maharāj! You had inspired me in my heart, that is why all the preparations were done before.” Shree Hari was pleased with her devotion.

Shree Hari had a friendship with Surākhāchar. Shree Hari would laugh seeing his pot-bellied stomach and by listening to the way he speaks. Also, Surākhāchar had told Shree Hari, “Maharāj! When we become sorrowful, we remember you to keep aside our sorrow. Similarly, when you become sad, just remember my pot-bellied stomach, all your sadness will disappear.” Shree Hari laughed on listening to this.

Surākhāchar asked Shree Hari as to what preparations he should make for Vasant Panchami. Shree Hari said, “We would begin the celebration with the pujan of Vasant in the Darbār, because it is a form of God. So, please prepare the articles for pujan. Thereafter, we would start the Vasant Utsav.

The next day, as per the instructions of Shree Hari, Surākhāchar had all the preparations completed. The saints sang songs of Vasant at the darbār of Surākhāchar. Then, Shree Hari arrived. Great excitement was seen with His arrival. Bright colors of gulāl and abeel were brought. The saints began to sing devotional songs composed by Muktānand Swāmi to the accompaniment of a jhānjh and pakhwāj.

“Sab ṛtu rāj vasant he, māŕyā Shree hari anb.”

The atmosphere filled with vibrations of the songs. The festival of Vasant marks the arrival of spring (hope and joy). The gloom of the winter departs and promises brighter days. Fields are filled with crops, promising a good harvest to the farmers and flowers. Flora bloomed coloring the surroundings and embossed the air with filling fragrances. Everyone at the time, felt as if personified form of Vasant was dancing in the joy of Shree Hari's presence there. In a short time, the worshiping rituals concluded. Shree Hari saw heartfelt devotion of the devotees and blessed them all by sprinkling the colored water with pichkāri. Muktānand Swāmi was overjoyed to see Shree Hari in such ecstatic

mood. He also sprinkled the colored water with a pichakāri on Shree Hari. Shree Hari took special delight on Surākhāchar. He also threw the fists full of gulāl and abeel. The saints and devotees also began to play with Shree Hari. Everyone surrounded Shree Hari by spraying colors on Him. Shree Hari was puzzled and said, “There is so many of you, and I am only one. Now bring the vessels full of colors. In turn, I'll spray colors on you.”

With the instruction of Shree Hari, Anand Swāmi arranged the pots and pichkāri. Shree Hari sprayed delightful colors on the saints and devotees with pichkāri also throwing lumps of gulāl.

When all the saints and devotees were satisfied, Shree Hari asked them all to go for bathing in the Bhādar River. Shree Hari mounted on his horse, while the other Kathi devotees also mounted their different kinds of mare. The one, who is controller of innumerable universes, was appearing like a Kathi. The saints sang devotional songs on the way to the river.

When they reached the river, they bathed, to which the water of the river became colorful. After bathing, all the saints and devotees returned to the darbār of Surākhāchar. Shree Hari sat on a cot. Then, he drew the attention of all and explained as to why such festivals are celebrated. “To increase love for God and his devotees is the objective of such festivals.” Soon, as the meal were readied, Shree Hari got up and took his lunch. He came to serve saints and devotees. After a fun filled and exciting day, in the evening Shree Hari sat on a decorated cot. Shortly, there was an assembly held. After preaching for some time, Shree Hari conveyed for the devotees to return to their appropriate villages, with festivities concluded.

It was a memorable event for Surākhāchar.

The story shares the uncommon selfless attitude of a mother. In addition, it reflects spiritual insight and practical knowledge through observance of saintly disciplines made by God.

In the scorching heat of the summer, the saints underwent a tenacious observance of Vrat. At that time, Shree Hari had ordered not to eat any items containing ghee or sugar. The saints strictly followed that command of God.

Once, Muktānand Swāmi with the group of fifty sādhus were traveling in the Marwād region. Bhāyātmānand Swāmi was also with him. It was the year of a great famine. Consequently, people in those villages were not kind or generous. Respected sādhus were insulted wherever they went and they were welcomed only with abusing words and lots of trouble. They did acquire any food to eat for the past three days. The saints suffered from the heat of the sun outside, and with the heat of hunger from the inside. Muktānand Swāmi was worried about the younger saints who had come with him. For and a half days passed without any food.

As the sun was about to set, a devout Brāhmin saw the group and saints and approached to meet Muktānand Swāmi. He experienced a great joy in his heart by merely observing the patience of saints. The Brāhmin felt himself fortunate to see them and he was inspired to serve the saints. He invited them to have dinner at his house. Muktānand Swāmi was somewhat comforted. Then, he suggested to make only Khichḍi (hotchpotch) for all and not to add ghee inside of it. The Brāhmin was surprised because

he had never seen such restrained and pious saints ever before.

Quickly, the Brāhmin went home. The joy appeared on his face as if he had seen the manifest form of God. Meanwhile, Khichḍi was prepared. The Brāhmin offered thāl to God in which he mixed only two spoons of ghee.

Muktānand Swāmi and saints arrived to the Brāhmin's house. The Brāhmin greeted them with sandalwood paste and kumkum (red powder) and then prepared for dinner. The saints had eaten nothing for the last four days and now the time had come to consume a warm meal.

Bhāyātmānand Swāmi, who was one of the senior saints asked, "O Bhudev! Have you mixed ghee in the Khichḍi?"

"Swāmi! Not for you but to offer God, I had mixed only two spoons of ghee and it was mixed in with the rest of the Khichḍi," Brāhmin replied with joy.

On listening to this, Bhāyātmānand Swāmi said, "This Khichḍi contains ghee therefore we cannot consume this, per the directions of Shree Hari." He stood up immediately.

All the other saints felt the same, leaving the Brāhmin perplexed.

Sadguru Muktānand Swāmi thought, it was not appropriate to break the heart of neither the Brāhmin or the starving saints. He tried to convince Bhāyātmānand Swāmi but to no avail. The Brāhmin was anxious, "How is my terrible fate that today, I am unable to give food to such pious saints in my home?"

Muktānand Swāmi took pity upon the saints and the Brāhmin. He protested, "O saints! Today while remembering God consume Khichḍi prepared by this devotee; I will be responsible for any consequences of violating the command of Shree Hari."

With these words, all the sādhus and the Brāhmin became extremely pleased. The saints uttered only, “He is a kind of true mother that no one can compare to,” and so, they completed dinner. Muktānand Swāmi had taken prasad as well but Bhāyātmānand Swāmi did not eat.

The next day, Bhāyātmānand Swāmi took the way of Gaḍhapur. Maharāj considered him a Guru and also revered him as a great saint. As Bhāyātmānand Swāmi approached Gaḍhapur, he complained against Muktānand Swāmi's revolting move to Shree Hari.

Shree Hari said, “Let them come. I will meet with them.”

Muktānand Swāmi came back to Gaḍhaḍā. He performed dandvats to Shree Hari and said, “Maharāj! I am guilty, as I have disobeyed your command but the saints did not disobey you. So, instead of these saints, bear all consequences on me.”

“Swāmi! What offence have you committed?” Shree Hari asked.

Muktānand Swāmi related the whole incident.

On hearing this, tears dropped from Shree Hari's eyes. Shree Hari got up from His seat and embraced Muktānand Swāmi. All the saints, including Bhāyātmānand Swāmi, looked on with astonishment.

Shree Hari uttered, “Swāmi! In fact, you are a broad-minded saint. All your decisions are in accord with my will. You have not only comforted the saints but nurtured the Brāhmin's spiritual consciousness. Therefore, Swāmi! You are mother of Satsang fellowship that comprises of all the saints, devotees and Brahmchāris.”

Such loving words bestowed the title of 'Satsang ni Mā' to Muktānand Swāmi the saints raised great acclaim with constant clapping and joy while Shree Hari embraced Muktānand Swāmi.

At the Horror Quarters

Muktānand Swāmi's purity and sacredness through mind, speech, and behavior, made an imposing impact on everyone. His tranquility liberated even the souls who were consigned to become ghosts.

On one occasion, Shree Hari commanded the saints to deliver a sermon on truth and untruth, religion and irreligion, knowledge and ignorance. Thus, those who were well-learned immediately became ready and those who were unable to preach asked, “Maharāj, we have no knowledge, so what shall we do in the villages?” Subsequently, Shree Hari said, “O my beloved saints, never lose your courage. Your good conduct will speak to the roots of the Vedic knowledge.” As it happened, where the speech of eloquent speaker stopped, their good conduct profoundly influenced people.

Muktānand Swāmi was an extraordinary saint who made a superb impact on both the intellectual and the ignorant, with his satisfying speech and behavior.

Shree Hari ordered Muktānand Swāmi to go to Ahmedābād with fifty saints. Swāmi said, “Maharāj, the last time I went to Ahmedābād was with only ten saints. We did not have enough alms to even finish the tour. How will we get enough food for fifty saints?”

Now, the Lord intended something else. Instead of fifty saints, he ordered a hundred saints to travel, and reside at the place called 'Dariyākhān Nā Ghumaṭvāḍi jagyā'. It was a dreadful place where ghosts lived.

Muktānand Swāmi understood the motive behind

Maharaj's command and set out with a group of 100 saints. The next day, Swāmi and group of saints indicated by Shree Hari. They were in dismayed see the dreadful condition of the gateway. It was completely desolate. Around that ghumaṭ (the doom of a ruined palace), there were tamarind trees growing from it. It was such a dreadful place that neither human nor any creatures dared to enter. Muktānand Swāmi understood that this was Shree Hari's examination for all the saints. He was most worried about the younger saints. Swāmi encouraged that this was the will of God.

In the evening, the saints were engaged in devotion. Arti was in session, and all of a sudden, a terrifying noise was heard from the ghumaṭ. Within a few moments, horrible loud cries pierced the ears of the saints. Trembling began to set in but suddenly, Muktānand Swāmi rose and instilled vigilance into the saints, “O saints, our protector is bigger than any killer and He dwells within us. Be courageous and chant the holy name 'Swāmināràyan'.” As he encouraged, they began chanting and clapping loudly. Instead of a calming effect, the horror grew with increased cries and screaming. Muktānand Swāmi moved closer to where the dreadful sound was coming from. The other saints tried to stop him but he was undeterred and entered further into the ghumaṭ.

Swāmi sprinkled water around and chanted 'Swāmināràyan!' and all of sudden the ghastly noises started coming from a specific spot. All of the saints were startled and murmured, “What is this?” Swāmi sprinkled water again, and immediately the evil spirits appeared before Muktānand Swāmi. They implored, “O Swāmiji! You are an ocean of compassion. Be kind upon us. You are capable of liberating all of us. Due to our unfulfilled desires, we have become ghosts. Swāmi! Till this day, we have killed many, so we have been inflicted to unbearable sufferings. Therefore, please

release us from this miserable condition!" After listening to the requests of ghosts, Swāmi sprinkled the water again, and immediately all the ghost took a divine form and left for Badrikāshram. Seeing this, the other saints were greatly surprised and remarked, "Swāmi! You are really an extraordinary saint." In this way, Swāmi infused divinity in the surrounding area.

The saints engaged in devotion happily. The next day, a few rich men and some villagers came there for the cremation of a merchant. At the time, the saints were engaged in meditation. They laughed at the saints who were meditating under the tamarind tree. At that very moment, a poisonous cobra fell from the tree where the saints were meditating. It passed by the legs and thighs of some of the saints but not one moved from their respective positions. Observing this, the people realized that these were true saints of God. After a while the cobra disappeared.

As a result, the villagers approached the saints after their eyes opened. The villagers asked for forgiveness and said to Muktānand Swāmi, "We experienced true saintliness from this astonishing feat. We are very fortunate to have your darshan. We insulted you, thinking that you are fake saints, this is our mistake. In returned for our silly mistake we want to offer you food everyday as compensation. Please tell us what you would like to eat." Muktānand Swāmi said, "We are saints, so we only partake in simple foods. Please only prepare according to your ability."

Thereafter, they facilitated the saints with meals everyday. On continued observance of the saint's fearlessness, self-control, austerities and love for God, many merchants and villagers became Satsangis.

A few years later, Shree Hari was residing in Ahmedābād and after celebrating the festival of Holi, Shree

Hari went to take bath in Sabarmati River. He was seated on Mānki (his mare). Many saints and devotees were following him. As the entourage went ahead, Shree Hari stopped under a banyan tree for some time and then afterwards proceeded back on track. The entourage arrived on the bank of Sabarmati. Muktānand Swāmi came near Shree Hari and asked, "Maharāj! Why did you stop under the banyan tree on the way to Sabarmati? What were your intentions?"

Shree Hari looked at Muktānand Swāmi and said, "Swāmi! When you were staying at that place of Dariyākhān, you had liberated many ghosts however, one ghost had not yet received salvation. In his previous birth, one of the ghost was Vikarna at the time of Mahābhārat. He had scolded Duryodhan being in favor of Draupadi (devotee of Lord Krishna). So, Duryodhan had banished him from his kingdom. In his next birth, he became a great king called Dariyākhān. One day, he went to hunt near the āshram of Dadhichi. As a result, Dadhichi cursed him so that he became a ghost. The king begged for forgiveness, then Dadhichi said, "When the Supreme God will arrive on this Earth, you will be liberated and freed from my curse by his accordance."

Shree Hari continued, "So today, I blessed him and he has been liberated." Muktānand Swāmi very well remembered the occasion, when he stayed at place of Dariyākhān and out of the many ghosts, there was this special one as well. He thought about how great Shree Hari is after reflecting upon this incident.

Generous to the ill-Natured

"Which is the chief virtue within you that may affect others miraculously?" Shree Hari asked Muktānand Swāmi, who replied, "By the grace of God, if someone whose heart is as hard as a rock were to listen to my speech, his mind would become attached to God with love."

Anger Causes the Loss of Intelligence

Once upon a time, there was an assembly held at a village temple where Muktānand Swāmi was delivering a discourse. Some sādhus came there after taking their bath and among them, one sādhu immorally washed his hands on the carpet. Consequently, it became wet and dirty. Muktānand Swāmi observed this.

When the assembly was over, Muktānand Swāmi rebuked him by saying, "Sādhuram, this is the property of God and it is our duty to take care of it. When good sādhus like you would not mind this, then who will protect the things of God and who would like to follow you? So, be cautious of your duty and respect every discipline of saintly codes. Never act in a way that would harm someone's property."

That sādhu did not realize his mistake because his ego was defeated by the words of Muktānand Swāmi. He became very angry but could not speak at that time. The poison of his anger grew to such an extent that he planned to kill Muktānand Swāmi by throwing him into a well.

One day at mid-night, the sādhu awakened Muktānand Swāmi and said, "Swāmi! I want to take a bath, will you come with me?" Muktānand Swāmi realized his ill intentions and said, "Sādhuram! Please sit here." Then, Muktānand Swāmi continued to speak, "The greatest drawback of anger is that it covers the mind and does not allow it to distinguish between good and bad. That is what Lord Krishna

asserted in Bhagwad Gitā.

क्रोधाद्भवति सम्मोहः सम्मोहात्स्मृतिविभ्रमः ।
स्मृतिभ्रंशाद् बुद्धिनाशो बुद्धिनाशात्प्रणश्यति ॥२.६३॥

"Anger is the result of attachment to all objects and from anger, complete delusion arises and from delusion, bewilderment of memory occurs and when memory is bewildered, intelligence is lost. When intelligence is lost, one falls down again into the material pool which opens the way to hell."

Muktānand Swāmi continued, "Swāmi! Introspect upon your thoughts and try to remove the evil-thoughts that are clouding your mind."

Such loving and compassionate words not only pacified the sādhu's anger but also made him realize his mistake. The sādhu frankly admitted his fault and asked for forgiveness.

You are Pārshads of Vaikunthdhām

Shree Hari was present in the assembly at Vadtāl. As a result, a folk of naked Bāwās (ascetics) came in an extremely angry mood with weapons to create trouble. Seeing their ferocious sight, Shree Hari called Muktānand Swāmi and asked to welcome them.

Muktānand Swāmi welcomed them with admiring words, "O great saints of God! Welcome to our assembly. By a graceful vision, you have come here to consecrate at our assembly. In fact, you all look like the servants of God in Vaikunthdhām and being pleased on us God has sent you to protect us."

Muktānand Swāmi continued "A long time ago, I was blessed by a sage who told me I would once receive darshan of great saints. I feel that this is that precious moment. Please be seated on these decorated seats."

With the influence of Muktānand Swāmi's words, they could not exhibit even a bit of anger and took their place in the assembly.

Kind to the Wicked.

"Father, forgive them; they do not know what they are doing." These were some of the last words of Jesus when he was nailed to the cross by the soldiers. A similar incident in the life of Muktānand Swāmi shows unanimous quality even for the wicked. His relentless persistence in the face of many obstacles proves that absolute dedication to the Lord will lead to the ultimate spiritual experience.

The fame and glory of Lord Swāmināràyan inspired the governor of Gujarat to build a temple in Ahmedābād. The governor offered the land. Meanwhile, under the care of the devotees, a residence for saints was prepared. Finally, the chief devotee, Nanabhāi, told Jayānand Varṇi to travel to Gaḍhaḍā bring Muktānand Swāmi, and have him stay at a new residence for preaching to devotees throughout the months of the Monsoon season.

As per request, Jayānand Varṇi arrived at Gaḍhaḍā and explained the matter at hand. Shree Hari was pleased and ordered Muktānand Swāmi to travel to Ahmedābād with a few saints and at once, Swāmi prepared to leave.

After arrival, they the saints resided at the new residence and Muktānand Swāmi started his daily talks. When people heard of his arrival, they would come to listen and offered various gifts. Swāmi's fame increased, and the good people were inspired and oppositely, evil burned in the fire of envy. There were those who decided to kill Muktānand Swāmi. They declared, "Only Muktānand Swāmi is the root of the growth of Swāmināràyan sect. And when the root is cut, the branches and leaves automatically will dry up and die."

On one occasion, Muktānand Swāmi was speaking in the assembly of the glory of God. Everyone was praising Muktānand Swāmi and were satisfied by his eloquent speech. One evil minded person disguised as a devotee mixed deadly poison powder with sandalwood paste. Before the discourses began, he stood up and bowed down to Muktānand Swāmi and applied sandalwood paste on Swāmi's forehead. The poison was so intense, that the hands of the person who had applied the paste burned intensely, and before reaching home, he became unconscious.

Only by the grace of Shree Hari, could Muktānand Swāmi survive. After a few minutes, Swāmi's eyes were seized by the influence of poison. His forehead burned with unbearable pain, and he could not open his eyes. When saints and devotees observed this, they drew near to see what had happened. Muktānand Swāmi fell on the ground unconscious. No one could realize the reason of such a sudden assault. Devotees brought him down from the cot and called for help.

A physician checked swāmi's pulse and said, “Deadly poison has penetrated into the bloodstream of Pujya Swāmi.” While removing the sandalwood paste from Swāmi's forehead, a layer of skin also peeled off due to the poison. The physician asserted that someone had mixed poison with the sandalwood paste. After some research, they came to know that one wicked man had indeed done this and had ran away. Muktānand Swāmi's state worsened. His body expressions changed. The physician carefully observed and said, “Swāmi cannot live much longer.” On hearing this everyone started to wail. Within moments, Muktānand Swāmi's body became green. The physician declared, “I have no medicine to cure Swāmiji. It is an extremely deadly poison that may take one's life simply through contact. Swāmiji's survival depends all upon the grace of God.”

In this tragic condition, the chief sādhu sent a report to Shree Hari. The saints started to prepare immediately to take Swāmi to Jetalpur on a cart.

A messenger reached Gaḍhaḍā and handed over the letter to Shree Hari in which it was written, “O God! An evil man has applied poisonous sandalwood paste on Muktānand Swāmi's forehead. As a result, the poison pervaded the body and the physician cannot cure him. Muktānand Swāmi is unconscious. Katha has stopped. We will bring him to Jetalpur.”

After reading the letter, Shree Hari looked down, and gave the letter to Gopālānand Swāmi. Tears welled from his eyes. Gopālānand Swāmi read the letter. He also began to lament. Shree Hari said, “Muktānand Swāmi does not consider anyone his enemy and only thinks for the benefit of others. Yet the person who has done this to him is not pardonable.”

All the saints and devotees were shocked upon hearing the devastating and tragic news. Their hearts collapsed. Female devotees sheded tears. Dādākhāchar held the feet of Shree Hari and said while weeping, “Maharāj! Please, save Muktānand Swāmi. And if he is no longer to stay with us, give him the rest of my lifespan. Muktānand Swāmi is 'Ma' (mother) of our Satsang fellowship. And without a mother, no matter how much happiness there is in the world, it still feels empty for a child. Remorsefully pleading Dādākhāchar said, Maharāj! Please save him.”

Shree Hari wiped the tears of Dādākhāchar and told Bhaguji (an attendant) to bring Mānki (a mare on which Maharāj used to ride on). Shree Hari departed for Jetalpur. Mānki realized the intention of Shree Hari and with twinkling eyes, Mānki passed long distances with its majestic strides.

Before sunset, Shree Hari arrived at Jetalpur. Saints

and devotees were chanting the name of God while sitting around Muktānand Swāmi. At once, Shree Hari dismounted and asked the saints, “What had happened?” The tears from their eyes, revealed the tragic incident. As Shree Hari saw Muktānand Swāmi unconscious, he moved towards him. Seeing his body, the tears fell from Shree Hari's eyes. He placed his hand on Muktānand Swāmi's forehead and called, “Swāmi!”

By the soft touch of Shree Hari's hand and on hearing sympathetic voice, Muktānand Swāmi regained consciousness. He opened his eyes. He saw the devotees and saints along with Shree Hari.

Shree Hari raised His hands, and then embraced and put his head on Muktānand Swāmi's shoulder. Shree Hari said, “Swāmi! They are not exempt from dire consequences, those who have done such an unkind act to you. It would not be better to give no pardon.” Swāmi realized that a wicked one had applied the poisonous sandal paste on his forehead. He wiped the tears of Shree Hari and said, “O Lord! Please, be kind to them. Do not act mercilessly to him.” Then, Shree Hari said, “Swāmi! For your protection, I do not have mercy on such a person who has hurt my utmost elite Sant.”

“My Lord! How is it proper to take out your mercy for all, only for evilness of one person? You are the ocean of kindness. And only because of that kindness you are incarnated on this Earth, to liberate countless souls. And without your grace, salvation is not possible. O Lord! I apologize for you travelling all way here just for my grief. Please forgive him for applying poisonous sandalwood paste on me.” Muktānand Swāmi pleaded.

Hearing such words of Muktānand Swāmi, Shree Hari said, “Swāmi! Your kindness is on a greater platform than mine. In fact, your understanding is worth the greatest praise.”

The impact of the poison remained for a long time due to which staying in sun uproared great pain to Swāmi. Therefore, Shree Hari had ordered him to wear a topi (cap covering forehead and ears) on his head.

Muktānand Swāmi once traveled through Sundariyana village with the group of saints. On the outskirts of the village, four people were seated under a tree. Among them one said, "It seems that this old sādhu, who has worn a topi, does not belong to the Swāminārāyan sect." On hearing this, Muktānand Swāmi threw his topi away.

Thereafter, Muktānand Swāmi arrived in Gaḍhapur after traveling through numerous villages. Shree Hari greeted all the saints but Muktānand Swāmi.

Muktānand Swāmi said, "Maharāj! The king should know first the crime before punishment. Maharāj! What is my fault?" Shree Hari said, "I have asked you to wear a topi. Swāmi you have transgressed my order." Then, Muktānand Swāmi said, "Maharāj! I would all the pain in the world, but I cannot tolerate someone saying that I do not belong to Bhagwān Swāminārāyan"

As Muktānand Swāmi spoke these words, Shree Hari got up and embraced him. He said, "Swāmi! Your understanding and love for me is excellent and unparalleled."

In the Face of Opposition

A duel between good vs evil, true vs false, duty vs desire started as living beings came into existence on Earth and it will go on perpetually till the end. He is the man of God who propagates the truth despite sufferings imposed by evil.

Opposition of Vairāgis

The establishment of the Swāminārāyan sect broke temptations of vairāgis to gather wealth. As a result, the vairāgis and their followers were rejected from all places. In retaliation, they gathered and determined to uproot the name of Swāminārāyan. They had no sense of what spirituality was. Those intoxicated vairāgis started beating Shree Hari's saints wherever they appeared.

By the commandments of Shree Hari, the saints used to travel to villages to uplift the fallen. Thus, one day Muktānand Swāmi with some saints arrived in Dhāngadhrā and resided near the residence of where vairāgis lived. This made the vairāgis furious. They planned to trouble the saints. They went to the king and tempted him against the saints of Swāminārāyan by bribing the King with money. Muktānand Swāmi had preached to the group of saints that, “Humbleness is the greatest weapon. And it is the time to use it. If you would take any steps against them, people would criticize Bhagwan.”

They came and started omitting harsh words to the saints. They broke the idol of God, articles of worship and musical instruments. One vairāgi had a sharp pointed spear in his hand. He put it at the chest of Kapileshwarānand Swāmi. Then, Kapileshwarānand Swāmi said, “I am so strong

to break this spear into small pieces like mustard seeds. But, it is not the command of our God." This enraged the vairāgis further.

The saints received severe beatings and some had become unconscious, such that even Muktānand Swāmi was rigorously hurt. Nonetheless, without considering the status of his bodily inflictions, he started to consult the health of other wounded saints. Therefore, he went to the king for justice. The king insulted the saints even more due to being blackmailed pre-handed. As a result, the sādhus departed immediately and reached Gaḍhapur.

When Shree Hari was informed about these incidents, his eyes filled with tears. He was pained with the cruelty of vairāgis. Yet, he was proud of his saints for their forbearance and saintliness. He said, "In fact, you have defeated them with the weapon of humbleness." Thus, the saints knowing Shree Hari was pleased took a breath of relief and suddenly their pain vanished.

There was animosity for the name of Swāminārāyan who followed the acts of violence. They assumed Muktānand Swāmi to be a foremost saint in the association of Lord Swāminārāyan and made a target to kill him.

Omniscient Shri Hari knew this and notified Muktānand Swāmi in advance, "Swāmi! If a dog were to bite, at that time we throw bread in front of it, the dog will stop barking. Similarly, when someone wanted to beat us and we receive them reverently with garlands, their anger would be subsided." Muktānand Swāmi kept these words in his mind.

The next day, Muktānand Swāmi with a group of twenty sādhus departed for Jetalpur. Somehow the vairāgi found out about this and their chief, with his disciples, camped at the bank of a lake to conspire trouble at Muktānand Swāmi's residence. Afterwards, determined to

uproot the name 'Swāminārāyan' by killing Muktānand Swāmi, they set out weapons.

As they reached to where the saints were residing, Muktānand Swāmi spotted them immediately. He remembered the words of Shree Hari. He went to meet them from ahead with the with the support of two other saints. He took garlands and coconuts and greeted them with sweet words. He invited them inside and offered seats and then prostrated before them. He called all the saints and said, “See, these are very pious sādhus whom the Lord of Vaikuntha have sent here. We are very fortunate to have their darshan. They are attendants of God who have come to protect us.”

All the saints were listening attentively. Muktānand Swāmi continued, “Only with the utterance of the names of these pious saints are the sins of previous births washed away.” Such admiring words spread the wave of pleasure among the vairāgis. The vairāgis minds became calm and they had forgot their mission. The chief vairāgi asked, “Who is Muktānand Swāmi among all of you present here?”

“I am Muktānand Swāmi,” Swāmi replied.

“Are you the Muktānand Swāmi who is the most honored and widely known in the Swāminārāyan sect?”

Then, Muktānand Swāmi said, “I am the only Muktānand Swāmi, no one else.”

The chief vairāgi was surprised and enraged upon the other vairāgis for misleading him about Muktānand Swāmi's behavior. Finally, those who had come to kill Muktānand Swāmi bowed down respectfully and departed.

Rewards of Persecution

Muktānand Swāmi, with the group of saints had arrived in Sangavadar. Muktānand Swāmi sat on the

outskirts of the village nearby the well to get some rest. Meanwhile, the owner of the well came and started to beat the saints and expelled them far away.

As if due to this sin of persecution, while the owner of the well was working in the field at night, thieves came and killed him.

When Muktānand Swāmi heard of such a murder of the person who had drawn them away, he observed a fast for good of his soul.

In the Face of Danger

One day, Muktānand Swāmi and Brahmānand Swāmi arrived in the village of Kareli. They stayed at a Dharmashala. They used to go to beg alms once in a day and preach to preach the glory of God. Seeing the virtues and pure behavior, people welcomed them and accepted their messages. This inflamed the Bāwās (false sādhus) because they did not get respect and reverence despite living in the same village for several months.

One day, a Bāwā invited Muktānand Swāmi and Brahmānand Swāmi to his monastery. He greeted them pretending to be a good devotee, “Welcome, welcome purify my āshram with your footprints. I am very fortunate today with your darshan, please have as many meals as you like here in my āshram.”

As soon as the saints entered the room, he closed the door and locked it. Muktānand Swāmi asked, “Why did you lock the door?”

Bāwāji said, “Since a long time I was in search of saints belonging to 'Swāminārāyan' and I found them today. Now, I have decided to cut your nose and ears. And you are also called great saints, isn't it? Let's see, who can protect you today?”

When Brahmānand Swāmi heard this, he whispered, “Swāmi! It seems that he is a cruel man. I am not afraid that he will cut my nose and ears but such act is done to them who have committed great sins. People will criticize not only us to more to our Lord. Shree Hari reputation will become tainted. I am afraid of this matter.”

Muktānand Swāmi said, “Swāmi! Do not worry. God is all-doer. Nothing will happen without His desire. And, may be in previous lives, we may have committed some offenses, and as a result we would lose our nose and ears for worldly affairs and relatives but in this birth, it is better than those past lives that we might suffer for Lord Swāminārāyan. Let the world speak whatever they like. God is omniscient. He is sure to protect us. Now, we should only chant the holy name of God.”

On one side, Muktānand Swāmi and Brahmānand Swāmi were chanting the name 'Swāminārāyan' and on the other side the Bāwāji was sharpening the blade of knife. In this very moment, Raghavji, a noble man passed by the place on horse. He saw Bāwāji polishing the knife, “O Bāwāji! What are you doing?” Raghavji inquired.

“What do you mean? You may go from here. Today undoubtedly, I will cut the nose and ears of Swāminārāyan's sādhus. And I have locked them in that room.” Bāwāji spoke directly with anger.

“O Bāwāji! As you are a sādhu, they are also sādhus. They have worn the same clothes as you have. So, it is not proper to do it. Open the door and let them free.” Raghavji implored.

“By no means, today I'll do so. You get out of here, otherwise--” Bāwāji threatened but was then interrupted as Raghavji jumped over the wall and said, “I am in disbelief. How can you cut the nose and ears of these saints?” Saying

this, Raghavji snatched the knife away and Bāwāji was nearly knocked unconscious. Then, he pleaded and agreed to free the saints.

When Raghavji opened the door, the saints were chanting the holy name of God 'Swāminārāyan'. He said, “Swāmi! You are free, please remain safe.” Then, Muktānand Swāmi spoke, “O noble man! You really have endeavored a lot for us. May God, bless you and that Bāwāji.”

Insults by Alaiya Khāchar

Once, there was an assembly held with saints and devotees from various regions. At that time, Shree Hari pointed out at Muktānand Swāmi and asked, “Swāmi! You are most senior sādhu among all and you have much experience regarding the Satsang fellowship. So, tell me, who is the utmost top devotee in our satsang?”

Alaiya Khāchar of Jhinjhavadar was also sitting in that assembly. He had been observing celibacy through his one hundred previous births. After listening to his discourses, 18 youths had renounced worldly affairs and had become sādhus. In addition, he was the king of Jhinjhavadar. These qualities had taken the roots of deep ego in his heart. He had thought himself to be a elite devotee.

Muktānand Swāmi said, “Maharāj! I think in our satsang, Dādākhāchar is a first-class devotee. His immeasurable faith and devotion has helped him earn the profound blessings of all.” Alaiya Khāchar was surprised on hearing this, and looked down. All the devotees supported the the answer by clapping.

“Then, tell me who the second-class devotee is?” Shree Hari asked

Just then, Alaiya Khāchar looked at Muktānand Swāmi and made rough and husky sound to make him aware

of his presence. He thought that Muktānand Swāmi will say his name. Muktānand Swāmi was unaware of his pride and said, “Maharāj! Parvatbhai is a second-class devotee, who has sacrificed everything in the service of God and for sādhus.” Suddenly, a round of applause stirred the environment. With this, Alaiya Khāchar was senselessly bewildered. Still, he had hoped to be set at the third position.

When Shree Hari inquired about third ranked devotee, Muktānand Swāmi declared Jinabhai at number three for his embodiment of humility, faith and service. Again, a rhythmic sound of clapping filled the atmosphere. This enraged Alaiya Khāchar. He unsheathed his sword and angrily rushed toward Muktānand Swāmi. As he was about to strike the sword, the surrounding devotees grabbed and held him back. Shree Hari got up from his seat and consoled him, “Alaiya Khāchar! In fact, you are worth to be a first-class devotee. No one is equally worth to be revered as you are. I know very well that you have been observing perfect celibacy from your previous one hundred births. And many have become sādhus after listening to your discourses. And now Muktānand Swāmi has grown old, and accordingly he has lost his train of thought on who to rank where.”

Such praising words uttered by Shree Hari pacified his anger but Shree Hari was pained at the act of Alaiya Khāchar. In the 17th Vachanāmrit, he has revealed the cause of such insensible act, “If someone has firm faith in God, but lacks an extreme aversion towards the Vishays (desires for sense gratification), then even if a person like Muktānand Swāmi were to denounce those objects of enjoyment, he would go as far as to cut off the person's head with a sword in order to harm that person.”

Shree Hari wanted to teach him the truth. After the assembly was over, Shree Hari along with saints and

devotees, went to the river Ghela. On reaching there they got ready to a take bath. There was a slight hill from which one can dive into the river. So, Shree Hari said while looking at Alaiya Khāchar, “Now, one who is the top most devotee in satsang will dive in first.” Alaiya Khāchar became pleased and prepared to dive in. As he tried, Shree Hari pulled his under garment and Alaiya Khāchar fell into river naked. The Kathi devotees laughed abruptly at him. Alaiya Khāchar could not bear the insult and commanded Shree Hari to apologize.

Shree Hari conditioned to do so if Alaiya Khāchar would prostrate before Muktānand Swāmi and ask for forgiveness but ultimately, pride and status delayed his action. Shree Hari was adamant. Alaiya Khāchar broke his kanthi. He came out of the water, wore his wet clothes and set out towards Jhinjhavadar.

It is said that thereafter, he never came to have Shree Hari's darshan. When Shree Hari was about to leave his physical body, Alaiya Khāchar did come to have his final darshan due to his ego. After Shree Hari's disappearance from this world, Alaiya Khāchar experienced great regret and so he asked Muktānand Swāmi's forgiveness. Muktānand Swāmi was pleased and had consoled him. Finally, Alaiya Khāchar experienced peace of heart.

"Once, the holy land of India was overburdened by unnecessary forces of vairāgis (false sādhus). Though these vairāgis had no morality and they masqueraded themselves as sādhus. In contrast, the Swāminārāyan sādhus had true virtues. They observed absolute celibacy and wedded to the vows of poverty and humility.

Wherever Swāminārāyan sādhus traveled, people respected them. This enraged the vairāgis who saw the Swāminārāyan sādhus as a threat to their name and occupation to encounter the spread of the Swāminārāyan faith. The vairāgis decided to harass, persecute and humiliate the sādhus.

A total number of seven hundred vairāgis decided to intrude the assembly where Muktānand Swāmi was preaching the moral disciplines of Satsang in the great city of Ahmedābād. At that time, by the help of Vitthalrāo Subo, the ferocious army of Shivji rushed toward Muktānand Swāmi. Each one had weapons like swords, daggers, tridents, knives etc. Many were naked; many had worn only one cloth while others wore saintly robes. All were adorned with long matted hair and had blood shaded eyes full of anger.

By the arrival of such terror, the assembly scattered on sight. Muktānand Swāmi realized it would be best to leave, then to be killed by these vairāgis. The intoxicated evil crowd was pursued to slay them all.

Consequently, a brave woman told a devotee that was with Muktānand Swāmi for all the saints to take shelter in her home. Muktānand Swāmi, realizing adverse circumstance,

entered the house and the woman climbed on the roof and started throwing roofing tiles and stones on the crowd of vairāgis. The vairāgis were overwhelmed by the continuous downfall of stones and titles and started to retreat.

Unfortunately, a few robust vairāgis broke the door of the house and threatened Muktānand Swāmi with frightening weapons. They mercilessly injured Muktānand Swāmi yet he did not utter even a word. He calmly tolerated while chanting the name 'Swāminārāyan'.

Finally, the Pārshads Bhaguji, Dungarji and Agraji arrived there by God's will. Bhaguji, seeing Muktānand Swāmi in such condition, angrily unsheathed his sword. Though he was short, he had the power and courage to single-handedly defeat the army. Agraji had daggers ready to strike the vairāgis. A fierce fight broke out. The vairāgis could not bear the strikes of the three Pārshads. As a result, they attacked the Pārshads from behind. In a few moments, other vairāgis arrived there and began to beat up the Pārshads and Muktānand Swāmi.

Despite being an able saint who could dismantle the vairāgis by a single thought, Muktānand Swāmi did not do anything. Thereafter, vairāgis knew that Lord Swāminārāyan was staying at the home of Nāthbhakt. So, they departed for Nāthbhakt's home. Before, vairāgis could reach the place where Shree Hari was, Bhaguji ran to inform Shree Hari by taking a shortcut. He tied a cloth to conceal his wounds. He had spear a in one hand and sword hanging from his waist. His body was trembling with courage. Observing this, Shree Hari smilingly said, “Bhaguji! Today I would like to avoid a fight.”

“But Maharāj! These vairāgis have beaten Muktānand Swāmi. His body is wounded and you are telling me not to fight?” Bhaguji cried out.

Shree Hari stopped for a while and thought seriously.

He called out the other Kāthis and said, “Immediately all of you go and bring Muktānand Swāmi here under your protection.” Shree Hari's command echoed through the minds of Kāthi devotees who immediately left to bring back Muktānand Swāmi. Muktānand Swāmi could not walk, so the devotees carried him on a bed.

On seeing Swāmi's miserable condition tears dropped from Shree Hari's eyes. He uttered the words, “Swāmi! You are very valuable to me. Forgive me. I could not protect you from such intense bodily pain.”

“Maharāj! Please do not speak such words. On account of your grace I have survived.” Muktānand Swāmi said, resting his hands. Then, saints and devotees grieved and burst into tears upon seeing his body.

After some time, Shree Hari struck his own right leg on the earth and spoke, “These wicked people harassed my poor sādhus yesterday and today they pained my Guru. When the power of evil will increase, the way of salvation can no longer be sustained.”

Upon seeing such a ferocious form of God, the Earth trembled. Seeing this, Muktānand Swāmi folded his hands and said, “Maharāj! You are the ocean of kindness and every one's life depends upon your mercy.”

“Swāmi! This is known but when one afflicts my saints, I am become very ferocious,” Shree Hari interrupted.

“Maharāj! I cannot bear to see someone else in pain because of me.” Muktānand Swāmi grieved.

“Swāmi! What harm have you done to them, that they are doing this to you? Swāmi! Now I will see who dares to touch my beloved saints.” Shree Hari declared.

“No Maharāj! No one has beaten us. They are conducting according to their nature. The body is pained but my atma (soul) is untouched and ever blissful. So, please be

calm, my Lord and have mercy upon ignorant people."

With such kind words from the heart of Muktānand Swāmi, Shree Hari was placated. Shree Hari kept twelve saints and other devotee to take care of Muktānand Swāmi but he ordered four hundred saints to travel to Surat.

Later Shree Hari held an assembly in the memory of bravehearted Kāthi devotees and said, "While we remained quiet, the evil became fiercely excited. I had sent my beloved sādhus to Surat for their safety." The brave Kāthi devotees energized to retaliate when they saw Shree Hari pained at heart. They spoke with courage, "Maharāj! We will not hesitate to give up our lives in order to protect such true sādhus. Maharāj! Call back the sādhus. We are ready to fight and we are just waiting for your command."

On the other side, a crowd of vairāgis filled the streets of Ahmedābād. Those vairāgis were under the influence of intoxicating drinks and became uncontrolled as they jumped, laughed and screamed. They surrounded the house of Nāthbhakt.

Somlakhāchar said, "Maharāj! These vairāgis will soon attack us. Allow us to fight. We are real Kshatriya; we would sacrifice ourselves for the protection of religion."

Shree Hari was in deep thought. At last, he said, "It is my command for all you to engage. Today, even Shivji is standing with weapons and waiting for the command. Today, it is the time of using your skill and strength; welcome it with your ability."

Without hesitation, all Kāthi devotees prepared to fight in a great array. All were well-versed in the use of all kinds of weapons like swords, daggers, tridents, and spears. By being like lions and shouting 'Jay Swāminārāyan', the devotees attacked the gigantic group of vairāgis. A fierce fight commenced among them. The great warriors like Mulubhāi

and Ramsingh, Matrodhadhal, Surākhāchar and Somlakhāchar single handedly charged many vairāgis. Seeing this, they began to run away from the battlefield. Meanwhile, all vairāgis fearfully fled to all direction. Thus, the war concluded.

Shree Hari embraced to all victorious devotees one by one and warmly turned his hands on the wounded part of their bodies. Their wounds relieved by mere touch of Shree Hari's hand. Then, Shree Hari with great compassion exclaimed, “Well, in fact you all are praiseworthy. You performed your duty as a true Kshatriya. Today, the work of God to destroy evil has been accomplished by your help. Your bravery has been used for executing the work of God.” Kāthis felt themselves blessed with these words and bowed down to Shree Hari.

Muktānand Swāmi was the embodiment of humility. He was renowned for his generosity. People who once experienced it, never forgot him. He loved and served everyone, instilling in them hope and confidence. He was an idol of servitude.

Consuming Rasoi on Alternate Days

After traveling into villages, Muktānand Swāmi arrived in the city of Surat. Coming to know Muktānand Swāmi's arrival numerous devotees became overjoyed and impatient to meet him. They managed to feed saints with nice food made from ghee, jaggery and sugar. Muktānand Swāmi thought it to be harmful for the youther saints. Swāmi was worried if these saints consume such delicious meals everyday their senses will not remain in their control, which will lead to be an obstacle in worshipping God. He called a meeting of devotees and suggested them to arrange delicious foods on alternate days instead of everyday. The devotees agreed. One of the sādhus did not like the decision of Muktānand Swāmi. He wrote a letter to Shree Hari that Muktānand Swāmi had restrained them on consuming food.

A few days later, Muktānand Swāmi along with saints left for Vadtāl where Shree Hari was staying. He came to Vadtāl, performed dandvats to Shree Hari and took his place in the assembly. Then, Shree Hari asked, “Swāmi! Have you restricted the saints from food?” “Maharāj! I had not restrained to eat food but managed to make nice and simple food on alternate days,” Muktānand Swāmi replied.

“What is your idea behind this?” Shree Hari asked.

“Maharāj! I thought that, when the holy saints ate nice food donated and prepared by the devotees, it will help the

devotees achieve liberation. And on the other side, I thought that if the saints become habituated to consume good meals too often, it will increase laziness, and as a result they would not be able to engage in devotion happily. Therefore, I told devotees to make nice food on alternate days." Muktānand Swāmi replied. Hearing this, Shree Hari became very happy to see how Swāmi was taking care of his saints.

The one who had written the letter with his misunderstanding asked for Muktānand Swāmi's forgiveness and as a mother forgets the mistakes of her child, Muktānand Swāmi gladly embraced him.

Your Shelter is My House

Once upon a time, Muktānand Swāmi was staying in Surat with seventy sādhus. A small sādhu, out of affection for his parents thought, "My parents are not devotees of God, let me go to instruct them to worship God." The small sādhu decided to leave by taking permission from Muktānand Swāmi. When he shared his thoughts with Pujya Swāmi, Muktānand Swāmi warmly said, "O sādhu! You thought well but devotees have maintained comforts of food, water and shelter, for seventy saints. And if you will leave now, what will the devotees think. Also, people in the city will talk about your absence and will criticize Lord Swāminārāyan as well as santo. Therefore, it would be better for you to leave while returning to Gaḍhaḍā." The sādhu became convinced, by hearing such thoughts from the mouth of Muktānand Swāmi.

Thereafter, through Muktānand Swāmi's discourses, the small sādhu's thoughts changed and he determined to serve Muktānand Swāmi till the end of his life.

A few days later, Muktānand Swāmi and other saints departed, from Surat towards Gaḍhaḍā. On the way, Muktānand Swāmi asked the sādhu, "Swāmi! This is the way

that goes towards your village; you may go if you like." The sādhu folded his hands; with tears coming down from his eyes and reverently requested, "Swāmi! Through your discourses, I recognized the attachment of worldly relations as the poison of a snake. O compassionate one! Please, make me your servant. I do not want to go back. From now, your shelter is my home."

Is There Any Food to Eat?

Shree Hari had ordered many small sādhus to learn Sanskrit scriptures from Muktānand Swāmi who tirelessly nursed the sādhus with care and patience. One day, while a few saints were reading at night, they became quite hungry, so they sneaked their way into the kitchen without being seen by Muktānand Swāmi. They found a few rotlas (loaf of bread made from millet) and buttermilk.

At that time, Muktānand Swāmi thought the sādhus are studying with great endeavour, so let me go there and relief them for some time. To his surprise, they were not there. Muktānand Swāmi looked all around for the saints at last, he walked towards the kitchen in hope of finding them there.

As the saints saw Muktānand Swāmi coming, they stopped for a moment, felt ashamed, tried to conceal the food. Muktānand Swāmi took pity on them. He went to them and asked, "My dear saints! I am very hungry. Is there any food?"

By hearing such a statement from Muktānand Swāmi, the saints rejoiced and said, "Yes, Guru Maharāj!" A sādhu brought rotlas for Muktānand Swāmi and served him. Muktānand Swāmi said, "I do not feel happy eating by myself, so all of you should take something as well." He served the rotlas to the saints, relieving them from anxiety. At last, he

took only half a rotlo and began to eat. Although Muktānand Swāmi was not hungry, he consumed some food for the sake of pleasing the saints.

Brahmānand Swāmi's Intelligence

Vasudevānand Swāmi was living in association of Brahmānand Swāmi. Brahmānand Swāmi was well learned in Sanskrit and full of saintly virtues. He was considered a senior saint. On one occasion, being unhappy with the behavior of Brahmānand Swāmi, Vasudevānand Swāmi decided to leave the satsang fellowship. As he was preparing to leave, Muktānand Swāmi thought that if Vasudevānand Swāmi will go home maligning a great saint like Brahmānand Swāmi, he will be thrown into the material pool of miseries. Therefore, Muktānand Swāmi instructed Vasudevānand Swāmi to stay in his association, so he would be saved from falling from Satsang. He praised about the greatness of Brahmānand Swāmi to Vasudevānand Swāmi, so the animosity that was built would be melted.

When Brahmānand Swāmi heard of this, a little jealousy was developed against Muktānand Swāmi. For a week, Brahmānand Swāmi neither bowed to Muktānand Swāmi nor he spoke to him.

Finally, when Shree Hari came to know of this incident, he called both Muktānand Swāmi and Brahmānand Swāmi in the assembly. He asked Muktānand Swāmi, “Swāmi! I have heard that you and Brahmānand Swāmi do not speak to each other; is it true? Muktānand Swāmi respectfully said, “Maharāj! I don't have any reason not to talk with Pujya Swāmi.” Then, he revealed the matters that had taken palace with Vasudevānand Swāmi.

Then, Brahmānand Swāmi realized his misunderstanding towards Muktānand Swāmi. He

apologized and prostrated before Muktānand Swāmi again and again even though Swāmi pardoned him. All were stunned by seeing such an act. Brahmānand Swāmi thought, "Why did this happen to me? Why did my mind grow jealous towards Muktānand Swāmi?"

He said, "Maharāj! When I was ill and my life time was about to end, the devotees requested you to uphold my life in exchange of their lifespan. Among them, a quarrelsome old lady had given me seven days of her life. These were the days of that quarrelsome woman had given to me. As a result, I raised jealousy with Muktānand Swāmi." Shortly, Brahmānand Swāmi reflected back into his original pleasant and delightful mood.

Extreme Sympathy

"It is not wrong to say that Muktānand Swāmi was the personified form of compassion."

Freed from the Wrath of Kal

As per his daily routine, Muktānand Swāmi engaged in singing devotional songs. The night was growing very dense and dark. Only Muktānand Swāmi was awake in the silent village of Gaḍhapur. He sang hymns and meditated on the form of God. When he opened his eyes, he saw a demon. It appeared with a big trident in his hand which was stained with blood. His daunting figure was black as charcoal. His hair, beard and mustache appeared reddish like copper, giving him a dangerous and fierce look. Yet, he was standing with folded hands before Muktānand Swāmi.

Muktānand Swāmi inquired, "Who are you? And why have you come here?"

"Swāmi! I am Kal (the personified god of death)" the demon replied. "I have been very hungry. I came to take your permission, so that I can satisfy my hunger by killing thousands of people in this famine year. Please give me permission."

Muktānand Swāmi thought that, if I will give him permission, he will kill people maliciously. "Who told you to get my permission? Go at once and be satisfied with what you have, otherwise the Lord is present now, and He will destroy you. I will never give you my consent to do such a cruel act."

The devil expressed discontent and ran away.

In the morning, when Muktānand Swāmi completed his daily worship, Mukund Brahmchāri came to him. Muktānand Swāmi applied sandalwood paste on his

forehead and said, “O Brahmchāri! Please prepare a lavish meal for Shree Hari today.”

“Ok, Swāmiji,” Brahmchāri replied.

After that, Brahmchāri came to Shree Hari, “Shree Hari asked, “Who applied sandalwood paste on your forehead this early in the morning?”

“Muktānand Swāmi applied it!” Brahmchāri replied.

Subsequently, Muktānand Swāmi also arrived there. Shree Hari asked him, “Swāmi! Is today a special day that you performed the pujan of Mukund Brahmchāri?”

Thereafter, Muktānand Swāmi revealed the incident that took place the night before. Then, Shree Hari said, “Swāmi! It is a festive day in which you saved thousands of people from a great disaster. So, lavish food should be prepared and the cows should be given in charity to the Brāhmins. Swāmi! Don't worry, I will manage everything.” Thus, Shree Hari called Lakhu Kandoi and prepared sweets of sata and jalebi.

After satisfying everyone, Shree Hari called Muktānand Swāmi to donate cows to Sitaram, a pious Brāhmin.

As a result, Muktānand Swāmi had given protection to all the people from the wrath of Kal.

Liberation to a Mulidoshi

The saints of Lord Swāminārāyan were traveling to various villages for the establishment of dharma. While the saints were traveling, they had to go begging for alms in order to obtain some food. They would eat whatever they received by the will of God. Those who were acquainted with Satsang would give them sufficient food, while greedy and unholy people insulted and harassed the saints.

“Evil men cannot give up their wicked nature, then why should we give up our pious nature.” This was the level of wisdom Lord Swāmināràyan's santo possessed. For this reason, not only did they tolorate the insults of such low beings but moreover prayed for their welfare in return.

Once upon a time, Muktānand Swāmi along with a few saints came to the village Ghānlā for begging alms. He approached the doorway of a home and shouted, “Narayan hare, sachidānand prabho.” There was old lady there Her name was Mulidoshi. She was busy in coloring the walls of her home with a cloth. When she saw Muktānand Swāmi, she became furious and threw the cloth in his face. Muktānand Swāmi uttered, “Swāmināràyan, Swāmināràyan”. Thus, they left the house. However, Muktānand Swāmi kept that cloth with him. When they reached a pond, he took bath in it and washed and cleaned the cloth that was thrown at him by Mulidoshi.

Soon, after drying it, he separated all the threads, soaked them in ghee and made a wick. In the evening, the saints got together, lit the lamp from that wick. Thus, the whole room filled with beaming radiance. Muktānand Swāmi said to the sādhus, “This wick is made from the cloth thrown at me by an old lady. So, our room is filled with light. We must chant the name of God, so her heart will be filled with devotion.”

The sādhus started chanting 'Swāmināràyan' 'Swāmināràyan' while remembering God in their heart. It vibrated the heart of Mulidoshi. She regretted for performing such a malicious act. Waves of devotion began to spring up in her heart. She was determined to ask for forgiveness, hoping the sādhus would come the following day to her home.

The next day, as Mulidoshi was waiting, the sādhus passed by her home. She became overwhelmed with joy. She

bowed down and begged pardon. Muktānand Swāmi was pleased with her transformation. She was convinced, that Lord Swāmināràyan is Supreme and became a staunch satsangi.

It is a notable incident, as to how her devotion for God increased to the highest level. One day, Mulidoshi received a message that Shree Hari was coming to visit her home. She became delighted. Although she was old, and her hands trembled, by hearing such news she cleaned her home a prepared a decorative seat for Maharaj.

As she was eager to meet her Lord, Shree Hari was also eager to meet her. During the time preparations Mulidoshi thought, “What shall I offer to Lord? When giving to God, one should give the thing that one most likes.”

Soon Shree Hari appeared she was filled with great joy. Shree Hari came to her home, but like just like how iron is attracted towards a magnetic, Mulidoshi kept on staring at Shree Hari's face. She even forgot to greet him inside. She was attracted by his beauty. Shree Hari was naturally beautiful and had fantastic complexion and was finely dressed in colorful garments. Shree Hari smiled at her and said, “Are you going to welcome me in your home?” Then, she warmly welcomed Shree Hari made him sit on the special seat prepared by her. She bowed down and with overflowing enthusiasm said, “Maharāj! Please, reveal to me what you would like.”

Dedication is the quality of true love. Although, she was merely an old and poor woman, she told requested Maharaj for anything. Shree Hari smiled seeing her devotion and said, “What is dearest to you?”

Suddenly, she went inside her home. She had preserved costly ornaments in her chest and thought that these ornaments are dearest to me. As she was about to

open the chest, she thought of her cow which gives sweet milk everyday. Then, she went to the cow but as she was releasing the cow, she remembered her two sons who could keep the house running, and finally felt that her two sons were dearest to her heart. She approached Shree Hari looking downward. Shree Hari asked, "What did you bring for me?"

"Maharāj! The dearest of items to my heart are arriving now." Shree Hari was surprised with her reply. Just then, her two sons arrived. Seeing them, Mulidoshi said, "Maharāj! These two sons are my gifts to you. Please accept them."

Then, both sons prostrated to Shree Hari. They were very elated to go into the service of God. They had no other desires. Seeing such kind of dedication, Shree Hari became was extremely pleased upon Mulidoshi. Tears of joy came from her eyes. Then, Shree Hari blessed her and left her home with her two sons, ensuring them all ultimate liberation.

Never Let It Be Worse

To understand Muktānand Swāmi's exalted position is beyond the capacity of the mind. He lived the life of simplicity and humility. After Shree Hari departed for the Akshardhām, the sorrow exhibited by saints and devotees was unspeakable. Playing the role of a mother Muktānand Swāmi kept everyone calm and stable minded. He explained the secrets which Shree Hari had personally spoken to him about.

Because of his old age, he became weak. He walked unsteadily. Due to this issue, he had a sādhu, who was

employed in his personal service. The sādhu was a writer. He used to make Khichḍi (hotch-potch) for Muktānand Swāmi without first cleaning the rice. The rice had very minute stones inside. On numerous occasions while partaking in his meal, Swāmi found minute stones in the Khichḍi, but without expressing even the slightest distress towards the food or sādhu, he consumed everything without any comments.

One day, Muktānand Swāmi had severe pain in his stomach. Gopālānand Swāmi and Nityānand Swāmi came to see him. Gopālānand Swāmi knew with his yogic power that something was wrong with the food. Gopālānand Swāmi called the sādhu who was in the service of preparing food for Muktānand Swāmi. He asked, "Sādhuram! Why have you been making Khichḍi without first cleaning the rice?"

The sādhu bluntly replied by saying, "Swāmi! If I were to clean rice, when will I get time to write books?"

"How long have you been doing this?" Swāmi asked.

"From the day, I came into the service of Muktānand Swāmi," the sādhu replied.

Gopālānand Swāmi asked Muktānand Swāmi, "Swāmi! You should have revealed this issue with us earlier, so we could have replaced the sādhu in your service." Then, Gopālānand Swāmi called Anopānand Swāmi and said to serve Muktānand Swāmi with great care.

After some time, Muktānand Swāmi again became ill. As a result, he did not eat anything for eight days. Anopānand Swāmi was much aggrieved with this. One day, he made pudlā from millet flour for Muktānand Swāmi. He brought it and served in Muktānand Swāmi's eating bowl. Nevertheless, Muktānand Swāmi refused to eat the spicy

food on the account of sickness. Anopānand Swāmi insisted to eat pudlā, since he had not eaten anything for eight days. Seeing such love of Anopānand Swāmi, Muktānand Swāmi began to eat. Yet as Muktānand Swāmi was about to put the first morsel of pudlā in his mouth, an arrogant sādhu came and boldly spoke, “O Muktānandji! What are you eating? You talk to us to get control over the senses and you exercise in eating the savoriest of foods. Aren't you ill?”

Muktānand Swāmi's mind felt perturbed and immediately, the morsel fell from his mouth. He pushed away his bowl. There were tears in the eyes of Anopānand Swāmi. With this view he requested, “O Gurudev! Please do not take into consideration of what this sādhu is saying. He does not know that you have not eaten anything for last eight days. He is blunt and illiberal. He has no sense of respect.” Instantly, Muktānand Swāmi paused him, “Swāmi! Do not think such kind of thoughts. He does not possess any faults.”

Muktānand Swāmi observed God even in him, even in those who insulted and criticized him. This arrogant sādhu continued to condemn Muktānand Swāmi before the saints and devotees. Consequently, when the sādhu sat to eat take a meal, all he could see was insects in his eating bowl. He was extremely disgusted and could not eat anything or drink anything. He became despondent. At last, he approached a great saint who revealed that “For the sin of accusing a God like saint, your vision has become venal. Now even God cannot save you. Therefore, there is only one way. Go to Muktānand Swāmi, and confess your sins and ask for forgiveness.”

The sādhu realized his mistake. He approached Muktānand Swāmi, expressing his sorrow and begged for forgiveness. The sādhu's vision cleared enabling him to eat.

Muktānand Swāmi prayed to God, “O Maharaj! I had no aversion towards the sādhu. He is as innocent as a child.”

Only such a sādhu who has such kind of understanding and forgive can uplift countless souls.



First Ārti in Kālvāni

This was a historical day which was enclosed with a number of mystifications in conviction about the supremacy of Lord Swāminārāyan. As a matter of fact, this auspicious event had been preserved under a pre-planned arrangement to maintain its unique importance.

After the passing of Rāmānand Swāmi, Muktānand Swāmi and a few sādhus arrived in Bhuj with the purpose to spread *satsang*. At the same time, sorrowful conditions existed due to Rāmānand Swāmi's disappearance. All of devotees were feeling regret for Swāmi's sudden departure. However, in the vast and ever-flourishing holy fellowship, Rāmānand Swāmi had taken place in everyone's heart as the Supreme Lord.

So as to relieve the satsangis of this, Shree Hari traveled through villages with sādhus, and reached Mangrol. Shree Hari desired to do something new in satsang. He started *Samadhi Prakaran* (a chapter of leading people into trance) to establish true *upasana* by revealing his immense power of Godliness. It quickly became a miracle not only in Mangrol but also in other villages. People could realize the greatness of Shree Hari through such trances. Children, youths and even the elderly observed the divine abode of God and witnessed the supreme personality of Shree Hari surrounded by numerous *muktos* (liberated souls). After returning from such a trance-state, they would reveal to the others what they saw. People knew the facts and took the shelter of Shree Hari and understood him to the supreme God of Gods.

This led to a joyous, peaceful and divinized period in the satsang.

When Muktānand Swāmi, a foremost saint amongst the sādhus, heard about this *Samadhi Prakaran*, he initially felt it was wrong. Immediately, he went to where Shree Hari was staying. Muktānand Swāmi knowing it to be a hypocritical action said, "Maharāj, all these matters about Samadhi are hard to fathom. Samadhi is not possible without practicing the eight folds of *yoga* which are extremely difficult to carry out in a perfect way, even by the great *yogi*s. Rāmānand Swāmi never showed his power in this manner."

With such kind feeling in his heart, Muktānand Swāmi continued, "Even though you all know the true value of satsang, how can you solely trust what you see in *Samadhi Prakaran* to be the complete truth?"

Within a while Santdasji, a sādhu, came to Shree Hari. He looked at Shree Hari and lost consciousness. Though Shree Hari called him, Santdasji did not get up. Shree Hari smiled and said to Muktānand Swāmi, "Swāmi! See, I did nothing but with the grace of Rāmānand Swāmi, everyone can see God's abode in *Samadhi*." Muktānand Swāmi kept on staring at Santdasji. He knew that the endeavors which are required to achieve Samadhi were never practiced by Santdasji. But how did he reach such a high spiritual state without any practice? This is what was bothering Muktānand Swāmi. Shree Hari told Muktānand Swāmi to wake up Santdasji, but he could not do so. When Shree Hari uttered his name, Santdasji immediately got up and explained what he observed in Samadhi, "Shree Hari was seated on the throne in Akshardhām and countless *Muktos* including Rāmānand Swāmi were worshipping to Shree Hari. Then, I went to Rāmānand Swāmi and bowed down to him. And, Rāmānand Swāmi told me that Sahajānand Swāmi is the Supreme Lord of Lords."

Muktānand Swāmi was lost in deep thought.

In the evening, Muktānand Swāmi walked towards the jungle, barefooted with tears in his eyes. He suddenly

stopped and one of the trees. At once, he heard a familiar voice, “Oh Muktānand! Oh Muktānand!” Hearing such loving words in such a solitary place, Muktānand Swāmi was startled. As he looked back, he saw his Guru Rāmānand Swāmi who was dressed in white garments; the luster of his presence filled the jungle with light. His hands were long enough to reach to his knees. His face was beautiful, with a divine touch. Muktānand Swāmi's joy had no bounds. He prostrated upon having Guru Rāmānand Swāmi's darshan.

Then, Rāmānand Swāmi said pleasantly, “My son, I know very well, you know me as God but in reality, your disturbance is due to what people are seeing in Samadhi.” Muktānand Swāmi was filling his heart with the immortal words of Rāmānand Swāmi.

“Did you forget that I repeatedly had said that, 'I am only a drum beater but the real hero is Sahajānand Swāmi.' He is the cause of all the causes, God of all Gods, the Supreme Lord. For him, nothing is impossible. As the sun gives light to the world, it is not a matter of astonishment. Likewise, Sahajānand Swāmi is giving the knowledge of God, therefore, there is nothing to be surprised about. He can do anything because he is God. As the ocean contains the water of each river, likewise Sahajānand Swāmi possesses the power to emerge in all incarnations and has the ability to submerge them back inside of his divine form.

In addition, rose such a flower which gives sweet fragrance to everyone, regardless of the person's caste or status. It does not distinguish between anyone; similarly, whoever sees our Sahajānand Swāmi achieves Samadhi. There is no difference of caste in the realm of His grace.”

These words were enough to vanquish Muktānand Swāmi's doubt. Muktānand Swāmi understood that Sahajānand Swāmi is the supreme lord himself. He was extremely happy. Subsequently, Rāmānand Swāmi vanished.

There was a tremendous joy on the face of Muktānand Swāmi. He went straight to his residence. He called all the saints and devotees and asked them to be present at the home of Naranbhāi with various *ārti*cles for worshipping, such as: garlands, flowers, sandalwood paste and kumkum.

Muktānand Swāmi approached Shreeji Maharāj with rich clothes and ornaments. Shree Hari said, “Swāmi, we are saints, we cannot possess such objects. Muktānand Swāmi said, “You are the lord of lords.” Then after seeing Swāmi's kind appeal, Shree Hari was dressed in lavish clothes and adorned with highly precious jewelry. He occupied a decorated cot on which Rāmānand Swāmi used to sit. Muktānand Swāmi worshipped Him with sandalwood paste, kumkum and flowers and devotees worshipped Shree Hari as well.

It was that evening in Kalvani village, where those most fructified moments bestowed the crown in the history of Swāminārāyan Sampradāy.

There was a crowd of devotees that had gathered. Muktānand Swāmi raised acclaim and said, “This Sahajānand Swāmi is the Supreme Lord and whoever would have his *darshan*, will have their sins destroyed and will attain Akshardhām.”

Muktānand Swāmi lit the *Ārti*, so all followed him, and everyone lit their *Ārti* as well. Today, for the first time, the whole assembly consisting of saints, male and female devotees performed the *Ārti* of the Supreme Lord Sahajānand Swāmi. From that day onwards, each and every follower performs the *Ārti* daily with great devotion and admiration.

First Vachanāmritam

The Vachanāmrit is considered to be the most authentic scripture of the Swāminārāyan faith and a magical source of spiritual understanding. It has inspired many followers due to being the original words of Bhagwān Swāminārāyan. The dialogue below puts one in a scenario where one can experience the nectarine like words of the Vachanāmrit being spoken for the very first time by Shree Hari himself.

It was the year of samvat 1876. After the celebration of Diwali, Shree Hari resided at Gaḍhaḍā with saints and *pārshads.* In the days of winter, to please Shree Hari some sādhus performed severe penance by eating little food, tolerating the harsh cold weather, bathing in cold water, forsaking sleep, etc.

On the day of Magshar sud 4th, when all were in deep sleep, and only serene silence was experienced, Shree Hari was resting in the *Darbār* of Dādākhāchar surrounded by a few *pārshads*. Only a devotee by the name f, Devjibhakt, was massaging the lotus feet of Shree Hari. All other saints and devotees were sleeping. At that time, Muktānand Swāmi took his *Sarod* and began to sing affectionately devotional hymns. Adharānand Swāmi, a disciple of Muktānand Swāmi, was seated before him. Muktānand Swāmi's tears had no bound.

"Odhajiamneshyam re vinasukh nave re."

A touching eloquence permeated the atmosphere. Affectionate sounds emerged from the heart of Muktānand Swāmi to Shree Hari's ears. Suddenly, Shree Hari rose and

asked, “Who is calling me now?”

“Maharāj! Nobody is calling you,” Devjibhakt replied.

“What? Nobody is there? Listen, isn't someone singing?” Shree Hari asked.

“*Brahmānand* Swāmi may be singing,” Devjibhakt said.

Shree Hari rose from the bed and said, “Devjibhakt! Please go and confirm who is singing.” Devjibhakt went towards the residence of saints and listened. He said, “Surely, *Brahmānand* Swāmi is singing.”

“Let's make sure,” Shree Hari said on approach, and moved towards where Muktanand Swāmi was situated.

No one expected to experience such auspicious moments. Muktānand Swāmi was engrossed deeply in singing. He did not know about Shree Hari's arrival. Adharānand Swāmi stood up and arranged a cot and pillow for Shree Hari. Hearing of Shree Hari's arrival, all the other saints and devotees woke up. They seated around him. When Muktānand Swāmi opened his eyes, and saw the assembly. He was quite surprised, humbled and embarrassed. He immediately fell at the holy feet of Shree Hari and remarked, “Maharāj! Forgive me. I did not realize that you had arrived.”

Shree Hari embraced him and said, “Swāmi! Your mind was engaged in the form of God. Therefore, there is no reason to ask for forgiveness. Swāmi! I want you to carefully write the sermon I am going to deliver. In this way, it could be useful to all spiritual seekers in future.”

Then, Shree Hari sat on the cot. He was dressed in all white garments and saints and devotees were seated before him.

Shree Hari asked, “What is the most difficult *Sadhan* (spiritual endeavour) of all Sadhans?”

Then, Shree Hari replied, “To focus continuously one's mind on the form of God is the most difficult of all Sadhans.”

Thus, the first Vachanāmrit was written at this time.

The entire Vachanāmrit scripture was recorded and compiled by four prominent and elite saints: Muktānand Swāmi, Gopālānand Swāmi, Nityānand Swāmi and Shukānand Swāmi.

Little but Perfect

It is true that the ocean contains plenty of water. However, the salty water of the ocean cannot quench one's thirst, as one glass of sweet water can. Similarly, one cannot attain peace at heart from the devotion filled with an agitated mind or with the hope of worldly affairs.

There was a continuous flow of knowledge in the *Darbār* of Dādākhāchar in Gaḍhaḍā, as Lord Swāmināràyan unearthed the hidden essence of the scriptures in the assembly, which was comprised of lustrous saints and devout devotees.

There, the saints filled the atmosphere with thrilling *kirtans,* infused with deep thoughts of *Vedas* and *Upanishads.* Even the sun eagerly rose up in the sky to witness this divine congregation.

As the days of *Chaturmas* drew closer, saints and devotees took vows for *Vrats* and *Niyams* to please Shree Hari.

Many saints and devotees had vowed to do 100 *Malas* everyday. Some had vowed to do 200 *Malas*, as others vowed of doing 300, 400 or 500 *Malas*. Muktānand Swāmi also did so, with speech as charming as the feather of a peacock and like honey, whose sweetness remains the same from the first drop till the last.

Hearing this, the Lord himself said to Muktānand Swāmi, “Oh, Gurudev! During these very auspicious days, all saints and devotees are taking *Vrats* and *Niyams* of devotion. Will you not take any extra *Niyams* during these auspicious four months of monsoon?”

"My lord! I have vowed of doing 50 *Malas* every day," Muktānand Swāmi replied.

The whole assembly was surprised and thought, "How can a great saint like Muktānand Swāmi do only 50 *Malas* during these auspicious days?"

As to expose the secret, the omniscient Shree Hari acted like he was not familiar with the truth and asked, "Swāmi, I do not understand your motive behind only spinning 50 *Malas.* Please show us how you do each *Mala.*"

Hearing this, Muktānand Swāmi closed his eyes for a while and said, "O Lord! You know everything. While doing each *Mala,* my mind is completely focused on the form of God and while doing *Mala,* if any other thoughts appear in my mind, I would not take that *Mala* into account. I would start over."

Shree Hari was pleased with Muktānand Swāmi's response, and kindly instructed the saints, "O my dear sādhus! In fact, your attempts to please God are admirable, yet there needs to be perfection. Doing little but in a perfect way bears more fruits with less efforts. The moment one's mind is engaged on the form of God is the most fructified moment of performing devotion. Similarly, Muktānand Swāmi's 50 *Malas* are better than doing 500 *Malas* without having one's mind focused on the form of God. By only spinning rosary beads, the mind cannot be controlled but while chanting the name of God and focusing your mind on God's beautiful form, the mind is controlled."

Thus, the saints and devotees had realized, how great Muktānand Swāmi's devotion is towards God and thus learned the perfect way of doing *Malas.*

Thereafter, Shree Hari told Muktānand Swāmi to compose a *kirtan* showing the manner of doing 50 *Malas.*

Muktānand Swāmi was considered to be the foremost saint in poetry. He articulated the subtle meaning of the scriptures in a sincere and serene manner. *Bhajobhavshu Akhand Jaap Mala:* This Kirtan explains the method of doing 50 *Malas* the way Muktānand Swāmi did. It reflects Muktānand Swāmi's uncommon devotion towards God.

It is said that when Muktānand Swāmi explained this sequence of doing 50 *Malas,* Shree Hari put a mala (rosary) around Muktānand Swāmi's neck.

Importance of Sādhus

The profound Bhakti of Narsinh Mehta toward Shree Hari amazed all devotees. Since the time Shree Hari had arrived at Narsinh Mehta's home at Piplana in the form of Nilkanth Varṇi, he had been devotionally engaged in Shree Hari's service. He also served Rāmānand Swāmi with great devotion.

It was a time of famine and drought in the village of Kāriyāni where Shree Hari was staying at the *Darbār* of Deha Khāchar. There was an assembly of few devotees and senior saints seated before Shree Hari. Narsinh Mehta came to the assembly and prostrated before Shree Hari. He was very delighted with the darshan of Shree Hari. He put a bag filled with money at the feet of Shree Hari.

"Mehta! What have you brought?" Shree Hari asked

"Maharāj! I have brought 200 Rupees to prepare a fine lunch for you and santos." Narsinh Mehta replied

"Mehta! From this money, I would like to feed the lower-class people who do not have food to eat," Shree Hari said.

Narsinh Mehta was bewildered on listening such words of God. His aspirations to feed Shree Hari and saints were disturbed, replying "Maharāj! I have brought the money to feed you and santo, but not for lower class people."

Shree Hari shifted the bag of money and said, "Ok, then take your bag back, the saints do not need money for food nor do I."

It was an examination. Only adverse circumstances determine how much faith and love a devotee has for God. Narsinh Mehta could not depict the situation. He was

agitated and left with the bag of money in tow.

As this happened, kind hearted Muktānand Swāmi became upset. He thought, “Narsinh Mehta is a pure devotee. He has served Rāmānand Swāmi and if he will disregard Shree Hari in this way, he will not acquire happiness. And all the service he has done will be washed away.” Muktānand Swāmi then followed Narsinh Mehta.

Narsinh Mehta was sitting at the outskirts of the village with his hands on his head. He was lost in deep thought. Soon, Muktānand Swāmi arrived and said, “O Narsinh Mehta! I understand your love towards Maharaj and santo but just think over the words of Rāmānand Swāmi who had said frequently in the assembly, 'Nilkanth Varṇi is the supreme Lord, so never consider him to be a mere ordinary human being.' Mehta!” Muktānand Swāmi continued, “It's time for a test. Accusing Shree Hari due to the lack of understanding is a grave sin. It is our great fortune that we have a chance to become His servant and it is our first duty to do as our Lord wishes. Such master-servitude relationship between God and the devotee is eternal and everlasting. Even after leaving this material body of the five elements (earth, water, fire, air and space), Shree Hari is our master and we are His servants. Therefore, it is better to merge all our aspirations into His will.”

Such affectionate words influenced Narsinh Mehta's spirit. His surging thoughts calmed and he said, “Swāmi! Today you have blessed me. I could only realize my faults, until you showered your grace upon me. I promise to do as Shree Hari desires.” Saying this Narsinh Mehta went to Shree Hari with the bag of money.

“Why bring back this bag of money? With this, are you intending to feed the saints?” Shree Hari inquired.

“O all powerful Lord! You may use this money as you

like. I have surrendered everything to you." On hearing this, Shree Hari looked at Muktānand Swāmi.

Swāmi said, "Maharāj! You are the life of devotees who fulfills all their desires."

Shree Hari was pleased and placed his hands-on Mehta's head and said, "Mehta, the saints will prepare food to eat for two days with this money. Are you happy?"

On hearing this, Narsinh Mehta was overjoyed and thanked Muktānand Swāmi.

Dakornath's Instruction

Once, Ramchandra Vaidya was going to the village of Dakor. On the way he thought, "I should worship Dakornath by going for his darshan every month by foot. Yet, are my efforts enough to attain *Moksha* (liberation)?" He vowed that Dakornath did not answer his question promptly, he would end his life by committing suicide.

Thus, Ramchandra Vaidya arrived in Dakor. He prostrated before Dakornath, sat before the deity without eating or drinking anything. Three days had passed. Dakornath, the deity, took pity upon Ramchandra. Dakornath appeared in the form of a *Brāhmin* and said, "Ramchandra! If you really seek *Moksha*, go to Ahmedābād and take the shelter of Muktānand Swāmi, who is a great saint of Sahajānand Swāmi."

After hearing the strange voice Ramchandra, with surprise asked, "Who are you?"

"I am Dakornath (Lord of Dakor)," the *Brāhmin* replied.

"What is the proof that you are Dakornath?" Vaidya questioned.

The *Brāhmin* said, "Have faith in my words. The priests of the deity will be engaged with activities behind closed

doors tomorrow at noon. If you can see their actions, I will very soon merge into the idol of Dakornath."

After that, Ramchandra Vaidya saw the *Brāhmin* merging into the form of Dakornath just as a river submerges into the sea. On the following day, at noon Ramchandra Vaidya observed the priests engaged in sinful activities and requested the trustees to quickly remove the appointed priests.

Ramchandra Vaidya was now fully convinced the *Brāhmin* was Dakornath himself. He departed from Dakor and travelled to Ahmedābād. Upon arriving, he stayed at the home of Hemabhāi.

He asked Hemabhāi, "Is a sādhu named Muktānand Swāmi residing in this town?

"Yes, he is a great saint and everyday he comes here to beg alms," Hemabhāi replied. Hearing this, Vaidya decided to meet Muktānand Swāmi.

Soon, they both came to Muktānand Swāmi. Seeing Ramchandra Vaidya, Muktānand Swāmi stood up from his seat and put the garland which he was wearing around Ramchandra's neck and warmly welcomed him. Being honored by Muktānand Swāmi simply overwhelmed Vaidya, and added to his astonishment. Muktānand Swāmi said, "We are very fortunate to see such a great devotee to whom Lord Dakornath himself sent here." Immediately on hearing this, Ramchandra Vaidya bowed down at Muktānand Swāmi's feet and surrendered himself to Swāmi.

Muktānand Swāmi's entire life was centered on reforming the lives of others. His speech had a magnetic influence. Those who listen to him, rapidly progress on the path of spirituality.

Govindram of Methan

Once, Muktānand Swāmi was delivering a speech in the village of Methan. He started by giving sermons on celibacy. After listening to Muktānand Swāmi, and realizing the greatness of God manifested in human form, a youth from the village named Govindram, was inspired and desired to become a *Brahmchāri* (celibate).

However, he knew that his marriage was fixed with Amarbai, who was also a devotee of God. Yet, he still wanted to become a *Brahmchāri*.

The day of marriage arrived, and the ceremonies had already begun. Govindram came to know that Shree Hari and Muktānand Swāmi had arrived in his village. He remembered the words of Muktānand Swāmi and became impatient to meet Shree Hari. Yet the only way to meet Shree Hari was after all the marriage ceremonies had concluded.

Incidentally, Amarbai also came to know about the arrival of Shree Hari. She too became eager to see God on this auspicious occasion. When the ceremonies were completed, Govindram requested from his mother, “My dear mother! Presently, Shree Hari is staying at Pujabhāi's house in our village. I have heard from Muktānand Swāmi that He is God. May we go for his *darshan*, so that we would be blessed by the Supreme Lord?”

Before his mother could give them permission to go meet Shree Hari, they bowed down and departed for Pujabhāi's home.

Upon arriving there, they became satisfied by the *darshan* of Shree Hari and Muktānand Swāmi. Seeing the newly married couple, the saints in the assembly moved aside and Shree Hari called them forth. Both drew closer and in respect they touched God's feet and offered a coconut. Shree Hari being pleased with their devotion put his hands on their heads and said, “Doesn't this pair seem like that of a brother and sister?”

The entire assembly was startled on what Shree Hari had just spoken. Many thought, “Shree Hari does not know what to speak, as he has no knowledge about marriage since he had renounced home in childhood.” Many thought that Shree Hari was joking. However, the newly married couple understood the true meaning of the question and immediately turned their relationship into that of a brother and sister. Then straightaway, they firmly determined to observe the vows of celibacy. For their entire lives, they lived as brother and sister by mere words of Shree Hari.

During an assembly in Gaḍhaḍā, Shree Hari was in delightful mood. He was merrily playing with a nice rose. He sometimes smelled it and touched it to his eyes and sometimes lovingly pressed it to his chest. Witnessing this, Muktānand Swāmi anxiously asked, “Maharāj! There are many flowers you have taken but why are you showing so much love to this particular flower?”

Shree Hari replied, “Swāmi! It is scented by the fragrance of restrained life of Govindram and Amarbai. They did not even care for the harsh words of their relatives; only for the sake of my words. I had just told them sportingly that

they appear to be brother and sister. They decided to fulfill my words and are performing celibacy even today. I have observed many people performing great celibacy, but I have never seen anyone performing perfect celibacy while living together."

Muktānand Swāmi bowed down and said, "O Lord! Anything is possible by your grace." Shree Hari said, "Swāmi! The credit goes to you. You have been traveling from village to village, to explain the glory of God."

My Speech is Not a Miracle

In Ahmedābād, a Shastri (Scholar *Brāhmin*) came to Muktānand Swāmi. He frankly asked, "Swāmi! I explain the meaning of the scriptures in the same manner as you do. Then, why do people express that they are attaining liberation when you are explaining them the scriptures, but not when I am explaining?"

"Shastri! Let me explain it to you." Muktānand Swāmi continued, "Your heart is full of materialistic contaminations. Therefore, the words which come out from your heart are like roasted grains which can never be grown but can only be consumed. So, your words do not affect people. However, when we converse, we first see the form of God in our hearts and next to the listeners. As a result, our words touch their hearts. It is the only difference between the way we explain scriptures. It is not a miracle but it only happens by the grace of the Supreme Lord."

Shastri was very satisfied with the answer, and he said, folding his hands, "Swāmi! You are my spiritual master as you have clearly showed me my mistakes."

Householder or Renunciant

Once, after Muktānand Swāmi had finished taking a bath, Pujabhāi of Sārangpur rushed to wash Muktānand Swāmi's wet clothes. Muktānand Swāmi stopped him and asked, “Are you a householder or renunciant?”

Pujabhāi replied, “Swāmi! I am householder.”

Muktānand Swāmi said, “Only a renunciant can wash clothes for a saint.” Pujabhāi was most inclined to serve Muktānand Swāmi, and therefore decided to give up the household life and became a renunciant to serve Muktānand Swāmi.

Amba Sheth of Gaḍhaḍi

Gaḍhaḍi is a village situated approximately 10 kilometers from Gaḍhaḍā. An affectionate devotee named Amba Sheth lived in that village. Amba Sheth was a very rich merchant. He had immense enthusiasm for the service of Shree Hari and His saints. Amba Sheth would never miss out on offering only the best things to Shree Hari. He would bring milk, butter, ghee, sweets and the finest fruits according to the seasons for Shree Hari, saints and devotees. Also, he would never hesitate to spend money for *Satsangis.*

Shree Hari praised his love for the saints and devotees many times in Satsang assembly.

During the auspicious four months of monsoon (Chaturmas), Amba Sheth took a *Niyam* of offering a fresh datan (teeth cleaning twig) to Shree Hari every day. He was such a caring devotee that despite having many servants, he would cut the datan himself, and dip it into fragrant water the entire night. Then, early in the morning, before Shree Hari woke up, while remembering the Shree Hari he would reach Gaḍhaḍā. Upon reaching Gaḍhaḍā, he would perform

dandvats to Shree Hari, and offer the datan to Mulji Brahmchāri, and return back home.

Only after doing this dedicated service, Amba Sheth would engage in other activities.

Shree Hari was very pleased upon him for his true devotion.

Once in the morning, Adiba, sister of Jinabhāi, was sweeping the courtyard of Dādākhāchar's *Darbār* in Gaḍhaḍā. Shree Hari came there and placed his right hand on the shoulder of Adiba to reassure her union with God in *Akshardham.* Adiba felt fulfilled with the mere touch of Shree Hari's hand. Just then, Amba Sheth, as per his *Niyam*, came there to offer a *datan* to Shree Hari, but upon seeing Shree Hari's hand on Adiba he became frantic. Suddenly, all his love towards Shree Hari disappeared. His mind began to have malicious thoughts. He thought, "This so-called God is also influenced by *Maya* (illusion). All the services that I had done with pure faith and devotion are proved to be worth nothing. That whom I believed God, is just an ordinary human, and attracted to women." He threw the *datan* and returned home, and broke his *Kanthi* (necklace), which Shree Hari put around his neck.

As few days passed, Shree Hari noticed that Amba Sheth had stopped coming for *darshan*.

Shree Hari called Muktānand Swāmi and said, "Swāmi! Amba Sheth used to come early morning every day to offer me a *datan*. I have not seen him for the past six days. It seems like he has lost his faith in Satsang. Would you please go to Gaḍhaḍi and convince him?"

Muktānand Swāmi said, "Maharāj! I will do as you command." Then, Muktānand Swāmi came to Gaḍhaḍi at the home of Amba Sheth. As soon as Amba Sheth heard the

news that Muktānand Swāmi has come, he stood up and welcomed him.

From a quick glance, Muktānand Swāmi had recognized that the roots of ignorance had been spread deep in the heart of Amba Sheth. Muktānand Swāmi asked, “Amba Sheth! How are you? You have not come to Gaḍhaḍā for Shree Hari's *darshan* for some time now. What has happened?”

Amba Sheth had affection for Muktānand Swāmi, so he disclosed the anguish in his heart. Muktānand Swāmi quietly listened, and then he explained, “Amba Sheth! Shree Hari is the Supreme Lord, the most powerful of all mystic yogis, the creator of everything. He is the personification of supreme knowledge. He can appear anywhere according to His desire in any desired form. Presently, for our liberation He is appearing in the form of Sahajānand Swāmi, who is the root of all creation and the supreme soul of all living entities. God manifested on this Earth to fulfill the desires of his devotees.”

As Muktānand Swāmi was explaining, the roots of ignorance began to wash away. He continued, “Due to our gross ignorance, if we fail to realize the truth, we will encounter a great disadvantage with this human body. He is like the volcanic fire that remains in the ocean but it is not extinguished by the water. The fire coverts the salty water of the ocean into sweet water. No worldly actions can bind him; and in relation He purifies the actions into transcendental memories. By engaging our mind in His sweet memories and actions, the grave sins of our past lives are vanished.”

Amba Sheth listened with rapt attention. Muktānand Swāmi said, “Our Lord is so merciful that He only accepts our services but not our offences. He has appeared on this Earth

for the sole purpose to reduce the burden of impurity."

"Maya is the power of God that has embedded every soul in the universe with its long-stretched aspects of *satva* (peace), *raj* (passion) and *tam* (ignorance). When God accepts these qualities of Maya, it becomes transcendental and by remembering His divine memories with love, one attains *Moksha (salvation)*. Therefore, four *Vedas,* great sages, *yogis* and even the great demigods sing praises of His memories."

Muktānand Swāmi continued, "Even Shukdevji Maharāj who was an ascetic, describes the loving memories of Lord Krishna and Gopis. However, Parikshit raised doubts about those loving memories of Krishna. By finding faults in God's actions you will join in the rank of those who are said to be degraded from the path of God. All actions of God are divine and whoever remembers them, will attain his divine abode, '*Akshardham*'.

The glorifying words of Muktānand Swāmi not only pacified Amba Sheth's misgivings toward Shree Hari but also doubled his love for God. Amba Sheth realized his mistake. He fell at the feet of Muktānand Swāmi and asked for forgiveness. Then Muktānand Swāmi said, "Amba Sheth! Shree Hari is very kind. He does not possess even the slightest aversion for you. If you will humbly pray to him, he will surely be pleased upon you."

Amba Sheth's eyes filled with tears in repentance. Muktānand Swāmi turned his hand over Amba Sheth's head. Amba Sheth fell at Muktānand Swāmi's feet and said, "Swāmi! Today you have saved me from a great danger. I had decided not to even look in the direction of Gaḍhaḍā. But today, you have revealed the glory of almighty Lord and improved my salvation."

Immediately, Muktānand Swāmi said, “Let's go to Gaḍhaḍā. Shree Hari is waiting for you.”

Amba Sheth came to Shree Hari. Upon seeing Amba Sheth, Shree Hari said, “Sheth! It seems like you have received a new life.”

Amba Sheth said, “Yes, Maharāj! Muktānand Swāmi has given me a new birth in the satsang.” Amba Sheth became emotional. His heart was burning in the thoughts of repentance of the sin of perceiving faults in Shree Hari. Then, Amba Sheth asked Shree Hari for His forgiveness. Shree Hari was pleased upon him placed both of his hands on Amba Sheth's head.

Once again, Amba Sheth joined the satsang with true understanding of God and never doubted any actions of Shree Hari.

Not Fit to be My Son

Once, Sundarji Suthar was going to the marriage ceremony of the king's son. As he passed by the village, where Shree Hari was staying, he wished to have His *darshan* on the way to the king's palace. He came to Shree Hari who asked him, “Who are you?”

“I am your servant, Maharāj,” Sundarji replied.

“What are the characteristics of servant?” Shree Hari inquired.

“To follow his master's commandments is the prime characteristic of a servant.” Sundarji answered.

“Then, it is my command for you to become a saint immediately,” Shree Hari said.

Sundarji Suthar was ready. He shaved his head, beard and put on saffron cloths and became a sādhu. He was not worried about the public redicule he would have to face

because he has firm faith in the commands of Shree Hari. Then, Shree Hari ordered him to go to Kashi for further studies.

Soon, Shree Hari asked Muktānand Swāmi, “Swāmi! Have I made the right decision? What is your opinion on making Sundarji Suthar a saint?”

Muktānand Swāmi said, “Maharāj! Our saints have to undergo a barrage of insults wherever they would travel. Sundarji's house was the only place we had a strong foundation in all of Bhuj, but now he has become a saint, so we have no scope to spread Satsang in Bhuj.”

“Swāmi! After analyzing your thoughts, I have realized that I had made a wrong move. So Swāmi! How should I fix my mistake?” Shree Hari asked.

Muktānand Swāmi said, “Maharāj! The only way to fix this, would be to call Sundarji back, and command him to return into a householder.

Shree Hari immediately sent a *parshad* to bring back Sundarji from *Kashi*. Upon coming back from *Kashi,* Sundarji developed a little pride for his renunciation and staunch faith. He had placed himself above other saints. As a result, he had developed ego.

To remove his ego, Shree Hari wrote a letter to some faithful devotees mentioning their names. Among them, some were the kings of many provinces, some were businessmen and some were *Kshatriyas*. In the letter, Shree Hari wrote, “As soon as you receive this letter, leave everything behind and go to Jetalpur. Upon arriving there, I command all of you to become sādhus, and go to Kashi for pilgrimage immediately.”

As the devotees read the letter written by Shree Hari, they immediately left worldly affairs, shaved their heads, and

went to Jetalpur. There they were initiated as sādhus by Ramdas Swāmi, and proceeded towards Kashi for pilgrimage.

In the letter, Shree Hari had also written the name of Mamaiya Patgar. He also went Jetalpur with other devotees to be initiated as a saint but doe to affection for his mother, he came back. Then, Raiba, his mother who was also a very staunch devotee of Shree Hari, asked Mamaiya, “Did you get Shree Hari's permission prior to returning?”

“No, mother.” Replied Mamaiya with his head looking down in shame.

Knowing that the affection that he possessed was harmful, she requested Hathiya Patgar, her younger son to bring a sword and escort him out of the village.

Immediately, Hathiya Patgar and Raiba led Mamaiya to the outskirts of the village. Mamaiya ran out of the village and from behind, Raiba yelled, “One must not disobey the command of the God. To follow His commands is the true test of character.”

Other nearby satsangis were surprised on seeing her faith and wisdom. After this incident, Mamaiya lived in a nearby village named Turkha. As for disobeying the command of Shree Hari, Mamaiya labored to earn money for six months but as Shree Hari received the news of Mamaiya being in such condition, He commanded Muktānand Swāmi to go to Kundal and convince Raiba to allow Mamaiya to stay with her.

As per Shree Hari's command, Muktānand Swāmi arrived in Kundal. Hathiya Patgar warmly welcomed him. Thereafter, Muktānand Swāmi started to explain a graceful manner. He lived there for eight days. Finally, he convinced Raiba to bring back Mamaiya.

Muktānand Swāmi was a revered saint. He planted the roots of Lord Swāminārāyan's supremacy throughout numerous villages. Listed below are major cities in which Muktānand Swāmi sow the seeds of supreme knowledge.

Satsang in Surat

Once Muktānand Swāmi came to Surat with the group of sādhus. Initially, there was not a single devotee who could provide food or shelter for them. As a result, the sādhus had to reside in a forest and go for begging alms in the village. Every day, they passed by the shop of Bhalchandra Sheth, who was a well-known merchant in the whole city. Sheth had a natural dislike for all religions. One day, Sheth did not receive any customers at his shop. On that evening, Muktānand Swāmi with his sādhus were passing by. Their faces were luminous with constant remembrance of God. Bhalchandra Sheth saw the sādhus. He became infuriated, and threw a bundle of spinach at Muktānand Swāmi's face. On the other hand, being an ocean of compassion, Swāmi portrayed the true qualities of saintliness by tolerating his insult. He took the bundle of spinach and departed.

At night, the sādhus prepared food from that spinach and offered it to God. After having prasad, Muktānand Swāmi asked the sādhus to pray to God for Bhalchandra Sheth's well-being. As the saints started praying, on the other side Sheth felt regretful for his evil act upon the innocent sādhus. He decided to ask for their forgiveness.

Next day, as usual the sādhus were passing by Sheth's

shop, he was extremely pleased to see them. Immediately, he rushed towards them, fell to the ground and prostrated. He said to Muktānand Swāmi, “Swāmi! Please, forgive me for my absurd behavior. I am very much impressed with your humility as well as your saintliness. I am ashamed of what I had done. Please, forgive me.”

Muktānand Swāmi softly smiled at him and said, “Sheth! We were not pained by your anger even a bit, instead we prayed to God for your welfare.” Hearing this, Bhalchandra Sheth was greatly impressed. Then, he inquired about their food and residence and Muktānand Swāmi revealed the matter.

After listening to Muktānand Swāmi, Bhalchandra Sheth facilitated the saints with nice food and managed a place where the saints could reside. Subsequently, Sheth brought his family members to Muktānand Swāmi. With Swāmi's impressive and unfailing discourses, all turned to staunch followers of Lord Swāmināràyan. After few days, Muktānand Swāmi departed from Surat.

Liberating Ghosts in Surat

There was a merchant who had an exquisite mansion. Once, after the marriage ceremony of the merchant's son, his family and relatives were returning from Bhavnagar in a ship. On the way, they faced violent storms and heavy rains. As a result, their ship capsized and sank. Everyone on that ship died and had become ghosts. All the ghosts lived in the exquisite mansion of the merchant. Consequently, they started harassing other people around the mansion. As the time passed by, their harassment increased. Due to their fear and annoyance, people emptied their homes and went elsewhere.

The British Government came to know about the problem. They declared that whoever will solve this problem, will be gifted the mansion and other property. Bhalchandra Sheth heard this declaration made by the British Government. He thought if Muktānand Swāmi was here, he would surely be able to make the place free of ghosts.

Eventually, Muktānand Swāmi came to Surat. Sheth informed him about the mansion. Muktānand Swāmi obtained the key of the mansion and entered with other sādhus and *Thakorji*. In the evening, as the sādhus finished *arti-dhun,* horrible sounds of screaming and shouting began to come. After a while, a ghost appeared asked Muktānand Swāmi, “Who are you and what are you doing here?” Muktānand Swāmi recognized him. Without saying a word, He sprinkled sanctified water throughout the whole mansion. The ghosts realized that Muktānand Swāmi was not an ordinary person. They appeared before Muktānand Swāmi. They could not see Swāmi due to the divine light radiating from his body.

They pleaded to make them free from the miserable life of a ghosts. Muktānand Swāmi took pity upon them. While chanting the name, 'Swāminārāyan' he sprinkled the water once again. At that moment, all ghosts became liberated and left the mansion forever.

As Bhalchandra Sheth came to know about this, he informed the British government. The government also confirmed this fact by marching into the mansion at night. They were astonished by this miracle. Finally, the mansion and other surrounding property were given to Lord Swāminārāyan. Soon after the mansion was demolished and a temple of Lord Swāminārāyan was constructed in that very location. The location of the temple is Rampara, Surat. After this incident, many people had joined the satsang fellowship.

Ardesharji Kotwal

Ardesharji Kotwal a friend of Bhalchandra Sheth was an administrator of the state. Once, unexpectedly he was accused of stealing money from the government. He was released from his post and was sentenced to death if he could not prove himself to be innocent within 2 weeks.

Ardesharji informed Bhalchandra Sheth about the incident. Sheth asked him to become the follower of Lord Swāminārāyan. Ardesharji said, “If I were to be absolved by the government, I will become a follower of Lord Swāminārāyan.”

That night, Ardesharji had a dream, in which Lord Swāminārāyan appeared. His face was magnificently shining with divine radiance. He was dressed in silken clothes and had adorned valuable jewelry. Ardesharji recognized Lord Swāminārāyan as he was described by Bhalchandra Sheth. When he bowed, Lord Swāminārāyan came close and applied a *chandlo* on his forehead and said, “Tomorrow, you will be set free from all the accusations.”

Soon after, Lord Swāminārāyan disappeared. In the morning Ardesharji was very confused. He felt the dream was true when he saw a *chandlo* on his forehead, which is a sign of auspiciousness. On the same day, some officers came to his home and honorably acquitted him. They acknowledged him for being excused, and apologized for the trouble. Thereafter, Ardesharji who was previously adherent follower of the *parsee* religion, became a firm devotee of Lord Swāminārāyan.

Satsang in Bhuj

Although, Muktānand Swāmi was well learned from childhood, Rāmānand Swāmi ordered him to go to Bhuj and study *Sanskrit* there. Muktānand Swāmi was interested in

the study of God realization but to fulfill his Guru's desire, he left for Bhuj with Devānand Swāmi.

Muktānand Swāmi and Devānand Swāmi were stationed at a *Dharmashala* (the monastery facilitated with school and hostel) in Bhuj and began their studies there. Due to the constant flow of people coming to visit them, they could not maintain concentration in their studies. Finally, they decided to change their residence.

Therefore, they talked to the mother of Sundarji Sheth, a merchant via some local devotees. She was a devotee of God. She informed Sundarji, “Two saints have come from Loj for studies. While, in the *Dharmashala* they are being disturbed due to the frequent visitors. So, please arrange for an isolated room for them to study in.” Soon after, Hirjibhāi, the brother of Sundarji remarked, “Mother! There have been many ascetics who have come and gone, but none of them were trustworthy. They are all just fake *bawas* using the name of a saint. What will make these saints any different from the other phony saints.”

At that time, Muktānand Swāmi and Devānand Swāmi came for begging alms. The divine luster of devotion and celibacy were illumination their body. On witnessing such radiance Hirjibhāi had a sudden change of heart. He reverently welcomed Muktānand Swāmi and offered him a seat on a decorated cot in his home. Sundarji folded his hands said, “Swāmi! We knew that you are receiving disturbances while studying at the *Dharmashala*. We intend to help you as much as we can. There is a room in front of our house, but....” Sundarji then trailed off.

Muktānand Swāmi immediately realized the matter at hand and asked, “Does the room possess ghosts? If so, we will turn into a pious place of living, don't worry.” With these words of Muktānand Swāmi, both the brothers were

surprised. They revealed the fact of that room, “Besides the room there is a banyan tree nearby where many ghosts dwell. No one dares to go near the tree after sundown.”

“Sundarji! If that is the case, we would like to stay there,” Muktanand Swāmi answered. Sundarji had witnessed spiritual prowess of Muktānand Swāmi by changing their thoughts. Afterwards, the brothers helped the santo move in.

In the evening, the saints came to live there. At night, the saints went to sleep, and after some time, a group of ghosts arrived making ferocious sounds. With such activity, the saints woke up but they were not afraid.

The ghosts, realizing the opportunity of being free from the miserable life of a ghost, requested Muktānand Swāmi to liberate them. Muktānand Swāmi sprinkled water on them directly sending them to the realm of *Badrikāshram*.

The following day, Sundarji and Hirjibhāi came to see Muktānand Swāmi. Muktānand Swāmi revealed the incident that had happened at night. Soon after, Sundarji called his relatives and made them all *satsangis.* They all rejoiced on hearing the news. With this miracle, people became fearless. As Muktānand Swāmi explained the glory of God, the villagers were also inspired. Thereby, this was the first time Muktānand Swāmi spread such *Satsang* in Bhuj.

"It is impossible to fathom the divine foresight, power and work of Muktānand Swāmi. However, from the tangible effects of his work, one can learn about the transcendental glory of God."

After being convinced with the words of Rāmānand Swāmi that Sahajānand Swāmi is the supreme Lord of Lords, Muktānand Swāmi had always administered his life in the commands of Sahajānand Swāmi.

Once, Shree Hari said to Muktānand Swāmi, "Swāmi! It's a month of Ashadh. Your health is not remaining well. Please stay in Gaḍhapur until your health improves. I wrote a letter to each saint, requesting them to follow the five vows of the saints in a strict manner. Swāmi! I am requesting you to make a book regulating those five vows. Please name it the *Ved Rahasya*."

As Shree Hari requested, Muktānand Swāmi wrote the book. Muktānand Swāmi spoke and Siddhānand Swāmi wrote the book.

According to Vachanāmrit 58th of Gaḍhaḍā second chapter, Shree Hari said to Muktānand Swāmi, "I command you to write about the glory of God and the Scriptures related to the sect as long as you live." From that day on wards, Muktānand Swāmi's maintained a mission to write as many books relating to the glory of God and commandments of the sect as possible.

Secondly, his most remarkable text includes the collections in the *Vachanāmrit,* the words of Lord Swāminārāyan, which to this day, motivates thousands of aspirants to achieve God-realization.

Unfortunately, many of his literature is still unknown/unpublished. The texts which have been found and published are mentioned below.

(Sanskrit Language)

- Brahmsutrabhāshya - Elaborately describing the form of *Brahm* and *Parabrahm*.
- SatsangiJivan Mahātmya - Satsangijivan is an authentic scripture written by Satānand Swāmi. The glory of this scripture has been revealed by Muktānand Swāmi in this *shāstra*.
- Nirṇaypanchak – a description of decisions made for rites and rituals. It also explains the five eternal entities: *Jiva, Ishwar, Māyā, Brahm and Parabrahm.*
- Hanumantkavach Mantra & Hanumanstrotar Sat Nam - Summary of one hundred and eight names of the deity, Hanumānji.

(Hindi Language)

- Satsang Siromani - It is the dialogue between Shree Hari and Muktānand Swāmi.
- Mukundbāvni - Facts about God. The name of this scripture is given by the name of Muktānand Swāmi's childhood name.
- Vāsudevāvtār Charitra -Translation of 7th chapter of 2nd canto of the *Shrimad Bhāgwat*. The discourses between Brahma and Nāradji are ciated in this *shāstra*.
- Avdhutgitam - Translation of 7th, 8th and 9th chapters, of the 11th canto, of the *Shrimad Bhāgwat*.
- Guruchoviśi - Describes the way to be inspired by 24 preceptors accepted by Dattātrey.
- Nārāyan Charitra - The divine pastimes of Shree

Narayanmuni (Shree Hari) have been composed in various *Rāg*s within this text.

- Nārāyan Kavach - A hindi translation of 8th chapter of 6th canto of the *Shrimad Bhāgwat*.
- Vaikunthdhām Darshan - By seeing the ability of Krishna, the *Gopis* requested Krishna to show His abode to them; then Krishnā showed them his divine abode, Golok. This incident is taken from 10th canto of the *Srimad Bhāgwat*.
- Bhagvad Gitā Bhāshya - Summary of the *Bhagvad gitā.*

(Gujarāti Language)

- Kapilgitā - The discourses between Kapilmuni and His mother Devhuti. Kapilmuni gives transcendental knowledge of God to her. It is taken from 3rd canto of Bhāgwat and translated into Gujarāti *kāvya*.
- Sati Gitā - Here, Shivji tells Pārvati the principle codes of conduct for a chaste woman.
- Krishna Prasad - Dwārkādhish (Lord Krishna) appeared before Sachidānand Swāmi and desired to go with him to Vartāl. People would experience God in each village that Sachidānand Swāmi passed by. This incident is referred in this scripture.
- Dhāmvarnan Chāturi - A beautiful narration of God's abode.
- Gunvibhāg - It enlightens the three root causes of the material existence, *satva* (peace), *raj* (passion), and *tam* (anger, sleep).
- Nārāyan Gitā - Shree Hari speaks to His followers the glory of God, along with *dharma, Gnān, vairāgya* and *bhakti.*
- Rukmanivivāh - With the commandment of Shree Hari, Muktānand Swāmi made a composition to be sung at a marriage to avoid the customary singing of the obscene songs in marriages for followers.

Apart from this, Muktānand Swāmi has made thousands of Kirtan compositions which elaborate the devotion of highest orders. According to 19th Vachnāmrit of the Gaḍhaḍā second chapter, Shree Hari had a dream where he visited Golokdhām. There, He witnessed countless attendants of God who were singing devotional songs originally composed by Muktānand Swāmi.

Even today, Muktānand Swāmi's compositions are being sung by devotees the Swāminārāyan sect across of the world.



The First Debate in Vadodarā

Due to the spread of the Swāminārāyan sect throughout the lands of India many owl-like people developed animosity. The Diwān (the chief of the royal kingdom) of Vadodarā had developed jealousy towards the movement. He wanted to uproot the name 'Swāminārāyan' from all his followers.

Diwān Bābā Sāheb, with the help of scholars and fake ascetics, incited Ānandrām Giakwād, the king of Vadodarā against Lord Swāminārāyan. The king had passed a declaration stating not to allow the saints of Lord Swāminārāyan into his kingdom.

After hearing this declaration, Shree Hari called a grand assembly of saints and devotees in which He proclaimed, “Dear saints! It is the strict command of Ānandrām Giakwād not to travel in any part of his kingdom (villages under the rule of the kingdom) but it is my wish that our principles should be proclaimed throughout each and every village. Therefore, go to each village and enhance the values of Vedic scriptures and its doctrines.”

With Shree Hari's command, Gopālānand Swāmi came to Vadodarā and stayed at the home of Nāthbhakt. Gopālānand Swāmi was an able saint. He attracted many people through his divine personality. As a result, Diwān Bābā Sāheb and his son Vitthalrāo were agitated. Soon after, Bābā Sāheb died, and Gangādhar Shāstri was appointed as Diwān. Very soon, he died as well. Then, Vitthalrāo took position of Diwān in the court of Ānandrām Giakwād. Vitthalrāo had the same aversion for Lord Swāminārāyan as his father.

Soon after, Ānandrām Giakwād passed away, and Sayājirāo Giakwād became the new king. Since, Sayājirāo Giakwād took kingship at such a young age, all administrations rights were directed by Diwān Vitthalrāo.

Vitthalrāo encountered a fake Pandit, Hariharyāchārya, who was a Vedāntāchārya (a scholar). Formerly, Hariharyāchārya had come to Vadtāl to oppose Lord Swāminārāyan but had failed. Nevertheless, he told Vitthalrāo that he had defeated Lord Swāminārāyan. Hariharyāchārya was ready to carry out a scriptural debate with the condition that if deemed victorious, he would be appointed as the chief officer of the kingdom. He made a promise that if he took position he would never allow any followers of Lord Swāminārāyan to enter the Kingdom. Vitthalrāo was greatly delighted with his vigorous ideas.

By providing false evidence, Vitthalrāo convinced the king to arrange a scriptural debate with any disciple of Lord Swāminārāyan. An inviation letter for the scriptural debate was sent. Prabhudās Patel, a devotee who lived in Vadodarā, came to Vadtāl with the letter. Shree Hari read the letter and ordered Muktānand Swāmi to go to Vadodarā and carry out the debate.

Upon Shree Hari's command, Muktānand Swāmi came to Vadodarā to participate in the scriptural debate against Hariharyāchārya. The debate was arranged by Sayājirāo Giakwād. All the arrangements for the debate were made in the king's royal mandir near Mandavi. Two seats were arranged facing each other, for the two competitors. Another two cushions were placed for the two judges, Chimanrāo Shāstri and Bhāv Purāni. Muktānand Swāmi came with saints & devotees to the venue. Hariharyāchārya also arrived with pomp, supported by the evil Vitthalrāo Diwān. Accompanying him were some Bāwās, who were

barred from entering the assembly at the king's word. Within a few minutes, the assembly hall became packed with many pandits, citizens and royal officers.

Muktānand Swāmi prostrated to the deity in the royal mandir. Then, he prayed to Shree Hari before taking his seat. The assembly was impressed by the glow of penance and Brahmcharya on Muktānand Swāmi's face. His saintliness and devotion touched the audience. Hariharyāchārya however, came to the assembly straightaway climbed on his seat. His face showed signs of vanity. The two judges, Chimanrāo Shāstri and Bhāv Purāni took their seats as well.

Muktānand Swāmi suggested that the debate should begin by singing a prayer. After a short prayer by Swāmi, the debate commenced at 9:00 am. Muktānand Swāmi looked at Hariharyāchārya. The Pandit recognized Muktānand Swāmi, and quivered with fear, thinking that Swāmi would expose his defeat in Vadtāl. Muktānand Swāmi then decided to reveal the facts about the Pandit's defeat. Muktānand Swāmi asked Hariharyāchārya, “You came to Vadtāl to dispute with Bhagwān Swāminārāyan. He had asked you to interpret the 12 great Shloks (verses) of the Vedas. Do you remember the occasion? Can you explain the meaning of those verses?”

Hariharyāchārya was still unfamiliar with the Shloks. Upon facing the same question, he became nervous. Vitthalrāo Diwān and the other pandits saw the blank and defeated face of Hariharyāchārya. The audience realized that he was a fraud. A wave of protests surged through the assembly of the pandits. Before anybody could react, Muktānand Swāmi urged, “Āchārya, speak the truth. We are in a royal mandir and in the divine presence of the deities. Tell the assembly what had happened in Vadtāl.” The two judges also forced Hariharyāchārya to speak about the incident that took place in Vadtāl.

Finally, the crestfallen Hariharyāchārya confessed, “Bhagwān Swāminārāyan is great. To make me feel at ease, despite my defeat, Bhagwān Swāminārāyan respected me due to my caste as a Brāhmin and my status as an Āchārya, and in result gifted me 200 rupees. I had propagated false rumors about him due to my embarrassing defeat, and from being guided in the wrong direction by others.” On hearing this, Vitthalrāo Diwān turned red with rage and hissed, “you are a liar and deceiver! You played a trick upon me!”

Instantly, Bhāv Purāni stopped him, “Diwān Sāheb, this is an assembly of revered personality. It is not right for you to utter such words. Though you are a Diwān, we are the judges, you'll have to speak with respect in accordance with the rules.”

Diwān Sāheb left the assembly. Chimanrāo Shāstri the judge said to the Pandit, “Now, do you have any questions? Then you may ask.” Hariharyāchārya was already deflated due to his exposed hypocrisy and false vanity. He bowed down and remained silent.

Finally, Chimanrāo proclaimed, “Today, this Vedāntāchārya is defeated, and accusations raised for Lord Swāminārāyan have been proven false, and Sadguru Muktānand Swāmi is victorious in this debate.”

With this proclamation, the whole assembly grew in delight and rewarded with shouts of approval by clapping. After the victory of Muktānand Swāmi, the king sent a rose garland and dishes of golden coins to honor him. Muktānand Swāmi had devotees distributed the gold coins to the underprivileged.

After obtaining permission from the king, Muktānand Swāmi left Vadodarā came to Gaḍhapur. Shree Hari welcomed and praised him in the assembly.

Muktānand Swāmi was a distinguished scholar. He did not utilize his intellect or status to impress the people. He rendered his intellect to describe Lord Swāminārāyan's supreme authority. In addition, he spent his entire life spreading the glory of Lord Swāminārāyan.

The war between good and evil has been waging for ages. The good qualities are always winning because it is under the protection of God and evil individualities are always defeated since it is a gloomy and unsheltered aspect of darkness and has no support from God. Like the golden rays of the rising sun, the glory of Lord Swāminārāyan was extending day by day in rural communities by methods of celebrating festivals, discourses and excessive travel to various regions by dedicated saints.

Vitthalrāo Diwān was furious. He decided to prove that in this age of Kalyug, God has never manifested and the Swāminārāyan movement is not in accordance with the Vedas. So, he passed summons to the scholars of Jāmnagar, Kāshi and Vadodarā to reorganize another scriptural debate.

The insult of Vitthalrāo in the assembly had fueled the fire to develop even more hatred towards Lord Swāminārāyan. He congregated the learned Brāhmins from regional parts, planning to displace the name of Swāminārāyan from his kingdom. He laid the proposal of debate to the king.

The king Sayājirāo Giakwād was noble and he knew the truth. He had innate dislike for those who opposed saints in his kingdom. Yet, due to some specific reasons, he remained silent and agreed to have another scriptural

debate. He wrote a letter to Sahajānand Swāmi. The letter stated the following:

Shree Sahajānand Swāmi,

Jay Nārāyan, I would like to inform you that the learned Brāhmins of the royal community of Vadodarā wanted to debate about the establishment regarding your holiness (Swāminārāyan) and how it concerns with Vedic civilization. Therefore, it is my humble request for you to send a scholarly saint as your representative to participate in the debate.

- Sayājirāo Giakwād

In the early morning of Kartak Sud 12, 1881 (Wednesday, 3 November 1824), Nārupantnānā, an intimate executive officer, arrived to Vadtāl with the letter. The installation ceremony for the revered idol of Harikrushana Maharaj & Laxminarayan Dev were taking place in Vadtāl at the moment. Massive crowds of devotees from various regions had gathered to witness this grand event. Nārupantnānā placed the letter next to the lotus feet of Shree Hari. Shree Hari asked Shukmuni to read the letter. On listening to the invitation from the king, Shree Hari glanced throughout the assembly and looked for a saint who would be perfectly suitable for the scriptural debate. There were many saints who were superior in scriptural knowledge. Shree Hari asked, “Who would like to participate in this debate?” Soon, Muktānand Swāmi spoke, “Maharāj! You may command anyone to participate in the debate.” Shree Hari looked throughout the assembly again, and at the end chose, Muktānand Swāmi. Shree Hari specified, “Swāmi! Head to Vadodarā and reveal the supremacy of God in the debate.”

Muktānand Swāmi pleaded with folded hands, “Maharāj! I do not have much knowledge of scriptures. How will I be able to answer their complex questions?

“Swāmi! I am very aware that Nityānand Swāmi could

go and conquer those Brāhmins easily but I intend to show them that apart from Nityānand Swāmi, we have many saints who are also capable of answering questions in scriptural debates."

"But Mahārāj!" Before Muktānand Swāmi could continue, Shree Hari said, "Swāmi! Don't worry. I am always with you."

"Mahārāj! I will do as you command." Then Muktānand Swāmi prepared for to go to Vadodarā.

Shree Hari said to Nārupantnānā, "Please tell the king that the debate will take place on the day of Maha Sud 3.

Then, Nārupantnānā reached Vadodarā and informed the king. The king ordered Diwān to announce Maha Sud 3, 1881 (Saturday, 22 January 1825) as the day of the scriptural debate.

Muktānand Swāmi in Vadodarā

Upon Shree Hari's command, Muktānand Swāmi prepared to leave for Vadodarā with a group of saints. Shree Hari called Bhaguji and told him to prepare the best oxen to take the cart of Muktānand Swāmi to Vadodarā, ensuring he reaches his destination safe and sound with haste. Shree Hari removed the flower garland he was wearing and placed it around Muktānand Swāmi. He applied a chandlo on his forehead and blessed him.

After receiving the blessings of Lord Swāminārāyan, Muktānand Swāmi departed for Vadodarā. He arrived in Vadodarā on Posh Vad 11, 1881 (Saturday, 15 January 1825). Knowing the arrival of Muktānand Swāmi, the prince Ganpatrāo came to welcome him into the city with a decorated Sigrām (a comfortable covered cart drawn by two bullocks). The Sigrām was accompanied by officers and numerous soldiers. Muktānand Swāmi requested the

officers to take the splendor back. He had no interest in enjoying the joys of the world. But, upon the humble request of Nāthbhakt, Muktānand Swāmi sat on the Sigrām and proceeded to while singing devotional songs. Thousands of people came to see Muktānand Swāmi. By observing the tranquil and unmatched personality of Muktānand Swāmi, people were sure that he would triumph.

Swāmi was stationed at Nāthbhakta's home. The next day, a chief officer came to visit Muktānand Swāmi. He bestowed honors and proposed the location of the debate will take place at Vitthalnāthji's temple between 9:00am to 12:00am. Muktānand Swāmi said replied, “Nothing can be done by man, God is the all doer. I will be there.” The officer left with surprise thinking to himself that he has never heard such kinds of words from any human being before.

The prodigious day had arrived. It was the day of Mahā Sud 3. Muktānand Swāmi woke up early in the morning. He completed morning puja and prayed to Shree Hari, “Oh Lord! You are the all doer. I do not want to win or lose; I just wish to carry out your command.”

On the other side, the temple of Vitthalnāthji was overflowing with the public. The whole city was cleaned and decorated with flags and ribbons. Homes were also decorated with beautiful flowers.

The assembly hall was prepared for the debate. A seat for Muktānand Swāmi was placed higher in elevation than all others. Behind his seat, other saints who has accompanied Swāmi took their position. A seat for the competitor was placed in the front of Muktānand Swāmi's seat. Next to those seats, there were spaces for respectable officers and chief guests. The finest arrangements were made for even the spectators. The king's seat was placed exactly in front of the assembly hall in temple. Around the assembly hall, soldiers

and other administrators were placed for protection. Nārupantnānā had made fine seating arrangements with respect, reverence and courtesy.

It was the first time in history that such kinds of preparations were made for a scriptural debate. People from nearby cities & villages also joined in witnessing the imposing occasion. It was a strict order by the king to keep the entrance closed until 8:00 AM.

Soon the gates for the assembly hall were opened. Despite having well-managed seating arrangements, the hall overflowed with people.

On the other side, prince Ganpatrāo, Shāstri Dhaneshwar and other officers approached Muktānand Swāmi with a decorated Sigrām. Muktānand Swāmi remembered Shree Hari and mentally performed His pujan with Kumkum, Sandalwood paste and flowers. Then he took a seat in the Sigrām. The prince, saints and other devotees followed the Sigrām while singing devotional songs. On the way, hundreds of people were standing to greet and honor Muktānand Swāmi. Muktānand Swāmi's remained calm, tranquil and unaffected by the grandeur. His lotus-like eyes were closed and meditating upon the Supreme Lord. He prayed to God, “O Maharāj! I am only a servant of your lotus feet. Today, in the debate, the great scholars will ask me questions of different scriptures, but I do not know anything. The only thing I know is that I have pure and unconditional faith in you. Therefore, O Gods of Gods, Controller of countless cosmos, please be graceful upon your mere servant.” As Muktānand Swāmi prayed, he saw Shree Hari midst people. Shree Hari came towards Muktānand Swāmi and said, “Swāmi! You are not alone. I will always be with you.” Hearing these words from Shree Hari, a sense of confidence sparked Muktānand Swāmi.

Beginning of The Debate

The Brāhmins who were going to face Swāmi had already taken their seats. Muktānand Swāmi came to the assembly hall. He first bowed down to Vitthalnāthji (the idol of God). Afterwards, Muktānand Swāmi took his seat. The opponents were dazzled with the lustrous and affectionate sight of Muktānand Swāmi. Their doubts vanished by the mere darshan of Pujya Swāmi.

Bhāv Purāni explained the rules and regulations of the debate to the participants, "One should ask questions one by one, but not all at once, and under the limits of the scriptures." Then, he said, "Let the debate begin." A sound of rhythmic clapping began to grow in motion.

Thereafter, Bhāv Purāni told the Brāhmins to ask questions. There was pin-drop silence in the assembly hall. The Brāhmins were confused on what to ask Muktānand Swāmi. Their rage and wicked thoughts had subsided and they all became pacified with the divine glow of Muktānand Swāmi. Bhāv Purāni had already requested the Brāhmins to ask a question to Muktānand Swāmi numerous times. Then, after a long wait, a Pandit (scholar) asked spiritedly, "What are the means for Moksha (salvation)?"

Muktānand Swāmi said, "O great scholar! You have very well learned the scriptures such as: Vedas, Purān and Bhāgwat etc. So, according to you, what is the ultimate way of salvation? And what leads one to salvation?"

A Pandit by the name of Harischandra, replied, "In this age of Kalyug, chanting the name of God is the only way of salvation."

"It is true that chanting the name of God can liberate one, but along with this, one must recognize the manifest form of God to attain ultimate liberation," remarked Muktānand Swāmi.

Nārupantnānā objected, “Swāmi! Your statement is out of the context of the scriptures. There are many examples of those who have been liberated by chanting the name of God but your Sampradāy (sect) does not run in accordance with the Veda, because there are no verses in the scriptures that talk about requiring the manifest form of God to attain salvation. It is stated in the Bhāgwat:

“अजामिलो महापापी, नामोच्चारणमात्रतः ।
नारायणस्य सम्प्राप, मुक्तिं त्वमपि वेत्सि तत् ।।”

Ajāmil, was a mountain of sins, and had attained liberation by only chanting the name of God. Then how can you say that there is a need for recognizing the manifest form of God?”

With this objection, the debate had taken a serious tone. Other scholars were happy that the Brāhmin had refuted Muktānand Swāmi with evidence of the Bhāgwat. Muktānand Swāmi smiled as if he was not fazed by the Brāhmin's argument. Swāmi said, “Panditji! It seems that you have not completely learned the Bhāgwat.”

“How so?” the Brāhmin questioned.

Muktānand Swāmi replied, “See, it is true that Ajāmil was rescued from the unbearable consequences of hell. No doubt that he was released from the clutches of Yamdutas (death god) by chanting the name of God, but he could not attain the abode of God. After that he performed penance on the bank of river Gangā. A verse from the Bhāgwat states:

“नामोच्चारणमाहात्म्यं, हरेः पश्यत पुत्रकाः ।
अजामिलोऽपि येनैव, मृत्युपाशादमुच्यत ।। ”

Ajāmil attained salvation after pleasing God and by performing austerities at the bank of river Gangā.” After listening to the answer, Bhāv Purāni got up and played a gong (saucer-shaped bell) and stated that Muktānand Swāmi's answer was correct. With this, the public rewarded him by

clapping and hailed "Swāminārāyan Bhagwān Ni Jay" (Victory to Swāminārāyan Bhagwān).

The Brāhmins were ashamed. Soon, Harischandra asked again, "Swāmi! As you stated, only chanting the name of God is not sole means to attain Moksha; then what is the meaning of this verse?

"कलौ युगे न प्रत्यक्षो, हरिः स्यादिति यद्वचः ।।"

Swāmi! According to your answer, Moksha is not possible in Kalyug, because God will never manifest in Kalyug. Therefore, the best way to attain salvation is by chanting the name of God." Brāhmins hopes elevated again.

Swāmi said, "Panditji! Is there a single place in any scripture which says, God will never manifest on Earth in Kalyug? Instead, in the Bhāgwat Geeta, Shree Krishnā said,

"यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य, ग्लानिर्भवति भारत ।
अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य तदाऽऽत्मानं सृजाम्यहम् ।।"४.७।।

When there is decay of dharma(righteousness) and rise of adharma (unrighteousness), then I (the Lord) take birth in this world. However, it is stated that God appears in human form in all Yugas. The famous Purān, Markendeypurān, and Shrimad Bhāgwat also reflect on this standpoint. And Bhagwān Buddha had incarnated in Kalyug and Bhagwān Kalki will also appear on the Earth in Kalyug."

Harischandra was confused. Swāmi continued, "Lord Krishnā who is considered to be the greatest incarnation of God, had appeared in beginning of Kalyug, correct? And nine Yogeshwars had spoken to Janakrājā taking an account of the appearance of God in Kalyug.

"कृतादिषु प्रजा राजन्, कलाविच्छन्ति सम्भवम् ।
कलौ खलु भविष्यन्ति, नारायणपरायणाः ।।"

The meaning of this verse is, "O Rājan! The people of Satyug wanted to take birth in Kalyug, so they would attain Moksha, due to the association of the manifest form of God."

Thus, your belief about God, not incarnating in Kalyug is incorrect."

Suddenly Bhāv Purāni rose and proclaimed, "Swāmi's answer is correct." Harischandra folded his hands and said, "Swāmi! I am convinced by your answers and I surrender myself to Lord Swāminārāyan."

Observing this, the whole assembly applauded with the shouts, "Victory to Lord Swāminārāyan!"

This amazed the other Brāhmins. Then, among the others, Rāmchandra Vaidya stood up. "Do you believe that God appears in Kalyug?" Rāmchandra Vaidya asked.

"Yes, Vaidyarāj! I am truly convinced today that, I have attained God with the same greatness and grandeur as described in the scriptures, replied Muktānand Swāmi"

"Swāmi! Then you are called a Gurubhakt (devoted to one's spiritual master), since there are many people who worship their Guru as God, it is not incorrect, but if you want to share discourses by scriptures then..." Vaidya replied but was cut short.

"Vaidyarāj!" Muktānand Swāmi interrupted, "Please tell me, out of all my statements, which one is not according to the scriptures."

Rāmchandra was lost in deep thought and contemplated on how to answer. At last he said, "No, Swāmi! You haven't said any statements which go against the scriptures. It is my fault, I apologize for my ignorance. But Swāmi, I was asking that "**त्रियुगाय ते नमः।**", I bow down to Triyugi Nārāyan. It means 'God appears in three Yugas: Satyug, Tretayug and Dwaparyug.' If God assumes human form in Kalyug, then why is God called Triyugi?" Muktānand Swāmi said, "Your interpretation of the word 'Triyugi' is misleading."

"युग शब्दो युग्मवाची, भगशब्दाभिधानी तु ।
त्रीणि तान्यस्य सन्तीति, त्रियुगो भगवान् मतः ॥"

In Amarkosh (the book containing all Sanskrit words with its meaning) the word Yug means 'couple'. I bow down to God, who endures the three couples, namely, the forces of his abilities, (1) Utpatti-Sthiti (creation and sustenance), (2) Gati-Āgati (Knower of strategy of the advent and departure of souls) and, (3) Moksha-Bandhan (Liberation and Bondage). The other meaning is that "**कृते यद्ध्यायतो विष्णुं**" Those who meditate on God in Satyug, they continuously see the form of God, thus there is no need to appear on the earth during that period. That is why God is called 'Triyugi'.

However, there are four Yugas prevalent in the world in series of time, and thereby the same Yugas are prevalent in the heart. Thus, when the heart is covered by the darkness of Kalyug, God may not be seen in those moments. Therefore, God is still called 'Triyugi'. This is the meaning of 'Triyugi' word.

Rāmchandra realized his mistake and said, "Swāmi! I misunderstood the word 'Triyugi' but by your grace I have understood its true meaning in result all my doubts are cleared. Thus, I also seek refuge of Lord Swāminārāyan, please make me your disciple."

Once again, the people rewarded Muktānand Swāmi by clapping and shouting "Sahajānand Swāmi Maharāj Ni Jay" (Victory to Sahajānand Swāmi).

As the winning streak for Muktānand Swāmi continued, Vitthalrāo Diwān became embarrassed.

Sayājirāo the king of Vadodarā was observing the debate carefully due to his interest in seeking true knowledge. He knew that the triumph of Muktānand Swāmi would create trouble amongst some people. Thus, he called an army officer and ordered him to keep a close eye on the public.

Meanwhile, Bhāv Purāni announced to continue the debate but now who could speak? Two great scholars were defeated. Bhāv Purāni said, "O Brāhmins! It is your turn to ask."

A Pandit from Kashi thought, "Let me clear my doubts." He got up and questioned, "How can one attain Moksha (liberation)?"

Muktānand Swāmi assuredly replied, "To attain Moksha, one should engage in devotion with the company of great saints. In result God will become pleased upon him. Therefore, In the 12th chapter of the 11th Skandha of Srimad Bhāgwat, Shree Krishnā spoke to Uddhav,

"न रोधयति मां योगो, न साख्यं धर्म एव च ।
न स्वाध्यायः तपस्त्यागो नेष्टापूर्तं न दक्षिणा ॥
व्रतानि यज्ञाश्छन्दांसि तीर्थानि नियमाः यमाः ।
यथावरुन्धे सत्संगः, सर्वसंगापहो हि माम् ॥"

It means, "I am not as pleased by ashtāng-yoga, sānkhya, renunciation, observances, sacrifices, austerities, donations, pilgrimages, etc., as I am pleased by satsang."

The Pandit was satisfied with the answer and humbly said, "Swāmi! It seems that you are the incarnation of Rudra (Shivji)."

"No Panditji! I am not the incarnation of Rudra," replied Swāmi. "There are thousands of capable saints Lord Swāminārāyan possesses in his movement. Compared to them I am a very insignificant servant."

Regarding such humility, the Pandit of Kashi was amazed and fell at the feet of Muktānand Swāmi and requested to make him a disciple of Lord Swāminārāyan.

After listening to Muktānand Swāmi's answer, people applauded and hailed "Victory to Lord Swāminārāyan."

Questions from Shobhārām Shāstri

With the defeat of one more Brāhmin, the others looked down in distress. At once Bhāv Purāni commented to them, "Oh great scholars! You had been preparing for this debate for a long time and you insisted to arrange the scriptural debate with any saint of Lord Swāminārāyan. Then, why are you all silent today? Please ask questions." The statements made by the judge were unbearable for the Brāhmins. But who could speak?

Now the whole assembly looked towards the most prevalent scholar in Vadodarā, Shobhārām Shāstri. He had a heavy body, with a small head and a pot-belly. He had defeated many scholars of Kashi in scriptural debates. He had a very good record. He was considered by many to be an ocean of knowledge.

He said, "Swāmi! Generally, there are only ten incarnations of God that are renowned and furthermore, twenty-four incarnations in total. You consider your Guru as God but there is no account of Sahajānand Swāmi in the names of those either ten or twenty-four incarnations of God. Thus, with what evidence have you accepted Swāminārāyan as God?"

"Panditji! You are like the crown of Vadodarā," Muktānand Swāmi replied and continued, "And you are the chief amongst all present scholars and still you speak as if you are a youth. Those ignorant people believe only in the twenty-four incarnations. Shāstriji! Haven't you studied the Shrimad Bhāgwat? Hence, I request you to show me any verse from any scriptures which elucidate that there are only ten or twenty-four incarnations of God."

Shobhārām Shāstri was sweating. He fervently attempted to find evidence but was successful.

Muktānand Swāmi continued, "Shāstriji! In the Bhagwad Gita, it is said:

"बहुनि मे व्यतीतानि, जन्मानि तव चार्जुन ।
तान्यहं वेद सर्वाणि, न त्वं वेत्थ परंतप ।।"

Meaning, "Oh Arjun! You and I have taken births many times. I remember all of them, but you do not."

The first canto of Bhāgwat describes; as thousands of rivers spring from a huge lake, similarly there can be countless incarnations of God. It also explains that one may count each particle of dust and each star in the sky but God's forms are countless. Shobhārām Shāstri! Please tell me how did you count the ten and twenty-four incarnations of God?"

Shobhārām Shāstri was put into disorder.

Seeing this, the other Brāhmins lost hope of success. Shobhārām Shāstri wanted this topic to be put aside so he said, "Swāmi! Let's converse on another subject."

"No, before starting a new topic, you must accept that there are innumerable incarnations of God on this earth." Bhāv Purāni also agreed with Muktānand Swāmi and said, "Shāstriji! Either accept the side of Muktānand Swāmi or provide scriptural evidence."

Shobhārām Shāstri said, "I am convinced with Muktānand Swāmi's statements. I now believe that there are innumerable incarnations of God."

Immediately, the crowd cheered and shouted, "Victory to Sahajānand Swāmi!"

Shobhārām Shāstri then said, "Swāmi! Now, let us discuss the hymns of the Vedas. The ultimate means of Moksha has been described in Vedas, thus...

"तमेव विदित्वा अति मृत्युमेति ।
नान्यः पन्थाः विद्यते अयनाय ।।"

The only way to attain liberation is the knowledge of God. Therefore, there is no need of manifest form of God. It is in accordance with the Vedas."

Muktānand Swāmi replied, “Shāstriji! Despite being a great scholar, it seems like the roots of ignorance have been planted deep in your heart. You mean that only knowledge is enough to achieve Moksha, and not the manifest form of God? Then, I would ask a question to the assembly, if someone speaks Sākar-Sākar(sugar) continuously for several years, would he ever enjoy the taste of sugar?”

“No, it's not possible,” Shobhārām replied.

“In a dreadful dark night, can an illustration of the sun give light to a home?” Muktānand Swāmi asked?

“Not at all, Swāmiji!” Bhāv Purāni said.

“Similarly, with the belief that God is omnipresent and dwells in each and every particle of dust, one cannot attain Moksha until he does not seek refuge of the manifest form of God.”

Shobhārām Shāstri bowed down, by listening to the unflinching statement of Muktānand Swāmi and said, “You are right Swāmiji. I am convinced that without the manifest form of God, Moksha is unattainable.”

Then, Bhāv Purāni acclaimed Muktānand Swāmi by playing the gong and said, “Correct answer.”

The people once again shouted, “Swāminārāyan Bhagwān ni Jay!” (Victory to Lord Swāminārāyan).

Shobhārām Shāstri continued, “Swāmi! Please would you narrate any hymn or verse of the scriptures that pronounce about the manifestation of Lord Swāminārāyan?”

Muktānand Swāmi answered, “Shāstriji! In the Vāsudev Mahātmya, Skand Purān, Vishnukānd, it is pointed out:

“धर्मदेवात्तदा मूर्तौ, नारायणात्मना ।
प्रवृतेऽपि कलौ ब्रह्मन्, भूत्वाहं सामगो द्विजः ।।”

I will appear as a Samvedi Brāhmin in the form of Nar Nārāyan through Dharmadev and Bhaktidevi.

"मुनिशापान्नृतां प्राप्तं सर्षि जनकमात्मनः ।
ततोऽविता गुरुभ्योऽहं सद्धर्मं स्थापयन्नजः ।।"

And I will liberate the rishis from the curse of Durvasā and reestablish Bhāgwat Dharma.

"दत्तात्रेयो कृतयुगे, त्रेतायां रघुनन्दनः ।
द्वापरे वासुदेवश्च, कलौ स्वामी वृषात्मजः ।।"

I will descend to the Earth in Satyug in the form of Dattatrey, in Tretayug in the form of Rāmchandra, in Dwaparyug in the form of Shree Krishnā, the son of Vāsudev and in Kalyug as son of Dharmdev.

Muktānand Swāmi continued, "Shobhārām Shāstri! In Vishwakshen Sahitā, it is evidently explained:

"भूम्यां कृतावतारोऽहम् सर्वान्नेतान् जनानहम् ।
प्रभविष्यामि वैकुंठम् सहजानन्दनामतः ।।"

I will protect all life forms and I will appear in Kalyug by the name of Sahajānand Swāmi."

Swāmi added, "It is also declared in Padma Purān:

"पाखंडबहुले लोके, स्वामिनाम्ना हरिः स्वयं ।
पापपङ्कनिमग्नं तत्, जगदुद्धारयिष्यति ।।"

When this earth will be overburdened by the sinful activities, the almighty Lord will incarnate himself as, Swāminārāyan."

"Shobhārām Shāstri! According to these indications of the scriptures, God is manifest in present time by the name of Swāminārāyan."

After giving satisfactory answers to Shobhārām Shāstri's questions, Shobhārām Shāstri folded his hands and said, "Swāmi! Today, I am very fortunate that I came into your contact, and could understand the true meanings of the scriptures. You have granted me a divine vision. From this point on, I surrender my life to the holy feet of Lord Swāminārāyan. Thus, please make me your disciple."

Muktānand Swāmi, the ocean of compassion, kindly made him a follower of Lord Swāminārāyan. Witnessing this special moment, the two judges and the whole crowd kept on clapping, and shouted, “Swāminārāyan Bhagwān ni Jay!” (Victory to Lord Swāminārāyan).

The Unique Trick of Answering 100 Hundred Questions

With continuous victory over three great scholars, the other Brāhmins thought Muktānand Swāmi couldn't be defeated in scriptural debates. Thus, the only way to conquer him would be to ask him multiple questions at once.

As per their planning, one scholar asked, “Lord Ram killed Ravan, the great demon, for that reason he is called God. Thus, which demon has Lord Swāminārāyan killed, that would prove he is God?

Another question was asked, “Lord Krishnā has killed Kans, as a result he is God.”

A third question was asked, “Lord Krishnā lifted Govardhan on his pinky finger, therefore he is considered to be God.”

A fourth scholar stood up and said, “Vaman Bhagwān showed Virāt Swarup (gigantic form), including the whole cosmos to King Bali. Therefore, he is considered to be God.” In the end, a total of one hundred questions were asked to Muktānand Swāmi by numerous scholars.

Upon listening to the questions, Muktānand Swāmi was not phased at all. With a stable and patient mind, he started replying to their questions one by one. Muktānand Swāmi pointed at the Pandit who asked the first question and said, “If God was determined from the ability of killing demons, then Laxmanji would also be proven as God because he killed Megnad, who bounded Lord Ram, with Nagpash (snake-arrows).”

Muktānand Swāmi pointed towards the second Brāhmin, “Your question is like the previous question, and it

seems like you are trying to measure the sky with a ruler. When Jarāsandh attacked Mathurā, Krishnā and Balrām both ran away from the battle and later Jarasāsndh was killed by Bhim. That would prove that Bhim should be worshiped as God, and that he is greater than Krishnā and Balrām."

Muktānand Swāmi replied to the third Pandit, "Hiranyāksha, the elder brother of Hiranyakashipu took the Earth, and numerous mountains like Govardhan to the bottom of the ocean and slept on them considering them as a pillow; will you call him God as well?"

Muktānand Swāmi pointed at the fourth Brāhmin and said, "Vāman Bhagwān showed a Virāt form. Similarly, when Putna (a demon woman) died, her body expanded up to twelve kilometers' diameter. Would you worship her as a goddess?"

Muktānand Swāmi answered the fifth Pandit's questions by saying, "If you believe God who can take many forms, then you have to consider Rāvan (the demon) as a God. During the battle with Lord Ram, Rāvan appeared in many forms but we do not consider Rāvan as God's incarnation."

Muktānand Swāmi gave the answer of the sixth Brāhmin by saying, "You stated that one who is born through parents is not called God. Consequently, only Matsya, Katch, Varāh, Nrishih and Mohini are called God. Then listen, there is no rule for the appearance of God. He is independent. He can appear in both ways, either by taking birth through parents or without parents. And if you claim that only those who appeared without parents to be God then Agastya muni was born through a pot. Therefore, he was named Kumbhak Rishi. Similarly, children of Drupad, Dhrishtadyumna and Draupadi were born out of a Yagna. Would you consider them as God's and Goddess's?"

Muktānand Swāmi looked at the seventh Pandit and replied, "If you consider Krishnā as Lord, he because drank

milk from two mothers, Yashoda and Devki, and Ram as Lord Ram because he drank milk from three mothers; then, there is no doubt that Lord Swāmināràyan is a supreme God because he has drunk milk of thirteen mothers; Bhaktidevi, and twelve other wives of Dharmadev. Then, how could Lord Swāmināràyan not be considered God?"

Muktānand Swāmi gave 100 answers to 100 questions in the same order that they were asked with little ease.

Seeing such a unique intellectual power of replying questions simultaneously, the spectators were astonished. All the Brāhmins fell to the feet of Muktānand Swāmi and said, "You are really a great saint and Lord Swāmināràyan is the Supreme Lord of Lords. We are fully convinced by your answers. Swāmi please, be kind upon us and initiate us as followers in the Swāmināràyan sect."

The whole the assembly raised their hands, applauded Muktānand Swāmi and shouted:

'Swāmināràyan Bhagwān Ni Jay'
- Victory to Lord Swāmināràyan
'Sahajānand Swāmi Maharāj Ni Jay'
- Victory to Sahajānand Swāmi

History includes the time and episodes which declare the victory of God. Moreover, saints are very beloved to God. Why? Because, it is through the sādhu that one can understand God and have the divine glimpse of his beautiful form.

Sayājirāo Giakwād the king of the city of Vadodarā became excessively pleased by the saints of Lord Swāminārāyan after the unrivaled victory in the scriptural debate Muktānand Swāmi. On the other side, Diwān Vitthalrāo had no choice but to accept his shameful defeat and grieve. The atmosphere was filled with admiration for Muktānand Swāmi.

As the king, honored Muktānand Swāmi with a rose garland, the rhythmic sound of clapping filled the sky. Then, the king and his son, Ganpatrāo, perfomed the pujan of Muktānand Swāmi with kumkum, sandalwood paste and flowers as a revelation of joy. Sweets were distributed in the city Vadodarā for the victorious act in the name of Lord Swāminārāyan.

The king said to Muktānand Swāmi, “Swāmi! You have proved to everyone that Lord Swāminārāyan is the Supreme Lord with the evidence from authentic scriptures, and that your sect is based on the Vedic principles. The learned Brāhmins will always remember you for your divine persona and charm. Therefore, Swāmi! I am very pleased. Please, ask for anything you desire.”

Muktānand Swāmi smiled and said, “You have stopped providing food to the innocent people of the city who were against Lord Swāminārāyan. I do not wish for anyone to suffer in the name of Lord Swāminārāyan, therefore I request you to provide them food.”

Muktānand Swāmi's kindness mesmerized Sayājirāo. He said, “Swāmi! You are really a great saint. Your request is accepted. Swāmi! It is my desire to invite Lord Swāminārāyan to my royal palace.”

Sayājirāo was greatly inspired. He arranged for a grand procession in honor of Muktānand Swāmi's victory. The auspicious sounds of Shehnais (a musical instrument) and drums filled the atmosphere. The city of Vadodarā took on a festive ambience. Thousands of people came to celebrate the unique event.

The soldiers brought a caparisoned elephant for Muktānand Swāmi to sit on for the procession. The king requested Muktānand Swāmi to sit on the elephant but Muktānand Swāmi humbly refused. However, with the request of prince Ganpatrāo, Nārupantnānā and Nāthbhakt, Muktānand Swāmi took a seat on the golden chair arranged on the elephant. The procession commenced with drum sounds made by the orchestra. It comprised of a colourful array of sādhus, men, women and children. The sound of music, spiritual hymns electrified the atmosphere with excitement. The city local's curiosity lured them in the procession making the event even more majestic. Vadodarā had never seen such a grand procession. It mirrored the profound devotion of Muktānand Swāmi towards Shree Hari.

The whole city ardently waited for the darshan of Muktānand Swāmi in the streets of Vadodarā. The mere presence of the king's soldiers was not enough to retain discipline to control the large concourse that had poured out into the streets.

As the procession appeared; people showered flowers on Muktānand Swāmi. During the procession Muktānand Swāmi had closed his eyes. He was meditating upon the celestial form of Shree Hari. He had no interest in the fame he was receiving from the public.

The procession carried throughout the city and finally arrived back at the royal palace. The elephant stood on its knees as Muktānand Swāmi dismounted. Sayājirāo Giakwād was waiting with a garland in his hands. He placed the garland on Muktānand Swāmi and bowed down with great humility. The royal priest worshiped Muktānand Swāmi with various articles.

Sayājirāo wrote a letter to Shree Hari, “In the debate, Muktānand Swāmi has defeated all the Brāhmins, and we had arranged a grand procession for Muktānand Swāmi's victory.” Nāthbhakt and Juhuji took the letter to Gaḍhapur.

Upon receiving the news of Muktānand Swāmi's victory, Shree Hari became filled with joy. He embraced Nāthbhakt and Juhuji twice and asked, “When did you leave Vadodarā?”

“Two days ago, Maharaj,” Nāthbhakt replied.

“Then you must be tired,” Shree Hari commented.

Shree Hari told Dādākhāchar to prepare food for both the devotees who brought the good news.

Next day in the assembly Shree Hari talked about the Muktānand Swāmi victory. All the saints and devotees became very happy upon hearing the joyous news.

Thereupon, Nāthbhakt came to Shree Hari and asked for permission to go back to Vadodarā. Shree Hari delightedly embraced both the devotees and imprinted two hundred pairs of His divine lotus feet on pieces of cloth. The devotees had no bounds. They were very elated to see Maharaj bestow his appiness upon them.

On the other side, Muktānand Swāmi became very eager to meet Shree Hari. Three months had already passed, yet for Muktānand Swāmi it seemed like three decades. After his long stay devotees bid farewell, to Muktānand Swāmi. Swāmi left the city of Vadodarā, leaving behind the divine fragrance of saintliness.

The Consequence of Jealousy and Love

A little jealousy creates a gigantic form of distress and chaos. Love is the only cure.

There was a grand assembly comprising of saints, devotees, Brahmchāris and female devotees. Shukmuni, Brahmmuni, Nityānandmuni praised Muktānand Swāmi with a shower of extolling words. Shree Hari placed a rose garland around Muktānand Swāmi's neck and proclaimed, “Today, Muktānand Swāmi has established the principles of our sect. The scholars who were present there were astonished by the eloquence of Muktānand Swāmi.”

Muktānand Swāmi felt embarrassed due to the bombardment of extolling words for his victory in Vadodarā.

On the other side, due countless praise being showered upon Muktānand Swāmi, jealousy a raised in the heart of Nirvikalpānand Swāmi. Nirvikalpānand Swāmi was very educated in the language of Sanskrit. He could interrupt verses from the scriptures with great ease. He felt that his ego was crushed by Shree Hari. He was enraged. His eyes turned red and his body began to tremble due to anger. He spoke out in the fire of vanity saying, “What's the big deal for winning the debate. If I were there in the place of Muktānand Swāmi, I would have easily won the debate as well.”

Nirvikalpānand Swāmi harsh words spoiled the divine environment. Everyone became curious as to why he had spoken such harsh words. The saints and devotees became disappointed by witnessing such outrage from a senior sādhu.

Being proud of his knowledge, Nirvikalpānand left the assembly. Shree Hari was grieved by his scorching words.

Shree Hari remarked, “How can someone retain wrath for such great saint, especially whom I consider as my Guru?” Shree Hari started to cry. Soon after, he left the assembly.

Muktānand Swāmi became disheartened, upon Shree Hari's reaction. He felt that Nirvikalpānand Swāmi would surely leave Satsang fellowship. He thought, “It is not proper for someone to leave the satsang fellowship due to my success.” In result, he went to Nirvikalpānand Swāmi with a garland which Shree Hari had honored him with in the assembly and said, “Swāmi! If I knew that you wanted to participate in the debate, I would have convinced Shree Hari to send you. Please accept this garland, you also deserve it. After all, our satsang fellowship has flourished. Our Lords name has thrived through the lands.”

Nirvikalpānand Swāmi vanity did not subside. He uttered, “Swāmi! I am also well-versed and well educated. I do not hold anything against you, but Swāmi! Maharāj has completely ignored me. That's the reason why I am disturbed!”

“Swāmi! He is God, master of all and he is independent. Only His will should be our happiness. And whatever He does will always bring happiness to us.” Such compassionate and loving words of Muktānand Swāmi proved to be worthless to calm the wrath of Nirvikalpānand Swāmi.

Shree Hari was deeply hurt by the jealousy of Nirvikalpānand Swāmi. During the assembly in the evening, Shree Hari expressed remorse, “Envy is a prime enemy which does not allow one to settle down in this holy fellowship. If a saint thinks negatively about others, he will soon fall from the path of salvation. I do not want to reside in a community where there isn't respect for seniors. My incarnation on this Earth will prove to be worthless if such envious natures exist

among great saints."

Shree Hari words made everyone gloomy. At last Shree Hari commented, "Tomorrow we will go to Gaḍhapur." Everyone began to shed tears.

The next day, Shree Hari travelled to Gaḍhapur with saints and devotees. The atmosphere felt different. In the past, when Shree Hari came to Gaḍhapur, he would be thrilled with joy seeing the love of Dādākhāchar, Jivubā and Lādubā. But, this time even the trees of the village experienced distress. Consequently, Shree Hari's sorrow grew as the day's past.

Saint and devotees tried to cheer up Shree Hari but failed to do so. The female devotees requested Shree Hari to forgive Nirvikalpānand. Shree Hari stood up, and said, "I have firmly decided to leave this satsang fellowship and go to the forest. Hearing such shocking comments, saints and devotees became even more saddened. Hearing such appalling news, Motiba, a senior female devotee, sent a message to Shree Hari. The message stated that if he wanted to leave the Satsang fellowship, he must get permission from everyone in the fellowship. Shree Hari liked the proposal made by Motiba. Thus, he decided to celebrate a grand festival of Annakut at Ādrej and to seek permission from everyone during the celebration.

Soon after, Shree Hari arrived at Ādrej with a group of saints and devotees. He didn't smile, speak or even look at anyone. Saints offered Shree Hari various food items, but he rejected everything. He was moodless during the throughout the celebration.

Observing this, Muktānand Swāmi felt as if the satsang was just attacked by a rain of fire. At midnight, of Diwali on Asho Vad 15 of Samvat 1881, (Friday, 24 October 1824), Muktānand Swāmi thought while sitting at the porch

of Ratukhat's home, “I do not understand what Shree Hari wants. Everyone in satsang looks at me as a mother figure. Nonetheless, Shree Hari will leave satsang due to another saint insulting me?”

Muktānand Swāmi experienced great grief. His eyes were full of tears. A faint sound was heard from his heart, “You are a very able saint. Remember your humbleness and saintliness had stopped Nilkanth Varṇi from his journey throughout India and had anchored him in the village of Loj. And today you can't stop Shree Hari from leaving this Satsang? At that very moment, Swāmi took a pen and paper and composed the kirtan:

“Hari haiyānā hār cho, jire tame hari haiyā nā hār cho...”

The next morning, on the day of New Year's, a grand assembly was held for the festival of Annakut. Shree Hari revealed his desire to leave the fellowship.

Everyone's heart became nervous. Then, Muktānand Swāmi sang the kirtan he had composed the previous night. Thousands of saints and devotees cried from the thought of being separated from Shree Hari. Muktānand Swāmi sobbed while singing.

As soon as Muktānand Swāmi completed the last line of the kirtan, Shree Hari got up from his decorated cot, grabbed the Sarod from Swāmi's hands and embraced him with loving tears in his eyes uttering, “Swāmi! observing your pure love for me, I promise to stay in the satsang fellowship forever. Swāmi! Please forgive me for my stubbornness.”

Everyone felt a spark in their hearts. A wave of joy ran through the whole assembly. Shree Hari made Muktānand Swāmi sit his decorated cot. Afterwards, Shree Hari said,” Swāmi! You are my Guru.”

Listening to the words of Shree Hari, Muktānand Swāmi felt embarrassed, and said, “Mahārāj! You are God and I

am an insignificant servant of this satsang. I am not worthy of this honor."

"Swāmi! All of your virtues lie in your nature of servitude and I want to reveal your greatness to all," Shree Hari added.

After a while, Shree Hari called Brahmānand Swāmi, Nityānand Swāmi, Paramchaitanyānand Swāmi and said, "On this auspicious day, I appoint these four saints as Sadgurus. So, all of you should obey their commands and give them respect when they come to your villages. You should admire them by realizing their greatness.

Finally, after this event Shree Hari performed the Ārti.

Shree Hari Builds Six Temples

"By Lord Swāmināràyan's luminous personality, His propagation, endearing sermons and mercy, countless people embraced single-minded devotion with moral conduct. To continue the same flow, Muktānand Swāmi instilled three points: (1) To construct temples and install idols (2) To establish Āchāryas (3) To make new scriptures.

Once, Shree Hari became sad due to some reason while he was in the village Panchala. He stopped speaking with the saints or devotees. He was completely detached for all worldly activities. The devotees feared that Shree Hari might be thinking about leaving this World.

Seeing Shree Hari's sadness, devotees also became poignant. In such condition, Muktānand Swāmi took pity upon the devotees and went to where Shree Hari was sleeping. When Muktānand Swāmi touched Shree Hari's hands, his temperature was very high due to a severe flu. His body was shaking. Seeing this, Muktānand Swāmi had tears in his eyes. A tear drop fell on Shree Hari's cheek. Shree Hari was startled. He woke and looked at Muktānand Swāmi and asked, "Swāmi! Why are you crying?"

While wiping his tears Muktānand Swāmi said, "Maharāj! By observing your severe illness, who would not become sad? You are the support for us. So, it breaks our hearts to see you in such a critical condition."

Upon listening to Swāmi's heartfelt words, Shree Hari took a deep breath. Muktānand Swāmi said, "Maharāj! You are the supreme Lord. You have graced us with your presence on this Earth. You have initiated over 2000 saints. If you

develop an indifferent feeling towards everyone, how could they attain ultimate liberation?"

Shree Hari was listening. He asked Muktānand Swāmi, "Swāmi! What should I do?" Muktānand Swāmi said, "Maharāj! Seeing your sadness makes all the devotees gloomy. Thus, it is not proper to become indifferent towards them. You are their life."

Shree Hari was listening very attentively. Then He said, "Swāmi! Then, get together with other senior saints and decide what steps must be taken to advance this fellowship. Decide, what would be beneficial for satsang."

On the fifth day, all the senior saints gathered together and went to Shree Hari. On arrival of the saints, Shree Hari became very happy. He asked, "What have you decided? Have you decided what will be beneficial for this fellowship?" Muktānand Swāmi said, "We have decided to keep the Swāminārāyan sect alive, as long as the sun and the moon rise. For the sake of the devotees, we have decided to develop places of pilgrimage in the form of temples, and for the management of the temples, we shall appoint Āchāryas (dioceses). For knowledge of the scriptures and to enhance true understanding, we shall write, easier scriptures which even a lower-class person could understand. We thought that these ideas will enhance the path to the salvation."

Upon presenting their idea to Shree Hari, all the saints looked at Shree Hari with curiosity and thought about how Shree Hari would reply.

After a while, Shree Hari revealed his uninterested nature towards worldly activities. However, Shree Hari remembered that he had promised Rāmānand Swāmi to always do things for the betterment of the fellowship, and thought, "Therefore, I should do what is best for the satsang fellowship."

There was a moment of passing silence. After a while Muktānand Swāmi said, “Maharāj! All the satsangis desire for you give up your illness and become healthy again. Everyone will become pleased”

Shree Hari immediately got up from his bed and said, “Swāmi! I'll do as you command. Seeing your pure love, my flu has subsided.”

(Reference from Satsangi jivan 4-24; Shree Hari digvijay, ullas-39; Haricharitrāmrut Sāgar, 25-53)

Building of the Temples

Upon Muktānand Swāmi's request, Shree Hari undertook the project of constructing temples throughout the lands of Gujarat.

Ahmedābād (February 24th, 1822)

Shree Hari decided to build the first temple in Ahmedābād.

Nārāyanji Suthār was a sculpture by occupation. He was very skilled by the grace of God. At once, Shree Hari needed the services of Nārāyanji Suthār so he called him from Junāgadh to come and visit him in Gaḍhaḍā. He arrived in Gaḍhaḍā, performed prostrations and said, “Maharāj! I was preparing to come for your darshan and just then, I received your letter. I am ready to be in your service, what would you like me to do?”

Shree Hari said, “I want to build a grand temple in the city of Ahmedābād. The British have offered land for the construction of the temple. I wish to install Shree Nar-Nārāyan dev (the deities) in that temple because Nar-Nārāyan is the king of the Earth. And he is performing austerities with a view towards liberating and giving happiness to the devotees. Therefore, I wish to install the idol

of Shree Nar-Nārāyan. So please, you make a sculpture of of Shree Nar-Nārāyan."

By the inspiration of Shree Hari, Nārāyanji Suthār made the sculptures of Shree Nar-Nārāyan. He then showed it to Shree Hari. Nar-Nārāyan had four hands that possessed conch-shell, chakra, mace and lotus. Shree Hari became pleased upon seeing the sculptures. He even commented, Nārāyanji, you have sculpted these idols so beautifully that they resemble the idols in Badrikashram.

Shree Hari sent Muktānand Swāmi and Brāhmānand Swāmi to Ahmedābād for the preparation for the upcoming festival.

After a few months, Shree Hari arrived in Ahmedābād with saints, pārshads and devotees on Maha vad 11, samvat 1878 (Sunday, 11 February 1822), to observe the preparations for the upcoming festival of the installation ceremony of Shree Nar-Nārāyan. Devotees of Ahmedābād welcomed Shree Hari, pārshads and devotees in a splendid array by holding a grand procession.

Shree Hari went to the construction site of where the temple was being built. Observing the progress, Shree Hari became very much pleased upon Ānandānand Swāmi who oversaw the work. Then, Shree Hari said to Ānandānand Swāmi, "Swāmi! Gather all the devotees who helping construct this temple. I would like to shower them with my blessings." Ānandānand Swāmi called all the devotees to where Shree Hari was residing. Shree Hari bestowed his blessings in respect for their selfless devotion. The devotees experienced divine happiness and their hearts became filled with joy.

Ānandānand Swāmi humbly requested Shree Hari to observe the idols of Shree Nar-Nārāyan. Thus, Shree Hari came to the place where the idols were kept. Seeing the

idols, Shree Hari was quite pleased and while turning His hands on the idols said, “Swāmi! Finish construction process as soon as possible, so we can install the idols on a good Muhrat (auspicious time).”

Soon, the auspicious time of the installation ceremony arrived. It was the day of Fagan Sud 3, 1878 (Sunday, 24 February 1822). The joy of Saints and devotees had no bounds. The temple was decorated very well. All the finest and most expensive decorations were used. Hymns of the Vedas were being sung by pious Brāhmins. The divine vibrations of the music had spread throughout the temple. The idols of Shree Nar-Nārāyan were worshiped with the sixteen ritual offerings, and then installed in the central shrine of the temple. Devotees in the courtyard of the temple hailed 'Shree Nar-Nārāyan Dev Ni Jay'.

Shree Hari smiled. Then suddenly, the temple became filled with divine light which emerged from the idol of Shree Nar-Nārāyan. All the devotees witnessed this phenomenon. Thus, after the installation ceremony, Shree Hari lovingly blessed all the saints and devotees for their seva efforts.

Bhuj (May 15th, 1823)

Once Shree Hari was residing at the quarters of Jivā Khāchar in Sārangpur. He had ordered all the saints to travel in villages until he called them back for his darshan. Muktānand Swāmi was travelling in villages but his mind was eagerly waiting for Shree Hari's darshan. When he came to know that Shree Hari was in Sārangpur, out of extreme love, he came there. When Muktānand Swāmi arrived at Jiva Khāchar's quarters, Bhaguji was guarding the door. Shree Hari had strictly ordered him not to allow anyone to come inside.

Muktānand Swāmi said, “Bhaguji! Please tell Shree

Hari that Muktānand Swāmi has come for His darshan and is waiting for His orders." Bhaguji went inside and asked Shree Hari to allow Muktānand Swāmi to enter the room. Shree Hari was in a different mood. He said, "Tell him to go back. I do not want to give him my darshan. This is my order."

Bhaguji came back to Muktānand Swāmi. He was trembling out of fear on how to present such a response by Shree Hari to His guru, Muktānand Swāmi. He was confused. He was in dilemma that on one side there was Shree Hari's order and on other side Muktānand Swāmi's love for Shree Hari.

Muktānand Swāmi asked Bhaguji, "What did Maharāj say?" Bhaguji folded his hands and said, "Swāmi! Maharāj does not want to give his darshan to you."

On hearing this, Muktānand Swāmi was stunned. After a while he said, "Bhaguji! Could you please pass my message to Shree Hari?"

"Yes, Swāmi! I will do so," Bhaguji replied.

Muktānand Swāmi asked him to bring a pen and paper. Then, he composed a kirtan and handed it over to Bhaguji.

"Māru man hariyu re..."

Bhaguji gave the kirtan to Shree Hari. Shree Hari called Shukmuni and asked him to read the letter. As Shukmuni read the letter, Shree Hari's heart melted by see the superb devotion of Muktānand Swāmi. He got up and went to where Muktānand Swāmi was standing, and lovingly embraced Muktānand Swāmi.

Then, he led Muktānand Swāmi into the quarters and made him sit beside Himself and asked, "Swāmi! Where were you going?"

"Maharāj! I am travelling in villages as you per your command," Muktānand Swāmi replied.

"The festival of installation ceremony of the temple of Bhuj is near. And until the festival, I would like you to stay with me." Shree Hari added.

In a few days, Shree Hari departed from Sārangpur and came to Gaḍhaḍā. He called a meeting of senior saints. He said, "The temple of Bhuj has been constructed. The auspicious day of installation ceremony is Vaisākh Sud 5, Samvat 1879 (Friday, 26 April 1822). Thus, I would like all of you to begin preparations for the festival. Invite all of the saints and devotees to Bhuj." Then, He called Bhaguji and the other Pārshads and said, "You prepare to leave for Bhuj with the idols of Shree Nar-Nārāyan Dev so that you may reach adequately."

Soon, Shree Hari departed from Gaḍhaḍā and came to Bhuj with Muktānand Swāmi on Chaitra Vad 2 (Wednesday, 11 April 1822).

Upon Shree Hari's arrival, the devotees of Bhuj welcomed Shree Hari, His saint, and devotees in a splendid way. The devotees of Bhuj were extremely happy. Tears of joy poured from their eyes. Then, Shree Hari blessed everyone.

Shree Hari came to the temple, and observed the art and construction of the temple, and became very pleased.

Soon after, the festival day had arrived. People were gathered in the courtyard of the temple. Shree Hari himself performed the Yagna. After the Yagna, the installation ceremony commenced. Shree Hari glanced at the idols making them lustrous. Shortly, the installation process was completed.

The sound of trumpets, horns and drums were heard. The devotees approved the auspicious moments by hailing "Shree Nar-Nārāyan Dev Ni Jay!"

Vadtāl (November 3rd, 1824)

After the festival of Harijayanti on Chaitra Sud 9, 1878 in Vadtāl (Wednesday, 11 April 1821) chief devotees of Vadtāl came to Shree Hari and they recalled Shree Hari's promise of building a grand temple in Vadtāl. The place for the temple had already been decided. On Chaitra Sud 13 (Sunday, April 15, 1821), Shree Hari performed ceremony of laying down the first foundation-stone.

Thereafter, on the festival of Janmashtami, Shravan Vad 8, 1881 (Wednesday, 18 August 1821), Shree Hari ordered Brāhmānand Swāmi to go to Vadtāl and begin the construction for the temple.

The temple was constructed and Brahmānand Swāmi wrote a letter to Shree Hari. Shree Hari was delighted upon reading the letter and he called for a meeting which consisted of senior saints and decided the Muhrat as Kartak Sud 12 (Wednesday, 3 November 1824) for the installation ceremony.

Then Shree Hari wrote a letter back to Brahmānand Swāmi, “We will soon arrive in Vadtāl. Please send invitations to the devotees of different villages and to the kings of Vadodarā, Surat, Junāgadh, Khambhāt, Māngrol, etc. Make preparations for food and residence for saints and devotees.”

Shree Hari explained various other details to Axarānand Swāmi and sent him to Vadtāl. Shree Hari had already planned which idols to install in the temple. He called Muktānand Swāmi and Nityānand Swāmi and said, “Go to Mandvi, Baroda to the home of Amichand Sheth. He has ancient idols of Shree Laxmi-Nārāyan which were concealed by his ancestors under the soil. Request him to bring those idols to Vadtāl.” Shree Hari wrote a letter to Amichand Sheth in which stated that he is requesting the sacred idols.

Shortly saints arrived in Vadodarā at the home of Amichand Sheth. They gave him the letter written by Shree Hari. As he read the letter, he remembered Nilkanth Varṇi's promise twenty-five years ago. He pondered whether these saints belong to Nilkanth Varṇi or were hypocrites. But by observing the saint's divine persona and saintliness all his thoughts subsided.

Amichand Sheth said, “Swāmi! Twenty-five years ago, Nilkanth Varṇi came to my home; by the power of telekinesis. He knew that I had the idols of Shree Laxmi-Nārāyan. He had said that he will send his saints in the future for the idols. His words have come true today.”

Then after, he made living arrangements for the saints. He folded his hands said, “Swāmi! When Nilkanth Varṇi came to my home, I wished to feed him Lādus (sweet balls) but he denied departed quickly, thus saying He would accept my service another day. Therefore, I believe that you have come to accept my service today.”

Then, Amichand Sheth asked a Brāhmin to prepare lādus and offered them to the saints. Muktānand Swāmi first offered them to Thakorji, then they ate a little to satisfy him. Amichand Sheth was gratified. Thereafter, Amichand Sheth dug out the idols. Seeing them, the saints were astonished and desired to install the idols in Vadtāl.

The idols were packed and placed in the cart carefully. Muktānand Swāmi departed for Gaḍhaḍā. Along the way, they faced heavy rains and storms. As a result, the cart could not move any further and saints had to stay at the home of Kāshidās in Bochāsan. They decided to keep the idols at the home of Kāshidās.

After the weather became decent the saints departed for Gaḍhaḍā. Shree Hari inquired about the idols. Muktānand Swāmi said, “Maharāj! You are omniscient. You

know everything." Then, He revealed why they had kept the idols at the home of Kāshidās in Bochāsan.

Shree Hari smiled and said, "Shree Laxmi-Nārāyan Dev desires to fulfill the wishes of the devotees of Vadtāl and want to consume sweets and mangoes."

After the festival of Annakut, Shree Hari left Gaḍhaḍā for Vadtāl. As they reached Rojkā, Kākābhāi joined the group to go to Vadtāl. Muktānand Swāmi was discoursing while on the way there. When the entourage arrived in the village Gāf, Himā Soni requested Muktānand Swāmi to sit on his horse. Muktānand Swāmi said, "I am not accustomed to sitting on a horse, therefore I will walk."

After many requests from Himā Soni, Muktānand Swāmi sat on the horse. While traveling, the horse's foot fell in a small ditch, resulting in Muktānand Swāmi falling from the horse. In consequence, he fractured his right hand. The devotees brought Muktānand Swāmi to Kamiyada on a palanquin.

Shree Hari came to Muktānand Swāmi as soon as he got the message. Seeing Muktānand Swāmi's fractured hand Shree Hari became depressed.

Then, Shree Hari placed his soft hand on the fractured hand of Muktānand Swāmi. Just by a mere touch, Muktānand Swāmi felt at ease. The pain from the fracture was relieved instantly. Muktānand Swāmi smiled and said, "Maharāj! You are the source of all happiness ho resides constantly in my heart. When I see your form in my heart, it brings a thrill of joy to me. Your darshan is remedy for all pain."

"Swāmi! You have the finest understanding. This is the main characteristic of an elite devotee of God. It is our mission to bring such wisdom to all the Satsangis. For that to be accomplished, I will install my idol in the temple of Vadtāl

by the name of Harikrishnā Mahārāj for the establishment of true upasana."

"Nevertheless, due to the lack of perfect knowledge, devotees will not easily accept it." Just then, a physician arrived and he applied bandages on Muktānand Swāmi's right hand. Then, Shree Hari said, "Swāmi! You stay here until you are fully recovered. Shree Hari kept a few saints and devotees in the service of Muktānand Swāmi and departed for Vadtāl.

Upon arriving in Vadtāl, Brahmānand Swāmi welcomed Shree Hari. Shree Hari asked Brahmānand Swāmi about the preparations. Brahmānand Swāmi informed Shree Hari all the details regarding the festival. Then, Shree Hari asked Kāshidās to bring the idols to Vadtāl.

The auspicious day of Kartak Sud 12 1881 (Wednesday, November 3, 1824), was an auspicious day in the history of the Swāminārāyan sect. Devotees had arrived from all over Gujarat. The kings and heads of various communities had experienced a divine sensation on that day. The Brāhmins were reciting Vedic hymns.

After worshiping the idols at the Yagnashala, they were brought to the temple. The devotees were hailing the names of Harikrishnā Mahārāj, Laxmi-Nārāyan, and Dharmadev and Bhaktimata. It filled the atmosphere with sacred vibration.

From the moment the installation ceremony began, the temple was illuminated by a divine glow emerging from the idols. Harikrishnā Mahārāj's idol had an extraordinary feature, and was very enchanting. It immortalized true upasana, opening the gateway of Akshardham. It enhanced the joy of saints and devotees.

At the end of the ceremony, countless people started to praise the magnificence they experienced.

"Amazing, excellent, beyond imagination, divine..."

Afterwards, the devotees departed from Vadtāl. A constant flow of discussions on the thrilling festival was gossiped around various villages.

After the festival, Shree Hari stayed in Vadtāl for a few days, then departed for Surat. He desired to meet Muktānand Swāmi. On Magsar Sud 2, 1881 (Tuesday, 23 November 1824) Shree Hari arrived at Kamiyada. Shree Hari came where Muktānand Swāmi was residing. He was at the home of Sisa Vanar. Muktānand Swāmi's hand had recovered. By the darshan of Shree Hari, Muktānand Swāmi became elated.

Then, Shree Hari asked Muktānand Swāmi about his health and said, "The installation ceremony of Shree Laxmi-Nārāyan has been completed successfully. The devotees were very thrilled. And the idol by the name of Harikrishnā Mahārāj has been installed."

Muktānand Swāmi took a deep breath upon listening to Shree Hari. Being a mother of the fellowship, he thought, "In the satsang fellowship, there are many devotees but everyone does not have firm conviction in manifest form of God. There may be inconsistencies amongst the devotees with the installation of Harikrishnā Mahārāj, Shree Hari's own form." He looked down in a distressed mood.

Shree Hari read Muktānand Swāmi's mind. He said, "Swāmi! Do not worry. My sole purpose of coming to this Earth was to establish upasana, which would last forever. "

Hearing this, Muktānand Swāmi felt at ease.

Then, Shree Hari blessed the saints and devotees who were in the service of Muktānand Swāmi. Shree Hari then asked the saints and devotees to take Muktānand Swāmi to Gaḍhapur.

After reaching Gaḍhaḍā, Shree Hari arranged Muktānand Swāmi's residence and instructed the others to nurse him until he fully recovers.

Dholerā (May 19th, 1826)

Shree Hari had appointed four sadgurus: Nishkulānand Swāmi, Atmānand Swāmi, Aksharānand Swāmi and Dharmaprasadānand Swāmi for the construction of the temple in Dholerā. Upon the completion of the temple, Shree Hari came in Dholerā with saints and devotees for the ceremony of Murti-pratishtha.

As Shree Hari observed every side and corner of the temple, he admired the acquitted efforts of the saints and devotees by remarking, “Such splendid work of the temple reflects the deep-rooted devotion of these saints and devotees, otherwise without necessary materials, labors and money, it would not be possible to build such an artistic temple.”

Thereafter, the day of Vaisākh Sud 13, Samvat 1882 (Saturday, 30 April 1825) was decided to be the day for the Murti-Pratishtha.

As the day arrived, devotees started to arrive from different villages. Although Dholerā was a small village, by the mere presence of Shree Hari and his saints, it resembled Akshardhām (the abode of supreme God).

Brāhmins from different villages were invited to sing vedic hymns. After completing necessary vedic rituals for the installation process, the idols of Radha and Krishnā were installed in the temple. Shree Hari gave the name 'Madan Mohanji' and performed ārti.

At the end, Shree Hari blessed all devotees and instructed to serve 'Madan Mohanji' with great affection.

Junāgadh (May 1st, 1828)

Knowing the abilities of Brahmānand Swāmi, Shree Hari appointed him to construct a temple in Junāgadh. Although it was a difficult task, Shree Hari had firm faith in Brahmānand Swāmi. The king was in favor of Shree Hari but the Nagar community opposed the Swāminārāyan movement. Shree Hari entrusted Brahmānand Swāmi to accomplish this difficult task. Brahmānand Swāmi struggled very much. After going through many hardships, Brahmānand Swāmi built a grand artistic temple in Junāgadh.

As Shree Hari departed for Junāgadh, the day of Vaisākh Vad 2, 1884 (Sunday, 13 May 1827) was decided to be the day for the Murti-Pratishtha. Brahmānand Swāmi had sent invitations to different regions, inviting prominent saints and devotees. Carts full of grains, ghee, jaggery, etc came from different villages. On the other side, devotees from various villages started to flood Junāgadh.

Brahmānand Swāmi requested the king for royal equipment like horses, his army, elephants, palanquins etc., for the grand procession of Shree Hari, saints and devotees through the streets of Junāgadh. The king admired Shree Hari, so he provided everything that Brahmānand Swāmi had requested for.

This disheartened the Diwān and Nagar community because of their enmity towards Lord Swāminārāyan. Though they could not neglect the king's command, they planned to create disturbances in the procession.

Before Shree Hari's arrival in Junāgadh. Brāhmānand Swāmi had made all the preparation for a majestic ceremony. Shree Hari sat on a golden seat on a caparisoned elephant. Muktānand Swāmi and Gopālānand Swāmi sat in a golden. Devotees were singing devotional songs. The

sounds of trumpets, horns and drums, added a flair to the festivity on the streets of Junāgadh. The grand procession was followed by soldiers on horses and the king's army.

The king was observing the procession from his balcony. The Diwān was waiting for his men to come to Brahmānand Swāmi with a horse, named Vadi. It was untamed wild horse that no one could mount upon.

Soon, the Diwān's men went to Brahmānand Swāmi with the horse. It was well decorated, to show that it as an excellent horse. They said, “Swāmi! The king has sent his best horse specially for you.”

Brahmānand Swāmi immediately detective the cunning plan, the Diwān was trying to plot. Brahmānand Swāmi held the reins of the horse and asked the men to let go. Brahmānand Swāmi stroked the horse gently with his hand. He uttered “Jay Swāminārāyan" in the ear of the horse and then mounted it. The Diwān was eagerly watching the scene. The men holding the horse feared that Brahmānand Swāmi would get if they released the wild horse.

Seeing this, Brahmānand Swāmi said, “Don't worry; by the grace of Lord Swāminārāyan, it will be calm. Just like how thieves, robbers and dacoits had given up their wicked natures by listening and chanting the name Swāminārāyan, similarly this horse's base instincts will be removed.”

Then Brahmānand Swāmi nudged the horse with his right leg, immediately making it calm. Witnessing such a miraculous act, Diwān could not believe what he saw. His cunning plot came to an end.

Then, the procession arrived at the temple. Brahmānand Swāmi dismounted the horse. Brahmānand Swāmi and Gopālānand Swāmi held Shree Hari's hand as He dismounted the elephant. Shree Hari saw the construction of the temple and became very pleased.

The Murti-Pratishtha ceremony was successfully completed on the day of Vaisākh Vad 2, (Sunday, 13 May 1827). Then, Shree Hari blessed the king and devotees who served in the festival.

Gaḍhapur (October 20th, 1828)

Since Shree Hari typically resided in Gaḍhapur, Dādākhāchar often requested Shree Hari to build an exclusive temple by his courtyard. Therefore, seeing the pure afttection of bhaktaraj Dādākhāchar, Shree Hari performed the ceremony of laying down the first foundation stone. Dādākhāchar and his family members sacrificed everything in the service of the temple.

Shree Hari said, “I would like this temple completed as soon as possible.” Thereafter, all the saints and devotees became fully engaged in completing the construction of the temple.

One day, Shree Hari called Muktānand Swāmi and said, “Swāmi! I wish to install the idol of God according to my measurements. So, who shall I send to Dungarpur to bring the idols?”

“Maharāj! Nityānand Swāmi and Nishkulānand Swāmi are experts in recognizing the best idols,” Muktānand Swāmi replied.

Shree Hari called Nityānand Swāmi and said, “Swāmi! You and Nishkulānand Swāmi head to Dungarpur and bring an idol according to my measurements (same height and thick and equal to all my limbs).”

Thereafter, Nishkulānand Swāmi and Nityānand Swāmi reached at Dungarpur with sufficient funds. They were not able to find the idol that Shree Hari requested. Thus, they decided to take a stone to be carved by Shree Hari's measurements to Gaḍhaḍā.

Upon entering the stone mine, they saw Shree Hari's form on a black stone. Seeing it, they were very excited and thought, “God himself has chosen this stone.” Then, they purchased that stone along with the idol of Rādhaji and departed for Gaḍhaḍā.

Shree Hari was delighted with their choices. He called Nārāyanji Suthār and told him to carve the idol according to his measurements. Since Shree Hari did not continuously stay in Gaḍhaḍā, he had given power to Nārāyanji Suthār, in which he was able to see Shree Hari at all times. Nārāyanji Suthār considered himself most fortunate in rendering this service. He was overjoyed by the intimate company of God. With much labor work of saints, devotees and Shree Hari Himself, the construction of the temple was completed. Nārāyanji Suthār had also completed the idol in very short time.

On Āsho Sud 2, Samvat 1885 (Friday, 10 October 1828) the idols of Gopināthji and Rādhāji were installed along with other idols.

Appointment of Āchāryas

One day, Shree Hari was sitting in the quarters of Dādākhāchar. Muktānand Swāmi came there and prostrated. He was happy with the arrival of Dharmakul (relatives of Shree Hari; older brother Rāmpratāpbhāi and his wife Suvāsinibhābhi, their son Nandrām, younger brother Ichhārāmbhāi and his wife Variyād, their sons Gopāl, Sitārām, Badrināth and Māmā Sufal). He thought, "Since the temple constructions are in progress, in the future there will be someone required to be appointed as the head of this Satsang." They all very well familiar that Shree Hari is non-attached to any of his relatives. His only relatives are those who convey pure devotion towards God.

Muktānand Swāmi slowly said, "Maharāj! By the arrival of Dharmakul, the satsang will flourish rapidly."

Shree Hari smiled. He knew Muktānand Swāmi wanted to convey something. Then, Muktānand Swāmi said, "Maharāj! It is my humble request that you appoint someone from Dharmakul as the head of the Satsang. It would be fruitful to all satsangis."

"Swāmi! You are my Guru, and I will do anything that would please you. The head of the Satsang should know the customs, traditions, knowledge of our sect and scriptures. He must also honor the scriptures and saints more than anything," Shree Hari said.

On Kartak Sud 11 of Samvat 1882 (Tuesday, 22 November 1825), Shree Hari adopted his nephews Ayodhyāprasādji and Raghuvirji and established two gadis by

the name of Nar-Nārāyan and Laxmi-Nārāyan in Vadtāl. Shree Hari appointed them as the Āchāryas (spiritual leaders) of Uddhav Sampradāy. Raghuvirji Maharāj was appointed as the Āchārya of LaxmiNārāyan gadi (also known as 'Dakshin Vibhag', southern division) and Ayodhyāprasādji Maharāj was appointed as the Āchārya of Nar-Nārāyan gadi ('Uttar Vibhag', northern division).

The details of inauguration of the two appointed Āchāryas is enshrined in the document known as 'desh vibhāg no lekh'. It was written by Shukmuni as per the command of Shree Hari. It is the legal document that specifies instructions the Āchāryas and all other followers.

Then, Shree Hari instructed all the followers to worship these Āchāryas and obey their commands. Shree Hari authorized these two Āchāryas to install the idols of God in the temples and to initiate the disciples as saints. Shri Hari promised to reside in the idols which the Āchāryas install.

These Āchāryas are only authorized to initiate male disciples only, and their wives are authorized to initiate female disciples with the consent of their husbands.

Afterward, Ayodhyāprasādji bowed down to Muktānand Swāmi and requested him to disclose the divine glory of Shree Hari.

Muktānand Swāmi said, “Shree Hari had incarnated on this Earth to liberate countless souls. Because of your abundant and meritorious deeds, you are appointed as Āchārya of this sect. This is our divine satsang. You have the best opportunity to serve the Sampradāy comprising saints, brahmacharis, sankhyayogis and devotees. Please do what is best for satsang fellowship and for all its followers.”

“Āchārya means someone who teaches with conduct (example). To follow Dharma and lead others to follow it is the prime duty of an Āchārya. The simple meaning of Dharma

is the commandments made by Shree Hari. Though in this world there those who follow Dharma who seem to be very poor or insignificant in the realm of God they are very opulent.

Secondly, despite being engaged in worldly activities, never let your love for God decrease. To love God is called Bhakti. Our ancient sages and rishis also followed the same path of devotion. This is the essence of the scriptures, which you must follow and instruct others to follow as well."

Raghuvirji Maharāj and Ayodhyāprasādji were delighted from this divine message by the Guru of Shree Hari, and the mother of Satsang 'Muktānand Swāmi'.

The Great Farewell

Great historical moments arrive promptly but remind us of the physical absence of our most dear one. Yet, it is our great fortune to engage our mind in disappearance of God and His holy saints who remain with us through the sweet inspiration and memories of their life-stories.

During the month of Jeth of Samvat 1886 (Friday, June 12, 1829), Shree Hari had a severe flu. He was completely determined to leave his mortal body. The news of Shree Hari's illness spread throughout the fellowship. Saints, Pārshads, Brahmacharis, male and female devotees had arrived in Gaḍhaḍā.

One day, Shree Hari called an assembly. Seeing Shree Hari's condition saints and devotees lamented. Everyone knew that Shree Hari was going to deliver a serious message. Shree Hari called Muktānand Swāmi and said, “Swāmi! Examine my pulse.” As he was examining Shree Hari's pulse, he became lost in deep thought.

Shree Hari asked, “Swāmi! Is something wrong?” Muktānand Swāmi was unable to explain. Being a mother, he looked at the assembly with tears in his eyes and said, “My Lord! There is something more serious than I expected. O compassionate one, you are the only life and soul of all the followers and you have accepted such an illness that will separate you from us, forever. Please don't do it - don't do it.”

The others felt menacing clouds hovering over their heads. “Why did Muktānand Swāmi, the ocean of patience,

submerge into an ocean of grief? The person who always taught others to stay happy is very sad today." Everyone could see that Shree Hari was exhibiting a mood of complete detachment as if he was preparing to leave this world.

Before anyone could speak, Shree Hari said, "Swāmi! It is unfit for the doctor to shed tears. It increases the sorrow of the relatives of patient. The doctor should console his relatives and encourage the patient."

Muktānand Swāmi's heart was pierced with these words. He thought, "My ears won't be able to listen to such loving words, and my eyes will not be able to witness his sweet smile." He was most worried about how the separation of God will impact all the satsangis. In his mind, he prayed to Shree Hari to not burn the fire of distress with separation in the hearts of devotees.

As the atmosphere grew more serious, everyone felt that something terrible was about the happen. Meanwhile, Shree Hari ordered everyone to go and rest except Muktānand Swāmi. When the assembly scattered Shree Hari told Muktānand Swāmi, "You knew my intentions, and by no means, I will be convinced to stay any longer. You are the one to console the saints and devotees in my absence. Your tears have stopped me from revealing my intentions in the assembly. But after my departure your presence will be most required for satsangis."

Meanwhile, Muktānand Swāmi thought that how will he console other saints and devotees.

At last, Shree Hari told Muktānand Swāmi to reveal his intentions to the satsangis in the morning. For Muktānand

Swāmi, the night passed without any sleep because of thoughts of the tragic conversation. Muktānand Swāmi could not strengthen himself to convey what Shree Hari had asked of him in the assembly.

Once again, Shree Hari called an assembly in the morning. Shree Hari waited for Muktānand Swāmi to convey his message to everyone, but he could not. At last, Shree Hari made the announcement himself. As everyone listened to Shree Hari's announcement, a wave of sorrow passed through the assembly. Many Satsangis fell to the ground unconscious. However, Shree Hari was firmly determined, and He infused the power to saints and devotees to tolerate the separation.

It was the day of Jeth Sud 10 (Friday, 12 June 1829) Lord Brahma with other demigods appeared with their celestial chariots. A rain flowers by the demigods showered the darbār of Dādākhāchar.

Shree Hari meditated. As closed his eyes, the Aksharmuktas (liberated souls) appeared with celestial chariots and thus Shree Hari left his body and ascended to Akshardhām.

The whole village cried with agnoy. The sounds of drums were understood to be the appearance or disappearance of the manifest form of God.

Due to the departure of Shree Hari, everyone had become enveloped in grief. Muktānand Swāmi was heartbroken but seeing the piteous condition of other saints and devotees, he thought lamenting will worsen the current situation. “I will have to pacify them and so I should not allow

myself to become so upset."

To pacify them, Muktānand Swāmi said, "My beloved saints and devotees! I very know the conditions of everyone. Shree Hari Himself has said that He will always be present in temples and in the form of saints. A firm conviction of His words is the true definition of your love for Him. Therefore, have faith in the words of Shree Hari." Such loving words of Muktānand Swāmi fill their hearts with hope and faith. Other senior saints such as: Gopālānand Swāmi, Gunatitānand Swāmi were also consoling younger saints and devotees so that the funeral rituals can be completed. Shree Hari's body was still shining with luminosity on a decorated Sigrām.

The funeral pyre had been constructed from logs of sandalwood in Laxmiwadi. Soon after, Shree Hari's body was placed upon the logs of sandalwood. With the wailing sounds from Āchāryas, saints, parshads and devotees the fire was ignited.

The divine acts of the Supreme Lord have been inscripted in many scriptures. Anyone who chants or remembers any of those divine acts of the Supreme Lord will attain liberation and the transcendental service of God.

Muktānand Swāmi Departs

Muktānand Swāmi used to tell the divine pastimes of Lord Swāminārāyan to help the devotees forget his separation of Lord Swāminārāyan.

Premānand Swāmi is said to be an idol of love. He felt terribly distressed because of separation from His dearest Shree Hari. He did not feel ease even for a moment. However, Muktānand Swāmi was engrossed in remembering the

divine bitter-sweet memories of Shree Hari's pastimes. He was able to pacify himself by recollecting God's form in his mind. Being the mother the satsang fellowship, he prepared himself to console Premānand Swāmi.

Muktānand Swāmi came to where Premānand Swāmi was staying. Premānand Swāmi was crying. As he saw Muktānand Swāmi, he got up, wiped his tears and offered swāmi a seat. Muktānand Swāmi spoke gently, “Swāmi! God is very kind. He never gives up the association of His devotees. He remains with His devotees forever. Swāmi! See, Maharāj, is giving darshan in the temple in the form of Gopinathji Maharāj.” The words of Muktānand Swāmi was filled with kindness and had an emotional vibration. Yet, Premānand Swāmi recognized Muktānand Swāmi's heartache due to the separation of Shree Hari. He spoke, “Swāmi! You're saying that Shree Hari is present with us today, yet why are you crying?” Premānand Swāmi's inquiry made Muktānand Swāmi unable to handle himself. His voice choked up and tears incessantly flowed down from his eyes.

Muktānand Swāmi was now at the age of 73. Due to the disease of tuberculosis, his body had become weak and emaciated. He had not eaten anything for the last several days. Gopālānand Swāmi, Gunatitānand Swāmi, Nityānand Swāmi and other saints stayed with Muktānand Swāmi for his comforts. Despite of weakness, he narrated the divine episodes of Shree Hari to the attendant saints.

Gradually Muktānand Swāmi completely stopped eating. Gopālānand Swāmi requested to drink Rab but he refused, shaking his head. The news of Muktānand Swāmi's

becoming seriously ill spread throughout the Satsang fellowship. Many devotees rushed to the aid of Muktānand Swāmi. They requested, “After Shree Hari disappeared, only you were the hope of comfort to this fellowship. So please Swāmi! Eat something. Do not hurry to leave us.”

In this way, life in Gaḍhaḍā practically came to a standstill. It seems like a great ocean had dried up. Cows no longer gave milk to their calves, with the thought of becoming separated from the 'mother'. Even the stars in the sky appeared to have a stern, feeling completely depressed, no one bothered to eat or engage in any kind of entertainment. Everyone appeared like lifeless statues. They were absorbed in the critical condition of Muktānand Swāmi.

It was the day of Ekādashi of Ashadh Sud 11, 1886 (Sunday, 12 July 1829). Today, the rising sun was that of different type than usual. Muktānand Swāmi with the help of saints, reached the temple before Gopināthji Mahārāj. Muktānand Swāmi's eyes filled with tears. He had a pen in his hand, and he began to write and sing.

Antakāḍe āvi re sambhāri lejo śāmaḍā re,
jośo mā amārā avguṇ śyām;
Doyali veḍā mā re koi kenu nathi re,
jyāre kare jamḍā āvine jor...

His hands were trembling with weakness. Several times the pen from Swāmi's hands, yet he continued writing remembering the command of Shree Hari in 58th Vachanāmrit of Gaḍhaḍā second chapter. At that time Nityānand Swāmi approached him and said, “Swāmi! Please do not strive so hard, I will complete your half-written scripture 'Dharmakhyan'. I will install Raghuvirji Mahārāj in a

grand procession in Vadodarā as well."

He then began to sing the third composition:

Ā avasare re dayāḍ'u dayā kari re,
ṭāḍ'vāne janama maran nā tāp...

The temple filled with divine radiating light. Everyone could observe it. Meanwhile Shree Hari appeared along with thousands of Aksharmukts in the sky. Then Muktānand Swāmi composed forth hymn welcoming Shree Hari.

Bhalene padhārīyā re gīrīdhar gājatā re,
have mune karī kutārath kān...

Everyone became lost in the ecstasy of Shree Hari. In the meantime, Shree Hari invited Muktānand Swāmi to sit in the celestial chariot. Muktānand Swāmi took his place on the chariot and ascended back to the Akshardhām.

After some time, the divine light became disappeared. Having witnessed Muktānand Swāmi's spiritual prowess, the saints and devotees saw Muktānand Swāmi's body motionless. They were crying and wailing helplessly.

It was really a trying time for the Satsang fellowship. Out of grief, the wind ceased blowing. The leaves on the tree stopped fluttering and the water of the Ghela River was hushed. Large crowds of people came to have the last darshan of Muktānand Swāmi. The great demigods showered fragrant flowers on Muktānand Swāmi's body. A funeral pyre was created from the logs of sandalwood and his body was cremated, causing many followers to fall unconscious. Gopālānand Swāmi and other senior saints were pacifying the devotees. Finally, all the santo and bhakto took a bath in the

river Ghela and returned to their residence.

Muktānand Swāmi's saintly life and elevating discourses have left a legacy which even today continues to inspire genuine spiritual aspirants of all background.

When the Lord appears in this universe in the form of a human being, He protects His devotees. To protect the devotees, the Lord not only satisfies them by His personal presence but also teaches them, so that they will not fall from devotional service. By the exemplary life of Muktānand Swāmi we are inspired to live with humility, devotion, service, obedience and faith to the Supreme being, Lord Swāmināràyan.

This marks the end of the book
'Sadguru Muktānand Swāmi':
A Spiritual Odyssey Through His Remarkable Life

Jay Swaminarayan

Fragrance of His Life

Muktānand Swāmi's saintliness was admired by all. There are many statements that are made about him which explains his greatness, spiritual level and overall persona. Listed below are extracts from the Vachanāmrit, Haricharitrāmrut Sāgar, the talks of Gunātitānand Swāmi, and the talks of Gopālānand Swāmi. These four scriptures are the foremost scriptures in the Swāminārāyan sect.

Vachanāmrit

- "Muktānand Swāmi's shraddhā and understanding of God's greatness are the same today and just as fresh as they were when I first saw him in Lojpur; they have not diminished in any way whatsoever." (Sārangpur - 3)
- "When such vicious thoughts arise, one should stop the meditation, and should clap and chant 'Swāminārāyan, Swāminārāyan' aloud, without shame. One should pray to God, 'O Lord! You are a friend of the meek! You are an ocean of mercy!' Also, one should remember a great sādhu of God, like Muktānand Swāmi, and pray to him too." (Loyā-2)
- "Before I met Rāmānand Swāmi, I stayed under the commands of Muktānand Swāmi." (Loyā - 3)
- "At present, even a sādhu like Muktānand Swāmi can be considered to be like God because of his association with God." (Loyā - 13)
- "I had a dream in which I went to Golok where I saw countless attendants of God and they were singing

devotional songs composed by Muktānand Swāmi." (GM - 19)

- "One should listen and sing the devotional songs and poems written by Muktānand Swāmi." (GM - 35)
- "I have delivered this discourse about the three inclinations mainly for the sake of Muktānand Swāmi because I have a great deal of affection for him." (GM - 62)
- "In fact, before I met Rāmānand Swāmi, Muktānand Swāmi and I had decided to go to the forest and constantly meditate" (GL – 13)
- "Muktānand Swāmi has great virtues of pleasing me and having faith in me." (GL - 24)
- "Initially, my nature was like that of a renunciant, but because I had an intense yearning of Shree Rāmānand Swāmi's darshan, I lived under Muktānand Swāmi's commands." (GL – 27)
- "Muktānand Swāmi will not be impressed by anyone else; no matter how many miracles they show him." (GL - 33)

Haricharitrāmrut Sāgar

- Shree Hari said, "Muktānand Swāmi is a great saint. He is the mother of this fellowship, and my Guru as well." (H.C.S. 4 - 76)
- Once, Shree Hari had discoursed a lot in the assembly. After a while, he looked at Muktānand Swāmi and said, "Today's discussion is like a miracle. Anyone who listens to it and contemplates over it; his mind will become purified and fixed upon the form of God like Muktānand Swāmi. (H.C.S. 6 - 80)
- Shree Hari said, "I consider Muktānand Swāmi to be an elite saint. His understanding of the glory of God's

increases every day. He treats saints and devotees as if they were his best friends. Despite his best virtues, he never considers anyone lower than him. He even thinks positively for those who malign him. And because of his firmness in following the five vartmān (codes of conduct) he can convince others to follow those vartmān easily. (H.C.S. 8 - 14)

- An evil person in the Satsang fellowship is difficult to recognize. Ramdas Swāmi, Muktānand Swāmi, and Bhai Atmānand Swāmi are such determined saints, that if someone would imitate God by dressing or talking like him, would be recognize the hypocrisy. And they would not be influenced by any great personality other than God. (H.C.S. 8 - 28)
- In the village of Kariyani. There was a big well filled with pure water on the western side of the village which was surrounded by trees. Shree Hari was very enthusiastic about swimming and playing in water. So, at one time Shree Hari jumped into the well from top of a tree. To maintain Muktānand Swāmi's reverence, Shree Hari would not take Muktānand Swāmi to the well when he would go to play games. On the other side, Muktānand Swāmi was very eager to witness the divine incidences of Shree Hari but due his reverence, Shree Hari would not allow him to witness such activities. However, Muktānand Swāmi was so humble that he placed his own status down by praising devotees and considered himself very insignificant. (H.C.S. 9 - 38)
- Muktānand Swāmi was always ready to listen to the divine acts of Shree Hari. He would forget everything while listening to the divine acts of Shree Hari. Seeing such saintliness in Muktānand Swāmi, Shree Hari was very pleased on him. (H.C.S. 15 - 57)

- After the immense victory in the debate in Vadodarā, Shree Hari was eagerly waiting for Muktānand Swāmi. As He received the news of Muktānand Swāmi's arrival, He ran to receive Muktānand Swāmi and prostrated before him, and then Muktānand Swāmi also prostrated to Shree Hari. Thereupon, Shree Hari warmly embraced Muktānand Swāmi. (H.C.S. 18-27)
- Muktānand Swāmi folded his hands and said, "O Mahārāj! We experience joy and satisfaction while listening to your nectarine words. Your words attract our minds. As the rain impartially nourishes all sorts of fruits, vegetables and grass whether it be edible or nonedible. Similarly, your words nourish both good and bad people. (H.C.S. 18 - 66)
- Ravji, a Pārshad of Muktānand Swāmi had a highly valuable Shelu (embroidered scarf). It was given to him for Shree Hari by the merchant of Ahmadabad. Ravji, then offered it to Shree Hari. Shree Hari accepted it and asked, "Where did you get this fine Shelu?" Ravji replied, "After asking Muktānand Swāmi about your necessities, I bring this offering to you today." On listening to this, Shree Hari was pleased and said, "Muktānand Swāmi is an expert in recognizing my wishes. He takes every step with a sense of pleasing me. As a result, everyone likes to listen to him." (H.C.S. 19 - 41)

Gunatitānand Swāmi Ni Vato

- Mahārāj says, "I wish to make everyone like Muktānand Swāmi. Then, there would be no need to look after him. Muktānand Swāmi has spiritual wisdom, with which he overcomes everything. And for Muktānand Swāmi, words are a part of space. So, he

knows how to interpret them." (Prakaran 1 - 207)

- Developing an elevated spiritual state through knowledge is greater than seeing God during meditation. Parvatbhai, Krupanand Swāmi and Muktanand Swāmi did not experience samadhi, but they could continuously see the murti of God. And Parvatbhai understood as we understand now.1 Therefore, to believe oneself as brahmarup and that God resides within, is the state of spiritual wisdom; that is superior to samadhi and it is free of obstacles. (Prakaran 1 - 228)
- Even in the assembly of two thousand people, if Muktānand Swāmi preached, then all the inner questions would be answered. (Prakaran 1 - 323)
- Once, after taking bath in Narmada River, Shree Hari was in deep meditation and would not get up even though many devotees requested for him to take some food. Then, Muktānand Swāmi came there and said with a sweet humble voice, "O Maharāj! Please take some food." With the humble request of Muktānand Swāmi, Shree Hari said, "I will come, but first I need to address the assembly."

  "O Maharāj! Please do so," Muktānand Swāmi replied. Thus, Shree Hari spoke, "This earth is 500 million yojans. Water is ten times greater than the Earth; light is ten times greater than water; air is ten times greater than light; space is ten times greater than air; ahamkar is ten times greater than the space; mahatatva is ten times greater than ahamkar; pradhan-purush is ten times greater than mahatatva; an infinite is ten times greater than pradhan-purush; prakruti-purush is ten times greater than infinite; and above all Akshardham is the greatest. It is the abode of the Supreme Lord.

Only the akshar muktas residing there have the company of the Supreme Lord but others do not. Others can get the company of Indra, Brahma, Pradhan-purush, Prakruti-purush, but not all can get the company of Purushottam." Muktānand Swāmi then replied, "What if someone has the company of Purushottam here?" Shree Hari said, "Then understand yourself to be fulfilled." (Prakaran 2 - 2)

- Once Shree Hari asked Muktānand Swāmi, "I have been to many abodes and all of the residents praise you. Thus, what greatness do you acquire that they praise you?" He continued. "If this water pot made from clay breaks, would you be able to repair it?" "No Maharāj!" Muktānand Swāmi replied. Shree Hari then said, "Swāmi, you do not know your own greatness. Here let me explain. This Earth is 500 million yojans. Water is ten times greater than the earth; light is ten times greater than water; air is ten times greater than light; space is ten times greater than air; ahamkar is ten times greater than the space; mahatatva is ten times greater than ahamkar; pradhan-purush is ten times greater than mahatatva; an infinite is ten times greater than pradhan-purush; prakruti-purush is ten times greater than infinite; and above all Akshardham is the greatest. From which, if a huge iron ball weighing 1,00,000 tons is dropped, by the time it reaches earth, due to friction, it would become a particle of dust. That is how far the Akshardham is. You have such power that if you if you wish, you can send a very insignificant Jiva to Akshardham, that Jiva will transcend the eight barriers and go to the abode of Purushottam Narayan. This is the power you possess, which you do not know of." He continued, "Let me tell you why you acquire

such immense power. You are strongly associated with the manifest form of God who is seated in Akshardham, which is above all. And due to your strong association, you possess such power." (Prakaran 2 - 31)

- To understand the innermost principles of Maharaj and the great Sādhu is very difficult. When can they be known? When one serves such great sādhus as Muktanand Swāmi, Gopalanand Swāmi and Krupanand Swāmi for many years, then one comes to know them. But without this, they cannot be known; that is a fundamental fact. And without that, whatever we come to know is due to the grace of Shriji Maharaj and this great Sādhu. And when is this grace earned? When one is firm in dharma, has very firm knowledge of ātmā and Paramatma, has intense detachment from the sense pleasures and has single-minded devotion to Bhagwan Purushottam, coupled with knowledge of his glory. Such a person earns grace, but one who is body-conscious does not earn grace. Without the above, what appears to be grace will not last. Of that there is no doubt. (Prakaran 3 – 25)
- Normally, people can be pleased if they are served or offered any objects but Krupānand Swāmi, Muktānand Swāmi and Gopalānand Swāmi will not be pleased upon the person who serves them or offeres them objects. They do not desire for such objects or honor. The only way to please them is to humbly fold your hands and stand before them. (Prakaran 3 - 173)
- Shree Hari said to Muktānand Swāmi, "If one feeds a sādhu like you. That one deed done by him is equivalent of performing millions of Yagnas. If one touches your feet, his sins of countless previous births

would be washed away. If one offers you clothes with affection, he attains liberation. And the river, pond or wells in which you take bath or place your foot into, it becomes a place of pilgrimage. (Prakaran 4 - 15)

- What is difficult to achieve in this world and the world beyond? To have the knowledge of Shree Hari's form, Upasana, faith, trust, inclination to follow the commandments of God and affection for God. This is the essence of all. Muktānand Swāmi, Gopalānand Swāmi, Nityānand Swāmi, Brahmānand Swāmi and many other sādhus attained highly elevated state with the power of Shree Hari's Upasana. (Prakaran 4 - 34)
- Although, one may live with God for a hundred years, without the company of sādhus he cannot attain spiritual understanding. Therefore, when someone would come to listen to Shree Hari's discourse, he would say, "Go and sit with Muktānand Swāmi and listen to his discourses. (Prakaran 5 - 198)

Gopalānand Swāmi Ni Vato

- Maharāj would normally offer thal and valuable clothes to Muktānand Swāmi, and would not offer thal the day he scolded him. And yet he would surely give prasad and clothes to others even after scolding them. Muktānand Swāmi would not become saddened if he was scolded. What understanding did he posses? The answer is, "He believed himself to the different from body and free from mayic influences. He realized the extreme greatness of Shreeji Maharāj. He also firmly realized that God is well-wisher of his devotees. As a result, he would not become saddened after being scolded by Shree Hari." (Prakaran 1 - 74)
- Nishkulānand Swāmi asked, "Will everyone in satsang

attain liberation of the same category or different?" Gopalānand Swāmi replied, "Presently, everyone seems to be following the codes of conduct, but among them those who perform supplementary devotion achieve spiritual states like Muktānand Swāmi and Parvatbhai." (Prakaran 1 - 198)

- A sādhu asked, "Muktānand Swāmi and Swarupānand Swāmi have eradicated their swabhav by practicing various spiritual endeavors. Therefore, can worldly objects of pleasure bind them?" The answer is, "Those who have attained a high spiritual state, receive willingly objects of pleasure for the welfare of others but they could renounce them immediately without being attached to them." (Prakaran 1 - 233)
- How is it possible to remove egoistic nature when one encounters such a situation which helps the ego to increase? The answer is, "When one checks his own abilities with the abilities of greats saints like Satānand Swāmi, Swarupānand Swāmi, Muktānand Swāmi and devotees like Parvatbhai one must think that compared to them, 'I am nothing, so why am I keeping ego?'" (Prakaran 1 - 270)

Kirtan Translation of Stories in the Book

First Arti (pg.141)

Jaya sadaguru Swāmi, Sahajānand dayāďu,
Baďavanta bahunāmi.... Jaya
Charan saroj tamārā, Vandu kara Joďi:
Charańe śiśa dharyāthi, Dukha nākhyā toďi.... Jaya.1
Nārāyana narabhŕātā, Dwijakuďa tanu dhāri;
Pamārā patita uddhāŕyā, Agaṇita naranāri Jaya.2
Nitya nitya nautam lilā, Karatā avināśi;
Aďasath tiratha carane, Koṭi Gayā kāśi Jaya.3
Puruşottama pragaṭa nu., Je darśana karaśe;
Kāďa karama thī chuṭī, kutumba sahita taraśe... Jaya.4
Ā avasar karunā nidhi karunā bahu kīdhī;
Muktānand kahe mukti, sugam karī sidhī.... Jaya 5

Meaning:

Victory to you, our Lord and Master, Puissant and compassionate Sahajanand, Our Lord of a thousand names! I bow down at your Lotus-feet with folded hands, I lay my head at your holy feet of Lord who takes our sorrows away. (1)

You descended in Brahmin clan you're the savior of the fallen and the weak of thousands of men and women. (2)

Your divine actions are ever new, O immutable Lord; at your feet, we find all the holy places, sixty-eight and thousands of the Gayā and Kāśi. (3)

You are the supreme Lord. Whoever is lucky having a glimpse of Your divine self would be freed with all his family, from the bonds of Karmas. (4)

At this time, He, the ocean of compassion (Shree Hari) has showered His blessings abundantly, Muktānand Swāmi says that He made the way of salvation easier. (5)

Distinctive intelligence

Inspiration from a prostitute (pg.67)

Sajanī koḍe ānand, māre gher śrījī padhāryā,
Āvī mārā tanaḍa nā tāp nivāryā re... sajanī
Harakhe śu uṭhī hu to sanamukha chalī,
Tedī besāryā me to, bāyalḍī jalī,
Akśar nā vālīḍāne thāvāne vālī vālī vālī...sajanī (1)
Sanamukh besī huto nirakhavā lāgī,
Lokaḍiyānī meto lajjā re tyāgī,
Mukhaḍu joine marī bhukhalḍī bhāgī bhāgī bhāgī...sajanī (2)
Hari ne jamaḍyā meto hāthe sahelī,
Kuḍnī marjāda meto kore lai melī,
Govindne joi huto thai chhu re ghelī ghelī ghelī...sajanī (3)
Pananī bīḍī meto prem thī ālī,
Hasīne hośīle vāle sthir karī sthapī,
Koṭī janamnā dukhaḍa nākhyā chhe kāpī kāpī kāpī...sajanī (4)
Ūchī agaśī māre nautam meḍī,
Ūche āvāśe mujane ekānte teḍī,
Haiḍanī rāḍo meto Hari āgaḍa relī relī relī...sajanī (5)
Vaṇa teḍyā velā māre mandīra āvo,
Marakalḍe mohan mīṭhī veṇu re bajāvo,
Hete karīne mujane hasīne bolāvo bolāvo bolāvo...sajanī (6)
Rang nā rangīlā mujane ranga lāgyo tāro,
Keḍe phare chhe jīvan prāṇ amāro,
Muktānand kahe chhe māro janam sudhāro sudhāro
sudhāro...sajanī (7)

Meaning:

Friend, I am experiencing abundant bliss at every moment when Shriji (Shree Hari) came to my house, by coming at my home He eliminated all my distress caused by physical disorder.

I got up cheerfully, went forth to greet Him, by holding

His hands, I brought Him inside my house and made Him sit comfortably. I looked at His face very cheerfully. (1)

I fed Him with my own hands, then He kept aside the strict observance of untouchability from the religious point of view, I became joyously excited after seeing Govind, the Lord (2)

I offered betel-roll affectionately which he accepted joyfully into His mouth, then He offered chewed betel roll from His mouth, which I accepted with great pleasure. (3)

He satisfied me by fulfilling all my desires, and smilingly lit joy in by heart. The consequences of miseries of millions of past births are vanished. (4)

There is a magnificent upper storey in which he called alone. Then I expressed to my heartfelt joy and sorrows to Him. (5)

I requested Him to come at my home without invitation, play the flute beautifully with a smiling face and to call smilingly with affection. (6)

I felt, I have been colored with his blissful and pleasant complexion, the Lord of my heart comes with me wherever I go. Thus, Muktānand Swāmi says that He has fulfilled the purpose of my birth. (7)

A Letter to His Sister (Pg.70)

The First Stanza:

Mohan ne gamvāne icchho mānani,
Tyāgo sarve juthi man ni ṭek jo
Pativratā no dharma achaḍ kari pāḍajo,
Haricharane rahejo abaḍa thai cheka jo...Mohan ne1
Vaḍi eka vāt kahu chu adhika vivek ni,
Sāmbhaḍ beni tārā sukha ne kāj jo;
Harijana sange rākho puran prītḍi
Tyāgo mada matsar juthi kuḍ lāj jo...Mohan ne 2

Sukhdāyak tame jāno sundar Shyām ne,
Ati dukhadāyak man potānu jānjo;
Muktānand no nātha magan thai sevajo,
Samji vichāri bolo amruta ven jo ...Mohan ne 3

Meaning:

If you want to be loved by God and to please God, renounce all the false desires you have in your mind;

And observe single minded devotion to your husband (God), and humbly serve the feet of God throughout one's life. (1)

Listen sister, I may tell you one thing for your happiness which bears a great value.

Always remain attached to the devotees of God and renounce the base instincts like envy and false pride of one's social status. (2)

Know that God is the giver of all happiness and the mind is the source of all miseries. Be engaged in the service of Muktānand Swāmi's Lord. And you should speak the words sweet like the nectar followed by great understanding. (3)

The Second Stanza:

Sāmbhaď beni hari rijyāni ritđi,
Mohanvarne mān sangāthe ver jo;
Sādhan sarve mān bagāđe paď viśe,
Jem bhaďiyu paya sākar mā ahi-jher jo...Sāmbhal 1
Dāsi thai tu raheje dinadayāďani
Nici tel maďe to māne moṭā bhāgya jo;
Bhav brahmādik ne niśce maďti nathi,
Puruşottam pāse bethāni jāgya jo...Sāmbhal 2
Pŕit kare purušottam sāthe nitya navi
Dājhisa mā dekhi ke'nu sanmān jo;
Muktānand no nāth magan thai sevjo
To rijhe sundaravar kahn jo...Sāmbhal 3

Meaning:

Listen sister, the way to please God. God has natural antipathy with ego.

However, pride ruins all of one's endeavors (that one has done to please God) in an instant just like a drop of snake venom spoils sweetened milk. (1)

Always prefer the way to become a servant of merciful Lord. When you get a chance to offer even the smallest service, consider it as your very great fortune. For sure, even the great demigods Brahma and others do not get such a chance to sit next to purshottam(God). (2)

Offer renewed devotion to purushottam daily. Do not be jealous when others are honored. Happily, serve the master of Muktānand, so God will be pleased upon you. (3)

The Third Stanza:

Kāna kuvar ni rit suni manmā dharo,
To tame raheśo magan sadā hari sang jo;
Pururuşottam ne nathi koi pār potātanu
Purankām na rāche kene rang jo... Kān kuvar 1
Karunā nidhi mā kāmādik vyāpe nahi
Irśyā mān tano nahi antar lesh jo;
Kāďava ven kahe potānā dāsne
Auşadha sam āpe uttam upadeś jo... Kān kuvar 2
Jeje vacan kahe sundarvar Shyāmďo
Sukha upaje tem karavo shudh vichār jo
Muktānand no nāth sadā sukhadāi che
Evu jāni karajo puran pyār jo ... Kān kuvar 3

Meaning:

First, listen to the way and manner of Satsang described by Kān (Shree Hari) and then think over it. Then and only then you will be happy in his company. God does not harbour any feeling of partiality. He (Lord) is not affected by

any happenings of the world. (1)

Merciful God is never taken by any instincts(natures) like the worldly men. He does not even have a trace of jealousy or ego in his heart. He may say bitter words of great wisdom to his dear devotees to play the role of medicine. (2)

Whatever words are spoken by the Lord, believe that they will bring joy; Know that the Lord of Muktānand Swāmi always gives happiness, so offer total love/devotion to him. (3)

The Fourth Stanza:

Sukhasāgar harivar sange sukh mānajo
Ati ghaṇi maher kari shŕi Maharāj jo
Puruśottam sāthe puran sagapan thayu
Āpan tulua nahi koi biju āj jo;... Sukhasāgar 1
Ravimanďaď mā rāt tanu dukh nav made;
Pāras pāmyo dhan duŕbal tā jāy jo;
Tem pragaṭ puruśottam ne je je maď e
Teno mahimā bhav brahmādik gāy jo... Sukhasāgar 2
Tan abhimān taje pūran sukh pāmīye
śamaďiyā sang vādhe sāchi pŕit jo
Muktānand kahe maŕma ghano che vātmā
Jāni lejo ati uttam ras rit jo;... Sukhasāgar 3

Meaning:

Realize that happiness is only in the devotion of Shree Hari, who is the ocean of bliss. Maharāj has bestowed abundant grace upon us. We have been betrothed with company of God so there is nobody as fortunate as we are in the world. (1)

In the surrounding area of the sun, darkness is never to be seen; as one who has a pārasmani will never have to suffer the lack of money, similarly the glory of man is increased when God attained. And his glory is sung by the great deities like brahma. etc. (2)

By shedding the ego, one's association with God will increase one's true devotion. Muktānand says there is a bigger meaning to these talks, so realize it to be the best way to learn the essence. (3)

The Glory of Divine Contact (pg.83)

Mārā vālāji śu vālapa dīse re, teno sang śida tajiye
Te vinā kene bhajiye...teno
Sanmukh jātā sankā na kīje mārā bhālā tano meh varse re
Hansa jai harījan ne re maďśe, kāci te kāyā paďaśe re...teno
śuďi upara śayana karāve, toye sādhu ne sange rahiye re
Durijan lok duŕbhāşan bole,
tenu sukha dukha sarave sahiye re...teno
Amrut pe ati mīṭha mukhathi,
hari nā caritŕa sunāve re
Brahmābhav sanakādika jevā jenā,
darasana karvāne āve re... teno
Narak kundthī narasu lāge, durijan nu mukha manmā re
Muktānand magan thai māge vālā vās dejo harijan mā re...teno

Meaning:

Why would one give up the company of a saint who has only love for God? Only he should be worshiped with honor.

If one continues to keep company of him (saint) despite having numerous obstacles, his soul will attain the supreme bliss in the abode of God.

Though by living with saints, one is put on a bed of thorns or he had to face a barrage of insult by wicked people, He should not think to give up the company of saints.

His nectar-like speech narrates the divine pastimes of

God (Shree Hari). The great demigods like Brahma want to offer obeisance to such a saint.

To see the face of wicked people is more painful to me than the sufferings of hell. Muktānand Swāmi asks to keep him always in association of God's devotees.

Faith in God (pg.76)

The First Stanza:

Chāṅḍi ke Shrī kruśna dev, aur ki jo karu sev;
Kaṭi dāro kar mero, tikhi talvār se...chāṅḍi
Tyāgi ke rasik kān, aur ko jo dharu dhyān;
Cir dāro chāti meri, kathin kuthār se...chāndi 1
Kŕiśna bin anya jehi, iṣṭa jāni namu tehi;
For đāro śir mero, muśal pŕahār se...chāndi 2
Muktānand kahe moy, aur jo pratīt hoy;
Jānīyo adhīk nīch, svapac labārase...chāndi 3

Meaning:

After seeking the refuge of Krishna, if I were to serve anyone other than Him, cut my arms with sharp-edged sword.

If I meditate on anyone except God, who belongs to ascetics, strike my chest with a sharp-edged axe. (1)

If I realize anyone to be God except Krishna, let my head be crushed with the strokes of a musal (a long and thick wooden pestle) (2)

Muktānand Swāmi says that if I were to develop love except God (Shree Hari), know me lower than the man who is born to the lowest caste. (3)

The Second Stanza:

Chāndī ke shrī Ghanśyām, aur ko jo japu nām;
Kar le kaṭāri merī, jīhvā kāṭi dārīyo...Chāndi
Lokanaki lāj daru, jo na bhaktī chānī dharu;
Pāvak ke madhya mero tan ko prajādīyo...Chāndi 1
Jīvīkā ko lobha jāni, bhakti jo karu me chāni;
Tehi chin tan mero, śaila se pachariyo...Chāndi 2
Muktānand kahe teri, draḍhta jo ḍage meri;
śuḍi pe cadhāi tikhe, tirana se māriyo...Chāndi 3

Meaning:

If I begin to chant the name of anyone other than Ghanshyam, cut my tongue with a dagger.

If I become engaged in the devotion of others secretly out of the fear of criticism of bad-mannered people, destroy my body by burning it into the fire. (1)

If I become engaged in the devotion of others secretly knowing it as my livelihood, at the very moment throw my body down from the high mountain. (2)

Muktānand Swāmi says, if I ever move from my resolution (that Sahajānand Swāmi is the supreme Lord), hurl sharp arrows on my body sleeping me on stake. (3)

The Third Stanza:

Hoya me śrī kŕuśnadās, aur ki jo karu āśa;
Jāniyo labār lūcco, nīch thag jārse...hoy
Jantŕa mantŕa satya jānu, tāki jo pŕatit ānu;
Jāniyo adhīk mudh kumati gamārse...hoy 1
Dhaŕma hin bhakti karu, pŕabhuse jo nahi daru;
Jānīyo pŕabal pāpi, bhumīhu ke bhār se...hoy 2
Muktānand kahe iśṭ ek, tāki jo na rākhu ṭek;
Jāniyo adhik buro, gandak biḍār se...hoy 3

Meaning:

Being the servant of Lord Krishnā if I may hope of someone else, neglect me as unworthy, cunning, low and a fraud.

If I develop faith in black magic consider me to be an ignorant person. (1)

If I become fearless from God and perform bhakti devoid of dharma (moral duties) neglect me for being a grave sinner; and burden on the Earth. (2)

Muktānand Swāmi says, If I have do not possess faith in God (shree Hari) consider me to be more resentful than a cat.(3)

The Forth Stanza:

Pāy ke shree kŕuśna piyā, aur se jo joru jiyā
Jāno moy jag madhya, sabase labārjyu...pāy
Pragaṭ swarup tyāgu, aur se jo anurāgu;
Jāniyo jarur moku, pāp ko pahārjyu...pāy 1
Madya más bhogi dev, taki jo karu me sev;
Honā sadā śir mere, vajra ke pŕahārjyu...pāy 2
Muktānand kahe moy, aur jo āsh hoy;
Veshyā sam veś mero, jāno ati khuvāŕjyu...pāy 3

Meaning:

After receiving the favor of Lord Shree Krishnā if I fix my mind elsewhere, consider me the biggest rascal in the world.

If I become attached to anyone besides the manifest form of God consider me to be a mountain full of sins. (1)

If I go to serve the goddess who consumes meat and alcohol, let there be constant strikes of lightning on my head. (2)

Muktānand Swāmi says, if I have hope of anyone other than God, consider my role as a prostitute (worthless). (3)

The Consequence of Jealousy and Love (pg.202)

The First Stanza:

Hari haiyā nā hār cho, jire tame hari haiyā nā hār cho;
Sej tanā śangār cho...jire
Mukh thi śu ghanu kahiye mohan re,
prān taṇā ādhār cho... jire 1
Vālapanā mā atiśe vhālā re, naṭvar nand kumār cho... jire
Durijaniyāne dur Ghanā cho re,
premi te jannā prān cho... jire 3
Muktānand kahe nar nāṭak dhāri re,
śarṇāgat nā sār cho... jires 4

Meaning:

O Hari! You are necklace of my heart. How can I speak of you? In short you are the support of my life. (1)

You are the dearest among all my choices, you are Naṭvar (Lord Krishnā), the son of Nand. (2)

You are too far from the wicked and support for the devotees who love you. (3)

Muktānand Swāmi says, you have obtained a human body on this Earth, for the sake of others. (4)

The Second Stanza:

Nayṇā ṭhare che joyane re, mārā nayṇa thare che joyane
Rahi chu mohan sang mohine re...mārā
Je din mā darśan nav pāmu re, te din vite roine re... mārā 1
Lokaḍiyā ni lāj na rākhu re, ke mārā veṇ vagoine re... mārā 2
Shyām vinā hu caud bhuvan mā re,
range na rācu koi ne re... mārā 3
Muktānand mohan var pāmi re,
kul maŕjādā khoi ne re ... mārā 4

Meaning:

My eyes feel satisfaction in observing your delightful form, I am attached to Mohan(God).

The day in which I do not get a chance to see you, I spend that day by crying. (1)

I do not care for being dishonored by the worldly people when they censure me. (2)

I never become influenced by anyone else Shyām(Ghanshyam) in fourteen worlds. (3)

Muktānand Swāmi says that he has achieved Mohan by giving up every concern of cast and family. (4)

The Third Stanza:

Mohyu nayan ni sān mā re, man mohyu nayan ni sān ma;
Vasalđi nā tānmā re... man
Kām ne kāj mane kāi nav suje re,
girdharaji nā gān mā re... man 1
Ākhalđī aṇiyađi joine re, kunđaď ni chabi kānmā re ...2
Man game tem mukh thī bolu re,
jāne bethī chu rānmā re... man 3
Muktānand kahe thai matvāli re,
vālamjinā vālmā... man 4

Meaning

My mind is attached to your lotus eyes and the sweet sound of the flute you play.

When I start singing the praise of giridhar (one who lifted mount giri), I forget all other works to be carried out. (1)

After observing the beauty of your eyelids and ear rings il am mesmerized. I may speak in any manner as if seated in a wasteland. (2-3)

Muktānand Swāmi says, I became intoxicated by complexion of my dear one. (4)

The Fourth Stanza:

Kānudā sang man lāgyu saiyar māru kānudā sang man lāgyu;
Virah nu bān mane vāgyu re ... saiyar
Shyām vinā hu chaud bhuvan mā re,
aďgi te nav anurāgu ...saiyar 1
Mohanvar sāthe man mānyu re,
biju te kāi nav māgu re... saiyar 2
Fulade sej samārī sundar re, vāṭdi joi joi jāgu re... saiyar 3
Muktānand mohanvar maďtā re,
janma marana dukh bhāgyu re...saiyar 4

Meaning:

My mind is fascinated with Kānudā(Krishna), and am pierced by the arrows of separation.

I will never be allured in the fourteen realms except for Shyam(God). (1)

My mind has been settled with Mohanvar (God), therefore my I am fulfilled. (2)

I have prepared a beautiful flower-bed and am waiting for you(God) to come. (3)

Muktānand Swāmi says, having the favor of Mohanvar, the miseries of birth and death have been annihilated. (4)

First Vachanāmrit (pg.145)

Odhāji amne śyām vinā sukh nāve re..... Odhāji amne
Sagā na dithā sohāye mandiriyu khāvāne dhāye,
Bhojaniyā te nav bhāve re.....Odhāji amne...1
Rajani mā nind tyāgi lagni e sāthe lāgi
Kān na sandeso kāvere.... Odhāji amne...2
Divāni thai ne ďolu bapaiyā ni pere bolu,
Mohni lagādi māvere .... Odhāji amne...3
Muktānand māv pāse amne koi rākhe vāse
Kāhn ne koi ṭedi lāve... Odhāji amne...4

Meaning:

In this song Muktānand Swāmi addressing to Uddhav (A disciple of Lord Krishna) says, "Oh Uddhav! Everything is the cause of pain. I cannot feel happiness without Shyam(Krishna). (1)

To attain your darshan I have renounced relatives and other materialism. I am much eager to see you. I cannot wait any longer, I want to meet you. All things are insignificant for me. I dislike consuming food. The night becomes sleepless. You are my the only shelter for me. (2)

I oscillate being crazy, speak like bapaiyā (A kind of sweet voiced singing bird) since Mohan(G0d) has infatuated me with his beautiful form. (3)

Muktānand Swāmi request is for someone to bring me near my Lord and keep me with him. (4)

Little but Perfect (pg.148)

Bhajobhāvśu akhanđ jap mālā re,
mālā ṭāde che man kerā cāđā re...Bhajo (1)
Harinu ek ek ang ura dhāro re,
Swāminārāyan nām uccāro re...Bhajo (2)
Japu jugal caraṇ sukhakāri re,
uŕdhvarekhādik cihna sambhāri re...Bhajo (3)
Das āngađini mālā das jano re,
fanā jugalni pramāno re...Bhajo (4)
Pāṇi jugal gulaf jug śobhe re,
mālā cār feri jan man lobhe re... Bhajo (5)
Jangha jugal jānu jug vande re,
mālā chār feri sant ānande re... Bhajo (6)
Uru jugalni mālā jug fere re,
nābhi vartuď samān prite here re... Bhajo (7)
Nābhi udar jugal stan joi re,

mālā chār feri rahe jan mohi re Bhajo (8)
Bhuj jugal harinā sukhkāri re,
mālā feri jāy dās balihāri re...Bhajo (9)
Kar āngaḍini mālā das kāve re,
jotā bhaktane ānand upajāve re...Bhajo (10)
Kanth chibukni mālā jug feri re,
much pankaj umange rahe heri re...Bhajo (11)
Mukh nāsikā jugal draḍha here re,
mālā chār chāre ang joi fere re...Bhajo (12)
Kāne kunḍaḍ vhālāne jug kāve re,
feri mālā ubhay dās man bhave re...Bhajo (13)
Jotā jugal bhŕakruti fare kāl re,
preme joi dās jape jug māl re...Bhajo (14)
Bhāl tilak sahit vhālu lāge re,
jape mālā ek dās anurage re...Bhajo (15)
Māthe pāgh torā sahit rupāḍi re,
fere mālā jan juve vanamāli re...Bhajo (16)
Evi rite thai mālikā pachās re,
jape janma maran kare nāsh re...Bhajo (17)
Swāminārāyan deve mālā didhī re, preme
Muktānande ura dhāri lidhi re... (18)

Meaning:

This Kirtan explains the method of doing fifty Mala by which manner Muktānand Swāmi used to do regularly.

First, Muktānand Swāmi meditates on sixteen signs at the lotus feet of God. He observes a line known as uŕdhvarekhā in both of God's lotus feet and chants the name “Swāminārāyaṇ”. (1-3)

The first 10 mālās are spun by observing the beautiful lotus feet of Shree Hari. (4)

2 Mālā for both Uŕdhvarekhā which origins from the both

side of the finger next to the thumb (thumb of feet) and passes through the both sides of heels and 2 mala for the two thighs. (5-6)

2 mālās for most attractive round naval of Shree Hari (7)

4 mālās for the stomach and broad chest of Shree Hari (8)

10 mālās for all fingers and thumbs of both hands with sharp and raised nails which give the joy to the devotees. (9-10)

1 mālā for throat which is decorated with three lines like those on a conch shell and 1 mala by meditating on God's chin. (11)

7 mālās while observing the beautifully formed face which puts the Lord of cupid to shame. His two eyes are like lotus petals and nose and two ears decorated with golden earrings, eyebrows and gorgeous and bright forehead. (12-15)

Last 1 mala to observe Lord's well formed turban that is embroidered with golden and silver thread. (16)

By doing fifty mala in this way one becomes free from the miseries of birth and death. (17)

It is said that when Muktānand Swāmi explained this sequence of doing mala Shree Hari put a mala (rosary) around Muktānand Swāmi's neck which Muktānand Swāmi accepted with love. (18)

The Great Farewell (pg.227)

The First Stanza:

Antakāḍe āvi re sambhāri lejo śāmaḍā re,
jośo mā amārā avguṇ śyām;
Pan che potānu re pŕabhujī tame pāḍjo re,
adhamodhāraṇ karuṇā nā dhām... ant 1
Gajne chodāvyo grāhnā mukh thaki re,
kartā kāi aradha nām ucār,
Evī rite āvo re sundar śamaḍā re,
vāṭḍi jou chu varamvar... ant 2
Nārāyan nāme re odhāryo ajāmel ne re,

kartā te putŕa tano pokār,
Evu te vichāri re albelā āvjo re,
amāre che tamāro re ādhār...ant 3
Doyali veďā mā re dinānāth re, kahone ame keni kariye āśa?
Muktānand nā Swāmi re sundar śāmaďā re,
abalā ne teđi rākho pās... ant 4

Meaning:

(Muktānand Swāmi recalling Shree Hari)

O Shyam! By overlooking my faults, behold me at the end time of my life. You always fulfill your promises. You never forget one who has surrendered to you. O uplifter of even the unrighteous, the abode of compassion. (1)

You rescued the elephant from the clutch of the crocodile when it (elephant) chanted your half name. Please come my beautiful Shyam, I am eagerly waiting for you. (2)

As soon as Ajamil called his son 'Nārāyan', you set him free from the holds of Yamaduts (god of death). O my beloved! Please, come to me thinking of this incident. You are my only shelter. (3)

Muktānand Swāmi says, O helper of the meek! Tell me who will look after me at the time of difficulty. O beautiful Shyam! Keep me always with you. (4)

The Second Stanza:

Doyali veďā mā re koi kenu nathi re,
jyāre kare jamđā āvine jor
Teni velā āvi re dāyāďu muj din ni re,
bāhya gŕahi re jo nand kishor...doyali 1
Jyāre tute nāđī re jhalāy jāy jībhađi re,
vāje kaf sahita śvas no ghor,
Sagā ne sambandhī re lāge sahu lutvā re,

kudā kuda kari ne shor bakor...doyali 2
Swārath nā sagā re sarave sansāra mā re,
tam vinā juthā sarve jan,
Tame ne tamāre re jan pŕabhu paramārathi re,
bije nav māne māru man ... doyali 3
Tŕāhī tŕāhī kari re pokāru joi tam bhani re,
sevak nī karjo śyām sambhāď,
Muktānand Swāmi re jan sujāṇ cho re,
varṇave che ved dindayāl ...doyali 4

Meaning:

No one stands for help at the time of difficulty, when Yamduts appear. I am passing through such painful moments of end time. So please hold my hands. (1)

When the veins of body are being broken, the tongue cannot utter a single word properly, the breath slows down, the relatives began to take away everything thinking of no longer of living, and are making noisy clamor for that. (2)

All the relatives in the world are selfish. Only you and your devotees are true and noble. Consequently, my mind is concerned only with you. (3)

Muktānand Swāmi says, O compassionate one! The Vedas describe you very kind. I helplessly cry out looking at you, please look after your servant. (4)

The Third Stanza:

Ā avasare re dayāď́u dayā kari re,
ṭāď́vāne janama maran nā tāp,
Vāhane caďhi ne re āvo cho mārā vālmā re,
nārāyaṇ nāmano japatā jāp...ā ava 1
Anek ne āvyā re anta same teďva re,
sāthe lai sant jan no sātha
Evā to tamāre re gun anant apār re,

sāmbhaďatā mā sarve thāya sanāth ...ā ava 2
Adham jātī re odhāri bahu nārī ne re,
jene ninde śastra ved purāṇ
Gun ne avgun re ganatā nathī re,
śaraṇe āvyānā śyām sujāṇ... ā ava 3
Karunā ras ne re pŕagaṭa kariyo kānaji re,
karvā anek jan no uddhār,
Muktānand ne vāle re mahā sukha āpīyu re,
karī nītya naval neh vīhār...ā ava 4

Meaning:

O compassionate one! These moments are fortunate enough to get rid of the affliction caused by birth and death. Please! My beloved one! you come by sitting on vehicle when someone calls you by the name. 'Nārāyan' (1)

I have heard very often of your virtues, which makes one happy. You have taken many devotees at the end time coming with saints to your divine abode 'Akshardham'. (2)

You have liberated many unrighteous women, whom the scriptures, veda and puran proclaim. You look passed the faults of those who have surrendered to you. (3)

Muktānand Swāmi says, O my dear! You have given extreme happiness by staying affectionately with us. And presently you left us in pathetic condition. (4)

The Fourth Stanza:

Bhalene padhārīyā re gīrīdhar gājatā re,
have mune karī kutārath kān,
Nayaṇa thare che re nāth ne nīrakhatā re,
jenu nītya dharī ne rahetā dhyān... bhale ne 1
Dukhďā nā dahāďa re have to dur gayā re,
līdhī chel chabīle mārī sār,
Jīvan joine re jaga jutho thayo re,

tam sang lāgyo rang ektār...bhale ne 2
Kamḍā sarīkhī re karī mune kanjī re,
gŕahī guṇvante māro hāth,
Bhalu māru bhāgya re faḍyu koi kaḍnu re,
pāmi pati akhil bhuvan no nath... bhale ne 3
Akhanḍ sohāgi re tam ne je jānse re,
mānśe mahā sukha moj apār,
Muktānand kahe che re tamane parahari re,
bhava jaḍ koi na pāme pār ... bhale ne 4

Meaning:

O giridhar (one who lifted giri mount)! Welcome with profuse reverence making me fortunate, my eyes are fixed to see your form which I use to meditate with. (1)

O Lord! You have paid attention to me. Now the days of anxiety have been overcome. The world seems to be fatal observing your form; my mind is attached only to your form. (2)

You made me as fortunate as Laxmiji (the goddess) when you held my hand. Let my fortune be flourished by achieving the Lord of the whole universe. (3)

One, who knows your eternal existence, will attain extreme bliss. Muktānand Swāmi says, without your grace no one can cross the ocean of the material world. (4)

His Messages

Vivek

Text 1

विना विवेक संसार सब, भव भटकत मतिमंद ।
सार असार विवेक जेही, सोइ साधु जगवंद ।। पंचरत्नम् ।।

Vinā viveka sansār sab, bhav bhaṭkat matimaṅda;
Sāra asāra vivek jehī, soi sādhu jagvaṅd...

Vinā-without; viveka-discrimination of truth and false; sansār-in the world; sab-all; bhav-worldly life; bhaṭkat-wandering; matimaṅda-unwise people;

Sāra-good; asāra-worse; vivek-a sense of discrimination; jehī-who; soi-he; sādhu-saint; jagvaṅd-worth to be worshiped by the world

Those unwise people are wandering and leading their lives in the world without discrimination between true and false, and one who has a sense of vivek (power to discriminate) is a true saint and worthy to be worshiped by the world.

Text 2

सत असत अरु विष सुधा, मदिरा गंगातोय ।
मुक्त सबनके पृथक गुन, कहे एक क्युं होय ।।
विवेक चिंतामणि-विवेकको अंग-६ ।।

Sata asata aru viṣa sudhā, madirā gangātoya;
Mukta sabanake pṛithaka guna, kahe eka kyu hoi...

Sata-truth; asata-false; aru-and; viṣa-poison; sudhā-nectar; madirā-vine; gangātoya-water of holy river Ganga; Mukta-Muktānand swāmi says; sabanake-of all; pṛithaka- different;

guna-quality; kahe-by saying; eka kyu hoi-how can be one

Muktānand Swāmi says that true and false, nectar and poison, the water of holy river Ganga and wine - these all have different qualities. If someone says that there is no difference, how can it be true.

Higher Understanding

Text 1

ब्रह्म भुवन लगी ज्ञानविन, कालव्याल सब खात ।
मुक्त मीले जेही प्रगट प्रभु, तेही ढीग काल न जात ।।
विवेकचिंतामणि- ज्ञानको अंग-५ ।।

Brahma bhuvan lagī jṇānvina, kālavyāl saba khāta;
Mukta mīle jehī pragaṭ prabhu, tehī ḍhīga kāla na jāt...

Brahma bhuvan - the residence of Lord Brahma, creator; lagī-up to; jṇānvina-without knowledge; kālavyāl-the ferocious snake of time; saba-everything; khāta-destroys;

Mukta-Muktānand swāmi says; mīle-attained; jehī-who; pragaṭ prabhu-manifest God; tehī-him; ḍhīga-near; kāla-the influence of time; na jāt-cannot reach

The ferocious snake of time destroys everything up to the residence of Lord Brahma (the creator of universe). One who has attained the manifest form of God will find that the influence of time cannot touch him.

Text 2

त्रिभुवनकी संपत मिले, पल न तजत हरि ध्यान ।
मुक्त कहे सो संतकुं, कंचन कीच समान ।।
विवेक चिंतामणि- विवेकको अंग-११ ।।

Tribhuvanakī sampata mile, pala na tajata hari dhyān;
Mukta kahe so sañtaku, kanchan kīcha samāna...

Tribhuvana-three loks; kī-of; sampata-wealth or property; mile-acquire; pala-for a moment; na-not; tajata-give up; hari dhyān-meditation of God;

Mukta kahe-Muktānand swāmi says; so santaku-for such a saint or devotee; kañchan-gold; kīcha-mud; samāna-equal;

The attribute of a true saint is one who does not give up devotion of Lord Shree Hari even in case of acquiring wealth of the three loks (realms) -earth, heaven, hell, Muktānand swāmi says that he regards both the gold and mud in a equal category.

Greatness of God

Text 1

सुखदायक रे स्वामी सहजानंद, प्रगट पुरुषोत्तम श्री हरि ।
जेनुं स्वामिनारायण नाम छे, जेने भजने रे पामे भवजळ पार ॥
कीर्तन-सुखदायक रे स्वामी-१.१ ॥

Sukhadāyaka re swāmī Sahajānand, pragaṭ puruṣottam śrī hari;

Jenu swāmināràyaṇ nāma chhe,
jene bhajane re pāme bhavajaď pāra...

Sukhadāyaka re-bestower of happiness; swāmī Sahajānand-Sahajānand swāmi; pragaṭ puruṣottam-manifest supreme person; śrī hari-Shri Hari;

Jenu-whose; swāmināràyaṇ-Swāminarayan; nāma-name; chhe-is; jene-with; bhajane re-devotion; pāme-one can; bhavajaď-the ocean of illusion; pāra-cross

The supreme personality, bestower of happiness who manifested in the form of Sahajānand swāmi/Shri Hari, whose name is Swāminarayan, by performing his devotion one can easily cross the ocean of Maya (illusion).

Text 2

अनंत कोटी ब्रह्मांडनी उत्पत्ति स्थिति ने नाश ।
तेना ते करता श्री हरि, पोते अकळ अज अविनाश ।। धर्माख्यान-४-५ ।।

Anaṅt koṭī brahmāṅḍnī, utpatti sthiti ne nāśa;
Tenā te karatā śrī hari, pote akaḍa aja avināśa...

Anaṅt-innumerable; koṭī-one crore; brahmāṅḍnī-universes; utpatti-creation; sthiti-sustenance; ne-and nāśa-desolation;

Tenā-its; te-he; karatā-doer; śrī hari-Shri Hari, pote-Himself; akaḍa- beyond intelligence; aja-without beginning; avināśa-eternal

The supreme Lord Shri Hari is beyond our intelligence, without beginning and is eternal. He is the creator, sustainer and destroyer of innumerable universes.

Glory of the Saint

Text 1

सबही देव तेहि रीझहि, सब तीर्थ तेहि पास ।
मुक्त कहे जेहि संत उर, श्री हरि किन निवास ।।
विवेक चिंतामणि, साधु को अंग-३३ ।।

Sabahī deva tehi rījhahi, saba tīrtha tehi pāsa;
Mukta kahe jehi sant ura, śrī hari kina nivās...

Sabahī-all; deva-demigods; tehi-by him; rījhahi-pleased; saba-all; tīrtha-the places of pilgrimage; tehi pāsa-

near to him; Mukta kahe-Muktānand swāmi says; jehi sańt ura, śrī hari kina nivās-in whose heart resides Shri Hari

Muktānand Swāmi says that all demigods admire him, all the places of pilgrimage exist in him in whose heart Shri Hari resides. Swāmi is regarding a glory of such a true saint.

Text 2

धन दोलत सुत जुवति, राज वाज सुख साज ।
मुक्त कहे यह सब मिले, दुर्लभ संत समाज ।।
विवेक चिंतामणि, साधु को अंग-२१ ।।

Dhan dolat suta juvati, rāja vāja sukha sāja;
Mukta kahe yaha saba mile, durlabh sant samāj...

Dhan-wealth; dolat-property; suta-son; juvati-wife; rāja-kingdom; vāja-strength, power; sukha-happiness; sāja-necessary equipments;

Mukta kahe-Muktānand swāmi says; yaha-these; saba-all; mile-can be achieved; duŕlabh-rare; sańt samāj-the association of saints

Muktānand Swāmi says that wealth, property, son, wife, kingdom, strength, happiness and all other necessary material can be achieved but the association of saints is very rare.

Need of a Guru

Text 1

जन्म मरन के बंधन काटे, चोरासी लख त्रास मिटाइ ।
मुक्तानंद चरण बलीहारी, गुरु महिमा हरि से अधिकाइ ॥
कीर्तन-भाग्य बडे सद्गुरु मे पायो १-४ ॥

Janma maran ke bandhan kaṭe, chorāsī lakha trāsa miṭāi;
Muktānand charaṇ balīhārī, guru mahimā hari se adhikāi...

Janma-birth; maran-death; ke-of; bandhan-bondage; kaṭe-cut down; cohrāsī lakha-8.4 million types of species; trāsa-sufferings; miṭāi-alleviate;

Muktānand-Muktānand swāmi; charaṇ-lotus feet; balīhārī- applause; guru-spiritual master; mahimā-glorification; hari-Hari(God); se-then; adhikāi-greater;

Such a SantHe destroys the bondage of birth and death and also alleviates the soul from the sufferings of 8.4 million types of bodies. Muktānand Swāmi applauses such a spiritual master because his glory is greater than the glory of God.

Text 2

संत अनंत के कारज सीधे, जब गुरु गोविंद अेक जनायो ॥
दास मुकुंद वास गुरु चरने, जीनकी कृपासें भर्मगढ ढार्यो ॥
कीर्तन-लगन लगी मुरत माधुरीसे ३-३.४ ॥

Sant anant ke kāraja sīdhe, jab guru govind eka janāyo;
Dāsa mukunda vās guru charane,
jīnakī kṛpāse bhaŕma gaḍha ḍhāŕyo...

Sant-saint; anant-innumerable; ke-of; kāraja-endeavors for the attainment of moksha; sīdhe-be rewarded; jab-when; guru-spiritual master; goviń-God; eka janāyo-

appears to be one;

Dāsa mukuńda-Muktānand swāmi; vās-to reside; guru-of spiritual master; charane-feet; jīnakī-with whose; kṛpāse-grace; bhaŕma-illusion; gaḍha-fort; ḍhāŕyo-could be crossed

Innumerable endeavors for the attainment of moksha executed by a saint are said to be rewarded when he comes to know that there is no difference between God and Guru. Muktānand swāmi asks to reside at the feet of such a Guru with whose grace the fort of illusion can be crossed.

Humbleness

Text 1

जाहि प्रगट मोहन मिले, सोइ रहत गुलतान ।
मुक्त कहे तेहि ना रहे, मिथ्या तन अभिमान ।।
विवेक चिंतामणि-आनंदीको अंग १ ।।

Jāhi pragaṭ mohan mile, soi rahat gultān;
Mukta kahe tehi nā rahe, mithya tan abhimān...

Jāhi-one; pragaṭ-manifest; mohan-God; mile-attained; soi-he; rahat-lives; gultān-happily;

Mukta kahe-Muktānand swāmi says; tehi-he; nā rahe-does not harbor; mithya-false; tan abhimān-ego

One who has attained the manifest form of God, remains happy in any circumstances. Muktānand Swāmi says that he would never develop any type of ego.

Text 2

जीरे अेवुं जाणी अहंता तजी, शुद्ध भावे रे करवी संतनी सेव ।
मनुष्यभाव मनथी तजो, मुक्तानंद कहे रे साचा संत छे देव ।।
कीर्तन-सुख दायकरे साचा संतनो संग ४.४ ।।

Jīre Evu jāṇī ahamtā tajī, śuddha bhāve re karavī santnī sev;
Manuşyabhāva manathī tajo,
muktānand kahe re sāchā santa chhe dev...

Jīre Evu jāṇī-by knowing this, ahamtā –egoistic nature; tajī- relinquishing; śuddha bhāve re-with pure heart; karavī-should do; santnī sev-service of saint;

Manuşyabhāva-considering as a human; manathī tajo-give up from the mind; muktānand kahe-Muktānand swāmi says; re sāchā-true; santa –saint; chhe-is; dev-God's form

Perform the service of such a saint with a pure heart by relinquishing one's egoistic nature. Thus, give up the thought of considering him as a human, Muktānand Swāmi says that a true saint is the form of God.

Faith

Text 1

सदा रहे सुख संपत्ति, कि रहे विपत्ति अपार
मुक्त कहे हरिभक्तकु, निःसंशय निरधार ।।
विवेक चिंतामणि-हरिविश्वासको अंग १० ।।

Sadā rahe sukh sampatti ki rahe vipatti apār,
Mukta kahe haribhakta ku nisanśay nirdhār...

Sadā-always; rahe-be with us; sukh-happiness; sampatti- prosperity; ki-or; rahe-to have; vipatti-difficulties; apār-much;

Mukta kahe-Muktānand swāmi says; haribhakta ku –devotee of God; ni sanśay-doubtless; nirdhār-surely, certainly...

Muktānand Swāmi says either one may always be with great prosperity or have much difficulties, a devotee of God certainly remains free from worries.

Text 2

मुक्त कहे हरि भक्तकी, प्रभु टारत सब घात ।
सुरी लिखि ललाटमें, कांटेसें मिट जात ॥
विवेक चिंतामणि-हरिविश्वासको अंग १३ ॥

Mukta kahe hari bhakta kī, prabhu ṭārat sab ghāt,
Suri likhi lalāṭ me kāṭe se miṭa jāt...

Mukta kahe-Muktānand swāmi says; hari bhakta kī-devotee of God; prabhu-God; ṭārat-eliminates; sab-all; ghāt-miseries, anxieties;

Suri-a bed of sharp thorn; likhi lalāṭ me -destined; kāṭe se- simply by thorn; miṭa jāt- relieved

Muktānand Swāmi says that God takes away all the sorrows and anxieties of his devotees by inflicting a pain of a thorn instead of a shulii (vertical stake).

Love

Text 1

कबहु कहसिकें नाचहि, कबहुक देवत रोय ।
मुक्त कहे चित्त हरिसुं लग्यो, ताकी यह गति होय ॥
विवेक चिंतामणि, प्रेमिभक्तको अंग-१० ॥

Kabahuka hasike nāchahi, kabahuka devata roya;
Mukta kahe chitta harisu lagyo, tākī yaha gati hoya...

Kabahuka-sometimes; hasike-pleasingly; nāchahi-dance; kabahuka-sometimes; devata roya-began to cry;

Mukta kahe-Muktānand swāmi says; chitta-mind; harisu-with Hari; lagyo-attached; tākī-His; yaha-such; gati hoya –be the position

One whose mind is attached to Hari(God), sometimes dance in joy, while sometimes cries by remembering God's pastimes. Muktānand swāmi says that such is the state of

one who falls in love with God.

Text 2

प्रेमनी आगळ साधन सर्वे, रवि आगळ जेम तारा रे ।
मुक्तानंद कहे प्रेमनो मारग, प्रीछे ते प्रभु ने प्यारा रे ॥
कीर्तन-हरि भजता सहु मोटप पामे ३.४ ॥

Pŕem ni āgaď sādhana sarve, ravi āgaď jema tārā re,
Muktānand kahe pŕem no mārag,
pŕichhe te pŕabhu ne pyārā re....

Pŕem-love; ni-to; āgaď-in comparision, sādhana-means to please God, sarve-all, ravi-the sun, jema-as well, tārā-the stars;

Muktānand kahe-Muktānand swāmi says, pŕem-love, no mārag-way of love, pŕichhe-one who select, te-he/she, pŕabhu ne-to God, pyārā-beloved

All the means to please God, in comparison of love are like the stars before the sun, Muktānand swāmi says, that he is beloved to God who treads the path of loving God.

Glossary

Āchārya – a spiritual leader of a certain sect or religion

Ahamkār – ego

Ajāmil – was an extremely impious person, who had a son by the name of Nārāyan (Name of God). Due to becoming old he became ill and started to chant the name Nārāyan resulting in purification and God-realization.

Akshardhām – the divine abode of Purushottam Shree Swāminārāyan Bhagawān. In this eternal abode Shree Hari dwells, surrounded by infinite Aksharmukta. All redeemed souls go to this abode after selfless devotion to God Supreme never falls victim to the cycle of birth and death thereafter

Akshar mukta – liberated souls that forever reside in Akshardhām

Amarkosh – is a thesaurus for the language of Sanskrit

Annakut – an occasion where large variety of vegetarian foods are offered to God

Ārti – worship ritual of waving lighted wicks before the idol of God

Āsan – seat or a certain position of Yogic posture

Āshram – a hermitage

Āsopālavā – type of a tree whose leaves are used in rituals and on auspicious occasions as decoration.

Astāng-yoga – eight folds of yogic practice

Ātmā – the soul

Axar ordi – a place where Shree Hari regularly resided in located in the remote village of Gadhadā

Badrikāshram – the celestial land of Himalaya, graced by Nar and Nārāyan Dev and great Rishis of Indian heritage

Bāwā – typical mendicant used to wander for begging

Bhagat or Bhakt – a devotee of God

Bhāgavati Dikshā – initiation as a sādhu

Bhagwān – Lord

Bhāgwat Dharma – dharma related to God, also called Ekantik Dharma

Bhakti – devotion

Brahmānd – Individual 'cosmos' comprising of a system of 14 realms

Brāhman or Brāhmin – a person belonging to the first of the four varna (classes) in Hinduism

Brahmā – the lord of creation

Brahmchāri – one who follows brahmcharya

Brahmcharya – the observance of celibacy by mind, speech and action

Brahministh – God- realized

Chāndlo – Small, round mark comprised of a powder called kumkum, applied in the center of the forehead indicating one's Hindu affiliation.

Darbār – Court of residence belonging to a king or feudal ruler, traditionally with a central courtyard surrounded by rooms with verandas.

Darshan – means to look, or to gaze at the idl of God with love, dedication and admiration, with full faith

Dasherā – a festival which is celebrated in the remembrance of the victory of Lord Ram over the king Rāvan (a significance of victory of good over evil)

Dev – the deity

Dharma – religion; the code of conduct framed by Lord Swāminārāyan, the name of the father of Shree Hari

Dhoti – a traditional lower garment in India

Dhyān – meditation

Dikshā – initiation

Diwān – a chief administrative officer of the king

Ekāntik Dharma –a term for the combination of dharma, gnān, vairāgya and bhakti

Gati-Āgati – Knower of strategy of advent and departure of the souls

Gaumutra – cow urine

Gopichandan – a kind of yellowish wood made into a paste used in making marks on the forehead etc.

Gulāl – colored powder, especially used in the festival of Holi

Gun – attribute

Gurubhakt – A devoted disciple to a spiritual master

Guru Dakshinā – the disciple offers donation (any form) in honor of the knowledge which has been received from one's spiritual master.

Guru Paramparā – succession of knowledge being passed down from generation to generation (from a Guru to a disciple)

Guru – a spiritual master

Gutko – a small book, comprised by Nilkanth Varni which possessed the nectar of all the Vedic scriptures.

Haricharitrāmrut Sāgar – a scripture that contains the divine acts of the Supreme Lord, Shree Swāminārāyan Bhagwān

Hari – the name of God. Hari also means 'He who takes away evil traits from one's being and removes all odds'

Indra – the god of rain and king of demigods

Janoi – a consecrated thread that is worn by Hindu Brahmins

Jap – chanting of the holy name of God

Jay – victorious

Jhānjh – a pair of small traditional cymbals (a musical instrument)

Jowār – millet

Kāl – time

Kaliyug – name of the last and worst of the four Yuga i.e. ages, the present age, age of vice. It contains 432,000 human years

Kamandalu – a wooden water pot of an ascetic; gourd with a handle for serving water etc.

Kām – Lust

Kanthi – double lined necklace made of Tulsi beads

Katch – the avatar of Lord Vishnu in the form of a turtle

Kariyāvar – gift given by a father at the end of his daughter's marriage

Kartāls – an ancient musical instrument mainly used for devotional/folk songs. It derived its name from hindi words

'Kar' means hand and 'tal' means clapping

Kāshi – name of a celebrated city and place of pilgrimage now known as Banaras

Kathā – spiritual discourses

Kāthi – a tribe in Saurāstra known for their valour

Kaupin – (Loin Cloth) a scarf to be worn between two thighs

Kāvad – a type of instrument used to carry heavy loads on one's shoulder

Khesh – a traditional upper garment in India

Kirtan – chanting glory of God via singing spiritual hymns

Kshatriya – a person belonging to the second of the four varna (classes) in Hinduism, soldier

Lādus – an indian sweet, made from flour and sugar, shaped like a ball.

Lilā – divine acts of Shree Hari

Mahant - the most senior saint, who is head of a temple or group

Mahārāj – supreme sovereign Divinity; an adjective referring to Lord Swāminārāyan

Mahatatva – first of the entities produced by Pradhān Purush

Mahātma - great soul

Mālā – rosary

Mangalsutra – a thread containing small beads worn by married indian women

Mānki – the mare retained by Lord Swāminārāyan

Mārkendeypurān – a Sanskrit text of Hinduism, and one of the eighteen major Puranas

Matsya – the avatar of Lord Vishnu in the form of a fish

Māyā – anything that deviates one from the worship of God. One of the five eternal realities or power of God used as the fundamental substance of creation

Mohini – the only female avatar of Lord Vishnu, whose beauty was deadly to many

Mukta (Muktos) – liberated souls

Nārāyan – the name of God

Niyams – religious code of conduct provided by the God and Saints (e.g. Shikshapatri)

Pada – a portion of a verse

Pakhāwaj – a double sided drum

Panch vartmān – five moral disciplines for both Saints & householders

Pandit – a hindu scholar or priest well versed in Sanskrit, Hindu philosophies and religion

Pāras – a type of stone that transforms iron into Gold upon touch

Pārshad – a renunciant in white clothes, training to take the sādhu-fold

Patgir – a tribe of Kāthi in Saurāstra region of Gujarāt

Pichkāri – a water gun

Pipal – a sacred tree

Prabodhini Ekādashi – is one the most sacred and fruitful Ekādashi's of the year. It marks the end of Chaturmas, and the beginning of Tulsi Vivāh. “Prabodh” means awaken.

Pradhān-purush – one of the countless pairs of Pradhān Prakruti and Purush conceived by Mul purush and Mul

Prakruti for the creation and sustenance of each Brahmand(universe)

Prakruti-purush – The pair of Mul-Prakruti and Mul-Purush, from which countless pairs of Pradhāns and Purushes are formed for the creation and sustenance of each brahmānd. Also, called Mul-Prakruti-Purush.

Pralay – destruction, annihilation

Prasād – sanctified food, blessed and consecrated by having been offered to God

Pujan – the act of worshipping

Purnimā – full moon

Rāb – a sweet delicious for the ill

Rāga – any feeling presented in harmonious melody

Raj – the second of the three attributes of Maya; Raj leads one to activation; it is also a feverish stage of mind

Ramāyan – name of Vālmiki's celebrated big poem, describing the plays of Lord Ram; it contains 2,400 verses in seven cantos, i.e. Kand

Rāmcharitmānas – a holy scripture narrating the biography of Lord Ram compiled by Tulsidas

Ratna – a precious pearl

Reto – a silky woven piece of cloth with decorative edges and golden threads, usually tied around the head of the waist

Rotlo – loaf of bread made from millet

Rudrāksh – one kind of bead produced from the tree of Rudraksha

Sadguru – a high ranking sādhu

Samādhi Prakaran – a chapter of leading people into trance through divine interventions

Samādhi – spiritual trance

Sampradāy – any sectarian system of religious teaching is called Sampradāy

Sanskrit – the rich Indian language also called as the language of gods

Sanyāsi – an ascetic who has renounced all earthly concerns and devotes himself to meditation and the study of the sacred scriptures

Saroda – a musical plucking instrument in Indian classical music

Satsang – holy association – with God, his saints and devotees

Satsangi – member of the satsang fellowship. One who practices satsang

Satva – one of the three qualities of māyā or prakruti, characterized by awareness and vairāgya towards the vishays

Shehanāi – a musical instrument similar to oboe, made from wood, with a double reed at one end and a metal or wooden flared bell on the other.

Shāstra – scriptures

Sheth – a typical tribe of Baniya who used to deal in business of lending money to needy

Shikshāpatri – the holy scripture, the gospel of life divine written by Lord Swāminārāyan Himself; it contains 212 verses; the follower of the precepts of Shikshapatri may attain happiness in this world and the world beyond

Shloks – a couplet of Sanskrit verses

Shreemad – glorious, possessed of auspiciousness

Shree – name of Lakshmi, goddess of prosperity, beauty; it also indicates some respect, and refers to possession of dignity

Sigrām – a comfortable covered cart drawn by two bullocks

Suthār – carpenter

Swabhāv – a person's nature

Swarup – an image, Form

Tam – one of the three aspects of Māyā, quality of darkness or ignorance

Thākorji – a miniature size version idol of God

Thāl – a plate with food offered to God

Topi – a hat

Uddhav Sampradāy – name used by Bhagwan Swāminārāyan to refer to the Satsang Fellowship

Upāsanā – philosophical understanding of the nature of God as well as the mode of worship of God, i.e., how one understands God's nature, and how one worships Him. Sometimes synonymous with bhakti

Utpatti-Sthiti – creation and sustenance

Vachanāmrit – 262 spiritual discourses delivered by Shree Hari, which is compiled in a book

Varāh – the avatar of Lord Vishnu in a form of boar

Vaikunthdhām – celestial abode of Lord Vishnu

Vairāgi – one who has renounced the worldly affairs

Vairāgya – detachment from worldly objects and attachment in the form of God

Ved – the oldest sacred books of hindus

Virāt Swarup – grand form

Vishishtādvait – is a non-dualistic school of Vedanta philosophy

Vrat – religious observance

Yagna – a special form of worship performed in front of a sacred fire with mantras and shloks

Yagnashāla – a place where Yagna would be performed

Yamrāj – the god of death

Yogi – one who practices yogic practices

Yojan – distance equaling four gauss (i.e. approximately 6-7 km)

Yug – one cycle of time

References

This book contains the stories confirmed by standard authorized scriptures of the Swāminarayan sect. The following authentic scriptures are specifically cited in this book; and many stories are thus received through the chain of disciplic succession.

- Vachanāmrit - Spoken by Shree Hari
- Haricharitramrut Sagar - Sadguru Adharānand swāmi
- Shrimad Satsangi Jivan - Satānand swāmi
- Harililamrut - Acharya Shree Viharilalji Maharaj
- Muktānand Kavyam - A collection of Muktānand swāmi's scriptures
- Harililapradip - Acharya Shree Bhagvatprasaadji Maharaj
- Bhaktchintamani - Sadguru Nishkulānand swāmi
- Axarānand Swāmi ni Vato - The talks of Axarānand swāmi
- Adbhutānand swāmi ni Vato - The talks of Adbhutānand swāmi
- Nirgundasji Swāmi ni Vato - The talks of Nirgundasji swāmi
- Bhumānand Swāmi ni Vato - The talks of Bhumānand swāmi
- Shree Hari Digvijay - Nityānand swāmi
- Satsangi Bhusan - Vasudevānand brahmchari



Mahatma Muldas saves Ratan from committing suicide from this well located in Amareli, Gujarat. **(Left)**(See Pg. 5)



These idols were also gifted to Ānandrām by Mahatma Muldas, currently located in Amarāpur Temple. **(Above)**(See Pg.16)



Mahatma Muldas gifted this very temple located in Amarāpur, Gujarat on the occasion of Ratan's wedding. (See Pg. 17)



The Birthplace of Sadguru Muktānand Swāmi located in Amarāpur, Gujarat. (See Pg. 17)



The Ashram of Tulsidās where Mukund diligently served to please his Guru. (See Pg. 22)





Mukund hid behind this navedu (a narrow strip of ground behind house) to listen to the divine discourses of Rāmānand Swāmi. (See Pg. 23)



Nilkanth Varni arrives in the village of Loj, Gujarat for the very first time and sat upon this piece of stone. (See Pg. 31)





The infamous well located in Loj, Gujarat where Nilkanth Varni first met Sukhānand Swāmi. (See Pg. 31)



The first meeting between Nilkanth Varni and Muktānand Swāmi in Loj, Gujarat.(See Pg. 34)



Rāmānand Swāmi, Sarjudās, and Muktānand Swāmi
met all together for the very first time in the
village of Piplana, Gujarat.(See Pg. 49)





By the command of Shreeji Mahāraj, Muktānand Swāmi was adorned by ornaments and swung under this very banyan tree in the village of Vemārdi, Gujarat. (See Pg. 61)





Muktānand Swāmi depicted a beautiful elephant with his artful dancing skills. These Kartals used by Muktānand Swāmi. (See Pg. 73)



Shown here is the Sarangi used by Muktānand Swāmi. (See Pg. 72)



Muktanand swami cuts the nails of Shree Hari with great affection and humility. (See Pg. 78)



Axarordi,Gadhada was the location of Shreeji Maharaj's residence in DadaKhachar's courtyard where numerous events took place with Muktānand Swāmi. (See Pg. 81)



The monastery called 'Rāmmahel' located in Dhāngadhrā, Gujarat where Muktānand Swāmi was commanded to learn Sanskrit by Shree Hari. (See Pg. 83)



Shree Hari celebrated the colorful festival of Rangotsav with Muktānand Swāmi in the remote village of Loya, Gujarat. (See Pg. 94)



Muktānand Swāmi discoursing to Bhaktarāj Dādā Khāchar



Muktānand Swāmi liberated numerous ghosts
in this location known as Dariyakhan Na Ghumatvadi jagya,
in Ahmedābād, Gujarat. (See Pg. 103)

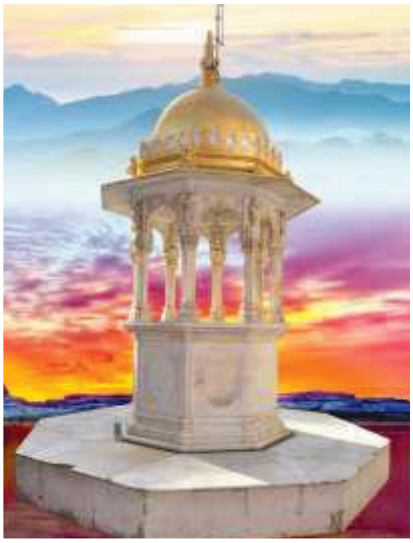


Muktānand Swāmi composed and performed the very 1st Ārti of Shree Hari in the village of Kālvāni, Gujarat. (See Pg. 144)





The infamous courtyard and neem tree in Bhaktaraj Dada Khāchar's residence in Gaḍhaḍā, Gujarat where Shreeji Mahāraj narrated numerous Vachanāmrits. (See Pg. 145)





Shreeji Maharaj initiated his very first Vachanāmrit discourse where Muktānand Swāmi present in Gaḍhaḍā, Gujarat. (See Pg. 145)



Muktānand Swāmi liberated numerous ghosts in a mansion.
Now, in its place, stands Rampurā Temple
located in Surat, Gujarat. (See Pg. 166)



Muktānand Swāmi and Devānand Swāmi were stationed at this
Dharmashala (a monastery facilitated with a school and hostel)
in Bhuj, Gujarat. (See Pg. 168)



The location of the infamous debate between Muktānand Swāmi and Scholars took place in Vitthalnāthji's temple located in Vadodara, Gujarat. (See Pg. 186)





Shree Hari met Muktānand Swāmi at Maghariyo Dungar, Gaḍhaḍā after his debate victory in Vadodarā.



Shown here is the mala used by Muktānand Swāmi. (See Pg. 148)



Ahmedābād Mandir was constructed on February 24th, 1822.
(See Pg. 210)



Bhuj Mandir was constructed on May 15th, 1823. (See Pg. 213)



Vadtāl Mandir was constructed on November 3rd, 1824. (See Pg. 218)



Dholerā Mandir was constructed on May 19th, 1826. (See Pg. 219)



Junāgadh Mandir was constructed on May 1st, 1828. (See Pg. 221)



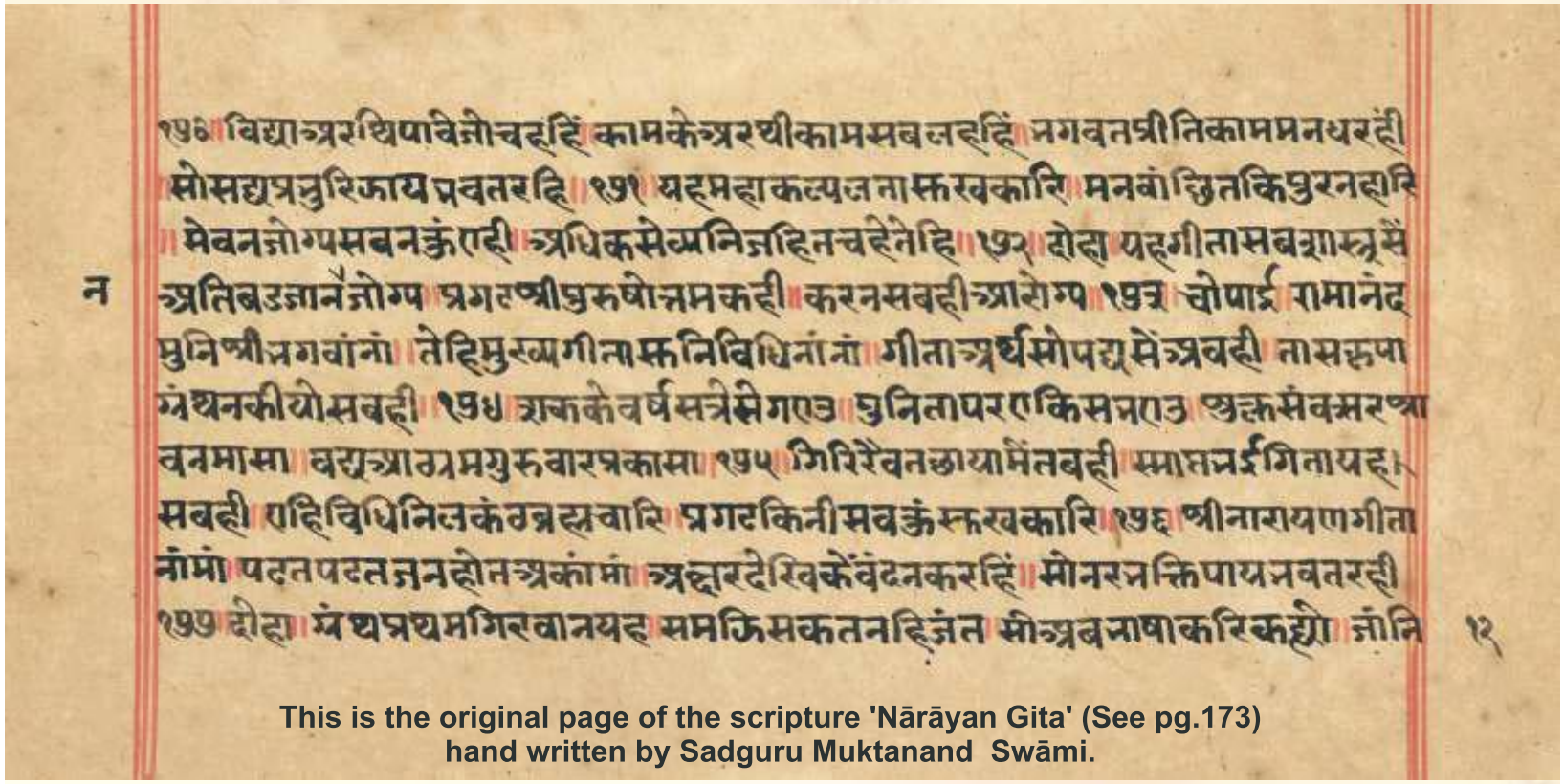
Gaḍhapur Mandir was constructed on October 20th, 1828. (See Pg. 223)



While composing the kirtan 'Antakāḍe āvi re sambhāri' Muktānand Swāmi departs from this Earth on Ekādashi of Ashadh Sud 11, 1886 (Sunday, 12 July 1829). (See Pg. 233)



The cremation site of Muktānand Swāmi. (See Pg. 234)



This is the original page of the scripture 'Nārāyan Gita' (See pg.173)
hand written by Sadguru Muktanand Swāmi.



To Our Dear Muktānand Swāmi,

You are the prime example of unparalleled devotion. You have revealed the secrets of the Vedic scriptures, and your words have opened windows of opportunities and happiness, found through the Supreme. You have worried, as a mother would, for the devotee of God regardless of their level. With your questions of the Vachanāmrit, you have cleansed the path of liberation from hurdles and obstacles.

No level of gratitude could suffice for the sacrifices which you have made for us. Your inspirational life and motivational messages, constitute a bridge over the ocean of material pains and pleasures, and leads those who read of it, to a paradise of spiritual bliss. The story of Muktānand Swāmi, as described in the pages of this book, is a journey in transcendental romance; a narration of true saintliness, endurance, and spiritual adventure that will eternally draw devotees into a plane of transcendental devotion.

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