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Mahant Purani Swami Dharmanandandasji

Shree Swaminarayan Mandir Bhuj – Kutch, India.

INTRODUCTION

With *Shree Swaminarayan Bhagwan's* permission, *Shatanand Swami* has composed a sacred Scripture called the '*Satsangi Jeevan*'. Thereafter, he composed the '*Sarvamangal Stotra*', which contains one thousand divine names of *Shree Swaminarayan Bhagwan*. Reciting the *Sarvamangal Stotra* is equivalent to reciting the whole of the *Satsangi Jeevan* Scripture. Moreover, *Shatanand Swami* thought that, 'In this age of *Kaliyug*, a human is surrounded with confusion and chaos within the heart. In a human birth, elements such as laziness, inactiveness, agitation and restlessness are more and more predominant. If a human in this condition cannot spend one hour to sit in one place and recite the *Sarvamangal Stotra*, then I shall introduce a more easy, simple and casual mode in order to fulfil something rather similar.' Through this thought, *Shatanand Swami* composed the '*Janmangal Stotra*', which contains one hundred and eight names of *Shree Swaminarayan Bhagwan*. This *stotra* will lead a human being towards the path of prosperity. For instance, the purport of the *Mahabharat* is the *Vishnusahastra Nam*. In the same way, the purport of *Satsangi Jeevan* is the *Sarvamangal Stotra* and the purport of the *Sarvamangal Stotra* is the *Janmangal Stotra*.

The *Janmangal Stotra* is a direct ladder leading to the pathway to *Akshardham*. It is a rescue boat for an oblivious soul who has fallen deep into the worldly ocean. It is the brightness for those souls who are entangled. One who recites the *Janmangal* never has to go through the stages of poverty. Those who, do not recite this beneficial *Stotra*, who do not meditate upon *Shree Hari*, or put forward donations or keep good company and refrain from worshipping *Shree Hari* with full affection, forever lack happiness and wealth and remain infertile. They start to constantly build grudges towards their relatives.

Bhagwan's divine name brings happiness in one's life.

THE NAME OF SHREE HARI GUIDES ONE TO AUSPICIOUSNESS.

IT IS A WING DIRECTING ONE TO ETERNAL BLISS.

namo namah shree haraye, budhi daay dayavate | bhakti dharmang jatay, bhakt kalpa drumay cha || 1 ||
sugandh pushpa haradhye, rvididhai rupa harakaih | sampujitay bhaktau dhaih, sitambar dharay cha || 2 ||

Shatanand Swami is saying that, "Oh *Bhagwan*, You are the Giver of proficient understanding. You are truly tender-hearted. Oh *Father Dharma* and *Mother Bhakti's* Son! You are the One

who forever fulfils the desires of Your dear devotees. Just like the *Kalp-vruksh* in the garden of perfection, has the power to satisfy all the desires of those who sit beneath it. You have on fragrant flower garlands and white clothes which are dear to you. Oh *Mother Bhakti* and *Father Dharma's* son, *Ghanshyam Maharaj*, I am offering my respectful obeisances to You with due respects.

Those who sit under the protection of the *Kalp-vruksh* achieve whatever they desire. In the same way, this *Janmangal*, which contains one hundred and eight sacred names of *Shree Hari*, is that fabulous tree. Any auspicious wishes are fulfilled. However, when are these benefits fulfilled? If one possesses uncontaminated thinking and if one recites *Shree Hari's* name with purity in the heart, his internal desires undoubtedly become true. The outer body is cleansed through bathing and the mind is cleansed through true spiritual knowledge. In the same manner, the heart is cleansed through meditating upon *Shree Hari*. However, by reciting these one hundred and eight names of *Shree Hari*, all three become purified. The body becomes pure, the mind becomes pure and the heart becomes pure. There is immense glory in the recitation of *Shree Hari's* name. *Tulsidasji* is stating:

leneko hari naam hai, deneko un daan l taran ko aadhinata, dubanko abhiman ll
To unite with *Bhagwan* is an incredibly large task.

SHREE HARI'S NAME ONLY, IS WORTHY OF CHANTING.

Shree Hari's name only is much more extraordinary than nectar. Chanting of His divine name is the cure for any lifetime diseases.

etatsam sev maanaanaam, purushaarth chatusht ye l
durlabham naasti kimapi, harikrushna prasadatah ll

Shatanand Swami is explaining that the four pursuits of a man's life (*Dharma* (moral emancipation), *Arth* (worldly prosperity), *Kaam* (fulfilment of worldly desires) and *Moksh* (final liberation)), are obtained through the recitation of this *stotra*. One who obtains these four pursuits in his lifetime, will gain the strength to act according to morality. Social affairs are then dealt with easily, wealth increases and pure wishes are fulfilled. In the end, such affectionate devotees reach the highest level of salvation and they experience the true harmony in *Akshardham*.

Such devotees become free from calamities such as having to come back as an evil spirit. Evil spirits cannot dare enter those who chant this *mantra*. The soul is rescued from the cycle of birth and death. This *mantra* is the key to pre-eminent success for a soul.

What are the attributes of the *Janmangal mantras*? They are like precious gems. Precious gems persistently glow. They sparkle on their own accord. Never does the brilliance fade away. Similar to them, are these *mantras* in the *Janmangal Stotra*. A single candle flame is suddenly extinguished with one blow of the wind. Nonetheless, no matter how powerful a hurricane is, it can never have an effect on the precious gem.

A violent storm is brewing in all four directions in this *Kaliyug*. The intoxicated air of hypocrisy, pretence and fashion is swaying all over. The diseased air of the five cognitive senses is polluting the minds of mankind. Nevertheless, no storm can have the courage to touch one who recites the *Janmangal*. One who peacefully recites *Shree Hari's* name and one who is absorbed in deep devotion is free from the darkness of illusion and delusion. His life will shine brightly like the glowing moonlight.

If you want to worship *Shree Hari*, you have to be aware of the time. You have to bathe and become pure. However, if you want to recite these *mantras*, it is not necessary to perform such acts. You can recite twenty four hours, seven days a week. In spite of this, your mind should be clean and

pure. Even while cooking, the *Janmangal Stotra* can be recited. You can chant while driving your car. There is not any harm in reciting the *Janmangal Stotra* even while sleeping when you are sick. Chant chant! Forever chant the *Janmangal*!

While meditating upon *Shree Hari*, *Shatanand Swami* is saying:

varni veshha ramaniya darshanam, mand haas ruchiran naam bujam l
pujitam suranaro tamairmuda, dharma nandan maham vichintaye ll

“To One who is beautifully dressed, who has got a charming, lotus-like face with a sweet smile, oh *Father Dharma's* dear Son, *Shree Swaminarayan Bhagwan*, great Deities worship You. I forever meditate upon You.”

The *Rushi* of this *Janmangal Stotra* is *Shatanand Swami*. The Deities are the sons of Dharma - righteousness. The seed of Dharma is *Ghanshyam Maharaj*. Strength is needed with *mantras*. The strength of these *mantras* is the vow of celibacy. Chanting while observing the vow of celibacy means that one's great ambitions become fulfilled.

What is the pillar of this *stotra mantra*? Where does a mere human go when the sun sets? He will head towards the direction of his home. Only then will he get some rest. Similarly, *Dharma's* dear Son, *Shree Hari*, is the pillar of relaxation for a soul.

Shatanand Swami is explaining that, “I have pointed out *Shree Hari's* divine names in this *Janmangal Stotra* according to *Shree Hari's* divine beauty, His *Leelas* and His virtues that I, myself, have witnessed.”

Shatanand Swami is showering blessings upon us. Those who speak, listen and illustrate to the rest of mankind, the glory of chanting these *mantras*, will naturally reach *Akshardham*.

The Deity of all Deities, *Shivji*, is ceaselessly chanting the name of Supreme *Swaminarayan Bhagwan*. As water is raised up by machinery, likewise, the mind needs to be raised to develop, through sacred *mantras*. Intellect becomes highly powerful and mental activity becomes extraordinary. *Sitaji's* life became successful, simply by reciting *mantras*. By this, she achieved salvation. *Sitaji* did not have to go and search for *Shree Ram*. Instead, *Shree Ram Bhagwan* came searching for her in her hut. What did *Valiyo* the looter do? He did nothing more than chant the divine name of *Shree Ram*. Ultimately, He came to be known as *Valmiki Rushi*.

ulata naam japat jag jaanaa, vaalmiki bhaye brahm samaana ll

Valiyo the looter chanted *Shree Ram's* name in reversed order. He chanted ‘*Maraa Maraa*’ instead of ‘*Ram Ram*’. From *Valiyo*, He became *Valmiki Rushi*. One's tongue becomes of value through chanting the sacred name of *Bhagwan*. One's life also becomes of value through chanting ‘*Shree Hari*’. There is nothing more worth while, than performing this act of chanting. Let us respectfully bow down to *Prabhu*.

MANTRA (1) AUM SHREE SHREE KRUSHNAY NAMAH
Krushna accompanied with Laxmiji (LaxmiNarayan)

The word ‘Shree’ represents *Laxmiji*, *Radhikaji* and *Sitaji*. Initially, *Shatanand Swami* is offering his respectful obeisances to *Shree Narayan Bhagwan* and His consort, *Laxmiji*. “Oh *LaxmiNarayan*! I am humbly offering my respectful obeisances to You.” *Shree Hari* never enjoys living unaccompanied. *Shree Hari* permanently remains associated with great devotees and *Muktos*. In *Akshardham*, *Shree Hari* is eternally present with *Muktos*. These are *Shatanand Swami's* words.

WED THE SOUL WITH SUPREME SHREE HARI.

Lakshmejee is the daughter of the Deity of the ocean (Sagar). Therefore, in sacred Scriptures, *Laxmiji* is also known as ‘Sagar-tanya’. When the ocean was churned, *Laxmiji* came to existence from therein.

In His physical form, the Deity of the ocean sat His Daughter on His lap and the *Brahmans* performed *abhishhek* to *Laxmiji* with the *mantras* from the *Veds*. After honourably seating Her upon a golden throne, *Laxmiji's* friends beautified Her eyes.

The Deity of the ocean in his physical form announced, “My dear Daughter will put a garland around the neck of a groom who She finds suitable for Herself.” Everyone became prepared. They all dreamt that She becomes theirs. Who would not desire to be with *Laxmiji*? Individuals in this mundane world are all humble attendants of *Laxmiji*. However, be aware that *Laxmiji* is a chaste wife. A chaste wife remains only with her husband. If you keep *Narayan* in your life, *Laxmiji* Herself automatically comes to your door. You would not have to vainly make an effort for *Laxmiji*.

On one side the Deities were assembled in a row and on the other, the demons. Great *Rushis* were also present in the marriage ceremony. *Rushis* who practice the act of penance, ascetics and Saints were all behaving according to the likes of *Laxmiji*. *Laxmiji* was accompanied with Her dear female friends in the marriage ceremony. Everyone had arrived in the hope that *Laxmiji* becomes their Bride.

Laxmiji's friends introduced Her to the full assembly one by one. “This is one who practices penance.” *Laxmiji* gave a frank but truthful reply, “He may be practicing penance but there is no act of devotion and peace along with his penance. Therefore, he abruptly loses his temper. Hence, let us move forward.”

Laxmiji's friends came to *Indra* and said, “*Laxmiji*, this is the Great King of Deities.” “He may be a Great King; however, His perception is uncontrolled. Please move on,” replied *Laxmiji* in a courteous manner.

Maarkanday Rushi was seated further on. *Laxmiji's* friends gave an introduction. *Laxmiji* again declined many Deities, demons and people who were assembled. If they had the charm, they lacked the qualities and if they had the qualities, they lacked the charm. For this reason, *Laxmiji* refused to put the garland around them.

Moving forward, *Purshotam Narayan*, who had held a conch, circular disc, mace and a lotus flower in His hands, came into sight. He had worn a yellow silk cloth on the lower part of His body and a glamorous crown. His golden hair was as soft and sparkling as silk. He had the most breathtaking, uttermost attractive charm. He is embodied with all good qualities. He does not even have the slightest fault in Him. His lotus-like eyes were half open. *Laxmiji* immediately put on the beautiful garland around the neck of *Narayan*. In a matter of seconds, Deities, celestial musicians and celestial damsels celebrated this auspicious event with a cry of victory and they showered blossomed flowers upon *Purshotam Narayan*. HAIL TO LAXMINARAYAN DEV!

As *Laxmiji* put the garland around *Narayan Bhagwan's* neck, *Bhagwan* glanced in all four directions. The significance of this gesture is that after acquiring wealth one should look in all four directions. Aid the poor and those in pain. Make use of wealth in an appropriate and benevolent manner.

Thereafter, *Laxmiji* and *Narayan* carried out a ritual ceremony according to the *Veds* and became Bride and Groom. The ceremony was celebrated on the shore of the ocean. *Laxmiji* and *Narayan* forever remain as a Couple. *Shatanand Swami* is bowing down to *Laxmiji* along with *Narayan* and is explaining to us, that in this manner of which *Laxmiji* has married *Narayan*, one also shall marry *Narayan*. The one with whom we may have wedded is only the mere body's companion. He is not the soul's companion. Beware! The partner of the soul is One and Only Supreme *Shree Hari*.

One has to wed the soul with Supreme *Shree Hari*. One should perform devotional acts by accepting *Shree Hari* and by surrendering upon Him. Wherever *Shree Hari* is present, there, every-

thing else is present. It is stated in the *Bhagvat Gita*:

yatra yogeshvarh krushno, yatra paartho dhanurdharah |
tatra shree virjayo bhuti, dhruvaa nitirmatirmamah ||

The great archer *Arjun*, is eternally present wherever Supreme *Bhagwan Shree Krushna* is. In that place, there is *Laxmiji* (wealth), victory and everlasting mortality. *Laxmiji* is present in the lives of those souls who have surrendered upon *Narayan*. For this reason, *Shatanand Swami*, in the first *mantra*, has unfolded the narrative of the soul uniting with Supreme *Shree Hari*. Bowing down to *Shree Krushna Bhagwan*, *Swami* is now moving on and chanting the second *mantra*.

MANTRA (2) AUM SHREE SHREE VASUDEVAY NAMAH

The Son of Vasudev

'*Vasudev*' means One who is pervaded in everyone and everything. This omnipresent divine Form is not even a molecule away from us. The world is inside *Shree Hari* and *Shree Hari* is inside the world. He resides everywhere. He is widespread in every atom and particle. Therefore, He is known as '*Vasudev*'. Moreover, He is acknowledged as '*Vasudev*' as He is the Son of *Vasudev*. What activity does Supreme *Vasudev* carry out while pervading everywhere? He conserves the durability of animate and inanimate objects in their original forms. You walk, you eat and you see with your eyes and listen with your ears. This potential arises from no other than *Vasudev* who dwells within your heart. Only *Vasudev* is the Doer of all. *Vasudev* carries out the deeds through our hearts. Thus we are able to act as we do.

SHREE HARI IS IN EVERY ATOM AND EVERY PARTICLE.

Shree Hari's presence lies within all movable and immovable objects. He resides in the smallest particles of soil and in the smallest particles of grains. He lies permanently within every soul, animal and living entity. There is not even one vacant place without the existence of *Bhagwan*. He pervades in every molecule of the hair.

What are the characteristics of a perfect devotee? A perfect devotee is one who spiritually sees *Bhagwan* in almost everyone, everything and anything. One who humbly bows down to every being is a perfect devotee. A true devotee sees the divine reflection of *Bhagwan* in every object matter. 'My dearest *Shree Hari* exists in every wildlife creatures, every flying bird and every type of undergrowth.' A true devotee cogitates in this manner and respectfully bows down to everyone. Attitudes such as enmity, jealousy and self-esteem never emerge in the lives of those who constantly bow down humbly to others. 'My dear beloved *Shree Hari* resides in the hearts of all mankind.' Having such envision encourages the rest to be servile and malicious enmity is immediately eradicated from their minds. Observing *Shree Hari* in every entity abolishes anything harmful to the self and ensures a heavenly blissful living. *Shree Hari's* existence lies within every locality. If one has such committed faith, one would quit the path of unrighteousness.

sthale vishnuh jale vishnuh, vishnuh parvat mastake |
jvala mala kule vishnuh, sarva vishnu mayam jagat ||

The presence of *Vasudev* is unfolded in this entire universe. A student asked his *Guru*, who was a *Rushi*, "How does the presence of *Shree Hari* pervade in all entities?" The *Guru* revealed a high quality illustration. "Well, go and fetch a fruit from that banyan tree over there." The student did as he was told. The *Guru* directed the student to cut the fruit. The student followed the command.

The *Guru* then questioned, "What do you perceive within the fruit?" "Dear *Guru*, I can identify minute seeds within." The *Guru* asked, "What is the outcome after sowing the seed?" The student replied, "A sapling will begin to mature." The *Guru* again directed the student. "Okay. Now do one thing. From all the seedlings, take one seed and crack it." The student followed His *Guru's* saying.

The seed cracked. Again, the *Guru* raised another question, “What do you perceive within that?” The student fell into remorse. He observed in full concentration. He examined carefully but could not witness anything. “Oh *Guru*! I am unable to perceive anything within this.” His *Guru* replied, “If you do not perceive anything, then what is the mystery behind the growth of the tree?”

The student humbly replied, “The seeds cause the rapid growth of the tree.” The *Guru* identified the secret mystery and showed how incredible this illustration was. The minutest seed conserves a concealed grand tree. This cannot be witnessed by the naked eye but definite it is. In such a way, *Bhagwan* is microscopic and at the same time He is extravagantly mighty. Although He exists in a grand form, He resides in every entity by manifesting on this earth in a minute form. His presence pervades on this earth, sun, moon, planet, constellation, space, air, water and in fire. This is the true reason of His grand form. The naked eye is unable to witness this, thus He also manifests in the smallest form. *Vasudev* is present in this universe just as milk is mixed with refined butter. The existence of fire in firewood is given in comparison to *Vasudev's* existence in this universe. A special method is required to obtain the milk which is mixed within the refined butter. Similarly, a method is also needed to reveal *Bhagwan* who resides in this universe. The existence of *Vasudev Narayan* is occupied in every single atom. *Shree Hari* is eternally omnipresent everywhere in all elements as the Supreme of all.

Bhagwan is in everybody and everywhere; and the whole world is in Bhagwan.

Shree Hari resides even in the tiniest atom. In some places, He may be animate and some places inanimate. Verify one place where *Prabhu* does not reside. Undoubtedly, *Shree Hari* is everywhere. He is omnipresent in all.

hari vyapak sarvatra samana,preme pragat hoi me jana l
ab jagamay sab rahit viraagi,preme prabhu pragtaai jini aadi ll

Bhagwan is omnipresent and everywhere; however, He is balanced, meaning that His presence is not less in some places and more in other places. *Bhagwan* is equally everywhere. So why cannot He be seen? Why does He not approach us? If we cry out for Him with affection from the heart, He definitely approaches us immediately. Some may wonder whether there has been such a situation, where *Shree Hari* has approached one who cries out desperately for Him. Proceed in reading the following narration:

Prahlad's father, *Hiranyakashipu*, told *Prahlad*, “Show me *Prahlad*, where is the presence of your *Bhagwan*?” *Prahlad* said, “Oh father! Mine and your *Bhagwan* is in every place.” His demonic father said, “Does He exist in this pole?” “Yes. He surely does.” Hearing this from *Prahlad*, his demonic father presented a challenge and said, “Show me! I shall see!” Within seconds, the pillar blew up, burning intensely. From within, *Nursinh Bhagwan* incarnated in a physical form and destroyed the demon.

Shatanand Swami is saying that I humbly bow down to my dear *Ishtadev*, *Shree Swaminarayan Bhagwan*, the Knower of all.

MANTRA (3) AUM SHREE NARNARAYANAY NAMAH

Nar Bhagwan accompanied with Narayan

Bhagwan is known as NarNarayan

The Great King of *Bharat Khand* is *Shree NarNarayan Dev*. Although He is one, He appears in two forms in the divine heavenly *Badrikashram*.

cho to ek ne diso cho dooy, teno bhed jaane jan koy ll

To what extent is *NarNarayan Bhagwan* affectionate? He is seated in *Badrikashram* under

the Bordi tree, performing extreme penance. He then grants the fruits of the penance to His devotees.

NarNarayan Bhagwan is carrying out penance whilst we do nothing. Yet we flourish blissfully. One's joints in the body become weak as soon as he observes a one day fast, but look at *Shree NarNarayan Dev's* grace upon us. He Himself does the penance but does not preserve the fruits of the penance. He awards the fruits to His dear devotees. One cannot, for even three hours, sit cross legged. What to talk about penance? One even goes into deep thought when deciding on how he will go with observing a vow to dine only once a day. Thus, how is penance possible for him? Many praises to *NarNarayan Dev!* We are seated under the protection of His shielding umbrella. *Muktanand Swami* presents the greatness of *Shree NarNarayan Dev*:

vaalo bharat khandna nar naar ne, pote tap karire aape fal soy...
 badripati prabal pratap che
 harina tap kera punya prataapthi,
 thayaa shudh man re, harijan sarve koy...
 badripati prabal pratap che

If a baby, who is nourished by his mother's milk, is unwell, a mother consumes medicine and the baby is immediately treated. This is the method that is in use today as Ayurvedic Medicine of Ancient India. Similarly, *Shree NarNarayan Dev*, in *Badrikashram*, is carrying out intense penance and the fruits are then generously awarded to righteous-led spiritual souls.

The miraculous power of the penance is seen with our bare eyes even today. Even whilst in this deadly poisonous age of *Kaliyug*, where the violent storm of toxic addictions, fashion and illusion prevails, *Bhagwan's* divine devotees are themselves abiding to righteous acts of *Satyug*. They also guide others to abide by the rules of righteousness. Not even one flaw from this *Kaliyug* has the capability to drag a devotee into worldly temptation. The devotees observe every single law of righteousness. All this is *NarNarayan Dev's* grace. Thus one does not become tied in the five cognitive senses.

Just ponder for a moment, on what need there is for *Bhagwan* to do penance? The reason for mankind observing penance is so that the natures of their five senses stay disciplined and so to please *Bhagwan*. However, what is the necessity for One whose five senses are already controlled, to even perform penance? What is the necessity of penance for One who is Himself *Purshotam Narayan Bhagwan*?

A mother is familiar that her child will not consume medication. It will be too bitter. The child will spit it out. It will choke. Instead, the mother will consume the medication herself. The extracts of the medication infiltrates in her milk. The child becomes healthier as it becomes nurtured through its mother's milk. The Mother of our mother is and can only be the One and Only *Shree NarNarayan Dev*.

Two-thousand-five-hundred years ago, Guru Shankaraacharya entered the realms of *Badrikashram* for the divine sight of *NarNarayan Dev*. Only *NarNarayan Dev* has the potential to bear the continuous freezing cold there. An ordinary human is unable to go there. The great Saint *Shatanand* (the author of the *Janmangal Stotra*) was able to physically reach straight to *Badrikashram* after diving in the Lake Hamir in *Bhuj*. Only those who have attained supernatural spiritual powers have the ability to reach there.

Shankaraacharya questioned *Prabhu*, "By what means will mankind have divine glimpse of You in this age of *Kaliyug*?" *Shree NarNarayan Dev* replied, "Bathe in the Narad-Kund. From there, you will get hold of My form. You should then establish that form. Humanity will gain darshan of that form and achieve the fruits gained when doing *Darshan* of *Badrikashram*." In this present moment, the form of *NarNarayan Dev* residing in *Badrikashram* is one which Shankaraacharya himself has installed.

In reality, *Badrinarayan Bhagwan* is an Emperor but His humble service is such of one practicing penance; which is why heat rises in His body. Therefore, despite the fact of the continuous cold climate in the Himalayas, He is daily bathed with cold water and sandalwood paste is applied on Him.

Within the Temple of *Badrinarayan*, worship to *NarNarayan Dev* is performed first and then worship to *Laxmiji*, who resides in the outer side of the Temple, is performed. Everywhere, *Laxmiji* and *Narayan* eternally reside together. However, because *Narayan* is dressed in the form of One performing penance, only here, *Laxmiji* and *Narayan* are residing separately. *Prabhu* has shown, through example, the norm to the world when joining the path of penance.

ONE PERFORMING PENANCE SHOULD REMAIN

A GREAT DISTANT APART FROM FEMALES.

Let us sing a *kirtan* of *NarNarayan Dev*:

narnarayan dev bhaj man narnarayan dev,
shiv sankaadik naarad sarkha, nitya kare jeni sev,
bhaj man narnarayan dev.
vishalavasi sab sukh rashi, yog abhyaasi abhev,
bhaj man narnarayan dev.

There are many risks to reach *Badrikashram*. Hence, *Shree Swaminarayan Bhagwan* has, with His divine touch, installed the Idol of *Shree NarNarayan Dev* in the city of *Ahmedabad* as well as in the city of *Bhuj*. He has made a promising guarantee that one who does *Darshan* of this *NarNarayan Dev* will surely attain the fruits of a *Badrikashram* pilgrimage. One who does *Darshan* daily will be enlightened towards the straight path to final liberation without any calamities. Before this Idol, one who recites the sacred name of *Shreeji Maharaj*, does penance, recites sacred Scriptures, performs worship and celebrates festivals, will win everlasting spiritual salvation. All wishes will be fulfilled. To this Idol, one who charitably grants donations, gifts and contributions will attain their wishes and desires by the grace of *Shree NarNarayan Dev*.

Innumerable Deities from heavenly *Svarglok* arrive to gain *Darshan* of *Shree NaaNarayan Dev* daily. *Shreeji Maharaj* is showering His divine words that, ‘Those devotees who live in a far-away village and yet, come to gain *Darshan* of *Shree NarNarayan Dev* on the days of *Ekadashi*, will attain the fruits equivalent to those receiving the fruits when approaching to gain *darshan* on a daily basis.’ Although it is possible for devotees to do monthly *Darshan* when coming from a remote distance, it is guaranteed that they will achieve the fruits of doing *Darshan* each and every day for a year by simply coming once a year to celebrate the anniversary of the installation of *Shree NarNarayan Dev*’s divine murti.

MANTRA (4) AUM SHREE PRABHAVE NAMAH

One who is supremely powerful ('prabhav')

Shatanand Swami is offering his respectful obeisances to *Shree Hari*. “Oh *Prabhu*! You are supremely powerful. You are One who is able to accomplish those acts that You decide.” In one of the most sacred Scriptures called the *Vachanamrut*, *Shreeji Maharaj* has affirmed that ‘My doings are performed to the accord of My wishes. If I desire for rain in this place, it will rain. If I do not desire for rain then so it will be. If I wish for a child to be born in a family, it will be born. If I do not wish for this, the result will not follow. If I desire for an illness in a person, illness will occur. If I do not desire the illness in that person, so it will be. All acts are a result of My expectations.’ Everything is a outcome of *Bhagwan*’s wishes.

maari marji vina re, koithi tarnu na todaay,

em mune jaanjo re, mara ashhrit sau nar naari.

The illustration of this verse is that the connected thread of every soul, animal and living entity is in the divine hands of *Bhagwan*. A conjuror has the powerful skill to make a monkey dance in his desired way. Similarly, only what *Bhagwan* wishes, happens. One can only walk the amount of steps *Shree Hari* wishes one to walk. One can only digest the amount of food *Shree Hari* kindly provides one with. Other than that, a person's wealth may remain put and the life of the person can be taken. One will be destined to the fate that is written for him at that particular time only. All acts are possible only by the wish of *Bhagwan*.

Shree Hari's power is incredibly miraculous. In a matter of only one night, He sent Sudama a surge of wealth. He built a beautiful golden palace in a single night. No person has the capability to understand His professional artistic skills. *Shreeji Maharaj* had the power to send the Queen of Udaipur, Zamkubai, all the way to *Gadhpur* in a single night. *Shree Hari* is the Creator, Sustainer and Destroyer of all universes. He has the potency to transform the helplessly poor into wealthy rich and the wealthy rich into helplessly poor. He makes the darkness of a jungle into an auspicious experience and an auspicious experience into the darkness of a jungle. All this takes place by the wishes of *Prabhu*, not the wishes of humankind. We shall make an effort and *Shree Hari* will honour us with the fruits. *Bhagwan's* supremacy is inherent within every soul, animal and living entity in this entire universe. Humankind is merely helpless. *Bhagwan* is the Doer of all.

How can the great power of *Bhagwan* be expressed? He causes a heavy rock to float on the brim of water and, at the same time, puts life into that rock. During the construction of the murti in *Vadtal*, *Shree Hari* brought the stone to life and made statues dance. He is One who fills the regions of all universes with one foot. One foot step in the heavenly *Svarglok* and one foot step in *Patallok*. He is able to present Himself in such an extensive form. All divine powers such as aagh-shakti (the power of fire), kaal-shakti (the power of time), kriya-shakti (the power of actions) etc. are performing their duties through the supreme power of *Prabhu*.

Such is the divine potential of *Prabhu!* He is one who has the capability to absorb all the twenty-four Incarnations into His heavenly form. What more is His expertise? He Himself produced the leaf of spinach in *Draupadiji akshay-patra*. He then consumed it and made a wish that the entire three regions of the universe shall become satisfied immediately. Thus every soul, animal and living entity in *Svarglok*, *Mrutyulok* and *Patalloka* became satisfied. In this way, He, as a Saviour, saved the *Pandavs's* from *Durvasa Rushi*.

Imagine the amazing talent that lies within *Swaminarayan Bhagwan!* *Shatanand Swami* is firmly stating that *Shree Hari* is able to give *Darshan* of *Akshardham*, *Golok* and *Vaikunth* to even those who have not achieved the extraordinary power of the eightfold processes of *Yog*.

In this worldly life, One and Only *Bhagwan* is controlling the life of a soul. Hence, one should not have pride. 'I am doing this', 'I am intelligent' and 'I am wealthy'. One should not allow such pride to overcome one's nature. One should not unnecessarily carry such heavy burden within. *Bhagwan* is the Doer of all. *Shatanand Swami* is saying that, "I respectfully offer my obeisances to *Swaminarayan Bhagwan*, the most Powerful."

MANTRA (5) AUM SHREE BHAKTI-DHARMATMA-JAY NAMAH

The son of Mother 'Bhakti' and Father 'Dharma'

Shatanand Swami is offering his respectful obeisances to *Ghanshyam Maharaj* who is the Son of *Mother Bhakti* and *Father Dharma*. How many fruits may the parents have attained, in which the Great Father of the entire universe takes birth to them? How many births must have been taken to gain such earnings? When does *Bhagwan* desire to incarnate on this earth as a Son? When *Bhagwan*

showers His full sympathy upon us, *Shree Hari* Himself incarnates on this earth in a human form.

THE FRUIT OF DEVOTION IS *Bhagwan*.

Bhagwan does not give an increase of wealth when sympathising, but instead purifies the mind. An ordinary person generally believes that the reason for their increase in wealth is *Bhagwan's* mercy. Nonetheless, the reason for that is *karma* (the universal law of actions and its consequences). However, *Shree Hari's* happiness for others is totally different. If mercy is showered upon one, one's insight becomes unpolluted and one finds worldly pleasures to be a mere dream. The mind is not attracted towards anything. He only has deep intense love for *Bhagwan*. This is the only true fruit of *Bhagwan's* mercy. To earn money is not a sin. However most importantly, to forget *Bhagwan* is a grave sin! To be enticed with the enemies such as trickery, unjust acts and discrimination etc. is a grave sin! Hence, one should formulate a courteous behaviour. The mind grows to be uncontaminated in those who have been showered with grace by *Bhagwan*. If the mind is pure, one will discover heavenly bliss when in devotion to *Shree Hari*. Perform devotion only for the means of *Bhagwan*.

The fruit of devotion is not worldly pleasure, nor is it materialistic enjoyment or gaining of material goods. The fruit of devotion is simply *Bhagwan*. An ordinary individual believes that if one performs devotion, *Bhagwan* will honour one with riches. The fruit of devotion is not riches. Perform the acts of devotion for the sake of *Bhagwan* only. *Bhagwan* is not a mere device. He is a goal to be reached.

The affectionate devotion of *Mother Bhakti* was so great, that *Bhagwan* took birth as her Son. What good deed did *Mother Bhakti* and *Father Dharma* carry out, where the result led to *Bhagwan* Himself taking birth as their Son in the form of a baby? *Mother Bhakti* and *Father Dharma* devotionally performed extreme tough penance for twelve thousand years on the banks of *Saryu-Nadi*. Standing on one leg and only consuming leaves, they constantly recited *Shree Hari's* sacred name. Consciousness of the body faded away. Intense obsession grew for *Bhagwan*. Only then did they get the chance to make the Master of the universe their Son. They got the chance to sit Him in their lap and play with Him, feed Him and rock Him in a cradle.

ॐ ॐॐॐॐॐॐॐॐः ॐॐॐॐ १

mata premvati zulaave kuvar paarne; zule rupaalo rangbhino rajiva nen...
 mata... (1)
 mukhdu nirkhi nirkhi jaaye harine varne; bole khamaa khamaa kahi mata madhuraa vena. mata... (2)
 ghadiyu vishhvakarmaae paraniyu bahu shobhtu; jadiyaa paaraniye mani hira ratna apaar. ...mata... (3)
 ope osariye nar naarina man lobhtu; zadke surajnaa rath sarkhu bimbaakaar...
 mata... (4)
 podhyaa paaraniye harikrushna dharmasut shree hari; pragatyaa purshotamji aham udhaaran haar.. . mata
 (5)
 mata hilo gaave zulraave prite ati; vahela mota thaa-o haidaa keraa haar. mata... (6)
 mata maakhan saakar jamaade jagdishne; jamo jivan mara pran tame ghanshyam... mata... (7)
 nirkhi harkhe mata akhil bhuvanapati ishne; premanandnaa swami pyaaraa purankaam.. .
 mata... (8)

Mother Bhakti kept her name eternal. Many praises to *Mother Bhakti* and to *Father Dharma* who gave us *Ghanshyam*. By singing His praises, we become fortunate. Do not make a mistake by taking the lengthy route. Perform devotion with righteousness and guide others to do the same. Wherever righteousness exists, devotion exists. Wherever devotion exists, *Bhagwan* exists. Hence, one should eternally carry out the act of devotion. *Shatanand Swami* is courteously bowing down to *Mother Bhakti* and *Father Dharma* and thereafter, moving onto the sixth *mantra*.

MANTRA (6) AUM SHREE AJANMANE NAMAH

One whose birth ('janma') never ('a') takes place

Shatanand Swami is saying that, "Oh *Maharaj!* You are 'ajanma'." *Bhagwan* has clearly demonstrated that, 'I am the Son of *Mother Bhakti* and *Father Dharma*. I have taken birth in their home, hence they are my mother and father.' In addition, *Shatanand Swami* is saying that *Bhagwan's* birth never takes place. The illustration of this puzzle will follow. On the one hand, He takes birth and on the other, His birth never takes place. This is what *Shatanand Swami* is stating. How should one comprehend this?

If we look at true reality, *Bhagwan*, in fact, never takes birth. He is 'ajanma'. One who takes birth and dies. However, one who emerges becomes concealed. *Prabhu* emerges and conceals Himself. He is eternally immortal. He is imperishable. He is never debilitated. He is definitely, without any doubt, present in His real form.

By a stroke of chance, if *Bhagwan* does take birth in a human form, He becomes concealed, but this does not mean He dies. *Shree Krushna Bhagwan* has stated in the *Bhagvat Gita* that:

janma karma ch me divya, mevam yo veti tatvatah 1
tyakatvaa deham purjanma, naiti maameti so'rjuna 11

'Oh *Arjun!* My birth deeds are naturally divine. I reveal myself in a divine form.' *Bhagwan* is not illusive in any way. He is One where illusion does not influence Him. When a soul, animal or living entity wants to take birth, it has to severely suffer imprisonment in the mother's womb for nine full months. It has to suffer the pain of intense misery and extreme agony. Tiny insects sting in the womb. The body becomes locked and defenceless in a small space. The fragile embryo cannot bear the pain when the mother eats salty, sour, bitter or acidic food. The embryo in the womb is intensely tormented and tortured. It has to survive in this space full of urine and excretion. Subsequently, during the time of birth, it again has to undergo intense affliction. The embryo is extruded in a severe manner from the origin of calamity, similar to how sugarcane is squashed and squeezed into juice using a juice machine.

If *Prabhu* wants to incarnate in this world, He does not have to endure the hurt within a mother's womb. A mere soul has to undoubtedly stay in a mother's womb. *Bhagwan* does not enter the womb; neither does He stay in the womb; nor does He take birth. He emerges to the likes of His wish. Other than that, He is in a divine form with no need of birth. *Prabhu* is saying:

hu chu ajanmaa avinaashi aap, to kyaathi maataa vali baap?
sadaiv vyaapisarvatra rahu chu, aatmaatana antarma rahu chu!

Bhagwan has the power to take many forms. A mere soul, however, does not have the power to do this. With the association of *Bhagwan*, *Bhagwan's Muktos* have the power to take many forms. This is illustrated very effectively in the following story. SERVE IN A HUMBLE MANNER.

One night, *Shreeji Maharaj* called for *Muktanand Swami* and said, "Will you believe what I tell you?" *Swami* answered, "Yes, definitely." *Shreeji Maharaj* proceeded and said, "*Gopalanand Swami* is a very great Saint. He is the form of *Akshardham*."

In one form, he is present before *Muktos* of *Akshardham*.

In another form, he is present in the service of *Purshotam Narayan*.

In the third form, he is guiding the *Muktos* of *Akshardham*.

In the fourth form, he is residing with us.

Do you trust what I am saying?" *Muktanand Swami* gave a reply, "Oh yes *Maharaj*. You are saying that because you are the All-Knower. Only today have I come to know that *Gopalanand Swami* is present in four forms." *Gopalanand Swami* had a daily vow that after worshiping in the morning, he would approach *Muktanand Swami* and respectfully bow down to him. The next day, as *Gopalanand*

Swami came to bow down respectively to *Muktanand Swami*, *Muktanand Swami* welcomed *Gopalanand Swami*, offered him a seat and said, “*Shreeji Maharaj* has advised me that I should do as *Gopalanand Swami* says.” Today, *Muktanand Swami* came to realise the true greatness of *Gopalanand Swami*, that *Gopalanand Swami* is present in four forms. He is a great devotee and faithful *Mukt* and is the form of *Akshardham*.

Another day, *Gopalanand Swami* said, “*Muktanand Swami!* I shall inform you with the truth. You are serving *Shreeji Maharaj* in a position of a friend. From now on, serve Him in a position of a humble attendant.” *Muktanand Swami* gave a content reply, “I shall do as you say *Swami*.” The main point was that *Bhagwan* is never born. He emerges and can take many forms. In the same way, if *Maharaj* wishes, *Muktos* also take many forms in order to support divine devotees in their performances.

Shatanand Swami is saying, “Oh *Prabhu*, You never have to take birth. However, You divinely emerge in the form of a Son, merely to fulfil the desire of *Mother Bhakti*. Oh *Swaminarayan Bhagwan!* I bow down to You many times.”

MANTRA (7) AUM SHREE KRUSHNAY NAMAH

One who allures the minds of all

“Oh *Prabhu!* You are capable of alluring the minds of all towards Your divine form. In other words, You are extremely tempting. Just like the force of a magnet pulling iron, You, Oh *Prabhu*, charmingly allure devotees into your heavenly form.”

Maarkanday Rushi entered the home of *Mother Bhakti*. *Father Dharma* was extremely delighted. He respectfully greeted *Maarkanday Rushi*, kindly fed him and requested, “Oh *Rushi Maharaj!* Please perform the naming ceremony of my dear Child.”

Maarkanday Rushi placed young *Ghanshyam's* right hand delicately onto his own hand. He attentively examined the lines on *Ghanshyam's* palm and came to know that this was no ordinary Child. This child was the great Master of this universe. While his heart flowed with extreme happiness, *Maarkanday Rushi* announced willingly, “Oh mother! Your beautiful Son does not have only one name. He has infinite names. He is the ocean of good virtues. This child will allure the minds of all, hence, name Him *Krushna*. The sign of His zodiac is cancer, therefore, He will be known as *Krushna*. *Laxmiji* will reside in His service. Oh mother! Your gorgeous Son will be famous in this universe. Huge, massive Idols will be built in His name. His name will be merrily celebrated and flags will be personalised with His name and will be highly honoured. Mother, this is the Master of the three regions of the universe. He will award salvation to many individuals. Mother, your remarkable Son will expand His *Leelas* through a human form. Your Child will become the most well-known Royal Majesty.”

Bhagwan only shows His wonderful charm to those devotees who recite His sacred name and those devotees who affectionately meditate upon Him. The more one recites the sacred name of *Krushna*, the more one's mind will be tranquilly concentrated upon *Prabhu*. Such is the power that lies very deeply within the name ‘*Krushna*’.

Those who are not engrossed in *Shree Hari's* name do not reach eternal heavenly bliss. On the other hand, those who devotedly recite *Prabhu's* name, never dare to think of committing even the smallest of sins. *Prabhu* may have concealed His original form but has kept His name evidently known.

Joban Pagi, the great bandit of the village of *Vadtal*, approached the village of *Dabhan* to steal *Shreeji Maharaj's* incredible horse named *Manki Godi*. He kept awake for three nights but was unable to get hold of *Manki Godi*. He witnessed many forms of *Bhagwan*, equal to the number of

horses in the stable. Which horse could he steal now? For three continuous nights he gained *Darshan* of *Shree Hari*. He was completely lost in the thought of *Shree Hari*, therefore *Bhagwan* lured *Joban Pagi's* mind into His glamorous charm. He was allured in the same force of an iron metal attracted to a piece of magnet. He had come to steal *Manki* but instead, his heart had been stolen. *Krushna* is one who even attracts such looters, which is the reason why He is named 'Krushna'.

KRUSHNA IS A HEART STEALER.

Swaminarayan Bhagwan attracted the mind of *Sachidanand Swami* into His charm. He would mount on the back of *Manki Godi* heading from one village to another. *Sachidanand Swami* would regularly accompany Him. However, he would not follow behind *Manki Godi*; neither would he proceed in front. Instead, he would eagerly walk on the side of her whilst gaining divine *Darshan* of *Prabhu*. *Shreeji Maharaj* kindheartedly said, "Swami, you are walking on the side of the pavement. Stones are wounding you and thorns are painfully injuring you. Follow from behind." *Sachidanand Swami* gave a pleasing reply, "Oh *Prabhu!* If I happen to follow all the way from behind, I would not attain the pleasure of gaining *Darshan* of Your divine lotus-like features. If I proceed in front of You, I still would not attain the pleasure of gaining Your *Darshan*. I am therefore walking on the side of the pavement." *Shreeji Maharaj* said in amusement, "If you have such intense passion for me, your fate will bring you back here as a spirit." *Swami* replied, "Oh *Maharaj*, while alive I have been clinging onto you and when lifeless I will remain clinging onto You only." In reality, this should be our only aim. No matter what condition the body is in, if something pains, let it pain, but do not lose the chance of gaining *Bhagwan's* heavenly *Darshan*. *Bhagwan* is a heart stealer.

chit chori gayo re maaroo, koi dekhaado kaan ne,

kaaink kaaman karine mujne, bhulavi gayo deh bhaan ne... chit...

If one's heart is stolen, imprisonment in false illusion is eradicated. Thereafter one freely reaches the stage of liberation. We shall offer a prayer to *Maharaj* that, "Oh *Maharaj!* We beg for mercy that our heart becomes allured into Your humble service." Now, we shall enter the realms of the eighth *mantra*.

MANTRA (8) AUM SHREE NARAYANAY NAMAH

The Knower of all and the All-pervader

'Nara' means water and 'anay' means to rest. *Shatanand Swami* is offering his respectful obeisances to *Narayan* who is resting on *Sheshnag* in the ocean of milk. The *Veds* have valued the existence of *Narayan*. The *mantra* 'Narayan' is an inspiring and stimulating *mantra* of the Supreme Being.

A thief would steal away wealth; however, *Narayan* steals away sins. By reciting the sacred name of *Narayan*, ones sins followed from numerous births are instantly shattered into pieces. Without the name of *Shree Hari*, this soul is never liberated. This 'Narayan' *mantra* is ever so potent that just by chanting 'Narayan, Narayan' the doors to salvation for many souls have been opened in the past and are continuing to open today. The greatness of *Shree Hari's* sacred name is everlasting. Even the four *Veds* are uttering this *mantra*. The main name of the One who is the Master of all is 'Narayan'. *Tulsidasji* is stating:

leneko hari naam hai, deneko un daan l taran ko aadhinata, dubanko abhiman ll
narayan sam kai nahi, tap tirath vali yog l naame paatak chuti-e, naame naashe rog ll

To chant 'Narayan', the sickness of birth and death vanishes. The journey of the cycle of birth and death is destroyed.

"OH PRABHU! WE BELONG TO A MASTER."

Under the protection of the green Nimb tree in *Gadhpur*, *Shreeji Maharaj* was seated on a

wooden bedstead. Saints and devotees were seated in front of Him. Birds were feeding on grains in the midst of the courtyard of the Temple. Birds were cheerfully singing and chirping. *Prabhu* asked eagerly, "Where do these birds live in the time of night?" Devotees replied, "In their nest." *Prabhu* said, "Why have they left their homely nest and arrived here at this moment?" "*Maharaj*, they have come to feed on grains." *Maharaj* asked, "Is it not okay if they don't feed on grains?" "*Maharaj*, if they don't feed on the grains, they will starve to death." *Maharaj* again questioned, "Where will they go after feeding on the grains?" "They will return back to their homely nest." *Maharaj* asked, "Don't they happen to forget their pathway to home?" "No *Maharaj*. Each and every one finds its own home, but does not enter another bird's nest." Again, *Shreeji Maharaj* questioned, "What does an animal belonging to a master do?" "*Maharaj*, an animal belonging to a master goes to the border of the field, grazes on grass and returns to its own peg."

Shreeji Maharaj clearly clarified that, "The animal belonging to a master would return to its own peg, but what about a stray animal?" "The stray animal would not return to its home," answered the devotees. "What is the meaning of an animal belonging to a master and what is the meaning of a stray animal?" "One who has an owner is known to belong to a master and one who wanders is known as a stray one."

Shreeji Maharaj said, "All those seated in this assembly, do you also return to your fixed place of rest like the animal having a master, or do you graze in somebody's field and go to rest wherever you like as the stray cattle? Moreover, a bird would undoubtedly return to its own homely nest and would not fail to remember its way home. Similarly, are you returning back to your nest or are you failing to remember the pathway?"

No one uttered a word. They did not know what answer to give. Folding both hands, they said, "*Maharaj*, we have not understood properly. Please explain in a more simple way." At that time, *Shreeji Maharaj* said, "One who dedicates his life into devotion, worships, donates in a virtuous manner, attends religious processions, chants, carries out the act of penance and continuously recites *Shree Hari's* name, is an animal belonging to a master. On the other hand, one who does not perform fruitive actions relating to *Bhagwan* and performs acts which makes the Goddess of Illusion proud of him, one who does not worship, one who feeds upon food that should not be eaten and drinks fluids that should not be consumed, does not belong to a master. One who roams around everywhere but does not care to gain darshan of Deities, one who insults great Saints, also does not belong to a master. He is helpless and an ownerless stray animal. What are you like?" At that moment, *Nishkulanand Swami* immediately started to sing a beautiful *kirtan* which related to the powerful Master.

dhanya dhanya dhanya mara samrath dhani re,
adhalak dhadyaa che aa vaar, sharanaagat potaana santni re,

vala mara vege karo cho vaar... dhanya...raaji rahi chu joi raavli re, antarma varte che anand,
nathi dagmag mara dilma re, nishchay kahe che nishkulanand... dhanya...

The devotees finally gave an answer, "Oh *Prabhu!* We belong to a Master. We are extremely fortunate to have found You before our eyes. You are ours in the form of a divine physical body and You are also ours in the form of a divine soul. You are everything to us. You are the One and Only Master of our souls."

He only recited '*Narayan, Narayan, Narayan*' three times, yet the shameful sinner, *Ajamil*, was saved from the *Yamduts*. This name is one which frees a soul from the cycle of birth and death. Wealth becomes sacred by the means of donation. The outer body becomes purified through the means of bathing. The mind becomes purified through the means of reciting the divine name '*Narayan*'.

Shatanand Swami is bowing down to *Bhagwan Narayan* and is now moving onto the next *mantra*.

MANTRA (9) AUM SHREE HARAYE NAMAH

The Destroyer ('har') of all calamities

“I offer my respectful obeisances by humbly bowing down to ‘*Hari*’, the Destroyer of all calamities.” Through chanting ‘*Hari, Hari, Hari*’, the calamities that we face are taken away by force. *Prabhu* demolishes those calamities that concern the body and the mind. He demolishes the extreme tragedy of birth and death and the adversity of taking birth in a mother’s womb. *Maarkanday Rushi* informed that, “Oh mother! Name your Son ‘*Hari*.’ This name will destroy one’s sins and miseries.”

If stroked by fire unknowingly, the skin is scorched and if stroked by fire knowingly, the skin is also scorched, then in the same way, chanting *Bhagwan’s* sacred name, ones sins are burnt. A diseased will be liberated from his disease and a person in agony will be liberated from his distress. How can pain even dare to lay its hand on one who vigilantly chants the name of ‘*Hari*’?

Until one’s heart is contaminated with lust, anger, greed, ego and jealousy, until one does not find the sweetness in *Shree Hari* and does not blissfully recite ‘*Shree Hari*’, the roots of his calamity will remain. No matter how many facilities there are in life, if the recitation of *Shree Hari* is not carried out, if worship is not performed, then that person’s soul will not achieve the highest destination of salvation. The soul will not reach the mega ocean of eternal bliss which is *Shree Hari*.

“I HAVE THE REMARKABLE EYE-DROP.”

He destroys calamities; therefore He is *Hari*. Till date, *Prabhu* has abolished the misfortunes of many. The following that has taken place in this very age of *Kaliyug*. *Zaverbai*, a firm devotee in the village of *Jamnagar*, had a painful eye. She had a vow of *ched-vrat*, meaning she would not touch any males and would firmly protect herself by following the acts of *Saankhya-Yog* (the codes of conducts for female ascetics). Her family came together and decided to get her treated by the doctor.

vaidh doctarne aankhdi bataavi, sau-e operation karva samjaavi,
chedavrat aj chute laj rakho prabhuji,
swaminarayan satya che... aaj...

The doctor advised that, “An operation must be carried out. She has a disease called *zamarva* (a disease caused by gas affecting the eyes and the head).” A decision had been taken that the operation would be carried out on the following day. In the early morning, *Zaverbai* arrived at the Temple to gain darshan along with her neighbourhood friends. She was performing circumambulation in slow motion around the divine Idol of *Shree Hari*. She was chanting *Shree Hari’s* divine name in her mind.

Much pain began to arise, so she sat down to take a rest. In a sudden moment, *Bhagwan*, disguised as a female form, arrived with an eye drop gripped in His hands. “Why have you sat down mother?” He asked. *Zaverbai* gave an answer, “I am going through intense pain so I sat down.” Disguised in a female form, *Bhagwan* said, “Here mother. Lie down gently. I have the remarkable eye drop. I will treat you. You will be just fine in a matter of minutes.” *hari-e naakhyu tipu nij hathe, maha amrutmay hath muki maathe, dukkh kaapyu sukh aapyu dinanathe prabhuji, swaminarayan satya..*

Prabhu treated *Zaverbai* with the eye-drop and blew in her eyes. He lay His gentle hands on her head and said, “Mother, open your eyes after a short time.” Saying these few words, *Prabhu* disappeared. As she tenderly opened her eyes, she started to see as clear as ever and her soreness completely faded away. Her eye sight became as clear as pearl.

Such is the glory of the recitation of *Prabhu’s* name. Bowing down to *Shree Hari*, *Shatanand Swami* is reciting the tenth *mantra*.

MANTRA (10) AUM SHREE HARIKRUSHNAY NAMAH

The Destroyer ('har') of all calamities and the Giver of eternal bliss

Shatanand Swami is offering respectful obeisances to *Maharaj*. "Oh *Prabhu!* You are the Destroyer of the confusion and chaos that materialises within one's heart." The meaning of *Krushna* is One who allures a mere person's heart into His. *Maarkanday Rushi* is saying, "Oh mother! By interlinking both names together, you can also call your beautiful Child by the name of *Hari-Krushna*." Those who forever chant the *mantra Hari-Krushna, Hari-Krushna'* while moving, walking, while carrying out all deeds; their minds will be powerfully disciplined. The heart within will be illuminated with joy. The mind will not run about here and there in a frantic manner. The *mantras* are simply divine. They are ever so powerful that they enlighten the glow of spiritual knowledge within the heart. Just as the dirt of clothes is cleansed through soap, in the same manner, the mind is cleansed through meditating upon *Shree Hari*.

One may starve oneself by carrying out many fasts. Qualities detaching the mind from worldly objects, becoming free from illusion and treating your diseased mind is achieved simply by chanting *Bhagwan's* sacred name. These very same qualities cannot even be achieved through penance. The body is nourished through food and the life of the body is dependant on food. In the same way, *Mother Bhakti's* life is *Hari-Krushna Maharaj*. The '*Hari-Krushna*' *mantra* is a medication in which the dead can be revived. It is the destructive force of the mega disease of birth and death. It is pure nectar.

Those who consume the sanctified nectar, become immortal. This sacred name is simply nectar. *Bhagwan* has pointed out many simple paths to reach the destination to salvation. This is one of the simplest pathways. It does not cost a penny. Humbly serve, worship, chanting of *Prabhu's* name in the mind and if the body is not in a healthy condition, then chant while resting. Without *Bhagwan*, every single entity is absolutely useless.

Stay physically active through the body and through the mouth; engage yourself in chanting *Prabhu's* name. All your actions will flourish with success. *Bhagwan* will come to give you a hand in your activities. You will not find worldly activities complicated. If you keep *Bhagwan's* name in the midst of all activities, all actions will become very pure. Stay vigilant in one thing which is: no matter what, never forget *Bhagwan!* If you do not forget *Bhagwan*, *Bhagwan* will never ever forget you. If you do not abandon *Bhagwan*, *Bhagwan* will never ever abandon you. Hence, tightly grip the most divine name of *Bhagwan* in your hands.

The misfortunes of those who recite *Bhagwan's* name will be abolished. Moreover, by covering oneself with the soil contacting *Bhagwan's* feet, one's misfortunes will be abolished. There is an illustration of this, present in our sacred Scriptures even today. The illustration relates to the divine heavenly greatness of the soil which comes into contact with *Bhagwan's* feet. "THE SACRED SOIL OF KHUDA IS CERTAINLY IN THIS PLACE."

Meer Saheb was the chief minister of Sayajiraav, the King of Vadodra, a devout muslim. His yearly salary was three hundred thousand rupees. In those days, this was a big value. As the minister of the government, he was adored by the nation but constantly suffered from headaches due to his involvement in challenging work. Night or day, he hardly got any sleep. The minister's body drained out, becoming pale, weak, drowsy and swollen. Numerous medications were given for treatment but this made no difference. Meer Saheb made a pledge to a Muslim Saint that, "If my condition is treated, I will offer you a beautiful shawl worth twenty-eight thousand rupees."

The condition still remained, yet he had arrived in the city of *Junagadh* to accomplish his vow. The minister began to shed tears before Sayajiraav. One of the governmental commanders kindly

offered him help. "Do not worry. I will sort everything out for you." He ordered ten horsemen to go with the Saheb. He told the professional palanquin-bearer, "Eight of you shall proceed and carry the palanquin. Take turns one after another to lift the palanquin properly." He supplied them with a large amount of money. Meer Saheb remained fast asleep on the palanquin. He was incapable of sitting. He had severe pain in his head.

Nine days passed by and they arrived in the city of *Junagadh*. Bowing down to the feet of the Muslim Saint, Meer Saheb offered him the shawl worth thirty-five thousand rupees; a larger value than he had previously decided to give. He resided there for six days, yet the extreme hurt did not heal. He became depressed and miserable. He decided to journey back to his place. On the way, near the village of *Gadhpur*, there was a farm named Radha-vadi. There, the palanquin bearers unburdened the palanquin and took a rest. Meer Saheb unfolded a white scarf on the floor and faced the north direction. He performed Namaaj (a prayer performed to God by Muslims) and bowed his head down to the ground. As soon as Meer Saheb touched his head to the earth, which was sanctified by the lotus feet of *Prabhu's* and Saints, tranquility and peace prevailed. He fell fast asleep. Everyone stared in amazement!

"Wow! This is a miracle. He fell asleep while performing Namaaj! Let him rest with relaxation for a while." Meer Saheb awoke in an hour's time and said, "The sacred soil of *Khuda* is certainly, without doubt, in this place. The disciples of *Khuda* too must have arrived in this place, otherwise all this would not happen. This is a very sacred place."

There, before Meer Saheb was *Sachidanand Swami*, who was reciting '*Swaminarayan, Swaminarayan*' whilst picking and selecting vegetables. Meer Saheb went and asked, "Oh ascetic! Is there the presence of *Khuda* nearby?" *Swami* replied, "Yes, certainly there is. Not very far away, in the village of *Gadhpur* is the Royal Court of *Dada Khachar*. Why do you ask?" There, the minister explained in detail to *Sachidanand Swami*. "This earthly land is full of tranquility and virtues. There is sacred soil of Allaah in this very place. Will I be able to physically meet Allaah?" "Yes. Certainly! Come, follow me."

Almost immediately after entering the realms of the Royal court of Dada Khachar, Meer Saheb's tender heart overflowed with blissful peace and all his calamities were destroyed. Meer Saheb explained everything to Shreeji Maharaj in detail. Perceiving the divine qualities in Bhagwan, every single calamity was shattered into pieces. After gaining Vartman, he became a disciple of Swaminarayan Bhagwan. Such is the greatness of the sacred soil of Prabhu and Saints. Now, the next mantra after this is particularly dear.

MANTRA (11) AUM SHREE GHANSHYAMAY NAMAH

One who is darkly complexioned ('shyam') like the colour of the sky

'*Ghan*' means rain and '*shyam*' means a dark complexion. *Bhagwan* does not have a pale but possesses a dark skin tone. He is dark-complexioned. When it rains, the sky becomes cloudy. After rainfall, the sky is complexioned. This is the colour of His skin tone. '*Ghanshyam*' is a loving name of *Bhagwan*. *Mother Bhakti* has named *Bhagwan* with this adorable name: '*Ghanshyam*'. HE WASHED AWAY THE DIRT WITHIN THE HEART.

The duty of the Deity of Rain is to shower rain in the entire universe. He equally showers rain universally without the act of injustice. It is not such where he would shower rain in the farm belonging to a devotee and would not shower rain in the farm belonging to a non-devotee. He showers rain everywhere. If he showers rain in a farm, rapid growth of crops is reaped. If he showers rain on the mountains, thorns and stones are washed away. If he showers rain on the roads, filth and dirt is cleansed away. Equally, *Bhagwan* has compassionately showered nectar upon this Earth! The plants of devo-

tion have grown in those divine souls who are yearning for spiritual salvation. The thorns of sins as big as the mountains and the sinful gravel obstacles are destroyed by Him. He washes away the filth in one's life. Reflect on *Valiyo's* life. *Bhagwan* entirely sanitised this terrorising criminal who was comparable to an extremely cruel solid black mountain. In due course, He came to be known as *Valmiki Rushi* from the malicious *Valiyo*. Reflect on *Roodiyo Rakhdu's* life. He was one who would roam around the dark jungle. He was a violent killer and a meat-eater. *Ghanshyam* washed away his immoral sinful acts and made it an honourable disciple. He guided the Demon *Munjaasura* on the path of final liberation. *Joban*, the looter committed sins as great as a mountain. Yet *Ghanshyam* generously wiped away those terrible sins. He entirely sanitised *Joban's* heart. The greatness of *Ghanshyam's* showers of nectar! Vero, the looter in the village of Upleta, would loot a marriage ceremony held in the daytime. He was the most skilful thief. *Bhagwan* intoxicated his heart with the splendid colours of *Satsang* and purified his polluted mind. During the journey of pilgrimage, *Nilkanth Varni* destructed the disease of worldly desires within the hearts of those who achieved salvation and those who had the desire to achieve salvation. *Ghanshyam* is showering the rain of nectar, similar to the heavy rainfall, during the time of the Ashaadha month. *Nishkulanand Swami* is singing:

ashaadhi meghe aavi karya re, zaza bija zaakal... purshotam pragti re
 pur chalya te pruthviye re, dhoya dhartina mal... purshotam pragti re
 gaaj vij ne varshavu re, agam sugam karyu soy... purshotam pragti re
 sahujanane sukh aapiya re, dukhi rahyu nahi koy... purshotam pragti re

Ghanshyam constantly showers nectar upon those who meditate upon Him, upon those who chant His adorable name, upon those who perform *Mala*, upon those who perform circumambulation around *Bhagwan's* Idol and upon those who gain His *Darshan*. What follows after the shower of sacred nectar? *Ghanshyam Maharaj* unites one with true enlightened spiritual knowledge.

teshaam satatam yuktaanaam, bhajtaam priti purvakam l
 dadaami budhi yogam tam, yet maamu payaanti te ll

Bhagwan is assuring that, 'I gift true spiritual knowledge to those who lovingly and devotionally dedicate themselves in devotion to Me. Through this, one becomes able to attain Me immediately and one can easily engage the mind into the sweetness of holy discourses and *Kirtans*.' *Shatanand Swami* is courteously saying that, "I bow down many a times to my *Ishtadev Shree Ghanshyam Maharaj*."

MANTRA (12) AUM SHREE DHARMIKAY NAMAH

One who is spiritually righteous ('Dharmik')

Shatanand Swami is offering respectful obeisances to *Maharaj*. "Oh *Prabhu!* You are 'Dharmik'. Righteous virtues are eternally predominant in You. No matter what incident occurs, You never leave the tender side of Dharma (righteousness). You lead mankind to the right path by generously giving them teachings, in which, by doing this, their righteousness stays deep-rooted."

Shreeji Maharaj is stating in the *Vachanamrut*, "I adore spiritually righteous devotees. I eternally reside by the side of those who follow the path of righteousness." Look at the way He has structured this unique righteousness and wrapped it up in an orderly manner. He separated the Temples for males and females. He has promoted good moral conducts. Males and females should not touch one another. He has tied such boundaries purely to ensure the survival of righteousness. He has not approved the contact of females and males.

Shreeji Maharaj has celebrated the festival of colour in many places; however, females celebrate with females and males with males. He did not let righteousness become loose in any way. It is

the son's right to lovingly and humbly serve his dear mother and father. *Swaminarayan Bhagwan* Himself has fulfilled this duty of righteousness. He is the Master of this universe and yet He would pay due respects to His mother and father by daily bowing down to them and by affectionately serving them. *Bhagwan* is spiritually righteous in this manner.

RIGHTEOUSNESS IS THE CORE OF PRABHU'S HEART.

Mother Bhakti was in poor health. *Ghanshyam Maharaj* would take a seat at the edge of His mother's bed and massage her feet. He would carry out deeds according to her needs. He would immensely serve His mother and father with compassion. He has shown the correct route to righteousness. He would bow down in reverence to seniors before Him and ask about their health. He is One who abides by such courtesy of righteousness.

How did *Ghanshyam Maharaj* obey the rules of righteousness? He proceeded, without question, in the direction He was told. *Mother Bhakti* would say, "*Ghanshyam*, the firewood is used up. Get hold of some firewood." In the village of *Loj*, *Muktanand Swami* would say, "*Sarjudas (Nilkanth Varni)*! I want to make *athanu* for the pilgrims, so bring some melons." Righteousness is the core of *Prabhu's* heart. If you protect righteousness, righteousness will protect you. *Swami Nishkulanand* is singing:

dharme haalvu dharme chaalvu, dharme levu ne devu vali l
 dharme rahevu dharme kahevu, dharme levi vaat saambhli ll
 sarve kaam dharme karva, dharmu muki na karvu kaai l
 sarve kaale em samaji, rahevu sadaay dharmu maahi ll

One should serve righteousness with the physical body, the loyal mind and with true concern. Those who have not gripped righteousness in their hands, such as atheists live, yet they bear a resemblance to the dead. The body is the support of the soul; similarly, life is supported by righteousness. *dharmu ev hatu hanti, dharmo rakshati rakshitah l*

Righteousness will shield those who shield their righteousness. Food without a pinch of salt is not tasty. Likewise, without righteousness, all achievements are useless, powerless and dry. No matter how much one practices penance by sitting beside a fireplace, or setting out for a pilgrimage bare-foot around India, or recites the four *Veds* by heart and fills the sacrificial pit by performing a *yagna*, or carries out much devotion, recitation, study of the *Veds*, circumambulation around the Idol of *Shree Hari* and does *Dandvat Pranams* one does, if there is no righteousness, all those deeds are pointless. Final liberation is not achieved without righteousness. A female cannot bear the fruits of a child if the male is infertile. Similarly, no matter how many charitable deeds such as recitation, penance, vows, donations are carried out; fruits are not gained without righteousness. The deep root of all blissful happiness is righteousness.

Shatanand Swami is paying reverence to his *Ishtadev Swaminarayan Bhagwan*, who is the Bearer of righteousness. He is now entering the thirteenth *mantra*.

MANTRA (13) AUM SHREE BHAKTI-NANDANAY NAMAH

The beloved Son ('Nand') of Mother Bhakti

Shatanand Swami is offering respectful obeisances to *Maharaj*. "Oh *Prabhu*, the son of *Bhakti*, many respects to You." *Bhagwan* does not merely emerge with only Dharma (righteousness). In the same way, *Bhagwan* does not just emerge with only Bhakti (devotion). *Bhakti* united with Dharma leads to the emergence of *Bhagwan*. *Mother Bhakti's* heart became ever so overwhelmed, that *Bhagwan* emerged right in front of her! *Bhagwan* said, "Mother! Ask Me, what desires do you wish for? I shall give all that you yearn for. What do you long for? A Kingdom? Ornaments? Happiness? Prosperity?" *Mother Bhakti* gave a reply, "*Prabhu!* What do I do with such perishable

objects? I have found You. I have achieved Your *Darshan*. This is more than anything. Everything is attained through that, although yet, I have one desire.” “What is it?” “Grant me with a Son just like You.” *Bhagwan* gave a sweet reply, “Mother, there is none alike to Me other than Myself.” “Then You come to me as a Son. Oh *Prabhu!* I will nurture You as a mother. You will sit on my lap and will feed on my milk. You will take charming foot steps. I will hold Your tiny finger and support You. I will rock You gently in a cradle, whilst singing beautiful lullabies. I will feed You lovingly with my own hands. I will adore You. I will caress You. Such moments cannot even be achieved by ascetics in the jungle. Thus, come to me as my Son.” *Bhagwan* gave a promising reply, “Oh mother! I will surely come to you as your Son.” The Supreme Being arrived in the sacred village named *Chapaiya*, where *Mother Bhakti* gave birth to Him. *Ghanshyam Maharaj* carried out many *Leelas* and made everyone in *Chapaiya* became mesmerised by Him. *Devanand Swami* is giving a fine description in one of his *kirtans*’.

jivanji jova re sakhi jivanji jovaa, chapaiyamaa chumpe chaalo jivanji jovaa.
premvati sut pataliyane chitmaa provaa,
shyaamaliya sangaathe rahiye, man na mal dhovaa... jivanji...

Following the birth of *Ghanshyam Maharaj*, many Deities and *Rushi's* would come to *Chhapaiya* to attain *darshan* of *Shree Hari*. They would bring along with them different types of gifts. Young *Ghanshyam* had a unique habit of greeting all with the hand. He would reveal His affection to them.

shree ghanshyam salunajine het tano hevaa, darshan kaaran dodi aave, sankaadik jeva... jivanji...
baal charitra kare che mohan, mandaane mohvaa, dayanand kahe hete joiye, harino hevaa... jivanji...

The Son of *Father Dharma* and *Mother Bhakti* has performed many *Leelas*. In *Chapaiya*, He would read and listen to discourses on a regular basis and perform the act of devotion by Himself. When carrying out devotion, one should not have any desires. The fruit of devotion is not enjoyment. It is *Bhagwan*. The fruit of devotion is not worldly pleasure, prosperity, or to produce offspring, but to attain *Bhagwan*. Many have limited understanding by believing that if the act of devotion is committed, they will achieve wealth. Yet again, the fruit of devotion is not wealth. Perform devotion to *Bhagwan* for Him only.

Bhagwan is all knower. The needs in your life are bestowed by *Bhagwan*. If He bestows upon atheists, how can He not bestow upon you? However, you should not rush to ask. By asking, affection decreases. Without the need of one asking, *Bhagwan* offers everything.

One may declare a question: ‘What wrong is there to ask for wealth or children?’ It may not be wrong, but on the other hand, it is not pleasant either. *Bhagwan* knows what you possess and what you do not possess. *Bhagwan* gives courteously according to ones level of worth. There is not as much delight in liberation as there is in devotion. Liberation is *Bhagwan's* maidservant. Devotees of the highest level do not ask for liberation. They forever ask for their commitment in devotion. *Meerabai* is singing a beautiful *kirtan*.

DEVOTION IS THE HIGHEST OF ALL MEANS. HARINI BHAKTI JAANO RE, SUKH BHANDAAR CHHE RE LOL,
kaam dudha che utam, kaashtma baavna chandan; shamaliyani bhakti e che anmol saadhan... hari...
niradhaniyanu nanu, maru sudhari lejo taanu, meerabai kahe che hu bhaktine shu vakhaanu...
hari...

Meerabai is telling us that there are a countless number of mountains, but the Himalayan Mountains are most profound. An *akshay-paatra* is the most valuable utensil. The King of all birds is the eagle. Gold is the most precious out of all metals. The sun is the most valuable source to provide radiance. Similarly, to attain *Bhagwan*, devotion is the most highest of all. Devotion gives the strength to observe the vow of celibacy. Let us understand this *mantra* in further detail.

MANTRA (14) AUM SHREE BRUHAD-VRAT-DHARAY NAMAH

The Observer of the vow ('vrat') of the highest level ('bruhad') of celibacy

Shatanand Swami is offering respectful obeisances to *Maharaj*. “Oh *Prabhu!* You are the possessor of the highest level of all vows”. Which vow is of the highest level? *Brahmcharya* (celibacy) is the highest level of all vows. ‘Brahm’ means *Bhagwan*. ‘Charya’ means to attain *Bhagwan*. *Bhagwan Swaminarayan* has incarnated upon this earth to plant the foundation of the vow of celibacy. To His disciples, *Bhagwan* is the Giver of strength for the preservation of the vow of celibacy. What fruits are attained from the observance of this vow? Many positive outcomes arise through this vow.

A celibate becomes extremely intelligent and immeasurable. His tone of melody is very appealing. His speech is admiring. His strength of recitation is remarkable. His nature of behaviour is motivated. His face is radiant. He rarely becomes exhausted. His stamina becomes preserved and he has full control over all his senses. Such is the limitless greatness of celibacy.

The body of those individuals who observe celibacy remain well conditioned, healthy and free of disease. Spiritual knowledge and understanding, digestive power and other such skills reach a highly advanced stage. Celibacy means the abandonment of females in all eight ways. Females should also abandon males. Penance is not true penance without celibacy. “YOU WILL UNDERSTAND WHEN THE AGE OF YOUTH ARRIVES.”

Shreeji Maharaj is explaining, “I very much admire the vow of celibacy. Although I may be one thousand five hundred miles at a distance, I yet reside in close proximity to those who observe this vow.”

At the age of eleven, Young *Ghanshyam* left home and headed towards the forest. Whilst travelling, He entered the territory of Nepal. There, He met King Mahadut. His sister, *Mayarani*, was incredibly affectionate and warm-hearted. Upon seeing the *Yogiraj*, her heart became engrossed in His charm and beauty. Such was the uniqueness of *Yogiraj!* *Nilkanth Varni's* charm is capable of attracting one and all. *Mayarani* pleaded, “Oh *Yogiraj!* Please reside here. Now You shall not proceed anywhere else. These are my two beloved daughters. We shall wed You to both of them.”

Prabhu replied, “I do not want to marry.” Surprised, *Mayarani* said, “What are You saying? You are yet young. You are inexperienced; hence You are denying to marry. However, You will understand when the age of youth arrives.” *Mayarani* is saying:

jyare thashe joban jor pachi pastasho,
mali koi vairaagan naar lai bhaagi jaasho... mali butol...

“Oh *Yogiraj!* Youthfulness is such where one is unable to live without a companion. Thus listen to me.”

graho kuvri maari doy raja kari sthaapu,
ghana gaam dantine ashva pedal hu aapu... mali butol...
suno nilkanth varnindra sukhad mam vaani

“I will entrust my beloved daughters, this royal throne and everything in the delicate care of Your hands. Become my Son-in-law.” *Mayarani's* affection flooded, thinking, ‘I was unable to make *Yogiraj* my beloved Son. Nevertheless, if He becomes my Son-in-law then through that relationship I will attain liberation.’ “He is exceptionally handsome. Just by looking at Him, my affection grows.” Hearing this, *Bhagwan* said, “What are you saying *Mayarani?*”

eva marma bharela ven suni sukhdhaami,
kahe shukji jevaa kaik karu nishkaami... mali butol...

Nilkanth Varni firmly said, “I will not marry, but will gather together many Saints who are

alike to Shukdevji. Do not worry about Me.” Saying this, *Prabhu* secretly left that very night alone. *Prabhu* is Bruhadvrat (a celibate of the highest level). The vow of celibacy is particularly dear to *Prabhu*.

“I WILL ALSO OBSERVE THE VOW OF CELIBACY.”

There lived a devotee in the village of Ningala named Daan Bhakt, who belonged to the Aahir caste. He once arrived in *Gadhpur* to gain *Darshan* of *Shreeji Maharaj*. He bowed down to *Shree Hari* and took a seat in the assembly of male devotees. His wife also took a seat in the assembly of female devotees.

At that moment of time, *Shree Hari* announced that, “Daan Bhakt is a *Mukt* and is inspired to follow celibacy.”

That is all. Just by hearing these few divine words from *Maharaj*, Daan Bhakt made a decision that, ‘I shall obey the vow of celibacy for the rest of my life.’ The couple arrived in their own village after returning from *Gadhpur*. Daan Bhakt informed his wife, “Oh Devi! As from today, I consider you as my mother, sister and daughter. I desire to fully observe the vow of celibacy up until my last breath. Hence, if you long for another companion, I am happy for you. However, I do not wish to get involved in worldly life and its activities. I want to live life in the manner of a Saint.”

Hearing this, his wife spoke, “Oh Dev! What are you saying? I have worn the bangle in your name once already. I have applied *sindoor* (vermillion worn by married women) on my head. I have worn the wedding saree in your name. What is the need to marry again? I too will observe the vow of celibacy.” In such a way, *Shree Hari* aroused many devotees to observe celibacy simply through speech.

Humbly bowing down to Supreme *Purshotam*, One who bears the act of Bruhadvrat, *Shatanand Swami* is chanting the fifteenth *mantra*.

MANTRA (15) AUM SHREE SHUDHAY NAMAH

One who possesses the most perfect ('Shudh') form

Shatanand Swami is offering respectful obeisances to *Maharaj*. “I bow down with folded hands to my *Ishtadev Purshotam Narayan* who appears in a perfect divine form. Oh *Prabhu*! You have a perfect nature. How perfect? Your living is perfect. Your thoughts are perfect. Your lotus-like eyes are perfect. Your actions are also perfect.”

Oh *Prabhu*! Your *Leelas* are perfect. Your speech is perfect. Your entire form is pure and perfect.” *Prabhu's* sacred name is tranquil. *Prabhu's Leelas* are tranquil. *Prabhu's* sweet smile is tranquil. He is all tranquil.

Oh how pure and perfect are *Prabhu's* beautiful eyes! His divine glance on one immediately illuminates one's heart with the rays of purity and perfection. Examine the sacred childhood *leelas* that *Ghanshyam Maharaj* performed at a tender age. The *Brahman's* from the village of *Gayaajee* arrived in the village of *Chapaiya*. There, *Ghanshyam Maharaj* was asleep in His cosy cradle. As soon as He divinely glanced upon the *Brahman*, the *Brahman's* negative stainful thoughts were wiped away. His heart prevailed with peace and harmony. He travelled to many holy places but never did he experience such tranquility. Upon gaining *Darshan* of *Bhagwan*, his heart enlightened with delight and joy. *Shree Hari* purifies many simply by His divine glimpse upon them. Such is the perfect nature of *Swaminarayan Bhagwan*.

Reflect upon *Ladudanji's* life. Before entering the district of *Gadhda*, he planned in an orderly manner that, ‘I will ask *Shree Hari* this. I will approach Him through speech in this way.’ He had four desires. ‘If the desires are fulfilled, only then, I will believe that He is truly *Swaminarayan*. Other people of Gujarat will easily believe, but I am the son of a *Devi-putra Charana* (a name of a

high caste). We do not simply trust that He is *Bhagwan* merely through someone's verbal statement. *Kathi's* can effortlessly be persuaded. We are known as Jaadejaa's (a name of a caste for warriors). I will reveal to all what it takes to achieve the status to be known as *Prabhu!* He firmly decided this all and arrived. Immediately glancing at the perfect form of *Purshotam Narayan*, his prepared desires came to a stand-still. What he intended to ask was forgotten and he became attached to the perfect form of *Sahajanand*. Thereafter, *Jivubaa* and *Ladubaa* enlightened him with the brilliance of *Satsang*. Hence, he later became a Saint and was named '*Brahmanand Swami*'.

One whose intelligence becomes firmly stable in the perfect form of Supreme *Parmatma*, becomes perfect and pure himself. He may belong to the Bheela caste, be illiterate, a male or female, but however much an individual becomes one with and engrossed in *Parmatma*, (like *Surdaas*, *Meerabai*, *Dada Khachar* of *Gadhpur*, *Roodiyo Rakhdu*, *Narsaiyo* and the thief *Vero* of the village of *Upleta*) his illusive view of the body will take its leave. However much he links himself with *Parmatma*, he will become pure. The purity in his live will awaken. Pollution and sins will not dare settle in the home of his heart.

The qualities that reside within those you recall and those you remember will make an entrance into you. If you commit your memory upon the perfect form of *Swaminarayan Bhagwan*, if you deeply meditate upon Him, your existence will become perfect and clean. If water is clean and pure, a reflected image can be seen within. Likewise, in a clean and pure heart, *Darshan* of *Parmatma* can be achieved.

THE SINFUL BECME PURE.

Bhagwan is the perfect form. Let us identify what types of sinful ones He cleaned and purified. The King of *Kanthkot* was extremely sinful. He influenced the slaughtering of holy cows and would take tax from sacred *Brahmans*. *Swaminarayan Bhagwan* attempted to explain the truth, but he did not value it. With superior power, he said in a discourteous manner, "*Swaminarayan!* Who are You to explain to me? Leave my Kingdom immediately! If You arrive in *Kanthkot* once again, I will imprison You! I will also imprison those who believe in You and those who devote upon You!"

Shreeji Maharaj told all His disciples, "Knowing that you are all Mine, the King will torment you. Thus, head towards another village."

Kachra Bhagat gathered all his belongings and left for another village. The sinful King told the thieves, "Go and loot *Kachraaa!* Beat him, strike him violently and throw him out!" The two thieves secretly concealed themselves in a deep ditch. 'When he surpasses from here we shall loot him.' *Kachra Bhagat* and his wife, *Dhanbai*, were heading towards another village because of the hurt and beatings they were experiencing. They were singing along to *akirtan* while proceeding on the road.

aavone ora chel chabila maari sheri-e,
aavone ora man ni aanti te have meli-e

All of a sudden the two thieves yelled, "Where are you heading? Beware! Don't you dare walk another step?" *Bhagat* panicked in sudden fright. He began to chant '*Swaminarayan, Swaminarayan*'. As soon as the thieves reached out for the *Bhagat's* hands to harm him, *Bhagwan* appeared to set *Bhagat* free. Light illuminated and brightened the surroundings. "What is this?" Saying this, as they glimpsed up they saw *Allaah* in a perfect form. *Prabhu's* eyes and the thieves' eyes met. Immediately, the state of their mind transformed. The sinful became perfect. Their judgments became perfect. The thieves folded both hands. "*Allaah!* Have You approached us?" "Yes, I have approached you. What is this that you are committing yourself into?"

"We have come to loot." "Who will you loot? *Kachra Bhagat*? Which fool has given you the command to loot?" "The King." "Oh, the King is a sinful evil-doer. Do you want to fall in the darkness

of hell?" The bandits gave a straight reply, "We do not want to fall in hell, but we want to do as You say." "Then complete the following task. Carry the large bundle Kachra Bhagat is holding and safely accompany him in the direction of another village. Serve him in this way."

Prabhu instructed, "Go! From today do not loot any individual. Do not consume wine, liquor or meat. Do not slaughter innocent holy cows." "As You say *Khuda!*" "Then you will experience bliss." Saying this, *Prabhu* disappeared.

Gaining *Darshan* of the perfect form, the lives of the Muslims became as purified as the *Brahmans*. By no means did they commit a sin for as long as they lived. Hence, in their next life, they took birth in the home of Sheth Padmashi. When they grew up, both became Saints named Chaitanyadasji Swami and Udhavadasji Swami.

No matter how impure and contaminated a soul is, if it surrenders upon *Shree Hari*, *Shree Hari* purifies the heart. If you desire to cleanse and make your inner mind perfect, by reciting the *Janmangal* daily, the mind becomes clean and free from filth. In the end, this devotee would attain a high status.

MANTRA (16) AUM SHREE RADHAKRUSHNA-ESHT- DAIVTAY NAMAH

One who regards Radhakrushna as His favourite ('esht') Deity ('daiv')

Shatanand Swami is offering respectful obeisances to *Maharaj*. "Oh *Prabhu!* You are naturally *Bhagwan* Himself. You are *Parabrahm*, yet You regard *Shree Radhakrushna Dev* as Your *Ishtadev*. You establish Him in every place. Furthermore, You humbly pleaded to *Ramanand Swami* that, "Oh *Swami!* *Shree Krushna Bhagwan* Himself enlightens you with *Darshan* when you worship and He harmoniously accepts your performed worship. Shower blessings upon Me so that He enlightens me with *Darshan* and accepts My performed worship in the same way." Due to this, You have kept *Shree Krushna Bhagwan* honoured in all places."

Additionally, *Shreeji Maharaj* has stated in the *Shikshapatni* that, 'All my followers shall go to the Temple of *Shree Krushna Bhagwan* every evening and sing and chant the names of *Shree Krushna* loudly.' Furthermore, *Maharaj* has also stated in the first verse:

vaame yasya sthita radha, shrishch yasyaasti vakshsi,
vrundavan viharam tam, shree krushnam hradi chintaye

'I meditate, in My heart, upon *Bhagwan Shree Krushna*, on whose left stands *Radhaji*, on whose chest resides *Laxmiji* and who enjoys divine sports at Vrundavan.'

Swaminarayan Bhagwan is saying that, 'I meditate upon *Shree Krushna Bhagwan*.' *Maharaj* has not kept *Radhaji* and *Laxmiji* separate from Him. He has kept Them as His beloved Companions.

jene gadiye na mele rama raadhika re lol,
eva durlabh sulabh thayaa aaj maari beni, pragat hari mujne malya re lol.

If an ordinary individual hears this discourse, deep doubts might arise in his mind that if *Swaminarayan Bhagwan* meditates upon *Radhakrushna Dev*, is *Swaminarayan* the Supreme Being, or is He a mere devotee? Those who have such suspicions are not firm in their faith. They are yet undeveloped. The reason being is that, in order to teach His disciples, when *Bhagwan* incarnates upon this earth, He performs worship, meditation and *archan* (worship with offerings) of His previous Incarnations. Consequently, there is no deficiency in *Bhagwan*. All Incarnations of *Bhagwan* are equal to each other. Moreover *Bhagwan* who has arrived on this earth is *Avtar na Avtari*.

This *mantra* is worth understanding. The chief of all Goddesses of power is Goddess *Radhkaji*. The chief of prosperity is Goddess Mother *Laxmiji*. Both these Goddesses are positioned in the highest status than all other Goddesses. Worship to *Bhagwan* is only performed from the strength given by *Bhagwan*. *Bhagwan* does not enjoy living alone, thus, He forever keeps outstanding devo-

tees with Him.

WHEN DOES ONE BECOME ENLIGHTENED WITH
UNDERSTANDING? THROUGH THE SAINTS DIVINE EXPLANATIONS.

When a teacher has studied a BA degree, BCOM degree or higher and teaches newly, fresh students, he will state that 'one times one is one'. He teaches them numerals. When he teaches them alphabets the tutor will pronounce 'A for apple, B for ball'. The new students will subsequently repeat 'A for apple, B for ball'. The ignorant and senseless raise doubts that this master does not know anything; hence he is saying his numbers and learning the alphabets. Those who think like this are foolish.

If *Swaminarayan Bhagwan* simply appears as a devotee merely by meditating, performing worship and by having faith upon an *Ishtadev*, then in the past era, during the *Ram* incarnation, *Shree Ramchandraji Bhagwan* Himself installed His loyal devotee *Shivji* in the locale of Rameshvar. At that time, *Bhagwan* bowed down to *Shivjee*, performed worship, offered *Arti* and sat with both hands folded. Thus, does this mean that *Shivji* is *Bhagwan* and *Ramchandraji* is a mere devotee? Through these performances, did *Ramchandraji* become a devotee or a follower of *Shivji*? Certainly not. He performs in such way in order to embed knowledge in His devotees.

Shivji is a follower of *Parmatma* and *Shree Ramchandraji* is *Purshotam Narayan* Himself. In a similar manner, *Bhagwan Shree Krushnachandra* performed daily worship to the Idol of *Chaturbhuj*, which was respectfully installed in His Royal Palace. To Him, He would bow down with folded hands, worship Him and offer Him food. When *Naradji* came to the Royal Palace to test him, *Shree Krushna Bhagwan* was worshipping the same Idol of *Chaturbhuj*. At that time, *Shree Krushna Bhagwan* told *Naradji* that, "This is My *Ishtadev*." Hence, when seeing this did *Naradji* have a doubt that the Idol of *Chaturbhuj Narayan* is *Bhagwan* and that *Shree Krushna Bhagwan* is a devotee? No, he did not have such foolish doubts. A learned, wise man would never raise such thoughts. It is the custom of civility that the human race should have faith on an *Ishtadev*. When *Bhagwan* maintains a human form, He perfectly abides by the custom of civility. No matter what kind of *Leelas Bhagwan* performs, one would believe the *Leela* to be conducive to bliss; however, by catching sight of such *Leela*, one would never see any deficiency within *Bhagwan* residing on earth. He would never awaken such doubtful thoughts. Such individuals are known as the highest mode of devotees. Such are known as true theists.

Observe the *Bhaagavata*. While listening to the Raas-Leela (*Shree Krushna's* divine dancing and singing with the *Gopee's* in Vrundavan), King Parikshit aroused a suspicion that, "As *Bhagwan*, He plays with young females. In which way can he be called '*Bhagwan*'?" His mind became unsteady. Shukdevji then said, "Oh King! Do not mistrust. *Krushna* is Supreme *Purshotam Narayan* Himself. No form of defect comes into association with Him. One should never see mundane actions of an ordinary human within His *Leelas*. One should forever see the divine-ness in *Bhagwan's* spiritual *leelas*. Only this is the highest path to salvation.

The *Shrutis* became exhausted in describing *Bhagwan's* divineness, but they were unable to reach the end of *Bhagwan's* divine form. Therefore, it is not worth mere beings like you, to raise doubts in *Bhagwan's* divine *Leelas*." Shukdevji simply clarified in this way, yet the King's suspicion did not elapse. Hence, *Bhagwan Krushna* integrated all the forms of the *Gopees* into *Bhagwan's* divine form. 'My only beloved is *Krushna*.' They laugh with *Krushna* and play *Raas* with Him. In this occasion, *Muktanand Swami* is singing a beautiful *kirtan*:

raas rachyo vanmaali, vrundavan raas rachyo vanmaali
premeshu palvat vaali, vrundavan raas rachyo vanmaali.

koi sakhi taal mrudang bajaave, koi bajaave kartaali;
karnaa latkaa kari koi naache, koi fare foodli rupali,
vrundavan raas rachyo vanmaali

radha raasma rang jamave, mohan sang marmaali;

muktanand mohan sang ramtaa, na shaki aap sambhaali. vrundavan raas rachyo vanmaali

Bhagwan merged all the *Gopees* into Himself. Only then, King Parikshit's doubts elapsed. The determination in *Bhagwan's* devotees becomes steady only through Saints. Determination does not become steady simply by reading sacred Scriptures. Refuge upon Saints must be taken.

Bhagwan Swaminarayan is proclaiming that, "My *Ishtadev* is *Radhakrushna Dev.*" Who is our *Ishtadev*? Our *Ishtadev* is *Swaminarayan Bhagwan*, the *avtar na avtari*. *Shatanand Swami* is bowing down to *Radhakrushna Dev* and thereafter, bowing down to the seventeenth *mantra*.

MANTRA (17) AUM SHREE MARUT-SUT-PRİYAY NAMAH

One who is the most favoured ('priya') by the Son ('sut') of wind ('Marut'), Hanumanji

In this *Janmangal*, *Shatanand Swami* has remembered a great devotee, *Hanumanji*. *Bhagwan* is dear to *Hanumanji* and *Hanumanji* is dear to *Bhagwan*. Why is He so dear? Whenever *Bhagwan* asked *Hanumanji* for service, *Hanumanji* immediately came to His eminent service. He has very much served *Bhagwan* in a humble manner. *Hanumanji* is *Ram Bhagwan's* Messenger. He has devoted Himself to *Ramchandraji Bhagwan* in the manner of a chaste wife. However, *Hanumanji* has served *Bhagwan* during *Krushna Bhagwan's* Incarnation and has also very much served *Bhagwan* during *Swaminarayan Bhagwan's* Incarnation.

Bhagwan's Incarnation may be changing from time to time, but *Hanumanji* who is immortal has never stepped back from *Prabhu's* humble service. His faith has never been altered. *Swami Badrinathji* has vividly described the power in *Hanumanji* and His extraordinary achievement:

raja ramji na sevak, hanuman baliya re, jene pativrataani che tek, hanuman baliya re,
sati sitane shodhva kaaj, hanuman baliya re, gayaa vege kari kapiraj, hanuman baliya re,
dhanya dhanya e keshri kumar, hanuman baliya re, jena parakramno nahi paar, hanuman baliya re.

Bhagwan is dear to *Hanumanji* and *Hanumanji* is dear to *Bhagwan*. They are mutually dear to each other. *Bhagwan Ramchandraji* has said that, "In My consideration, one who worships *Hanumanji* has worshiped Me."

When *Swaminarayan Bhagwan* took divine birth in *Chapaiya* and the demonic *Krutyas* abducted baby *Ghanshyam*, *Mother Bhakti* remembered *Hanumanji*. *Hanumanji* said, "Oh Mother! How may I serve you? Please tell me." *Mother Bhakti* cried out, "The *Krutyas* have taken away my baby *Ghanshyam*. Please rescue Him." *Hanumanji* immediately flew with power to the *Krutyas*, tying them up with his tail and threw them, loudly roaring, "Oh sinful *Krutyas*! You have come to hurt My *Ishtadev*? Right now you may be alive, next you will be gone. I will take away your life."

Saying this, He again beat them, threw them and threatened them. Then the *Krutyas* surrendered with folded hands and said, "Oh *Hanumanji*! Please let us go alive. We will never trouble *Ghanshyam* ever again." *Hanumanji* then took *Ghanshyam* and presented Him to *Mother Bhakti*. *Mother Bhakti* was extremely pleased. She gave *Ghanshyam* a motherly kiss and fed Him her milk.

Hanumanji has very much served *Prabhu*. *Nilkanth Varni* set out for a pilgrimage, in the jungle and was without food for four days. At that time, *Hanumanji* brought fruits from the jungle and offered them to *Bhagwan*. *Bhagwan* consumed the fruits with affection. *Hanumanji* then said, "Oh *Prabhu*! Please keep Me with You in Your humble service. I will serve You according to Your likings." *Bhagwan* replied, "At the moment I will tour alone, but when Your service is needed, I will surely keep You in mind. Then You shall come, but not with me at this moment."

Shreeji Maharaj has said that, “My disciples should have the same faithful determination on *Swaminarayan Bhagwan* as *Hanumanji* has for *Ramchandraji Bhagwan*.” *Hanumanji*’s devotional strength is further increased than any other devotee. For this reason, *Hanumanji* is very much adored by *Bhagwan*. If we devote ourselves to *Bhagwan* like a chaste and devote wife, we will also be adored by *Bhagwan*. *Swami Tulsidasji* is bowing down to *Hanumanji* and singing,

jay jay jay hanuman gosaai, krupa karo guru devki naai,
sankat kate mite sab pida,jo sumire hanumant balvira...

Shatanand Swami is saying, “*Swaminarayan Bhagwan*, to whom the Son of Wind is adored by, I bow down to You. Now I am entering the eighteenth *mantra*.”

MANTRA (18) AUM SHREE KALI-BHAIRAVA-DHYATI-BHISHANAY NAMAH

One who appears to be frightful to Tamsik Deities like Kaal-bhairav (Bhagwan does not appear frightful to devotees, but appears in this way before non-devotees as non-devotees possess stainful thoughts)

Mother Parvati is a *Satvik* Goddess. *Bhagwan* has not prohibited *Mother Kali* Herself but has prohibited the slaughtering and the sinful acts before Her.

During His pilgrimage, *Bhagwan Nilkanth Varni* took rest under a tree on the eighth day of the dark half of the month of *Shravan*. In that tree resided *Kal-bhairav* (a demon).

“NONE SHALL FEAR – I AM PRESENT.”

Many ghostly spirits were also accompanying *Kal-bhairav*. Upon catching sight of *Nilkanth Varni*, they immediately ran towards Him with the intention to take His life. Challenging Him, they addressed loudly, “Who is resting under my tree? Kill Him! Cut Him into pieces! You were unable to come across another place so you decided to come here?” As soon as they ran to take His life, *Hanumanji* appeared. He spoke aloud in a brave manner, “Which fool is he to speak of such words to My *Ishtadev*?!” Exclaiming loudly, he began to beat them. The ghostly spirits went running away. “Hurry, hurry... or we will be gone forever; this is a courageous and powerful monkey.”

Then *Kal-bhairav* arrived. As he grew nearer and nearer saying, “I will eat You, I will eat You”, *Hanumanji* gave a mighty blow and his head instantly became squashed in his upper body. He bled heavily and ran away. *Bhagwan Nilkanth Varni* was peacefully seated under the tree. *Hanumanji* was seated in the presence of Him. *Hanumanji* had defeated the *Tamsik* demon.

Nilkanth Varni Himself came in the place where *Pibek* (who belonged in a *kaul* sect) had arrived. The *Brahman* was not abiding to the rules of spiritual morality. He made numerous emancipated *Siddhs* his own disciples through the art of spells, having the intention that, ‘None on this earth is as miraculous as me.’ His pride was such that, ‘Only I am the true *Siddh*.’

There were numerous *Yogis* in the presence of *Bhagwan*. *Pibek* asked them, “Who are you? Do you recognise me? I am the leading *Siddh* to the highest level. If you wish to stay alive then take off your *Kanthi* and your *janoi* (the sacred thread worn by devotee). Become my faithful disciples or I shall kill you!” All the *Yogis* became frightened. *Bhagwan* said, “None shall fear. I am present. Do what you are capable of doing.”

Aloud, *Pibek* performed the act of necromancy to kill. He then threw the grains on the tree. The verdant tree instantly became dull and moistureless. The yellow leaves began to fall after withering. *Pibek* declared, “You see, the tree did not take long to dry out. Equally, it will not take time to kill you. Hence, trust me and become my disciples.” All the *Yogis* became horror-struck.

At that time, *Nilkanth Varni* gave courage and said, “None shall fear. I am present.” Vigorously, *Bhagwan* said, “Oh *Pibek*! Do whatever you desire. Let us identify your extraordinary heroism. What can a mosquito like you do?”

Just as a snake becomes aggravated, Pibek grinded his teeth and threw the grains upon *Bhagwan*. Nothing happened. He was sat as He was in a neutral position. *Bhagwan* smiled and said, “Do as you like. All is done by *Bhagwan*’s wish.” Pibek’s heart began to ignite within. Burning in flames, he said, “Oh Young *Yogi*! You will die without being killed. Thus become my disciple or I am calling Kaal-bhairav upon You. He will make you lifeless in a split second.”

At that time, reciting a *mantra*, Pibek called upon Kaal-bhairava. Kaal-bhairav appeared. “Tell me, what is your order?” “Go and kill that Young *Yogi* seated opposite!” responded Pibek. He came sprinting but there was no way Kal-bhairav could reach near, so he changed direction and targeted to kill Pibek. He severely wounded Pibek. He beat him. Pibek could not rise up. His relatives arrived and pleaded *Bhagwan* for forgiveness.

A while later Pibek raised from his position. Yet again, he ordered Kal-bhairav to kill *Bhagwan*. However, Kal-bhairav ran and battered Pibek instead. He thumped him plenty of times. *Bhagwan* then showed mercy and instructed, “Kaal-bhairav, keep Pibek alive as I have consumed upon his grains.”

Pibek then acquired true understanding. Bowing down, he begged for mercy for his offence. “Please condone my wrongdoings. Keep me under Your refuge. You are *Bhagwan* in the presence of my eyes. You have saved me from dying. Now I shall do as You say.” Thereafter, *Bhagwan Nilkanth Varni* gave a reply, “Forsake the evil *mantra* chanting of the malicious Godheads which you perform. Abandon the sinful acts and read, study and listen to the *Vaidik mantras*, performing devotion and worship. Through this routine, you will be gifted.”

In order to establish faith of His sacred form, *Prabhu* has prohibited malicious Godheads. Ordinary beings are afraid of malicious Godheads, but there is no need to fear. They all belong in the practices of occultism. Their potency is nothing to fear. Therefore, stay courageous and have the strength to commit yourself in devotion. Keep the strength of residing in *Bhagwan*’s protection, but do not let your mind wander here and there.

MANTRA (19) AUM SHREE JITENDRIYAY NAMAH

The conqueror ('Jit') of the five senses ('endriya')

Shatanand Swami is offering respectful obeisances to *Maharaj*. “Oh *Maharaj*! You are the Conqueror of the senses. You are the controller of the senses and the mind. We all are acting according to the senses and the mind. However, *Bhagwan* is not acting to the likes of the senses. He is performing according to His wishes.”

“ENTERTAIN THEM TOWARDS BHAGWAN.”

In the *Vachanamrut*, *Shreeji Maharaj* is stating that, “I am gripping the mind. Just as a lion grips its young, I grip my mind in the same manner and I also grip other people’s minds.” No individual has the power to grip the minds of others other than *Bhagwan*. If one cannot control his own mind, what to talk of others?

The following *Leela* was performed in the village of Sarangpur. One time, *Bhagwan* came to Sarangpur. He took a seat upon a horse. He made the horse gallop ever so speedily, making the horse jerk around in all directions. If the horse takes a long leap, it will forcefully pull on the reins in the wrong direction. Just imagine the speed of an eagle, the great King of Birds. This was the beauty laid within *Shreeji Maharaj*!

The white tassels studded over His turban were fluttering in the tranquil air as if the turban was about to take a tender drop. The drops of perspiration on *Shreeji Maharaj*’s divine body were as alluring as glowing pearls. Galloping away, the horse started to huff and puff. It became out of breath. All the limbs became weak and vulnerable. *Bhagwan* then aided the horse to stand, offering it water to drink and grass to feed upon.

Swaminarayan Bhagwan then occupied an honourable seat in the full assembly. *Sura Khachar* questioned Him, “Oh *Prabhu!* Today You caused the horse to gallop speedily. We have never seen such a scene. What is the purpose for the hasty galloping?” *Prabhu* gave a response, “The reason is that the owner of this horse has kept it imprisoned and restricted. He would offer it food and drink but never would he allow the horse to any duty or activity. Hence, due to this, the horse had become rebellious. To release it from this arrogance, today I let it to run hastily.”

The moral of this, is that everyones senses are as unsteady as this horse. If one does not allocate duties to the senses, they eventually become rebellious.

If one wishes the senses to be averted then entertain them. Attend the religious discourses, sing *kirtan's* and merge your senses in *Bhagwan*. Concentrate on *Bhagwan's* charming beauty and merge your vision with *Bhagwan*. Sing *Bhagwan's* virtues and link your speech with *Bhagwan*. Through this practice, the arrogance of the senses will be completely eradicated and the senses will lead one to the path of final liberation.

If the body becomes plump, just as the horse becomes rebellious, one should go through a period of fasting. Only then one will experience the weakness of the limbs. To weaken the horse-like senses one should do *Dandvat Pranam*. If one performs an approximate amount of *Dandvat Pranams*, the hinges will weaken. Other than this, the panchaang pranaam (prostrate bows performed by females) are remarkably simple. One can easily fall asleep if care is not taken. What should one do then? Perform circumambulation around the Idol of *Bhagwan*, stand on one leg and perform penance by performing *Mala*. If our physical posture is conquered, the limbs are conquered. If one performs *Mala*, the unsteadiness of the hands is conquered. In the Temple, one should clean, empty the rubbish, go to pick flowers, make garlands, wash dishes, humbly serve elderly Saints and wash their clothing. Involving oneself in such service is called penance.

This following narration is worth understanding. Humans, till today, associate their own senses with objects of worldly enjoyment. To the eyes he has shown beauty. He has not become fully satisfied by merely seeing the beauty of this earth, so in the end, he satisfies the eyes by watching bad scenes on television. He satisfies the ears by listening to filthy songs. By consuming many types of savour sweets and bitter food, he satisfies the tongue. Talking about worldly affairs and gossiping, he satisfies his habit. If the senses do not become rebellious then what do they become? Now if the senses are not controlled, then the person will undoubtedly throw the soul in the origins of hell. *Bhagwan* is the conqueror of the senses, so we should also be the conquerors of our senses. He is guiding us through example by saying, “Oh my dear disciples! If you become a slave of your senses you will be destined to see the un-seeable, hear the un-hearable, talk the un-talkable and view scenes which should not be viewed. Then you will have to fall in the regions of hell and go through severe torment and distress.” *Shreeji Maharaj* made the horse gallop ever so speedily making it exhausted. You should also join the senses in good deeds, services and devotion.

Fasten your eyes in meditation of *Bhagwan*, to a point that you do not feel like even opening them. Become still for a few hours. Perform aasans (physical postures) that no matter how exhausted you become, you would not get up from the Aasans. Instead, you will continually attempt and achieve.

If one keeps the horse restricted and fastened, the horse becomes disobedient and lazy. It needs to be trained to plough. Only then, it behaves. Otherwise, it will become mischievous. In spite of this, what if you ride it and it gallops backwards rather than forward? It will throw you in a deep hole. Similarly, like the horse, if you do not turn the senses in the direction of *Bhagwan*, they will become lazy. You will think you are riding it forward, but it will be dragging you back. Then you will tell the senses to perform *Mala* but it would not. It will roam here and there but would not stay put in

one place.

ekagra chite thavu kathama, drashti javaa devi nahi vruthaama,
tyaarej te bhakti saachi ganaay, prabhu te upar raaji thaay.

If we make an effort to conquer the senses step by step, the mind will be able to attain *Akshardham*. Otherwise it will throw you in a deep hole. Do you recognise which deep hole? The mother's womb. It will tumble in hell with the body in an up-side-down position. It will shiver in dismay and will flounder. The following narration is giving us awareness.

Shreeji Maharaj is stating in the *Shikshapatri*, 'They shall keep all their sensory organs under their control, especially the sense of taste.' The sense of taste referring to the tongue. The narration of how to conquer this, is about to come in the following *mantra*. *Shatanand Swami* is saying, "Oh *Prabhu!* What characteristics do you possess? You are the Conqueror of all the senses and also the Conqueror of your sense of taste".

MANTRA (20) AUM SHREE JITAHARAY NAMAH

The Conqueror ('Jit') of the organ of taste ('ahar')

Shatanand Swami is offering respectful obeisances to *Maharaj*. "Oh *Maharaj!* You are the Conqueror of the sense of taste. Within the period of five to six days, You had not found food to consume in the forest, yet there was no desire of hunger." He Himself conquers the sense of taste and is guiding His devotees to also control this sense. *Prabhu* has not even got the slightest fondness, for enjoyment of flavors. Also, during the period of *Ram's* Incarnation, for fourteen years, He journeyed in the forest and he had strictly controlled His intake of food. In the period of *Krushna Bhagwan's* Incarnation, He deserted the fifty-six types of food offerings and consumed the tasteless vegetables offered by *Vidurji*.

In the village of *Jetalpur*, *Swaminarayan Bhagwan* abandoned the large plate of exotic fruits and Indian sweets and devoured upon *Jeevan Bhakt's Mathno rotlo*. This narration is also worth understanding. In one way, we say that *Bhagwan* has not even the slightest yearning for enjoyment of flavors He is the conqueror of taste, however, fifty-six types of foods are been offered to *Bhagwan*. Yet *Bhagwan* does not ever desire them.

IF AFFECTION ARISES, BHAGWAN FEELS HUNGER.

Bhagwan is forever fulfilled. He possesses no faults. Then does *Bhagwan* feel hungry? If devotees arouse their affection, *Bhagwan* feels hungry. Wherever affection prevails, only there, there is the pleasure to request for and to eat. No matter how much one offers tasty pendaas and barfi (types of Indian sweets), if it is not offered with affection, it will not be appetising.

Bhagwan is advising all humans to conquer their sense of taste. When too much food is consumed, the *jatharagni* (the fire within our body which causes the easy digestion of food) falls dull. For this reason, a limited amount should be consumed. One should intake the minimum amount of food. The stomach is divided into two sections, the first section should be supplied with liquid and the other should be left empty for the ease of breathing. Else, to strictly fill the stomach is opposing the laws of nature.

Shreeji Maharaj entered the region of *Kutch*. He resided in the village named *Tera*. The Saints had left to ask for alms. They were given chapattis, rice, curry and the likes. In those days, Saints consumed the food cooked by householders. They would take raw alms, cook them with their own hands, offer the cooked food to *Bhagwan* and then consume the offerings. Any alms they receive, they would wrap them in a cloth and dip to soak them in the water of the lake. When the taste disperses from the food, they would shape into round *ladus* and then consume them.

Throughout the entire day, only once, would they eat the *ladu* shaped ball. When they were

about to begin eating, *Shreeji Maharaj* arrived close to the Saints and sat next to the saints. “Oh Saints! Please give me something to eat as well.”

Mulji Brahmchari (*Swaminarayan Bhagwan*'s ever ready attendant) immediately replied, “Oh *Maharaj*! I have made *Dudh-pak* and *sheero* for you. Let me go and get it.” Refusing, *Shreeji Maharaj* said, “I do not desire that, but I want to eat what these Saints are eating.” The Saints were startled. “*Prabhu*! You cannot eat this flavourless food.” At that time, *Shreeji Maharaj* gave a pleasing reply. “Dear Saints, if you eat, why can't I?” Much cannot be said to *Bhagwan*. Hence, they gave a dry and tasteless *ladu* from the vessel. As He was eating, *Bhagwan* said, “Oh Saints, this is actually a treatment.” What kind of treatment is it?

jamtaa thakaa kare vakhaan, vadi vaalo vade mukhe vaan I
aa to churan aushadh rup, taale vikaar ne kare anup II

“This is a treatment which rids all types of decay. If the intake of food is tasteless, devotion is carried out with delight. Through pure intake of food, pure thoughts awaken within.” As all the Saints finished eating, they took a seat in the assembly. *Shreeji Maharaj* then said, “Dear Saints! Why do I send you to ask for alms? Do you know? To ask for alms is an inferior activity. I am able. If you are sat upon the peak of a mountain, I would send large plates of Indian sweets, *sheero*, purees, rice and curry. All supernatural powers are in the firm grip of My hands. I am able to do as I wish. You do not have to roam around in places. Sit in one place and worship *Maharaj* in peace. I can send food even if you are sat on the peak of a mountain. My Saints are not beggars! They are not paupers! I can feed ten million Saints. I am all powerful. Why do I therefore send you to beg?” *Shreeji Maharaj* gave an answer Himself.

bhiksha mangaavu tam paas, mara manma dhaari hulaas I
koti jivnu kalyaan thaay, vadi tamaaro dharma padaay II

Shreeji Maharaj said, “Oh Saints! Those whose food you eat will achieve final liberation. This is because you perform devotion after consuming their given food. The fruits from your devotion are passed on to those who offered the food. *Satsang* will flourish and one will be motivated to perform worship. Thus, I am sending you to ask for alms.”

Those whose minds are entrapped in the worldly affairs are unable to carry out devotion. Talking too much destroys ones inner power and eating too much also destroys ones inner power. *Shatanand Swami* is praising *Maharaj*. “Oh *Prabhu*! You are the Conqueror of the sense of taste and You are guiding Your disciples to also conquer their sense of taste.” The next *mantra* is as follows.

MANTRA (21) AUM SHREE TIVRA-VAIRAGYAY NAMAH
One who has deep (*‘tivra’*) non-attachment (*‘vairagya’*)
towards the social life of householders

Shatanand Swami is offering respectful obeisances to *Maharaj*. “Oh *Prabhu*! You are strongly and deeply *vairagya-van* (unattached to worldly objects).” An intense *vairagya-van* person is one who forsakes objects of enjoyment such as his own Kingdom or wealth.

“*Prabhu*! You are honourably seated upon a Royal Throne. You are adorned with beautiful heavy ornaments. You are feeding upon fifty-six types of food, yet, You have not even a slightest trace of attachment. You remain distinct from the mortal body. You are highly *vairagya-van*.

You impart knowledge to Your devotees to maintain a non-attached inclination of the mind.” What is non-attachment? Non-attachment means no affection for other objects except for *Bhagwan*. If hatred and dislike arises towards worldly objects, ones non-attachment will grow. Without hatred, eager thoughts of pleasure for any objects are not treated. As one resents food that has been vomited, dislike should awaken from deep within the heart. Only this is true non-attachment.

Non-attachment illuminated from knowledge is called intense non-attachment. *Shatanand Swami* is praising *Maharaj* that, “Oh *Maharaj!* You possess the non-attachment formed from knowledge and You influence devotees on how to acquire thoughts of non-attachment. Oh *Maharaj!* At the tender age of just eleven, You set off on a journey in to the dark jungle.”

tivra vairagyane vege shyaam, chalya umangthi sukhdhaam l
gharno karyo che prabhu tyaag, ati vaalo manma vairagya ll
harsh kari harivar raay, gharthi utar dishe jaay l
ek kaupin ne achaadaan, te vina nathi biju vasan ll

One time, in the early morning period at four o'clock, *Rampratapbhai*, *Suvasani Bhabi*, *Icharam Bhai*, *Nandram*, were sleeping. *Ghanshyam* wore a loin cloth with a leather made from deer skin on top of it. He had a water pot in His hand, a *Char Sarno Gutko* worn around His neck, a Shaligram (a small, round stone worshiped as the Idol of *Vishnu Bhagwan*) for worship and he had a piece of cloth to filter water. With only these items, *Bhagwan* set off to the jungle bare-foot.

‘I am setting off to the jungle so let Me take a pair of shoes, a woollen blanket to wrap around My body, a servant for company.’ No such thoughts arose. He had set off immediately, alone, free from desires, at a young, tender age of eleven. Like such, *Swaminarayan Bhagwan* is vairagya-van.

pagma paheri nahi mojadi re, angarkhi nahi ang re, shyaamaliya chel chapaiye padhaarjo re.
ekaa eki chaali nisarya re, jova raakhi nahi jod re, shyaamaliya chel chapaiye padhaarjo re.

If we want to set off to a pilgrimage for a mere four days, we would prepare everything four days in advance. Sukhdi, ghanthiya (articles of Indian food) and snacks will be needed. Cups will be needed for drinking water.’ We would collect together many objects. Only then we could set out for a four day pilgrimage journey. *Nilkanthji* is fearless and unconcerned. *Shatanand Swami* is bowing down to *Nilkanth Varni* who is vigorously vairagya-van and is chanting the twenty-second *mantra*.

MANTRA (22) AUM SHREE ASTIKAY NAMAH

*One who is the Protector of devotees in every situation,
at all times and who has firm faith ('astik') on Bhagwan*

‘*Astik*’ means loyalty upon *Prabhu*’s divine form. Loyalty should be upon the Idol of *Prabhu*. Although He is Supreme *Purshotam* Himself, when *Prabhu* descended upon this earth as a human form, He would worship *Bhagwan*. To the souls in this mortal world, He set an example showing that one should have loyalty upon the Idol of *Prabhu*. Performing worship and offering food. On the other hand, be attentive and have firm faith on *Bhagwan* that this Idol is not just a mere portrait, or a picture, He is not just a mere Idol made out from wood or stone, but it is *Bhagwan* before your eyes. Have this kind of faith.

One who has faith, devotion and affection in *Bhagwan*, is known as a loyal and theist person. Those who do not have faith, devotion and affection in *Bhagwan* and who proclaim that, ‘I am not interested in *Bhagwan* or believe in *Bhagwan*’, are known as atheists.

No matter how much of a great sinner one may be, if he repeatedly chants ‘*Krushna, Krushna, Krushna*’ three times, then that great sinner is released from all his sins.

Those ignorant individuals who lack knowledge say, ‘When we went for a pilgrimage journey, in this particular place, there was a golden Idol.’ What, did you go to do *Darshan* of gold? ‘In this Temple, there was an Idol formed out of marble’, ‘In this Temple, there was an Idol formed out of wood’. One who has such feelings towards the divine Idols is not an ‘*astik*’ person but is an *anastik*.

Those with no affection for *Maharaj*, no belief, or faith in Saints and sacred Scriptures are called atheists. One should avoid the thoughts of the Idols being just mere pictures or marble and should have faith. When *Bhagwan* left for the forest, wherever a *Shiv* Idol would appear onroute,

Prabhu would carry out an *abhishek* upon *Shivji*, performing worship to Him, offering humble prayers and would consider the Idol to be *Shivji* before His eyes.

Those with firm faith upon *Bhagwan* are ‘*astiks*’ and those with no firm faith upon *Bhagwan* are atheists. One with no belief upon *Shree Hari*, or that he is the Giver of life, is known as an atheist.

You are responsible for your own luggage. If you are travelling from abroad and you want to use the bathroom, who would you nominate to protect your belongings? You would appoint those who you confidently trust. You would not allow any stranger to guard your belongings. Only those who you have faith upon would be given this responsibility. Similarly only those who *Bhagwan* has trust upon, are given, the most valuable entity to protect. As *Bhagwan*’s reward, what is ever so precious? Righteousness, devotion, spiritual knowledge, non-attachment to worldly objects, morality, contentment, peace, compassion, inspiration, trust and bliss. *Bhagwan* does not give the treasure full of such precious virtues to any strange person. However, He only offers to those He trusts. Let us pray to *Shreeji Maharaj* that we eventually become worthy of His trust.

Non-believers have the understanding of *Bhagwan*’s Idols to be mere statues of stones; but when calling for *Bhagwan*, He certainly appears. The Idols of *Bhagwan* give the desired longings to those who serve Him with deep affection.

“YOU YOURSELF BE THE LAWFUL JUDGE.”

A *Mahatma* was constructing a temple and he asked for a donation from the King of Udaipur. “Oh King! Please provide a share of funds for the divine construction of the Temple.” The King asked, “What will you do subsequent to the construction of the Temple?” The *Mahatma* replied, “We will respectfully install an Idol of *Bhagwan* within. We will worship it, perform *Bhagwan*’s *Arti*, offer Him food and numerous devotees will assemble to carry out devotion.”

A King, who was a non-believer, had pride over authority. One who is arrogant does not always see the truth. Vanity only leads to wrong doing. The King confidently spoke, “There is no *Bhagwan* in this universe. I do not believe in *Bhagwan*. *Bhagwan* never exists in stones. What is the actual point of installing all such statues and worshiping them? Saints like you have no other profitable activity to do; hence you perform such ludicrous acts. I will not donate even a penny towards such erroneous acts. How can *Bhagwan* exist in pictures?”

The *Mahatma* said in a serene manner, “It is not a problem that, you do not wish to offer money. We will find many other benevolent donors. *Bhagwan* Himself will accomplish His own deeds. However, your belief that *Bhagwan* does not reside in Idols is incorrect.”

The King said, “Show me and prove it or else I will not believe you and your mere talks.” The *Mahatma* thought that this non-believer needs to be clearly explained.

The *Mahatma* said, “I shall certainly prove it, but only on one condition. So do not fume in anger.” The King agreed, “I will not fume in anger.” The *Mahatma* then brought a photograph of the King. He positioned the photo resting it on a chair in front of the King. The *Mahatma* subsequently put a garland around the photo. Viewing this sight, the King became pleased.

Following this, the *Mahatma* offered *ladu* to the photo of the King. The King was extremely happy. Then he bowed down to the photo. The King instantly smiled, got up from his seat and embraced the *Mahatma*. “Bravo, oh *Mahatma*! Bravo! You have so much fondness and care for me.” The King then sat on the golden royal throne. He was smiling in glee and joy.

A while later, the *Mahatma* reached his hands to the King’s photo and said, “This photo is so incorrect that I actually do not believe in it.” Saying this, he spitted upon the photo, tore it into pieces and threw it away. Seeing his torn photo, the King fumed in limitless anger. “You fool! What have you done? Are you insulting me in the midst of this full assembly? Who do you think you are? Soldiers!

Seize this man and imprison him in the dungeon!”

The *Mahatma* spoke calmly, “Oh King! Do not fume in anger. I have brought this photo. You have not had to contribute any money. I threw it and tore it into pieces. There is no harm done to you. The harm is done to me. Yet, why do you enrage in such anger?”

Grinding his teeth in agitation, the King spoke, “You worthless fool! Despite everything else, the image in the photo was of me.” The *Mahatma* responded, “Oh King! This photo is made of glass, paper and wood. You are not sitting within it. You were pleased when I put a garland around your photo and you immediately embraced me. Now that I threw it and you fumed in anger. Similarly, those who perform worship to the Idols of *Prabhu*, perform *Arti* to Him, offer Him food and dress Him with clothes and ornaments have won the happiness of *Prabhu* upon them. Does not *Bhagwan* become unhappy on those who insult His divine Idols? You yourself be the lawful judge.” The King realised that this was true. “Seeing the tribute given to my photo I appeared to be glad. Similarly, by performing worship to *Prabhu*’s Idols, *Bhagwan* becomes pleased.” The King folded both hands and bowed down to the *Mahatma*. “Oh *Mahatma*! You have banished the non-believers understanding which once resided in me”. The King then developed his *astik* understanding of *Bhagwan*; thus, he offered a good service for the construction of the divine Temple.

When *Swaminarayan Bhagwan*, the *avtar na avtari*, would go to the village of *Ayodhya* to do *Darshan* in Hanuman Ghadhi, He would perform wordhip to the Idol of *Ramchandrajai Bhagwan* and sing a *Stuti* (the *Veds*) by standing on one leg.

shri ramjini murti aage, kare stuti ubha ek page l
 dhanya dhanya dhanya raghupati, tamaro mahima moto ati ll
 kari bhildine tame sanaath, dhanya dhanya he jaanki naath l
 tamara padrajno prataap, thai shila ahalyaa te aap ll
 bhetya hanumanjine bhari baath, dhanya dhanya hai jaanki naath l

In those places where *Bhagwan Swaminarayan* has journeyed, He has performed reverence to the previous Incarnations and to the Idols of Deities. He has set an example to the human race, that one should be *astik* and not a non-believer. *Shatanand Swami* is saying, “Oh *Prabhu*! You are *astik*.”

MANTRA (23) AUM SHREE YOGESHVARAY NAMAH

The Master ('Eshvara') of the Yogis

Shatanand Swami is offering respectful obeisances to *Maharaj*. “Oh *Prabhu*! You are the Supreme Master of the *Yogis*. You are the treasurer of *Yog*. Every *Yogi* concludes their *Yog* in Your presence.” You may suppose that *Nilkanth Varni* learnt the eightfold processes of *Yog* from *Gopal Yogi*. However, in the end, *Gopal Yogi* concluded the artistic skill of *Yog* in the lotus-like feet of *Nilkanth Varni*. (The narration relating to this will be explained in the coming *mantra*.) Right now, we shall fully understand the *mantra*, ‘*Yogeshvaray Namah*’.

naame navlakho parvat jyaay, yogeshvar avya che tyaaay l
 jemaa kaliyug na kare pravesh, evo e che pavitra desh ll

While on the journey of pilgrimage, *Nilkanth Varni* came across *Mount Navlakh* (now known as the Chittagong Hills in Bengal). *Mount Navlakh* is such a sacred territory, that even *Kaliyug* cannot enter its boundaries. There is no lust, anger, greed, trickery, treachery, disunity, dispute, jealousy or enmity. It is only full of peace. It was the middle of the severe cold full moon day of the month of *Posh*. In the extreme deep dense jungle, in the terrible dark forest full of dangerous animals, alone, *Nilkanth Varni* was climbing the mountain. On the summit of that mountain, nine hundred thousand *Yogis* were undertaking penance, but there was no enmity amongst each other. It had been five thousand years in which they were attaining the arts of *Yog*.

They are yearning intensely for *Prabhu*’s *Darshan*. ‘When *Prabhu* Himself appears before

our eyes, we will gain His *Darshan* and then we shall conclude our spiritual *Yog*.' So that they can conclude their divine *Yog* act, *Prabhu* considerably journeyed on the mountain to grant them with *Darshan*.

“WHAT DESIRE DO YOU HAVE?”

At that auspicious moment, a divine speech from the sky occurred, “Oh *Yogis*! Today your golden sun has aroused. A *Yogeshvar* (Master of all *Yogis*) is arriving to grant you with *Darshan*.” All of a sudden, each and every *Yogi* awakened. Their hair follicles stood up. The ocean of bliss set in the movement of extravagant waves. The *Yogis* eagerly hurried towards *Prabhu*'s direction just like every river is impatiently eager to meet the oceanic point. One *Prabhu* and many *Yogis*. Every *Yogi* had the passion to meet *Prabhu*, to embrace *Prabhu*. Right away, *Prabhu* emerged in nine hundred thousand forms. He touched the tender hearts of the *Yogis* and embraced them lovingly. Thereafter, *Prabhu* fed upon the various fruits offered by the *Yogis*. The rest of the offerings, He distributed to all the *Yogis* then assembled in all four directions before *Prabhu*. *Maharaj* gently asked, “Dear *Yogis*! For what purpose are you carrying out penance and which art of *Yog* have you been attaining? Tell me. What desire do you have?” The *Yogis* replied, “*Prabhu*! We are performing *Hath-Yog* (a system of techniques and physical postures that promotes health and mental calmness). To immortalise this body, we are accomplishing this *Yog*. Nevertheless, we have found You before our eyes, thus we shall do as You say.” *Bhagwan* gave a reply, “Not one being has remained immortal and none shall remain immortal. Oh *Yogis*, for how many years have you been accomplishing *Yog*?” “*Prabhu*, up till this moment, it has been five thousand years we have been performing *Yog*.”

This makes us question, ‘how can they endure their mortal body for the period of five thousand years?’ They can survive for numerous years through the skillful art of the eightfold processes of *Yog*. The power of their breathing forever flows with the *Sushumna-Nadi* (the middle one of the three arteries mentioned in *Hath-Yog*). It is essential for a *Hath-Yogi* (one who carries out *Hath-Yog*) to awaken their *Sushumna-Nadi*. A *Hath-Yogi* forcefully holds his breathing and reaches the point of his *Sushumna-Nadi*. If debris are blocked in the middle of a pipe, pressure is used to clean the pipe. Similarly, he vigorously awakens his *Sushumna-Nadi*.

While on the verge of studying *Pranayam* (conscious control of the creative vibration or energy that activates and sustains life in a body), a *Yogi* overtakes the six chakras (in *Yog*, the seven occults of like and consciousness in the spine and brain, which enliven the physical and astral bodies of man) and achieves the *Darshan* of his enlightened soul. Thereafter, he achieves *Darshan* of *Parmatma*, the One and Only who enlightens the soul.

Bhagwan is pointing out to the *Yogis*, “Oh *Yogis*! To endure this body for a large period of thousands of years is not a great do. To survive this long is not of great importance but to grow the admiration for *Parmatma* through the body is of great significance. Yes, you are achieving *Hath-Yog*. You ask to be immortal which is all also fine but more than *Hath-Yog*, *Raj-Yog* (meditation as the ultimate means for realising *Parmatma*) is a higher achievement.”

“NOW YOU SHOULD PERFORM PREM-YOG”

Bhagwan Nilkanth Varni is offering guidance. “My disciples, who listen to discourses of *Shree Hari*, sing *Kirtans* of *Shree Hari* and meditate upon *Shree Hari* with emotional love and without desires, live a moral life. They can also attain *Parmatma*.” If examining the lives of the *Nand Santos*, they did not achieve the eightfold processes of *Yog*, but they had the most essential ingredient: *Prabhu-Prem* (intense love for *Prabhu*). They attained *Bhagwan* through *Prem-Yog* (an art of *Yog* which increases intense love for *Bhagwan*). *Raj-Yog* is a greater achievement than *Hath-Yog*.

The *Gopees* did not perform *Yog*, yet they were able to attain *Bhagwan*. *Bhagwan* becomes absorbed in love. The *Gopees* would meditate intensely on each part of *Prabhu*'s divine body, bond

their inclination of the mind in the midst of *Shree Hari*, enter the pool of bliss and experience the heavenly *Darshan* of *Shree Hari*.

Prabhu gave blessings to the *Siddh-Yogis* and said, “Oh *Yogis* whose souls are sanctified! In a short period of time, your mortal bodies will be gone and you will attain my *Akshardham*.” The *Yogis* were in high spirits. They gently touched *Bhagwan*'s lotus-like feet, folded both hands and offered their prayers, “Dear *Prabhu*! Forever give us your *Darshan* in this exact form.”

apyu potana svarupnu gnaan, navlaakh yogine samaana l
temno moksh kari dayaal, chodaavi didhi mayani jaad ll

Nilkanth Varni dwelled upon the peak of *Mount Navlakh* for a few days. He gave understanding of His divine form to many souls who were thirsty for final liberation and freed them from the knots of birth and death. He is the Supreme Master of such great *Yogis*. Therefore, *Shatanand Swami* is calling Him by the name of *Yogeshvar* and bowing down to Him.

MANTRA (24) AUM SHREE YOG-KALA-PAVRUTAYE NAMAH

The Establisher ('pravrut') of the art ('kala') of the eightfold processes of Yog

Shatanand Swami is offering respectful obeisances to *Prabhu*, “You are the Master of great *Yogis* and in fact, beyond doubt, You are the One who has established the spiritual practice of *Yog*.” Whilst on the journey of pilgrimage, *Bhagwan Nilkanth Varni* entered the dense forest in the territory of Nepal. There, He noticed a *Yogi* residing under a Banyan tree. Immediately, He went towards the *Yogi*, folded both hands and humbly bowed down to him. *Nilkanth Varni* is the Master of this entire universe, yet by showing modesty and to teach the human race, He is showing us awareness that if you meet a Saint, *Yogi*, or an ascetic, bow down to him with respect.

naam gopal yogi udaar, tene prabhuye karya namaskaar l
gitajinu pustak che haath, teno paath kare che sanaath ll

This particular *Yogi*, known as *Gopal Yogi*, was studying the *Bhagvat Gita*. He caught *Maharaj*'s sight. As their eyes met, his mind was attracted towards *Prabhu* in the same way as a magnet is attracted metal.

vruti khenchava laagi che tyaay, nilkanthna svarup maay l

Nilkanth Varni and *Gopal Yogi* intimately embraced each other, just as those who express their affection from deep within the heart to their loved ones. *Gopal Yogi* realised that, ‘The One who I have been reciting the name of my entire life, is this very *Nilkanth Varni*. My inclination of the mind never becomes attracted to anybody other than *Bhagwan*.’ He recognised *Purshotam Narayan*. “*Prabhu*, You have arrived to liberate my soul. Apart from that, no ordinary being can reach this place. Dangerous, vicious creatures are roaming around.” *Prabhu* gave a reply.

GRADUALLY, THE HEART FLOURISHES WITH DEVOTION.

KAHYU TAME GURU NE HU SHISHYA, AAPO MANE RUDO UPDESH L
yogkala je ashtang yog, teno mane karaavo prayog ll

“Train me with the skillful art of the eightfold processes of *Yog*.” When *Guru Gopal Yogi* instructs Him once, immediately *Prabhu* would have memorised the information.

What is the eightfold processes of *Yog*? *Yam* and *Niyam* (moral practices), *Aasan* (bodily postures), *Pranayam* (breath control), *Pratyahar* (sensory withdrawal), *Dharna* (steadying the mind) and *Dhyan* (meditation) are 7 components. When all seven branches are attained, the eighth component of the eightfold proces of *Yog*, *Samadhi* (deep state of trance) can be naturally achieved. In this state of *Samadhi*, those who have faith in *Bhagwan* with form, achieve *Darshan* of *Bhagwan* and those who believe in no form of *Bhagwan* see only a glow of illumination. However, to the ones who do not believe *Bhagwan* to be with form, do not achieve the *Darshan* of *Bhagwan*. This is called the

eightfold processes of *Yog*.

Yam: - The belief of non-violence. Not to kill.

Niyam: - To act out penance and to have control over the senses.

Aasan: - To sit in a cross-legged position with a straight back.

Pranayam: - To gradually breathe in through the nose, close the mouth, recite the name 'Swaminarayan' four times and steadily take the inhalation up to the navel.

Poorak: - To recite the name of 'Swaminarayan' sixteen times whilst holding the breath and then recite 'Swaminarayan' eight times whilst progressively breathing out.

Pratyahar: - To clear the five senses from their respective cognitive organs. To draw the senses which are attracted to the five cognitive senses sound, touch, sight, taste and smell and direct these towards god. For instance, the cognitive organ of hearing, i.e. the ear, should be lured to the sound of the praises of *Bhagwan's* qualities but not towards worldly related talks. In the same way, the cognitive organ of touch skin, should be nourished with the touch of *Bhagwan's* lotus-like feet but not with pleasure with intimate relations. Thereafter, the cognitive organ of sight, the eyes, should be satisfied with the *Darshan* of *Bhagwan* and *Bhagwan's* single-minded devotees but pleasure should not be attained watching unsightly things. The cognitive organ of taste, the tongue, should be fulfilled through singing *Kirtans* of *Bhagwan* and through the intake of *Bhagwan's* offerings. The cognitive organ of smell, i.e. the nose, should be given the smell of only flowers, scent and incense which are offered to *Bhagwan* but should not be given any other smell. This is namely *Pratyahar*.

Dhyan: - The sixth component of the eightfold processes of *Yog* is *Dhyan*. This means pondering upon each part of *Prabhu's* heavenly body from head to toe.

Dharna: - *Dharna* is the seventh constituent. Whatever is been pondered upon, should be then concentrated upon in the mind. 'These are *Maharaj's* tender feet; these are *Prabhu's* soft cheeks.' Like this, one should concentrate and focus.

Samadhi: - The eighth element is *Samadhi* meaning a deep state of trance. *Prabhu* is the establisher of this art of *Yog*.

Prabhu is the treasurer of the skillful art of *Yog*. *Nilkanth Varni* trained *Gopal Yogi* with *Yog* where he advised, "You are merely achieving *Darshan* of illumination. Along with the illumination, clearly vision the Supreme Almighty. Meditate upon the divine form before your eyes."

Whilst meditating with concentration, *Gopal Yogi's* inclination of the mind fixed permanently on *Bhagwan*. He disregarded the existence of his mortal body and gained *Darshan* of *Bhagwan's* divine form before his eyes within meditation. He became engrossed in the blissful happiness, broke his concentration from the body and departed to *Akshardham*. *Bhagwan* performed *Gopal Yogi's* funeral rites. *Bhagwan Nilkanth Varni* resided in *Gopal Yogi's* company for a period of twelve months.

This skillful art of *Yog* was also inaugurated in the small village of *Loj*. *Prabhu* would train fifty Saints the fine art of *Yog*. He established *Brahma-Yog* (spiritual practice of association with *Bhagwan*) and *Prem-Yog* which influences the mind to be fixed upon *Prabhu*. For which reason do *Yogis* accomplish *Yog*? In order to interlock their mentality in *Bhagwan's* divine form. To the *Yogis*, this is their only purpose.

To interlock their mentality in *Bhagwan's* divine form is in addition the only intention for an affectionate devotee.

For us mere beings, *Prem-Yog* is adequate. *Hath-Yog* is an exceptionally complex practice, whereas *Prem-Yog* is something which is achieved in gradual movement. Therefore to merge

affectionately and lovingly into *Bhagwan*, is *Yog* and the ones who have been merged are especially known as '*Yogis*'.

The *Gopees* did not carry out *Yog* but with warm adoration, their concentration of the mind firmly became

embedded in *Prabhu* and they reached Him. Whilst the recitations of the *Veds* were revealed through their lips, they enlightened the hearts of those like *Udhayji* with devotional splendid brilliance. *Jivubaa* lightened the heart of *Ladubaa* with similar devotions.

Shatanand Swami is saying, "*Prabhu!* You are the One who established the spiritual art of *Yog*." Following this, the next *mantra* is one that should be engraved in the performance of our lives.

MANTRA (25) AUM SHREE ATI-DHAIRYA-VATE NAMAH

One who is deeply ('ati') patient ('dhairya')

Shatanand Swami is offering respectful obeisances to *Maharaj*. "Oh *Prabhu!* You are deeply patient." What are the characteristics of one who has the quality of patience? No matter what kind of harmful scenery arises, one maintains patience even though he is greatly insulted by another. No matter how much another repulsively swears, yet he tolerates it. Many individuals lose their patience on matter upon matter. If their desires are slightly twisted by others, witness the transformation of colour on their face. Everything must be acted to their own accord. ONLY THE PATIENT ONES CAN ACHIEVE FAME.

Observe the incident that took place in the great city of *Ahmedabad*. *Bhagwan Swaminarayan* carried out *Yagnas* in *Jetalpur*. He offered many *Brahmans* donations and charitable gifts. The renunciates let King *Peshva* know about this. They explained contrarily that, "*Swaminarayan* is not a *Brahman*, yet He is chanting the *mantras* of the *Veds*. For this reason, this is a sinful act and your Kingdom will undergo the suffering of starvation. Thus, believe in us and imprison *Swaminarayan* in a dungeon." The King was foolish. He believed this talk, but how should *Swaminarayan* be arrested?

He then planned a tactful scheme. He sent one of his people. "*Swaminarayan!* Come immediately, our King has called for You in the Royal Kingdom. We want to politely welcome you so please pay a respectful visit." *Prabhu* replied, "Okay, I am all ready." *Shreeji Maharaj's* devotees said, "*Prabhu*, the King *Peshva* is our opponent. He has given an invitation but he has a stomach full of deceit, hence we shall not go."

Shreeji Maharaj spoke, "What can such a vain person do to us? Be prepared." One thousand five hundred staunch devotees prepared themselves. The King's soldiers said, "Entry for all is not permitted. Wait outdoors. Only two to three shall enter the premises. The rest must remain outdoors and discover the meaning of these Scriptures."

Shreeji Maharaj ever so patiently entered the Royal Court. There, the King bowed down with both hands folded. "Welcome, welcome. *Jay Swaminarayan.*" Jealousy was prevailing inside. He had evilly plotted to kill and yet he was showing likeliness to *Shreeji Maharaj*.

However, the fools were not aware that *Bhagwan* is the Knower of all. Yet, *Shreeji Maharaj* did not utter a word. The fraudulent king formulated a special seat. On top of a deep tank filled of oil was a well arranged small thin stick. On top of that were well-adorned velvet pillows and a fine beautiful blanket made out of golden thread. It was a terrible wicked conspiracy. 'As *Swaminarayan* takes a seat, He will fall directly in the tank. As he falls, I will close the steel lid and kill *Swaminarayan.*' The King wanted to commit such a deception.

The sinful King spoke, "Oh *Swaminarayan!*" "Purify and sanctify this Royal Throne by sitting on it." *Prabhu* replied, "This is a Royal Throne. A

renunciate is not permitted to take a seat upon a Royal Throne.” Laughing, King Peshva said, “No *Maharaj*. Please sit for a while. Purify it.” He thought that if *Maharaj* does not sit, the game will be spoilt. “*Maharaj*, You are compassionate. Please, sanctify the throne.” He requested with false humbleness. Subsequently, *Shreeji Maharaj* said, “Okay then. Let me sanctify it.”

hati haathma soti je laambi, gaadi upar jorthi daabi l
tethi gadine takiyo te vaar, padya tarat te tanka mozaar ll

As He applied pressure with His stick, the complete throne along with the cushions fell in the tank with a piercing bang. *Devanand Swami* who was accompanying *Shreeji Maharaj*, became extremely wounded. He became hot-tempered. ‘Who does this King think he is? Right now he is living; next he will be a dead person! I will destroy this King!’ At once, *Shreeji Maharaj* interrupted, “*Swami*, relax.” *Devanand Swami* cried out, “He is insulting my *Ishtadev* in front of my bare eyes?! I will not keep him alive!” The King began to tremble. ‘What will become of me now?’ *Prabhu* was patient to the highest degree. *Maharaj* explained to the *Swami*, “The soil of *Ahmedabad* is highly fortunate. Here, I wish to open a *sadaavrata* (a place where food is charitably given to the needy). To tolerate is a Saint’s garment. Do not utter a word. To speak much is worthless.” *Prabhu* gave courage and the *Swami* calmed down. The King fell in shameful disgrace.

Subsequently, *Shreeji Maharaj* arrived in the village of *Motera*. An enormous assembly was gathered. The devotees of that village informed *Prabhu*, “Dear *Prabhu*! Just as the King has highly insulted you, he insults us in the same way disrespects us”.

Oh *Prabhu*! You are the King of many universes. The sun, moon, ocean, Deities, Goddesses all remain sheltered under Your rulings. You are the Supreme Emperor of this entire universe, so why is that chief given the right to rule? You do as You wish, yet why do You not give severe punishment to the King?”

Prabhu gave a reasonable reply, “Dear devotees! All shall be patient. Right now, the King has control in his hands. He has power, hence he is roaring with pride. For how many days will he do such? One day his city will be snatched away and his pride will come to an end. It will not remain like this forever. His Kingdom will not last for long. The Empire of an immoral sinner does not last for long. Thus, have patience.” Such is *Bhagwan*’s patience and He is teaching us to also have the virtue of patience.

Patience is considered necessary everywhere. Without patience, no act is fulfilled. If one does not maintain patience, difficulty stands in the way. With patience, the mind becomes tranquil. With patience, the most disastrous calamity is easily conquered and tranquil bliss is experienced.

Only those who care can achieve fame. They become particularly great in protecting the righteous rules. They are able to achieve their desired targets. Patience works as a shield, as a means of defence. *Shatanand Swami* is saying, “Dear devotees! Our *Ishtadev*, Supreme *Swaminarayan*, is patient to the highest degree; hence we should also maintain the patience virtue. I pay a humble bow to *Shreeji Maharaj*.” Now *Swami* is reciting the next *mantra*.

श्री स्वामिनारायणो विजयतेतसम्