# Pragat Parcha Pade Pade

Part - 1



Excerpts from the Bhaktachintamani Written By
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# 1. Supreme Lord of Lords

Parvatbhai worked as a farmer in the village of Agatrai in the region of Sorath, as part of a Patel family. He wasn't originally a devotee of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. One day, the much revered Sadguru Ramanand Swami visited the village, sanctifying it forever. It was during this occasion where Parvatbhai became a devoted disciple. On initiation, he wore a *kanthi*, and alongside other villagers, started to worship the form of God. It was the beginning of *Satsang* for him.

He came to believe firmly that Ramanand Swami was not only his Guru, but God in human form. Parvatbhai obeyed every single command given by Ramanand Swami, and due to his Guru's grace, Parvatbhai earned spiritual wisdom and virtues.

Moreover, he even contended with the great saint Muktanand Swami that no one could compare to Ramanand Swami, yet if he was shown miracles. Parvatbhai possessed sharp understanding. His firm faith in his Guru Ramanand Swami guided him towards the Supreme Godhead.

Bhagwan Swaminarayan Himself states in Gadhada last chapter 2nd Vachanamrut, "It appears to me that all *sanskars* one has gathered from previous lives have been attained through association with the *satpurush*. Even today, those who obtain *sanskars* are due to the association of a *satpurush*." According to these words of Bhagwan Swaminarayan, Parvatbhai had achieved everything by associating with his Guru through thought, word, and deed.

Later on, just before departing to Bhagwan's divine abode, Ramanand Swami undisclosed a fact that would be etched in

history forever. He told all of his disciples – "Sahajanand Swami is the Supreme God and there are countless servants like me, who serve Him in His divine abode *Akshardham.*" Naturally, to follow the words of one's Guru is the duty of a disciple so, Parvatbhai worshipped Bhagwan Swaminarayan with singular devotion, as if he would have done so for Ramanand Swami.

Bhagwan Swaminarayan states in Gadhada first chapter 1st Vachanamrut, "There is no spiritual endeavor more difficult than to continuously engage one's mind on the form of God." Parvatbhai started to meditate on the divine form of Bhagwan Swaminarayan, and because of the grace of his Guru, he was effortlessly able to focus his mind constantly on the form of God.

Parvatbhai had received *rajipo* of his Guru, and so, Maharaj's *murti* was etched in his heart. Parvatbhai enjoyed the divine bliss of Maharaj's *murti* while even sleeping. His spiritual level was truly admirable.

However, there was an instance where he once desired to see the form of Bhagwan in the assumed form of *Nrusinh* avatar. Parvatbhai imagined what Bhagwan must have looked like with half a body of a lion and half of a body of a human. He tried to envision this in his mind, but nothing could spring up. So, he remembered the whole incident of how *Nrusinh* avatar manifested from a pillar and killed a demon.

Parvatbhai went to his farm while still thinking about this. During plowing the field or any other activity his mind's *vrutti* was engaged continuously in the form of Maharaj. At the same time, he had yet another thought in his mind, regarding the form of *Nrusinh* Bhagwan.

Suddenly, that form of Maharaj which Parvatbhai constantly saw in his heart appeared in front of him. This form was stunning. Bhagwan Swaminarayan was wearing lavish garments,





a garland, and ornaments. His divine fragrance aroused the senses of Parvatbhai. Maharaj wore divine bunches of flowers in His right hand. His upraised left hand showered divine blessings. It was a wondrous, brilliant, unlimited, and indescribable experience. The divine light emanating from the *murti* was equivalent to a thousand suns and moons.

For some time, Parvatbhai stood there like a statue. He couldn't even blink as he took in the *darshan* of Maharaj, who was giving him a charming smile in return. Parvatbhai first gazed on the dark pink colored lips of Maharaj. A faint mustache increased the beauty of those lips. His nose resembled that of a straight flame of an oil lamp, and both cheeks were a soothing pink color.

There was a dark brown colored *til* on the center-right cheek, and another *til* that increased the beauty of Maharaj's right eye, as it was situated at the tip of it. Both eyes were brilliant and held a divine radiance. Parvatbhai relished watching Maharaj's eyelids that further beautified the charm it expressed.

A *tilak* started from the middle of Maharaj's eyebrows, stretched upwards to the hairline. That *tilak* was composed of saffron *chandan*, and it was beautified with a red *chandlo* at its center. His ears held decorated golden earrings which were embedded with diamonds. There was an incredibly beautiful crown with priceless diamonds encrusted inside of it.

He was smelling a red rose with His right hand. Parvatbhai gazed on Maharaj's fingers which held the flower, along with His bright and light pink colored nails which only further attracted Parvatbhai's mind to hold them.

Maharaj's left palm showered blessings. Parvatbhai, while receiving those blessings, watched the various lines of

Maharaj's palm which provided him with divine insight. The lower part of Bhagwan's body was covered with garments. Before bringing back his mind and vision from Maharaj, He further examined Maharaj's yellow silken *dhoti* with golden borders. For the upper garment, Maharaj only wore a golden colored extra-fine *khesh.* Parvatbhai had a chance to do *darshan* of half of Maharaj's chest and half of His belly. He further did *darshan* of the diamond-embedded golden necklace and armlets.

Parvatbhai watched the form with great attention. Maharaj wished to show him all the 24 different avatars of God and did so, as Parvatbhai watched in astonishment of this unbelievable scene. One after another, all 24 avatars emerged from Maharaj's *murti* and arranged themselves to surround Him, and prayed with folded hands. Like the rays of the sun, all those various forms came from the Supreme Lord Swaminarayan. They were comprised of *Sankadik, Varah, Yagna, Haygreiv, Nar-Narayan, Nrusinh, Kapil, Dattatreya, Rushabhdev, Pruthvi, Machchha, Kachchha, Dhanvantari, Hari, Narad, Vaman, Hans, Narayan, Parashurama, Ram, Vyas, Shri Krishna, Buddha,* and *Kalki.*

At the moment, Parvatbhai felt bad having desired to see the form of the *Nrusinh* avatar. By having that *darshan* of all avatars from Maharaj, he realized Maharaj as the Supreme Lord of Lords, and as the cause of all causes. What more was there to desire?

In an instant, before Parvatbhai could blink, Maharaj merged back all 24 avatars into His original form. Filled with astonishment, Parvatbhai bowed with folded hands began to pray to the Supreme Lord.

"Oh! Maharaj! Please forgive me for thinking of looking at





other forms besides yours. You are the original personality of Godhead, the eternal, the ultimate cause of this manifested cosmic world. You are the knower of everything. You are the supreme refuge, above all the material modes. You are limitless, God of Gods. You are the most powerful source, the cause of all causes, transcendental to this material manifestation. You pervade this whole cosmic manifestation! I, therefore, offer my respectful obeisance unto You a thousand times, and again, and yet again!"

Parvatbhai, who was struck with wonder continued, "You are the grandeur of this complete manifestation, of the moving and unmoving. No one is equal to You, nor can anyone be one with You. How then could there be anyone greater than You? You are the Supreme Lord to be worshipped by every living being. Thus, I bow down to offer You my respectful obeisance and ask for forgiveness. As a father tolerates the rudeness of his son, a friend's impertinence of a friend or a husband tolerates the familiarity of his wife, please, tolerate and forgive me."

While praying with such polite words, folded hands, hair-raising sentiments, and an emotionally-filled voice, Parvatbhai touched Lord Swaminarayan's feet with his eyelids and washed Bhagwan's feet with tears. Maharaj became delighted upon him and so, placed His left hand upon Parvatbhai's head. Then, Maharaj disappeared and along with Him, all of His transcendental divine masses of divine light. However, as a blessing, Maharaj graced that divine form permanently in Parvatbhai's heart so that he could envision this with open or closed eyes. Just as someone with a *chintamani* could attain anything of their desires, similarly, Parvatbhai also enjoyed eternal happiness with Maharaj through grace.

Once, Shreeji Maharaj was sitting in an assembly of sadhus

and devotees. Parvatbhai was also present. He asked Shreeji Maharaj about his divine experience. He specifically asked two questions: First, "Oh Maharaj! You are the ocean of compassion. Please reveal to me why, when I desired to see your *Nrusinh* form while meditating upon you, that you showed me the 24 avatars along with the form of *Nrusinh*? Secondly, you have shown me 24 avatars which emerged and then merged back into you. So, I did not fully grasp what I should be understanding regarding your form. Is there a similarity between you and the other forms, or are they different? Please answer if you are pleased with me."

Shreeji Maharaj replied, "Parvatbhai! You had the desire to see the avatar of *Nrusinh* so, after perceiving it, you would naturally and humbly desire to see other forms of God. So, I showed you all the forms."

Maharaj continued, now addressing the assembly as well, "I am the cause of all of the 24 avatars of God which you had seen emerging from myself, and merging back within me. I am the cause of all causes, Lord of all Lords, sustainer of all; all-knower, all-powerful, Purushottam Bhagwan. Therefore, I am known as the supreme personality of Godhead."

Everyone listened with rapt attention as Maharaj clarified and brought a sense of wonder with further truths. "Moreover, the earth remains stable and trembles, the stars remain steady in the sky, the rains fall, the sun rises and sets, the moon waxes and wanes, the vast oceans remain constrained within their boundaries; a drop of liquid develops into a human possessing hands, feet, a nose, ears, and the rest of the ten *indriyas;* the clouds, through which lightning strikes and which float unsupported in the sky - there and a countless variety of other wonders are due to me."





In this way, Bhagwan Swaminarayan revealed his supremacy in an assembly of sadhus and devotees.

Blessed with Divine Sight

Jem chintamani hoy kane, jeh chay thay teh tane;
Lok pralok agam na re, je je ape ichchhe teh kare.
(Meaning Below)

A *chintamani* refers to the 'philosopher's stone,' which grants the desires of its holder. Shreeji Maharaj said, "The scriptures state that there is no greater attainment for a person whose mind is continuously focused on the form of God because the form of God is like a *chintamani.* Just as a person who possesses a *chintamani* attains whatever he desires, a person whose mind's *vrutti* is constantly focused on the form of God can instantly see, if he so wishes, the forms of *Jiva, Ishwar, Maya,* and Brahma. He can also see Vaikunth, Golok, Brahma-mahol, and other abodes of God."

The words became a reality. After these incidents, Parvatbhai was granted an even more advanced stage concerning his spirituality. Due to this, he was able to see all of the divine abodes of God. While sitting in one place, Parvatbhai received the power of watching anything happening at any place, at any time, and not only in this world but he could reach up to other realms with his divine vision.

However, even after attaining such a divine vision, Parvatbhai did not use it to see anything besides the form of God. He always remained engrossed in the form of Bhagwan Swaminarayan day and night.

In this way, Parvatbhai experienced many such divine miracles of Maharaj, throughout his life. Such incidents are evidence of Maharaj's omnipresent nature and power.

## 2. Fearless Mulji Luvana

The company of evil and otherwise immoral people can poison even the purest *jiva*. In Vachanamrut Sarangpur 18, Maharaj says that "If a person who is internally pure, full of virtues, and free of all desire for worldly pleasures, is to meet with *kusang*, he will lose all his virtues and develop evil instincts."

Maharaj clarified further, "Conversely, if he encounters evil company, and if he develops *shraddha* in his words, then all of the virtues of *vairagya*, wisdom, etc., would be destroyed." Maharaj linked His principle with an example of heavily salted land. "If a person with *shraddha* encounters the company of a true Sant and develops *shraddha* in the words of that Sant, then all of the redemptive virtues of swadharma, *vairagya*, gnãn, bhakti, wisdom, etc., would develop in his heart, and the vicious natures of lust, anger, etc., would be burnt away. Subsequently, the seeds of lust, anger, avarice, infatuation, arrogance, *matsar,* etc., which are dormant in this 'silt,' would grow into large trees."

Mulji Luvana was a *Brahmin*, in his previous life. His name was Vishnu Sharma. He was very scholarly and had studied the Vedas. He followed the code of conducts prescribed by the sacred scriptures. By living such a pious life, he had gained many virtues such as control of his senses, control over his mind and thoughts, renunciation, compassion, morality, faith in God, remaining content, living simply, etc. He remained engaged in devotion of God and longed for the company and association of a *satpurush*.





Once, Vishnu Sharma traveled across the lands in search of a *satpurush* and reached the ashram of sage Angira. At that time, the sage was performing a *Yagna*. So, Vishnu Sharma sat distant from the sage without prostrating to him. He did not want to disturb the sage while the ceremony was going on. However, the sage misunderstood and after completing the ceremony, Angira cursed Vishnu Sharma. He remarked, "Oh, Vishnu! You have ego for your caste and your intellect. In result, you did not prostate or give respect to me. Therefore, I curse you that you'll be born in a Vaishya family in your next life and encounter hardships."

Vishnu Sharma prostrated and calmly replied. "Oh! Great Sage! According to the scriptures, it is restricted to prostrate before someone who is performing sacrificial rituals. So, please forgive me for my behavior."

By listening to such a humble request from Vishnu Sharma, Angira replied, "Oh! Vishnu! My curse cannot be lifted, but you will receive the Supreme Lord Swaminarayan's *darshan* in human form. And, with blessings of the Supreme Lord, you will attain the power to experience *samadhi*. Thus, you will experience bliss."

He was born into a Vaishya family and named Mulji, in the village of Madiya. During this birth, he came into the company of some thieves and became friends with them. Naturally, a man is known by the company he keeps. In result, Mulji became a thief and mastered the art of robbing others. He became a famed leader of a group of dacoits across the lands.

Once, Mulji heard about how Bhagwan Swaminarayan possessed numerous golden jewelry. He decided to steal them. He traveled to the place where Maharaj was present. Taking a distant seat, he observed Maharaj on a decorated cot under a

tree wearing beautiful golden ornaments, amidst an assembly of sadhus and devotees.

Mulji's mind quickly thought of ways to secure the ornaments, and while considering such, his eyes met with Maharaj's eyes. All of a sudden, something happened. Mulji experienced a divine state. He forgot his bodies consciousness and entered into a new and unique world. He experienced waves of *samadhi*. This state is difficult to attain even by great yogis and sages. In *samadhi*, Mulji received divine and celestial visions and visited many divine abodes of God.

After enjoying celestial and God-related eternal happiness, Mulji returned to his body. He was unable to understand what had just happened. He thought "Was it a dream, or was it real?" Maharaj provided an answer and said, "What you have experienced during *samadhi* is the ultimate truth."

Mulji realized his mistakes and asked for forgiveness. While repenting in this way, he pleaded and prayed, "Oh, Maharaj! You are the Lord of Lords; please forgive me. I have committed many sins in this life. I had planned to steal your golden ornaments. I am the gravest sinner on this Earth. Please, forgive me." Maharaj consoled him, "It's okay. Your remorse and prior fulfillments worked as atonement, and now, you are free from your sins." Mulji's crying turned into tears of appreciation because, without any punishment, Maharaj forgave him.

Then, without delay, he became a devotee. Mulji was gifted with a divine power by which he could enter the state of *samadhi* at his will. With such a gift he frequently entered into *samadhi* and enjoyed divine happiness and *darshan* of Maharaj's *Akshardham*. Also, he visited many abodes of God. For instance, there was Golok, the abode of Shri *Krishna*; Vaikunth, the abode of Shri *Ram*; Shwetdip, the realm of





Vasudev Narayan; Swarg (devlok), the residence of demigods; Kailas, the residence of Shiva; Satyalok, the abode of Brahma, etc. It was all due to Maharaj's grace.

Once, while going to *Akshardham* in *samadhi*, Mulji visited Kailas. In Kailas, he did not see Lord Shiva, so he shared divine wisdom of Bhagwan Swaminarayan with the disciples of Lord Shiva. He described, "Oh! Wise attendants of Lord Shiva! You should perform devotion to the Supreme Lord Swaminarayan to attain ultimate liberation. On the other hand, by performing services to Lord Shiva who is already captivated by the three qualities of illusion, you will not be liberated from the bondage of illusion." By saying so, Mulji departed towards *Akshardham*.

The attendants later described everything they heard to Lord Shiva. On hearing this, Shiva became angry. He then reached out to Mulji, who was returning from *Akshardham*, and asked, "Why did you speak adversely about me to the attendants? As a punishment, I'll restrict you from going further."

Mulji replied, "The Supreme Lord Swaminarayan has given me this divine power to enter into *samadhi*. So, no one besides Him can stop me." On saying this, he proceeded back to his body-consciousness without fear. In this manner, he would spend a long time in *samadhi*.

So, Mulji came to Maharaj and said, "Whenever I proceed towards *Akshardham* in *samadhi*, Lord Shiva forcefully stops me for a long period of time and does not allow me to pass. That is the reason why I am late most of the time." After listening to him, Maharaj said, "Now whenever you enter *samadhi*, do not stop anywhere even for a moment. If you have any difficulty, remember me, and you will find the solution. Head there and come back without delay. Also, narrate what

will happen to everyone, when you return."

Mulji touched the lotus feet of Maharaj who in return blessed him with divine strength. Afterwards, Mulji sat in a room for meditation and started pondering over the divine form of Maharaj within his *atma*. Instantly, he entered *samadhi*. With a divine body, he walked in divine spaces where there was no water, earth or atmosphere. Everything within this state was different than that of the world. As he went, he remembered the form of Maharaj walking in a particular direction. A path made of divine light opened up surrounded only by intense darkness everywhere else. Mulji walked at a relatively speedy pace so that he could keep close and could enjoy the *darshan* of Maharaj.

At the same time, he suddenly saw a threatening figure with matted hair. This figure held a *trishul* in its hand and had a snake around its neck. Every time, it was this *deva* who hindered him from going to *Akshardham*, however this time, Mulji remembered the words of Maharaj and kept moving forward. As he went further, the threatening face of Shiva appeared clearly.

Mulji requested, "Today, I am in a hurry, so I cannot stop here."

Shiva said, "You have to remain here for some time. And if you will not stay here with me, I will beat you to death." Mulji retorted, "If you try to check me, I will retaliate with force."

Both of their tempers became out of control. Shiva raised his right hand to throw the *trishul*. Fortunately, Mulji swayed out of the way. Now, Shiva's anger reached new peaks as he swung a fist with great force towards Mulji. Again, Mulji dodged the attack with ease. It was at this moment Mulji took a chance and struck Shiva on the head using his right hand. Upon





being hit in the head, Shiva fell to the ground becoming even more agitated.

This time, Shiva was alert and grabbed Mulji's hand. With the support of it, he stood up and attempted to strike back. Mulji held onto Shivji's hand with his left, and then used his right hand and held the matted locks of Shivji. With the sudden turn of events, Shiva struggled to be released, but it was to no avail.

Mulji threw Shiva onto the surface in result a thunderous sound occurred. The demigods heard this sound, a considerable distance away. They feared that something terrible had happened and prayed to almighty Lord Swaminarayan for protection.

Shiva was in great pain and agony. In this situation, Shiva asked Mulji, "Are you a devotee of the Supreme Lord? Because no one can conquer me in a duel." Mulji replied, "Yes, I am a devotee of Bhagwan Swaminarayan who is the Lord of Lords."

On hearing this answer, Shiva said, "Mulji! You have attained everything by attaining the Supreme Lord. By His grace, I have had His *darshan*. I meditate upon the form of Bhagwan Swaminarayan daily. I always abide by his commands prescribed for me. So please, forgive me for my improper conduct." Shiva then performed the pujan of Mulji and had him seated upon a particular seat in His abode Kailash, and offered a garland around his neck. Then, Mulji also bowed down to Shivji and departed.

After returning to consciousness, Mulji saw many saints and devotees had gathered to hear his story. First, he asked, "Where is Maharaj?" Maharaj was seated on a decorated cot under the tree not too far away, with one saint pointing to His location. Without delay, Mulji ran for *darshan* and fell at

Maharaj's feet. Maharaj patted his back as a blessing, and asked, "What happened during *samadhi*?" Mulji could not speak but only expressed tears of appreciation. Maharaj patted him again and encouraged, "Reveal your story to all the saints and devotees."

Mulji narrated what had happened during his journey to *Akshardham*. He explained the encounter with Shiva. He also humbly told everyone that, "Whatever happened is due to Maharaj. I do not have the strength to defeat, or possibly even challenge Shiva. This magical incident itself is evidence of the supremacy of Maharaj and His constant presence."

All of the saints and devotees realized the immense glory of Shreeji Maharaj. Mulji understanding also increased. After this incident, his faith and trust in Bhagwan Swaminarayan's words became solidified, and day by day experienced many such divine and miraculous episodes. He understood firmly that whatever happens is due to Maharaj because Maharaj is the Supreme Lord Himself.





# 3. Adventures of Santdasji Swami

Dawn broke over India. The rising sun scattered its saffron colors across its atmosphere. Chirping birds sang musical tones for the poet santo who sang *prabhatiyas* one after another, to please their beloved Maharaj. Thus, Gadhada rejoiced Bhagwan Swaminarayan's presence, along with his thousands of renunciant saints and dedicated devotees.

A huge crowd gathered near the *darbargadh* of Dada Khachar for darshan of Shri Hari. There were shouts of, 'Sahajanand Swami Maharaj Ni Jay!'. Maharaj was going to grace them in the morning assembly under a neem tree in the center of Dada Khachar's courtyard.

When Mulji *Brahmachari* led Shri Hari to the assembly, Shri Hari signaled the saints and devotees to take their seats by waving His right hand. As Maharaj Himself sat on a decorated cot under a neem tree, all the saints and devotees took their seats. Muktanand Swami lit the five wicks of *arti* and started to perform the ritual by waving lights before Shri Hari; the others were singing *arti*, 'Jay Sadguru Swami...', by the accompaniment of musical instruments and hand claps.

When the *arti* finished, everyone first touched the flame with the tips of their fingers and then touched their eyelids and head. After concluding the ritual, all *paramhansa* saints and devotees prostrated to the Lord. Soon after they sat in the assembly, both male and female devotees assembled at a distance from one another abiding by the regulations. All were in a sequence and held a sense of discipline as taught by their most venerable Lord.

Shri Hari had become the source of inspiration to all the saints and devotees. The leadership of Shri Hari gave countless devotees a sense of discipline and unique uniformity. Despite having differences in caste, region, language, background, etc., due to the grace and divine persona saints and devotees managed to live together as a family. Even to stay in His company, they changed their natures, along with their beliefs and desires.

Those in the assembly felt that His voice was like the life-giving drops of rain on parched soil. To meet Him is to love Him. To love Him is to surrender one's self to Him. Even though He was very simple, everyone who met Maharaj confirmed that if God is in human form, He is no other than Swaminarayan.

Finally, the assembly began with kirtan-bhakti. Some of the skilled *paramhansas* who sang devotional songs explained the glory and greatness of their beloved Lord. Those who mastered musical instruments played rhythmic and divine sounds. Afterward, the Lord signaled to conclude and then began spiritual discourses. His voice was enough to capture the genuine attention of all listeners.

During the discourse, He explained the greatness of His *paramhansas*. Maharaj narrated the importance of Gopalanand Swami who changed astrological configurations; Nityanand Swami to whom no one can conquer in a scriptural debate; Brahmanand Swami, who no one across the entire country could compare to in poetry; and Muktanand Swami's unmatchable saintliness. In this way, Maharaj one by one narrated stories in the assembly. He was an entertaining speaker who included advice from His personal experiences into the discourses. Not only devotees but all who came to Gadhada were as much fascinated with Shri Hari's graciousness





and wisdom as they were awed by the superb manner in which He had built up the divine power of His *paramhansa* saints. On leaving Gadhada, they carried with them the tales of Shri Hari's godliness and spoke of his greatness such wherever they traveled.

After the assembly, Santdasji Swami came to have *darshan* of Shreeji Maharaj. Swami prostrated before Maharaj. Maharaj quickly rose from His seat, took a step forward, and flung His arms around Swami. The all-knowing Maharaj greeted, embraced, and introduced him to the gathered sadhus and praised him tremendously. Shreeji Maharaj explained to everyone, "He has acquired the state of *samadhi,* so in result, he can travel everywhere overpassing all obstacles. Also, he did not need to take any food or water."

Sometime later, Maharaj thought for a while and said, "Santdasji, go to the northern part of the country and meet Daluji in his divine ashram. I wished to go there to facilitate Daluji and other *mukto* with my *darshan.* However, I cannot spare that much time, so if you go there on my behalf, then it will be as equal as me visiting personally." Thus, Maharaj motivated Santdasji to go there.

Santdasji agreed with Maharaj's proposal. He replied, "Maharaj, I am eager to carry out your commands." Maharaj then bestowed blessings and instructed, "Tell him all about my manifestation and the system of our *satsang.* By listening and knowing all about us, Daluji and other *mukto* will become intensely happy. There are sixteen other *mukto* who live there with Daluji. One *mukt* within the female order is also living there. Send ahead my divine blessings to all."

Santdasji prostrated before Maharaj and departed. He did not know where to go nor how to get there, nor did he have

food, water, clothing, or other necessities. He just remembered Maharaj's divine form in his heart and within and started on his way. Maharaj became a guide for his path. Maharaj navigated him in proper destination.

In reality, the divine place of Daluji was nearly impossible to reach. The route passed through thick forests even where sunlight could not penetrate. Also, many varieties of wild animals wandered in that jungle. Also, one has to journey through the woods with its thorny paths, snakes, howling wolves, chattering monkeys, and sparse meals of wild fruits.

Santdasji began to follow the form of Maharaj, and with great surprise, his body started to fly with fantastic speed. In just a few minutes, he reached his destination without encountering any obstacles.

There he noticed the surrounding territory was different. The atmosphere was filled with divinity, as sixteen muktos were always engaged in worshipping the form of Bhagwan Swaminarayan while chanting various hymns from the Vedas. He was captivated by the beauty of the various types of greenery. While walking further, he found an open landscape surrounded by astounding nature.

There was a beautiful, small hut and just outside of it, by a tree, there was a sparkling personality sitting on a deerskin. The face was framed with a white beard and manes and looked as if it possessed an ancient strength. With a staff, the figure chanted God's holy name with a rosary.

Santdasji approached him slowly. Reducing the distance, Daluji stepped down from the perch and came forward to welcome him. Before Santdasji could prostrate, Daluji wrapped his arms around Santdasji and embraced him lovingly. Daluji was in fact, elated after meeting Swami. He arranged for an





individual seat and had Santdasji sit on it and then, Daluji performed Swami's puja and *arti.* After that, he washed Swami's feet with the holy water of the Ganga River and then prostrated before him.

The sun sailed towards the western horizon. Daluji understood the demand of time and offered specially ripened sweetened fruits. Santdasji, in turn, performed mansi puja and offered the food to Maharaj, thereafter partook in the prasad himself. Both Santdasji and Daluji took their dinner together, and after completing their meal, both washed their hands and partook in some water.

Meanwhile, the other sixteen muktos made decorations with oil lamps just outside the hut. In the flickering light of the many wicks which floated in aromatic oil within the lamps, Daluji invited Swami to come forward. All sixteen divine *mukto* along with one female *mukt* were awaiting Swami's *darshan* and pujan. As Santdasji sat on the decorated seat, all prostrated before him and one after the another touched the feet of Swami, and then performed pujan with sweet-smelling flower garlands.

The atmosphere was covered with a wonderful scent from garlands and oil lamps. All were seated in front of Santdasji Swami and Daluji within the assembly. Daluji asked about the manifestation of Supreme God and His divine powers. Then, Santdasji disclosed his heart's contents to narrate the glory and immense greatness of the Bhagwan Swaminarayan. Santdasji explained how the Supreme Lord was using his divine powers to change the lives and behaviors of the lower caste and suffering communities, and transforming them into profound devotees. Santdasji did not stop and added that the method of Lord Shri Hari was to grant ultimate liberation even for those

who had committed many sins. “Shriji Maharaj has become so lighthearted that He did not classify or judge by age, caste, category, religion, or gender. Whoever comes into His contact immediately enters the state of *Samadhi* merely by having His *darshan*.” With this said, he continued, “Moreover, His male and female followers also behaved in such a manner that by their mere contact, others were influenced to give up bad habits and become devotees of God.” In conclusion, Santdasji declared, “I have read and heard many scriptures, but no scriptures describe such glory and divine powers of God. This time, the Supreme Lord Himself has appeared in human form on this earth.”

After listening to all the discourses from Santdasji Swami regarding the divine powers and persona of Lord Swaminarayan, Daluji, at last, gave his speech. “This time, the Supreme personality Himself came to Earth for the liberation of countless jivas. He is the cause of all avatars. Previously, those who had come as a form of God; they were all an avatar of this Supreme Lord so naturally, they did not have such powers.”

As Daluji and Santdasji Swami were talking, other *mukto* listened with great attention. As they concluded, they were delighted with the discourses.

Santdasji Swami resided at this location for six months. Every day, he explained divine episodes from the life of Shreeji Maharaj which he had personally witnessed. Daluji appreciated Swami and kindly expressed, “Swami, we are pleased after listening to the life incidents of Supreme Lord Swaminarayan. We are especially thankful to you as you have shared your valuable six months with us. Now, we understand the Supreme glory of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. Please, return and offer prostration before the Supreme Lord on behalf of us.





There is no single greater gift than that of Supreme Lord Swaminarayan. Please, perform *darshan* of His divine form.”

Santdasji was ready to do so, and thus, closed his eyes, remembered Bhagwan Swaminarayan’s form, and within a few seconds, the form of God appeared before his eyes and guided him towards the village of Gadhada. In this way, within a few minutes, he returned to Gadhada.

Santdasji came to do *darshan* of Shreeji Maharaj in Dada Khachar’s darbar. Maharaj was seated under a neem tree. Santdasji went there, prostrated before Maharaj, and Maharaj also stepped forward and lovingly embraced Swami. He asked about his journey, and Santdasji explained everything in great detail.

Maharaj then, at last, said, “Daluji’s place was divine, and no one can reach there nor see it. It was only due to the grace of Bhagwan, Santdasji had their *darshan* in human form and stayed amongst them for six months.”

Also, Daluji and the other *mukto* began to meditate on Bhagwan Swaminarayan’s divine form with the rituals taught to them by Santdasji Swami. As a result, at the end of their lives, all of them would be sent to the divine abode *Akshardham.*

## Journey to Badrikashram

According to Maharaj’s instruction, Santdasji stayed at Gadhada for several days. As per daily routine, Santdasji went to Akshar ordi (Maharaj’s residence), for *darshan* in the morning, he would prostrate before Shreeji Maharaj. At that time, Maharaj was sitting on a swing outside of His room. Muktanand Swami provided a gentle motion to the swing by pulling a string which was tied to it. Muktanand Swami was absorbed in the *darshan* of Shreeji Maharaj, and did not even notice any other presence aside from Maharaj. Such was his method to do

*darshan.* Santdasji Swami prostrated to Maharaj, and then Maharaj embraced him lovingly. After that, Santdasji bowed and touched the holy feet of Maharaj with his eyelids and found that tears of affection poured from his eyes, enough to wash the lotus-like feet of his beloved Lord.

In return, Maharaj put His palm on Swami's head, patted him on his back, and returned to the swing. A *brahmachari* brought water for Maharaj who drank some and gave what was left to Santdasji, who accepted the water as *prasad.*

Maharaj shifted the mood and began to narrate on the divine abode of Badrikashram. Nar and Narayan rishi were living there with other rishis. Maharaj revealed a secret; "I took the form of Nar and Narayan, when I had decided to come down to this Earth. While taking those forms, I had accepted the curse of Durvasa rishi. I always graced all of those abodes with my various forms. For example, in Badrikashram, it was the form of *Nar-Narayan;* in Shwetdip, the form of Vasudev Narayan; in Vaikunth, the form of Laxminarayan; and in Golok, the form of Shri *Krishna*. I visited all of those abodes quite frequently, while I forever reside in my abode *Akshardham* as well. So, please, go there in Badrikashram to meet *Nar-Narayan* and the other rishis." Maharaj expressed His wish by beckoning Santdasji, who also quickly understood Maharaj's gestures, bowed down for blessings, prostrated, and left.

Badrikashram is a divine place situated in the magnificent Himalayas where no humans can go. The snow-covered mountain peaks are secured with boundaries on all sides in the form of a celestial river which turns everything into stone whether that be a human body or a wooden boat. Due to this, great sages named the river Pathara Nadi (Stone River). No one can cross the river except one who is specially blessed by the





Supreme Lord. Only the chosen one can reach the other bank to meet the sages of Badrikashram.

Santdasji had blessings from the Supreme Lord and proceeded towards the Himalayas. As he did not know where Badrikashram was, and how to go there, he merely used his unique method. He closed his eyes and remembered the form of Supreme Lord Swaminarayan, and within seconds, that very form appeared and guided him towards his destination.

However, Swami was not in *samadhi.* With his physical body, he was flying through the air. So, in a very short time, Santdasji crossed some of the peaks of the Himalayas and arrived at the Stone River. The form of God disappeared from his vision. Now, Santdasji was alone. He took a wooden stick and dug it into the water to check its level. Surprisingly, Santdasji could not handle it. He was thinking on which creature could have possibly clutched the stick within its mouth. So, he bent down to observe what happened and found the stick turned to stone. Santdasji understood that this was indeed the Stone River, which could not be crossed without the help of Maharaj.

Now, he moved further away and thought to cross by remembering Bhagwan Swaminarayan's form. However, this time, Bhagwan did not appear as before. Instead, four sages came there and asked Swami, "Where do you want to go?" Santdasji replied, "I want to go to Badrikashram."

The sages said, "We are going there. If you want to come with us; close your eyes." Santdasji did so, and after a while, with the instruction of the sages, he opened them again. He saw a different view and received a new experience of a very different atmosphere. They were now 30 miles from the Stone River!

While walking along various footpaths, He heard the

solemn chants of Vedic hymns which were in perfect harmony. The magical quality of those chants floating through the air transformed the landscape into a scene of unimaginable beauty. On inquiry, Santdasji learned that this was Badrikashram, where *Nar-Narayan* Rishis situated their ashram.

They soon arrived at Badrikashram which was underneath a colossal jujube tree (the tree branches were ranging in miles). There were several grass huts built in the ashram. They proceeded towards where the hymns were being chanted. Within the center, a fire was burning in a sacrificial pit, and a large company of hermits was offering oblations accompanied by chants. There were several thousands of great rishis who were chanting the Vedic hymns. There, on a platform, Nar and Narayan rishi were sitting there in a pleasant.

As Santdasji Swami, along with the other four rishis arrived there, Nar and Narayan rishi both rose from their seats and came forward to receive their special guest Santdasji Swami.

Nar and Narayan rishi first moved before Santdasji, and in turn, Santdasji embraced both rishis with great affection. Both Nar and Narayan experienced great joy beyond their imagination and so after honoring Swami, they guided him towards a grass hut.

In that hut, the rishis had Swami sit on a particular seat. They garlanded Swami with colorful, fragrant smelling flowers. Nar rishi came with holy water of the Ganga River and gave it to Swami to drink. After that, they offered some variety of ripe and delicious fruits. Swami ate some after offering them to Bhagwan.

Then, Nar and Narayan sat in front of Swami, and while folding their hands, they requested, “Please explain to us the immense glory and greatness of the Supreme Lord Swami-





narayan. Also, describe to us what He is performing in various charities with His dear devotees and saints.”

Santdasji gave a smile and said, “Actually, no one can describe the divine incidents of Swaminarayan completely. Also, you know the glory and greatness of Lord Swaminarayan, yet, I am delighted to have a chance to explain the glory and divine powers of my beloved Maharaj.” Then, Santdasji narrated divine incidents. Everyone was entirely focused in the narration of divine episodes of Lord Swaminarayan.

According to their daily prayer schedule, all of the rishis of Badrikashram gathered in open spaces and their footsteps alarmed Nar-Narayan and Santdasji as it was time for evening prayer. So, Santdasji concluded narration for a short while and retired for evening prayers.

In that assembly, Nar and Narayan both sat on a porch. Nar rishi spread deerskin for Santdasji Swami and set it next to him. Narayan rishi invited Swami to sit upon it. All of the rishis did *darshan* and chanted prayers believing Nar-Narayan as their God.

Nar rishi announced in the assembly that, “Badrikashram is very lucky to welcome this noble sant as a representative of the Supreme Lord.” Then he introduced Santdasji Swami to the other rishis. So, understanding Swami’s glory, all of them came forward one after another to bow down to Swami.

After greeting their special guest, they all took their seats. Narayan rishi then explained the glory of those rishis who lived there in Badrikashram. He said to Santdasji, “Here, all of these rishis were living very austere and renounced lives. Some rishis eat only once every twelve years. Some experience hunger and thirst after six years. Many rishis eat once in a year, and thousands eat only every six months.”

Then he added, "Everyone in Badrikashram remains happy forever. No one experiences any misery here. They all perform austerities and penance with their physical bodies and worship and remember God with their inner emotions. And when they return from *samadhi*, their desires for food or water are fulfilled through divine servants who appear there with delicious food."

In this way, Narayan rishi explained everything about Badrikashram to Santdasji Swami, and in return, Swami narrated stories of Bhagwan Swaminarayan and his saints and devotees.

Many days passed by while enjoying and listening to the divine discourses. One day, Santdasji Swami revealed his desire to go to Mansarovar Lake. Nar rishi instructed him, "You want to go to the sacred lake Mansarovar; however, I suggest you should not bathe in the lake since the water is freezing cold. Therefore, you must return without taking a bath. Now, you can proceed with these four rishis for Mansarovar."

The four rishis guided Santdasji on the divine path towards Mansarovar. Within no time, they arrived at its bank. There, they saw that there were thousands of lotuses in freezing waters of the sacred lake. Many swans were swimming graciously. Swami was surprised to see a group of swans swimming happily in the bone chilling cold water.

Rishis advised Santdasji not to go into the chilled waters. However, Santdasji did not follow their advice and went in anyway. As he came out, he became unconscious. All the rishis became worried and decided to carry Swami's unconscious body to Badrikashram. Upon returning, they lit a fire to provide warmth. Once Swami regained consciousness, he turned and bowed to Nar-Narayan rishi.





After that incident, Santdasji stayed there for a month and a half. He told the divine incidences of the Supreme Lord to develop unshakable faith in all of the rishis. Then, Nar rishi suggested to him, "Swami, now we understand that the only Supreme authority the Supreme Lord of Lords, the cause of all causes Bhagwan Swaminarayan is performing his divine '*charitra*' in Gujarat. So, it is our humble request to you that, since we are not allowed to go there to be a part of Bhagwan's divine lila, that you have a chance to witness Bhagwan in human form. So please, return there and enjoy the *darshan* of the Supreme Lord."

Santdasji Swami was satisfied with all of the rishis' understanding regarding the supremacy of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. Now, his mission was completed.

The next day, Santdasji prostrated before Nar-Narayan rishi in the morning and revealed his desire to go back to Maharaj. Everyone gathered for the last meeting with Swami. They bowed with tears dwelling from their eyes. Nar rishi made arrangements to cross the Stone River. Four rishis were ready to go with Swami to get him across. With heavy hearts, everyone gave swami a farewell.

At the river, Swami was instructed to close his eyes. The group reached the other side of the bank within a few seconds. Now, the four rishis showed the path and prostrated for the last time. Swami humbled them, and the rishis returned with their divine power to the other side of the riverbank and disappeared towards Badrikashram.

Santdasji Swami walked onwards as shown by the rishis, with his focus always on the form of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. Through the help of Bhagwan, he was guided in the right direction towards his destination.

## Granting Liberation to the King

Instead of leading him towards Gujarat, the *murti* guided him towards another region of Tibet. During that time, Tibet was a part of India. There was a king named Shubhanusinh who had been practicing *hath-yoga* for several years. Due to his sincere practice, he attained the state of *Samadhi.* He stayed in a trance for six months. Even though he experienced such a state, he could not forget the kingdom, his wives, sons, and wealth, etc. For removing the desires for worldly relatives and possessions, he approached each yogi and saint, but no one was able to remove this illusion from his heart.

Maharaj purposefully guided Santdasji towards this king. Swami came into the palace, and the king was willing to meet any new ascetics, yogis, sanyasi, or saints. So, he invited Swami inside and sat him on a particular seat within his room. The king offered water, fruits, milk, etc. Then, he disclosed his heart and asked for any remedy to forget bodily relatives and possessions, and to enjoy the bliss of God.

Santdasji Swami told him, "Oh pious king! You are trying so much to attain *darshan* of the Supreme Lord, but for your information, he has manifested onto this Earth. At present time, that very Supreme Lord is staying in Gadhada." By listening to this detail, King Shubhanusinh requested, "Please describe to me that form of God. I want to see that form in my heart. Also, teach me the method of meditation."

Swami narrated the form of Nilkanth Varni and taught the proper method of meditation. So, the king began to meditate upon the form of Nilkanth Varni. Through the grace of Swami, he was able to visualize the form within his heart.

When he returned from meditation, the king requested, "You are the most compassionate in this world. It is your blessings by which I can see the form of God in my heart. But I was not satisfied with the feeble form of Nilkanth Varni."





Therefore, Swami described the form of Bhagwan Swaminarayan with beautiful clothes and ornaments. He detailed Maharaj's beauty with expensive embroidered clothes and decorated ornaments because he knew the king's inclinations. King Shubhanusinh was very passionate and had a liking for rich clothes and ornaments. Then again, the king was instructed to meditate upon such the form of God based on the shared description.

After a few minutes in meditation, the king received darshan of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. He became engrossed in the form and after that was able to experience inner peace. The king returned from meditation and happily bowed down to Santdasji Swami. He appreciated and was blessed for the *darshan* of God through meditation. Then, the king prayed for initiation into the fellowship of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. He performed pujan of Santdasji Swami and became a devotee of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. Then Swami departed from there.

At the time of his death, the king sat for meditation and remembered God's form. Maharaj arrived in a celestial chariot with many muktos. The king then departed for *Akshardham* with Maharaj.

## In the Custody of Ignorance

Santdasji Swami arrived at the village of Vervale. The sun was destined to the western horizon, and the moon gave light to the Earth. Santdasji entered the village. Most of the people were inside their homes for evening prayers and dinner. However, some people were still sitting outside of their homes. They saw Swami as a stranger. Some of them stopped Swami and asked his name and why he had come to their village.

Santdasji did not know why he arrived there as he was only following the *murti* of Maharaj. So, the people interpreted him to be a thief. They struck Swami and tied his hands and feet. Some decided to kill him. A person came towards Swami with a sword to cut his head.

All of a sudden, there was a bright beam of light. A family was coming towards them. The elderly person of the family asked, "Why have you tied my son's hands and feet? And why do you have intentions of killing him?" Then, all the villagers inquired as to who this person was. The elder replied, "I am the father of this person to whom you have tied. Please release him." The villagers then asked for forgiveness and untied Swami. That family was no one else but Bhagwan Swaminarayan who had taken the form of the father, mother, and brother of Swami to protect him. In this way, Maharaj came to the rescue, gave him divine *darshan,* and then disappeared.

Swami walked on for many days and arrived at Jetalpur. There, he took a bath in Dev Sarovar and asked some devotees where Maharaj was staying. They replied to him that Maharaj was staying in Dabhan. So, without taking food or water, Santdasji left for Dabhan. Unfortunately, Maharaj had already left two days prior and was staying in Kariyani. The devotees at Dabhan requested Swami to stay. So in result, Swami stayed there for ten days.

Soon after, Santdasji proceeded and finally arrived in Kariyani. Maharaj was staying in Vasta Khachar's *darbargadh.* In the open courtyard, Maharaj was seated with an assembly of santo and devotees. Swami came to the sabha and did *darshan* of Maharaj. In turn, Maharaj embraced him. Then, Santdasji Swami sat in front of Maharaj and narrated to him everything in detail. In this way, they had a long conversation, but the other





santo and bhakto could not understand their encoded talks. Then, Maharaj permitted him to travel to different villages to spread *satsang.* If devotees of God were this powerful than imagine the power and greatness of their master – Bhagwan Swaminarayan.

# 4. The power of Swaminarayan Mahamantra

The holy lands of India have long been infused with spiritual seekers. There were thousands of spiritual aspirants who were unable to attain the realization of the Supreme Lord. Only a few amongst thousands were able to progress in the right direction. For those who were selected by God himself were able to witness His divine form.

Shitaldas was such a spiritual seeker who strived to attain the manifest form of God. He lived in a small village called Jharnaparna located in northern India. Due to his intense desire to achieve God-realization, he left his home and traveled to different places for pilgrimage. Along the way, he was told that *Sadguru* Ramanand Swami was an incarnation of God and was living in Gujarat. So, he changed his direction and found that Ramanand Swami was residing in a small village called Faneni. Without wasting any time, Shitaldas proceeded towards Faneni with great haste. However, on his arrival, he was disappointed to learn that Ramanand Swami had just passed away twelve days ago. He also discovered that Sahajanand Swami was the successor of Ramanand Swami.

Disheartened by the disappointing news, Shitaldas lost all hope and decided to give up. Through His omniscient powers, Sahajanand Swami detected this in Shitaldas. So, Sahajanand Swami consoled and promised him Ramanand Swami's *darshan,* if Shitaldas would stay in Faneni. In anticipation of this promising statement, Shitaldas agreed to stay.

The next day, there was a grand assembly in the presence of the new spiritual head, Sahajanand Swami. There, for the first time, He gave Shitaldas to chant the 'Swaminarayan'





mahamantra. By the grace of Maharaj, upon reciting the mantra, he entered into a state of *samadhi* and there he experienced the divine abode of *Akshardham.*

When Shitaldas came out of *samadhi*, he narrated his divine experience to all. "Sahajanand Swami was seated on a golden, decorated throne in his divine *Akshardham*. There were countless divine *mukto*, praying to him, and surprisingly, *Ram, Krishna*, and other avatars and even guru Ramanand Swami was also standing there, offering prayers. I performed His pujan. I also wanted to perform the pujan of all the *muktos*. However, I was only one, and there were countless *muktos*. So, there was no way for me to perform their pujan. Then, Maharaj suggested to me, 'Make a wish that if, or any avatar is the Supreme Lord, then may I assume infinite forms so that I can perform the pujan of the infinite *muktos* simultaneously.' I tried to wish in my mind; however, nothing happened. Then Maharaj suggested to me, 'Make a wish that if Ramanand Swami is the Supreme Lord may I assume infinite forms to perform the pujan of the *muktos*.' I tried, but nothing happened. Then Maharaj suggested to make the same wish for His form. I made a wish that if Sahajanand Swami is the Supreme Lord, I may assume infinite forms. Surprisingly, I saw infinite forms of myself, and then, I completed the pujan of all the *muktos.* Afterward, I especially bowed to Ramanand Swami. As a result, Swami explained to me, 'Sahajanand Swami is the Supreme Lord, the cause of all of the avatars, and I am His devoted servant'. Through Swami's acknowledgment, I understood the real glory of Sahajanand Swami, as the Supreme Lord of Lords."

By listening to such heart-warming words of Shitaldas, the entire assembly was spellbound. Further convinced by Shreeji Maharaj's greatness, he decided to stay and become a *sadhu* of

Sahajanand Swami. On that same day, Shreeji Maharaj initiated him and named him Vyapakanand Swami.

After becoming a saint, Vyapakanand Swami traveled to different parts of the country to preach about the glory and principles of Sahajanand Swami. On one occasion, Swami mistakenly took the wrong path which led him into a jungle. By remembering Bhagwan Swaminarayan, Vyapakanand Swami along with Vaishnavanand Swami crossed the wilderness safely and reached the city of Bhopal, the capital of Madhya Pradesh, India.

The king of the state was a Muslim by faith and held a dislike for those who believed in other religions. Unfortunately, there was a senior officer in his administration who was a Hindu. The king held hatred for the officer, but due to his adequate and admirable skills to handle adverse circumstances, the king kept him as one of his administrators. In return, the officer received great praise, boosting his reputation.

One day, the king accused the officer of fraud. Even though the officer was innocent, he pleaded, "If someone proves with evidence that I am corrupt, then I'll be ready to suffer any punishment." However, without any proof, the king commanded to keep the officer in prison. After many days, he was released with the condition that if he could not pay 100 million rupees within 30 days, he would be forcefully converted into the Muslim religion.

After being released from jail, the officer began to sell all of his property to get back as much money as possible for his ransom. He sold everything yet sadly was unable to collect enough funds. He even borrowed money from his relatives and friends but could not meet the requirement. Now only two days remained before his deadline, so the officer thought, 'It





would be better to die than to be converted into a Muslim.' He decided to go to the jungle to commit suicide. Upon entering the jungle, he spotted a Shiv temple. He thought, 'I should perform the *darshan* and prayer of God before I go forward with my decision.' After going inside and completing his prayers, he came out of the temple and started to perform *pradakshina* around the *mandir* premise. While doing so, the officer cried out loudly, "Who will protect me from my death?" Vyapakanand Swami and Vaishnavanand Swami were sitting nearby. They heard the man's shriek and became immediately alert. They had been there for some time hoping anyone would come so that they could preach about the glory of Swaminarayan Bhagwan, but instead found this man.

The officer also spotted the saints and went to them and bowed down. Then, Vyapakanand Swami asked him affectionately, "Why are you crying? What happened?" Swami patted the officer's back giving him relief and placed his hand on the head. Then he explained the situation to Swami. At last, he said to Swami that now he had decided to end his life.

Swami explained to him the rarity of taking birth as a human and reverted his decision to commit suicide. Then Swami said, "Only God knows what will happen after two days. If you accept Bhagwan Swaminarayan's refuge by following his commands, then you will be happy in this life and beyond." The officer observed Swami's selfless intention and decided to become a follower of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. He took the vows of abstaining from, 1) drinking alcohol; 2) eating meat; 3) committing robbery; 4) committing adultery; 5) and partaking in food or water from improper persons or improper sources. Swami said, "If you observe and follow these five vows thoroughly, and worship Bhagwan with a true heart, He will

take care of you in all situations." Saying so, both of the saints left the temple and continued onward.

Surprisingly three days later, Bhagwan Swaminarayan went to a Nagar Sheth (a businessman) in Bhopal, while dressed as a merchant named Purushottam Sheth. With carts full of gold coins, he paid the penalty on behalf of the officer and took the receipt of the payment. Then, Purushottam Sheth went to the officer and gave him a receipt of payment made for ransom. Realizing that the ransom was taken off, the officer shed tears of gratitude and understood that it was none other than Lord Swaminarayan who played the role of Purushottam Sheth. He also felt appreciation for both the saints, Vyapakanand Swami, and Vaishnavanand Swami, by whose association he received a new life.

On the other hand, Nagar Sheth went to the king, handed over the gold coins, and told him everything. The officer also went to the King and explained everything regarding how Bhagwan Swaminarayan made the payment on behalf of him. In this way, he described the glory of Bhagwan Swaminarayan to the King. Witnessing the incident, the King was also convinced about the supremacy of Bhagwan Swaminarayan.

**Defeated Death!**

Vyapakanand Swami and Vaishnavanand Swami continued their travels to spread the glory of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. They reached the grand city of Hyderabad. They had to stay outside of the residential district, according to the instructions given by Maharaj. So, they found a solitary place to stay. After two-three hours, a *Brahmin* by the name of Indrajit happened to pass by. He saw the two saints who were sitting in meditation. By their facial expressions, they seemed to like that of great sages who had acquired God-realization. So, the





*Brahmin* went closer and bowed down. He waited until the Saints opened their eyes.

After some time, concluding their meditation Vyapakanand Swami opened his eyes and found a *Brahmin* who lived in a nearby city. Swami explained to him how to live a devoted life. By listening to the talks of selfless santo, the *Brahmin* realized them to be unique. So, he gave them an invitation for taking food at his home. They accepted the invitation.

The next day both santo arrived at his home. The *Brahmin* invited them to their seats and served enjoyable pure food. The saints started to perform mansi puja.

The *Brahmin* had a son who was seriously ill. He was sleeping in a room trying to recover from his illness. During that exact time when santo were performing mansi puja, the *Brahmin* received news that his son had passed away and was put into a moral dilemma. If he revealed the heartbreaking news, santo would not be able to partake in the *prasad.* Therefore, the *Brahmin* assumed he would receive sin, due to both of these saints remaining hungry.

On the other hand, if he did not proclaim regarding the death of his son and fed them anyway, he would have sinned providing impure food. The *Brahmin* thought to himself, 'What to do? What not to do?'

When the saints opened their eyes, the *Brahmin* broke down crying. Vyapakanand Swami went closer to the *Brahmin*, patted his back and head, and asked gently, "What happened? Why are you crying?"

First, the *Brahmin* could not speak even a single word, but when Swami asked him again, he shared what had happened and felt that he was the most unfortunate being in the world. He had invited saints for dinner, and his only son had died at

that very time. The *Brahmin* kept sobbing. Then Swami told him, "It is not possible that anyone could die immediately. So, go and check; he might be alive." The *Brahmin* went to check but found him dead. He returned to Swami and told him, "Swami, you told me to check, but it is too late." Then again, Vyapakanand Swami said, "Now, I want you to go there again and recite the mahamantra 'Swaminarayan.' Then, call him by his name. He will get up."

With such trust in the words of Vyapakanand Swami, the *Brahmin* again went and recited 'Swaminarayan... Swaminarayan', loudly and called his son's name. Immediately, his son awoke. The *Brahmin* felt extreme joy, witnessing his son come back to life in front of his eyes. He wanted to thank and appreciate pujya Swami's generous doing. He ran outside to where Swami was sitting and fell down at Swami's feet. Then he pleaded, "Swami, please stay forever at my home. You are God, and have specially come here for me." However, Vyapakanand Swami explained to him, that the Supreme God is one and only named, Swaminarayan Bhagwan. "We are all his servants. If you want to safeguard your liberation, then remain steady and follow His rules and regulations." Swami explained those commands given by Bhagwan Swaminarayan in detail.

The *Brahmin* and his family took refuge of Maharaj and began to follow the path of righteousness as prescribed by Bhagwan Swaminarayan. Both of the saints stayed there for two more days and then left the city to continue their journey onwards.





## 5. Sadguru Shri Muktanand Swami

The Swaminarayan Sampraday is a treasure of true saints. The primary duty of these saints is to selflessly guide all who come into their contact towards the righteous path of liberation.

*Sadguru* Shri Muktanand Swami was the most senior and prominent saint of our *sampraday*. He was initially a disciple of Ramanand Swami and head of one of the institutions of Ramanand Swami at the village of Loj. There, Lord Swaminarayan came in as Nilkanth Varni and observed the heart touching saintliness of Muktanand Swami.

Also, the entire *satsang* honored Muktanand Swami as the 'Mother of *Satsang' (Satsangni* Ma). Swami received this title because of his true saintliness to nurture saints and devotees. Swami had unique talents that if someone was to fall from the *satsang* fellowship, Swami effortlessly persuaded the person to stay and explained the importance of remaining in *satsang.* Muktanand Swami held a mastery for handling such tough situations.

Gunatitanand Swami says in his talks, 'When Muktanand Swami preached in an assembly of 2000 people, all the doubts and questions of the people would be answered and solved merely by listening to his discourse.' (Swami Ni Vato. 1-323)

After the passing of Ramanand Swami, Muktanand Swami and a few sadhus arrived in Bhuj. At that time, there was great sorrow due to Ramanand Swami's passing, and so, all of the devotees grieved for their Guru's departure. The sole cause of that sorrowful atmosphere was intense devotion held by those devotees for their guru. Everyone firmly believed Ramanand

Swami as the manifest form of God.

A new spiritual head named Sahajanand Swami, desired to revolutionize *satsang* by establishing true *upasana and Ekantik Dharma*. Therefore, Shri Hari traveled in different villages and because of his divine power, whoever came into His contact went into *samadhi*. Moreover, whoever listened to Maharaj's voice, and had his *darshan*, also fell into *samadhi*. In this state of trance, they would see the divine abode of God and witness the supremacy of Sahajanand Swami. After returning from that trance, the person would explain his experiences to others. In this way, without practicing yoga, the people could experience the divine state of trance, and through this, people could realize the greatness of Bhagwan Swaminarayan and join His holy fellowship.

When Muktanand Swami heard about these events of *samadhi,* he initially felt it was wrong. So, he went to the village where Shreeji Maharaj was staying. There, he said to Maharaj, "Maharaj! All these matters about *samadhi* are hard to fathom."

Shreeji Maharaj replied, "Swami...I have nothing to do with it, but by the grace of our Guru Ramanand Swami, everyone can experience *samadhi* and enjoy the bliss of God."

Muktanand Swami was firm in his *Guru-bhakti*, so he said, "Maharaj! Everyone can believe in *samadhi* or such miracles, but I will never believe in such things. I do not believe that there can be any other God besides Ramanand Swami."

Muktanand Swami was lost in deep thought. In the early evening, Swami walked towards the jungle with tears in his eyes. He was alone, and no one was with him. There, he remembered his one and only Ramanand Swami. At once, he heard a familiar voice. "Muktanand! Oh, Muktanand!"





Listening to such loving words in such a solitary place, Swami looked back and saw his Guru, Ramanand Swami, who was dressed in white garments amidst a divine light! Swami rose and embraced Ramanand Swami and cried to his satisfaction.

Then, Ramanand Swami said pleasantly, "My son! I know you very well. Your disturbance is only due to your firm faith in me. Did you forget that I repeatedly had said, "I am only a drum beater, and the real star has yet to come! This Sahajanand Swami is the cause of all causes, God of all Gods, the Supreme Lord."

From that day onwards, due to his Guru Ramanand Swami's heartfelt words, Muktanand Swami cultivated firm faith in the form of Sahajanand Swami as the Supreme Lord. This whole incident was just a role played by Swami for the generation to come. In reality, He had complete God-realization.

Once, Swami was traveling to different villages for preaching s*atsang* fundamentals as prescribed by Shreeji Maharaj. At that time, Maharaj had announced a new rule for saints to travel without a companion for *satsang* travels in various villages. So, abiding by Maharaj rules, Muktanand Swami traveled alone. While traveling, Swami had to pass through a dark jungle. Without any fear and with the remembrance of Swaminarayan Bhagwan, he proceeded in the dense forest. At the end of the woods, there was a wide river. When Swami reached the bank of the river, it was already evening, and there was no possibility to cross it. If he stayed there for the night, wild animals would kill him. The river was very deep, even from the bank.

Moreover, the river was teeming with crocodiles and snakes. So, Muktanand Swami had no chance to cross the river

without a boat. It was not possible to pass without a boat. Muktanand Swami was thirsty, but he could not drink the water due to impurities.

In short, Swami was in a tough situation. If he stayed there, wild animals would kill him. If he tried to enter the deep waters, he could drown.

Swami was not saddened, even if the odds were stacked against him. He instead became joyful. He thought that 'Without the desire of Maharaj, nothing will happen. So, I am facing these circumstances due to His wishes." Understanding Maharaj's doership, in this way, Swami remained joyful.

Swami thought this, and suddenly, Maharaj appeared there in the form of a *Brahmin* with a boat. That *Brahmin* asked Swami, 'Sadhuram, do you want to cross this river? Come with me. I will help you. Please come and sit in my boat." Muktanand Swami followed his instruction. When the boat reached the other bank, the *Brahmin* told Swami, "Please proceed onwards." Swami walked towards the village, but after a few steps, Swami looked back but saw no one. He was surprised and thought, 'Where did the *Brahmin* go?' He threw his gaze here and there but could not spot him. Then, Swami understood that the *Brahmin* was no one other than Maharaj. In this way, in a time of extreme difficulty, Maharaj protected Muktanand Swami.





## 6. Akhandanand Swami's Courageous Feat

By the grace of Shreeji Maharaj Akhandanand Swami had acquired all of the virtues of a true saint. He was free of all vicious natures and never became disturbed, even if someone hurt or insulted him. Amongst all of his divine virtues, patience and courage stood out. He understood that everything happens only due to the wish of Shreeji Maharaj.

Once, he headed towards another village and had to pass a jungle to get there. It was dark and dangerous, but he walked fearlessly amongst the roars of lions and tigers, all while remembering Maharaj.

All of a sudden, four tigers appeared from the woods. Swami was distant but thought, 'Today, my death is fixed. These tigers will definitely kill me.' He also thought, 'Whether it be today, or in the future, this body will perish. So, it is best that these hungry tigers eat the flesh of this body and fill their stomachs.' By thinking positively, he speedily walked towards the ferocious beasts. Through his omniscient powers, Shreeji Maharaj detected his great saint was in danger. Maharaj thought, 'If the tigers kill my dear saint, how could my followers consider me to be compassionate? I have to protect my saint.'

Akhandanand Swami drew closer to the tigers without any fear in his heart. The tigers stopped for a moment and stared at Swami resolutely. So, Swami drew even closer to them and remarked, 'What are you looking at? Kill me and eat my body.' Then, one of the tigers opened its mouth roaring loudly. It raised both of its front legs as a sign of intimidation. Swami remained fearless and stable in his position. Shreeji Maharaj

entered the minds of the tigers and changed their intentions. In result, the tigers prostrated before Swami and then performed *pradakshina*, and then departed.

In this way, Maharaj protected his saint from the danger of death.





## 7. Kaivalyanand Swami Saved

According to Maharaj's command, Kaivalyanand Swami along with five other saints traveled from village to village, preaching the glory of Bhagwan Swaminarayan and *satsang*. They traveled for a very long time, and very much desired for the *darshan* of Maharaj. When they were in northern Gujarat, they decided to go to Gadhada for Maharaj's *darshan.*

They traveled with great haste anticipating to reach where Maharaj was and to have *darshan* of His divine form. They skipped taking lunch and kept moving towards Gadhada. As they were traveling, they encountered the Sabarmati river. However, the river was flooded, and none of the santo knew how to swim. Only with the desire to have the *darshan* of Maharaj on their minds, they leaped into the flooded river. The raging river and heavy currents quickly devoured them. Moreover, all of their belongings were lost.

The saints struggled to swim towards the bank but could not manage and began to drown. In this terrifying situation, they figured rescue was not possible. Death awaited them, so they started to chant the mahamantra, 'Swaminarayan' and recalled Maharaj's *murti.*

A few moments later a boat was headed their way. It was none other than Shriji Maharaj. Maharaj himself pulled the saints aboard one by one. Nevertheless, Maharaj collected all of their items and returned them to the saints. The boat was directed towards the shoreland and safely docked. Then, Maharaj instructed, "Go slowly." When the saints started to depart per instruction, Maharaj disappeared with the boat. They realized, 'The Supreme Lord came to rescue us'. In this way, Maharaj had protected Kaivalyanand Swami, and other saints amidst the raging river.

# 8. Jivuba's Miracle

Ebhal Khachar was the chief of Gadhada. He had four daughters and one son. The daughter's names were Jivuba, Laduba, Panchuba, and Nanuba. The son was Dada Khachar. Jivuba was born in 1785 (Samvat Year 1841). She was considered lucky to have lived because in the past all of Ebhal Khachar's children had died prematurely. Thus, she was named Jivuba (life). Moreover, she was Ebhal Khachar's eldest child, so she was also called Motiba. From a young age, her life was infused with devotional activities.When Jivuba came of age, Ebhal Khachar began looking for a virtuous young man for matrimony. As soon as Jivuba found out what her father was planning for her, she immediately refused the concept of marriage. She said, "I don't want to get married. All I wish to do in my life is to worship God."

He suggested, "You are too young to worship God. When you become older, it would be more suitable for you to do so. So, stop all this; otherwise, I will have to take extreme measures." Even though Ebhal Khachar was angered, without fear, Jivuba replied to her father, "There is no certainty about life. Where and when life meets its end, no one knows. This body is perishable. So, while I have the chance, I want to worship God. No one knows what will happen tomorrow. So, do not tell me to worship God at a later time."

Ebhal Khachar knew of Jivuba's intense bhakti from her childhood and yet, sticking to traditional customs, he convinced her to get married. Giving in to her father's insistence, Jivuba soon married Hathiya Patgir, son of Amara Patgir of Kundal.





After marriage, Jivuba went to live with her in-laws. On the first night, Hathiya Patgir saw a female cobra in the form of Jivuba. So, he ran out of the room and again came to make sure but still found the same cobra present there. There wasn't a cobra, but because of Shreeji Maharaj's wish, it appeared to be so. The next day, he informed his mother Raiba that Jivuba was not an ordinary woman. She was a divine soul. On the other hand, Jivuba told Raiba of her desire, "I wish to remain celibate and worship God."

Raiba understood Jivuba's sentiments. She convinced her son to give his wife permission to worship God. Jivuba then received such a letter and returned to Gadhada. Ebhal Khachar was furious on seeing his daughter return home. Flushed with rage, he came forth to beat her but was silenced when he saw a letter of permission. So, he was left speechless.

Jivuba was free to spend day and night engaged in devotion. She kept a small idol of God and worshipped it day and night. As she had intense love only for the form of God, God also accepted whatever she offered to Him.

Villagers began to whisper that Ebhal Khachar's daughter had started a *mandir* in their residence, and so she would not engage in marriage life. Therefore, she returned from the home of her in-laws.

Once, Ebhal Khachar was coming from another town to his home and heard such talks from people of Gadhada. So, he returned and rushed to Jivuba's room. At that time, Jivuba was performing sandhya arti (evening *arti*) of God. Ebhal Khachar became extremely angry. After completing *arti* and stuti, Jivuba paused for a while and offered a bowl of sweetened milk to the small idol of God.

Ebhal Khachar became so angry that he was ready to pull his sword out. He spoke, “You act like such a great devotee yet you’ve blemished the family name!” At that time, Jivuba was offering a bowl of milk to Thakorji.

Ebhal Khachar boomed, “If this God of yours is true, he’ll come this instant and drink milk from that bowl. Otherwise, my sword will bring your end.”

Suddenly, the room was filled with divine light. God appeared from the small idol and began drinking the milk. Watching this unbelievable scene, Ebhal Khachar was stunned with fear. His sword fell to the ground. Upon returning to his senses, he fell at the feet of God.

Jivuba’s delight knew no bounds, for God Himself was standing before her very eyes. She was protected by her beloved God. So, tears of joy streamed from her eyes. Then, the divine form of God disappeared.

Ebhal Khachar asked for Jivuba’s forgiveness by saying, “You are not an ordinary person. You are a divine soul, so please, forgive me.” Then, from that day onwards, Ebhal Khachar also became a devotee of God and never again restricted his children from worshipping God.





## 9. Set it Ablaze!

Rajbai of the village Vankia, was cousin sister of Jivuba. So, Rajbai went to come to Gadhada frequently. Thus, she decided to become a devotee of Shreeji Maharaj when she first had *darshan* of Him in Gadhada. She realized that Shreeji Maharaj is the Supreme God. She did not have an interest in marriage or social life and had resolved to offer full-time devotion by observing strict celibacy.

Even though she did not agree with the idea of arranging her marriage, Rajbai’s parents decided to commit her to it. According to the tradition, this would be to have in-laws send a customary coconut and sari. Her, mother kept such things on a ledge and showed it to Rajbai and said, ‘Raju, look at this sari.” Rajbai was extremely displeased and uttered, “Set it ablaze.” Soon, the sari lit on fire itself.

Her parents complained to Maharaj about Rajbai’s decision of remaining unmarried. Then, Maharaj sent a letter for her. The message was short and right to the point. “Rajbai, worship God after marriage.” When Rajbai’s parents read this message, they became happy and were convinced that she would fulfill their wish of engaging in marriage life.

When Rajbai received the message, she also became over-joyed. Then, she asked her father, “When will you arrange my marriage? If you want to arrange it in the next month, then please do so in this month.” Rajbai’s parents were surprised and found that the changes in attitude happened because of Maharaj’s letter.

After Rajbai’s marriage was completed, she had to go with her husband. One night, she was sitting on her bed, meditating

upon her one and only Maharaj. Soon after, her husband entered the bedroom, instead of Rajbai, he saw a fierce lioness sitting on the bed. He gave out a wild scream and ran out. He went to his mother and said, “I don’t want this woman. She might be a form of a goddess. Please, send her back from where she came from.” Then, the mother-in-law went to Rajbai, and asked for forgiveness if anyone had hurt her. The mother-in-law performed her pujan, understanding Rajbai to be a divine soul.

In this way, Rajbai worshipped Maharaj after fulfilling her parents’ wish for marriage. Then, she started to live a detached life. She kept herself at least 10 yards away from men; wore thick, coarse clothes; ate very little, sometimes once in a day, and slept on the floor. Her celibacy was so absolute that after her death when Dada Khachar poured ghee on her funeral pyre for cremation and tried to light it, the pyre would not ignite. Dada Khachar attempted to light the fire again, but it was all in vain. Gopalanand Swami through his abilities found out the cause behind this. In divine form, Swami told the fire deity that, “The *sati* has left and this is just her body. Therefore, there is nothing wrong with making contact in the form of fire.” Only then after, the pyre was set ablaze. Due to her deep devotion for Shreeji Maharaj, she has earned her place among the immortal names of the great devotees in *satsang.*





## 10. Young yet Courageous

In our *satsang,* even child devotees possess great understanding and affection for Maharaj. Once, Shreeji Maharaj arrived in Kariyani from Vadtal. He decided to stay there for several days. The devotees of Gadhada recalled Maharaj for a very long time. For the last several weeks, they hadn’t received *darshan;* so they became impatient. The elderly devotees decided to wait for a couple of days.

Three child devotees possessed deep affection for Shriji Maharaj. Their names were Panchiba, Nanuba, and Ramba and they were merely six years old. At one time, they wanted to have the *darshan* of Maharaj who was residing in Kariyani. So, without telling anyone, they left for Kariyani. Moreover, they did not have any water, food, or money with them. They were headed for Kariyani without any supervision or guidance.

Beyond the village limits, the pathways were uneven, ridged and had thorns and sharp rocks everywhere. Being small, walking across such terrain proved difficult and as a result, they were hurt by many thorns due to not wearing any shoes. They tolerated the pain only to have the *darshan* of Maharaj.

Dehydration set in and after becoming exhausted, they collapsed. Soon, Maharaj appeared there in the form of a *Brahmin.* Maharaj first offered them water and some sweets to eat. Nonetheless, Maharaj pulled out all the thorns from their feet and applied bandages. Maharaj Himself became a servant of His devotees and guided to help them reach the outskirts of Kariyani.

The *Brahmin* said, "Now, you can go in this direction, Sahajanand Swami is present in the village." Panchuba, Nanuba, and Ramba, went to where Maharaj was seated in Vasta Khachar's darbar. Upon having the *darshan* of Maharaj, all of their exhaustion disappeared. Afterwords they performed *panchang pranam.*

Maharaj asked "How did you come here from Gadhada? Who came with you?" They replied, "Maharaj! We were traveling without companions, but on the way, a *Brahmin* joined us, and with great care, he guided us to Kariyani. Also, he fed us sweets and quenched our thirst with water. He carefully removed each thorn from our feet. If the *Brahmin* did not help us with rations and guidance, we might have been lost or even dead."

Then, with a smile, Maharaj disclosed that the *Brahmin* was no one else but Himself. "I came there in the form of a *Brahmin.*" Maharaj gave proof regarding when and where he gave them water, sweets, etc., along with where they stopped for some time to take rest. Everyone agreed with Maharaj and understood that the *Brahmin* was none other than Maharaj Himself. They felt a bit embarrassed knowing that Maharaj performed their seva.





## 11. Divine Darshan

Once, Maharaj had celebrated a grand eighteen-day sacrificial ceremony in Dabhan. There, thousands of devotees from various regions came to have the *darshan* of Maharaj and His saints, and perform seva during the ceremony. During the ceremony for the happiness of his devotees, Maharaj was attired in lavish clothes and expensive jewelry. Every day, devotees would recall the various attires Maharaj was dressed in.

Many devotees from the Sorath region received the news of the celebration very late. The devotees from the region of Sorath namely Parvatbhai, Marayam Bhatt, etc. received news of the ceremony ending in just four days. It was impossible for them to attend even if they traveled day and night to get to Dabhan.

The next day, they started their journey towards Dabhan. Maharaj, along with many saints and devotees met the devotees on the same pathway. Maharaj, santo, and bhakto were on horseback. He was adorned with beautiful clothes and ornaments and had garlands of flowers around His neck. He smiled upon seeing the devotees.

The group prostrated before Maharaj. After doing *darshan*, they began to pray and said, "Maharaj, we held an intense desire to see you. We were unfortunate that we could not attend the Dabhan *Yagna* ceremony. However, you are the most compassionate and so, you gave us your *darshan* today from ahead."

Then, they prayed to Maharaj, "Please, come to our home." Maharaj replied, "We will reach your village before you, so walk at your normal pace." After saying so, Maharaj proceeded on

his mare Manki towards their village.

All of these devotees understood that Maharaj would be at their home, so they walked very fast. Upon arrival, they asked one another, "Where did Maharaj and Santo go?" A wise devotee said, "Maharaj did not come here. He gave us His *darshan* in divine form along the way, with other santo and bhakto." Everyone understood this to be true. Maharaj gave divine *darshan* solely to give them bliss. In reality, Maharaj was in Dabhan performing the *Yagna.*

In this way, Maharaj manifested on Earth for the sake of His devotees and gave them bliss and fulfilled their desires.





## 12. Caught by Thieves!

Udhavji, a small business holder and staunch devotee of Bhagwan Swaminarayan, worked diligently while following the rules of *dharma.* Once, Udhavji was coming from another village to his home in Dharai. While walking, he remembered the *murti* of Bhagwan. However, some thieves caught and tied him up. After bringing him into a jungle, they asked for a considerable amount of money to be released. Udhavji feared for his life.

Udhavji did not have any form of retaliation but Bhagwan Swaminarayan. So, he started to remember Maharaj with chanting the mahamantra, 'Swaminarayan.' He prayed, "Oh! Maharaj! No one besides you can relieve me from this situation. So, if you will not protect me, I will die miserably."

Maharaj divinely appeared in front of Udhavji. Only Udhavji saw Maharaj in front of him. He lovingly said, "Udhavji, do not worry about anything. Nothing will happen to you. You will not be punished or harmed. You will be released the next day." After saying such words, Maharaj disappeared.

Maharaj then divinely went to visit the wife of the leader of the gang. He told her, "Your husband has kidnapped my devotee. If he meets with pain or misery, I will punish you and your husband. So, tell him to release my devotee." Warning her to be cautious, Maharaj disappeared.

The thieves came to their village, and two of them had tied Udhavji with rope and walked with him so that he could not run away. Then, they locked Udhavji in a room. The leader entered his own home and met with his wife who told him about the divine *darshan* of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. Immediately, Uddhavji was

released. Then, both husband and wife asked for forgiveness. Also, they informed Udhavji about how they received the *darshan* of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. Then, they provided Udhavji with food and water.

The next morning, Udhavji was offered new clothes as a gift. Udhavji firmly believed that if Maharaj did not save his life, he would have met with death. In this way, Maharaj protected His devotee from danger.





## 13. The Doctor's Mistake!

There was a village called Manavadar in the Sorath region of Gujarat. A devotee named Jadavji lived there. Once, Jadavji went to another town with three of his friends to attend a social event. There, they were welcomed by Jadavji's relatives who provided suitable accommodations. The friends participated in the event, and they filled their stomachs with food and returned to their homes.

One of Jadavji's friends was suffering from indigestion, so he was not feeling well. He asked his other friends if they had any herbal medicines to help. Unfortunately, there were none, so some of the friends went to get it from a nearby Ayurvedic doctor. Unfortunately, by mistake, the doctor gave the wrong medicine which turned out to be a poisonous powder. The friend returned with the herbal powder, and as they all suffered from indigestion, they all consumed it, believing it to be a remedy.

After a few minutes, all of them felt drowsy, and the poison pervaded throughout their bodies. The three friends died, and Jadavji became unconscious due to the poison's effects. He understood his death was going to occur momentarily and so he began to remember Bhagwan Swaminarayan.

After a few minutes, Bhagwan Swaminarayan appeared before his eyes. Maharaj looked at Jadavji with a divine glance, Jadavji was relieved from the poison and stood up. He bowed down to Shreeji Maharaj and asked what had happened to him. Then Maharaj replied, "The herbal powder given by the Ayurvedic doctor was poisonous. He had mistakenly given it to you." By saying so, Maharaj disappeared, and Jadavji felt thankful that his life was saved.

# 14. Sweet Ocean Water

While Maharaj was traveling through Gujarat, He desired to travel to the Kutch region. Usually, Maharaj traveled with many devotees and santo, but this time, He decided to travel with Lalji Suthar, who was a very staunch follower of Ramanand Swami. He gave Lalji the role of navigating. After Ramanand Swami's passing, Lalji firmly followed Maharaj's agna.

Lalji's mother prepared food for the journey. He also took some clothes, water, and money, etc. and left at dawn with Maharaj. On their way, they encountered a poor *Brahmin*. Due to Maharaj's compassionate nature, all of Lalji's supplies were given to the *Brahmin.*

After crossing great distances Maharaj and Lalji reached the ocean shore by the evening hour. There was no village nearby to stay the night, so they continued walking until they could find shelter. Without any food or water, Lalji became exhausted. Observing his fatigue, Maharaj decided to hold and take rest. Due to dehydration, Lalji would try to take a couple of steps forward, but would immediately fall. Even though there was plenty of water, it was not possible to drink due to it being salty.

Lalji looked towards Maharaj pleadingly. Maharaj instructed Lalji to drink the water from the ocean. With resolute faith, Lalji drank the water. Surprisingly, it was sweet so he drank as much as he could. He saw the true greatness of Shreeji Maharaj and recalled His guru Ramanand Swami's words to be true about Maharaj. In this way, Maharaj changed the salty ocean water into drinkable water for His devotee.

Lalji drank the water until he was satisfied, and regained





the strength to continue onwards. However, his mind diverted with a thought to drink the water once again, so he attempted to drink again, but this time it was extremely salty. He firmly realized that the change from salty to sweet drinking water was only done by the wish of Maharaj and no one else.

Continuing on their way, they encountered a stranger, who bowed to Maharaj and then disappeared. Lalji watched this incident and thought, 'Who was that stranger?' Lalji did not inquire regarding who the man was. Maharaj smiled and kept walking.

After some time passed, another person wearing all white clothes came. This time, Maharaj bowed down to him. So, Lalji thought, 'Last time when that other stranger came forth, he bowed down to Maharaj, and that was understandable, but now this time, Maharaj bowed to this person. What is the reason for this?'

Maharaj and Lalji stayed the night under a tree on the banks of the pond. After a long journey, they were exhausted and did not have any food to eat. So, Maharaj and Lalji both went to sleep on the earth without anything.

In the morning, seeing Maharaj in a fresh and happy mood after a bath, Lalji asked, "Maharaj! Who was the person who bowed down to you? Also, who was the person to whom you bowed down? How did the salty ocean water become drinkable?"

Then Maharaj replied, "Lalji, that person who bowed down to me was a *mukt* from *Akshardham,* who came for my *darshan*. Also, I knew you would not live without water, so I used my divine power and merely by my wish the salty ocean water changed into natural drinking water. Also, at last, I bowed to Ramanand Swami who met us in white clothes."

In this way, Maharaj displayed his divinity to Lalji Suthar. Later, Lalji was initiated by Maharaj during the journey and was made into a saint - Nishkulanand Swami. Nishkulanand Swami wrote the *Bhaktachintamani* and included this incident within it.





# 15. Saving Sachidanand Swami

The village of Moda is situated in Southern Gujarat. There lived a devotee of God whose name was Motabhai. Being within the Kshatriya caste, he was courageous, fit, and had great devotion towards God. Because of his previous connections with the Supreme Lord Swaminarayan, he could see the form of God before his eyes in all of his activities.

Once, during the monsoon season, there was heavy rain. A river which was situated close to the village of Moda flooded. As the rain stopped, Motabhai desired to bathe in the river, so he went to its bank. As he was getting ready to bathe, suddenly due to strong currents, he got pulled in. Before he knew it, he was drowning.

The massive body of Motabhai was drawn down into the water and then back to the surface, repeatedly. In a very tough situation, he gave up the possibility of living. He was sure in his mind that today death was undoubtedly certain. So, he remembered Maharaj, and to his surprise, Maharaj divinely appeared there and pulled Motabhai out of the water and placed him onto the riverbank. Shreeji Maharaj instructed never to enter into such flooded waters again as it was too dangerous and then disappeared.

## Locked Up Yet Free

Devotion in Motabhai's life increased as he received the divine *darshan* of Shri Hari. With an intense love for Bhagwan, he meditated upon the divine form of Shri Hari frequently. Due to severe penance and meditation, his body deteriorated. The relatives of Motabhai understood that he had lost his mental stability. They tied Motabhai's hands and

feet with shackles. He was locked in a room. He started to meditate. Magically, in a short period, Maharaj came and released him.

Further, Maharaj gave him divine powers. Motabhai attained *niravaran drasti.* Therefore, he became free of certain restrictions. For example, without opening doors, he could walk right through, and the same applied for walls or other objects whereas ordinary people could not pass.

Motabhai came out of the room with great surprise to his relatives. They again locked Motabhai inside the room, and again, Motabhai came out. He was released soon after. His relatives pleaded for forgiveness and then became devotees of Bhagwan Swaminarayan.

### Give us Proof!

Sachidanand Swami had very much affection for Maharaj. From the day he understood Maharaj's greatness, he always remembered God's form, while eating, drinking, walking, and even during sleeping. He had the highest level of affection for Maharaj, such that if he did not get the *darshan* of God, he would become extremely distressed, and due to feelings of separation, blood would excrete out from every pore of his body.

Maharaj also had great affection for him. Before meeting Shreeji Maharaj, he lived with his family. He didn't believe in any other God or goddesses. Once, the worshippers of some goddesses decided to kill him. Many such *bhuva* came and began to chant evil hymns to invoke evil goddesses. They swayed and shouted and asked him to show them any miracle or proof of the divinity of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. Before Swami could say anything, they warned him and remarked, "If





his Bhagwan didn't show any evidence, they would kill him."

Without any delay, Maharaj manifested there in divine form amidst divine light. Maharaj then said if you want to see my divine powers let me cut off your heads. Immediately, all of them ran for their lives. In reality, Maharaj did not want to kill them but just wanted to save His devotee. Some of the *bhuva* returned and bowed down to Maharaj, and asked for forgiveness.

### Samadhi during Journey

After becoming a saint, he mostly lived in Gadhada. Once, Swami desired to have *darshan* of Shreeji Maharaj. At that time, Shreeji Maharaj was traveling to the Kutch region. Swami decided to go to Kutch for Maharaj's *darshan* because he had an intense affection for Maharaj.

At that time, people used ferry boats from Bhavnagar to Kutch. Swami sat in one of those boats, then meditated and became engrossed in Maharaj's divine form. He experienced *samadhi* and forgot about his own body. His body remained within the boat as he enjoyed divine bliss in *Akshardham*. Seeing Swami motionless for three days, people thought he was dead. So, when the boat reached its destination, people decided to cremate his body. They prepared a funeral pyre, put Swami's body upon it and were ready to set it ablaze. But at that last moment, Maharaj divinely appeared to stop them from lighting the pyre on fire. Maharaj then woke Swami from *samadhi.* Swami was surprised to see himself on a funeral pyre. Maharaj embraced and blessed Swami. Then Maharaj Himself narrated what had happened. After listening, all bowed down to Maharaj and Swami and further understood Maharaj's divinity.

### Accepted the Challenge

Once, a *Tutiyu* came in personified form to meet Sachidanand Swami. He said, "I'll enter into your body and kill you." Then, Swami told him, "That's fine. You can enter at your will." The *Tutiyu* entered Swami's body in the form of light through the navel. Sachidanand Swami stopped his veins with his divine powers.

Moreover, he ignited the fire of digestion. With this fire, the *Tutiyu* began to burn and ask for forgiveness. The *Tutiyu* pleaded to swami to stop the burning and release him. Then, Swami released it.





## 16. Poisonous Gifts

Just as the sun rises in the eastern sky, and light spreads through its rays. Similarly, Bhagwan Swaminarayan's glory spread all through his dedicated saints' matchless efforts. People were attracted to their disciplined lifestyle. Nonetheless, their egoless qualities transformed thousands of lives.

As people came to know the difference between the *bawas* and pious saints, the *bawas* started to lose followers. Usually, they were intoxicated by drinking wine, speaking obscene words, and their only aim to enjoy sensual pleasures. So, the people who had witnessed the moral character living style of Swaminarayan's saints stopped giving rations and donations to the *bawas.*

In retribution, they decided to uproot the Swaminarayan movement. They decided to kill the sect's most elite and senior saint, Muktanand Swami. They believed that if he was killed the *satsang* fellowship would collapse.

By the commands of Shreeji Maharaj, Muktanand Swami went to Ahmedabad with a group of saints. Swami started his daily katha and devotees heard of his arrival. They would come to listen to Swami's katha and offered various gifts. Once, the cruel *bawas brought* poisonous sweets to give to Swamiji. Also, they brought sandalwood paste which was mixed with poison as a gift. They came in the guise of well-wishers and so, offered the sweets and paste, portraying it as a generous gift. The other saints accepted the gifts and the *bawas* left.

Due to Maharaj's wish, Muktanand Swami and the other saints did not consume the sweets. However, during the evening

katha, Vaishnavanand Swami used the sandalwood paste to perform Muktanand swami's pujan. At the time, no one knew that it was mixed with poison.

In the very next minute, the poison began to show its deadly effect on Swami's forehead. It was so intense that Swami felt as if his skin was burning. Shortly after, Swami became unconscious. Immediately, Maharaj divinely appeared in front of Swami. He advised, "Swami, this sandalwood paste was mixed with poison, so, immediately wash your forehead with water. The cruel *bawas* delivered the poisonous paste and sweets." While saying this, Maharaj put His hand on Swami's head relieving the pain, and blessed him, and then disappeared.

Swami washed his forehead with water, and because of Shreeji Maharaj's blessings, no further damage was done to swami's skin. He then instructed his saints to dig a deep hole and bury the sweets within so no other creature would consume the sweets. In this way, Shreeji Maharaj protected his dear saints from the effects of the poison.

The poison was so deadly that Vaishnavanand Swami's finger's skin was burned severely. To the surprise of all, they recovered quickly due to the blessings from Shreeji Maharaj.





## 17. Fatal Alms

The city of Surat had very limited number of followers of Bhagwan Swaminarayan, so they requested Maharaj to send santo for spreading *satsang*. So, Maharaj selected Niranjananand Swami to go to Surat. According to Maharaj's command, Swami took fifteen additional santo with him and proceeded forward. For a few days, the santo lived at a devotees' homes. At that time, Santo collected alms from people's home. Whatever they received, they cooked and offered to Bhagwan and then partook as *prasad.*

There were wicked *bawas* who did not like santos staying in Surat, so they desired to kill them. They were envious of Swaminarayan santo taking and converting their followers into Bhagwan Swaminarayan followers. One day, santo went to collect rations from various homes. At one of the homes they were given wheat flour mixed with poison. Unaware, they used the wheat flour and made food from it. After offering it to Maharaj, they started to consume. Soon after, due to the effects of the poison, they were unable to move or speak a single word. Even though death was lurking near them, they remembered Bhagwan Swaminarayan. Then they lost all consciousness.

Maharaj divinely appeared there to rescue the santo from death. He lovingly put His hands on their foreheads and within a few seconds, one after another, they became conscious. After having the *darshan* of their beloved Maharaj, their pain was relieved immediately.

# 18. Atmanand Swami Rescued

Once, Atmanand Swami was traveling in the Saurastra region with three other santo. They were preaching about Maharaj's principles to various people. Passing one village after another, they arrived at Jalsen. There were no followers of Bhagwan Swaminarayan living there. Instead, many *kusangis* despised Swaminarayan santo for teaching righteousness to others.

Atmanand Swami and other santo performed katha while remembering Bhagwan Swaminarayan. Their pious and disciplined lifestyles made a good impression on the public. So, by listening to their simple yet effective discourses and observing their character, people were attracted towards them. As a result, they accepted santo's advice to give up bad habits and live a devout life.

The *kusangis developed* a plan to stop the santo from preaching to others and decided to put poison in their food. The next morning, santo went to beg for alms, and in return, the *kusangis* gave grains mixed with poison. The santo had no idea, so they innocently cooked the grains. This particular poison was extremely toxic and was enough to kill a person within just a few minutes. After offering the food to God, santo sat to partake in the *prasad*. Only within a few moments, they started to vomit one after another and lost the ability to talk. They began to feel numbness in their bodies. They had only one desire remaining within their hearts, to have the *darshan* of Shreeji Maharaj.

Shreeji Maharaj, Himself manifested to give them *darshan*.





With His divine glance, Maharaj relieved all four santo from the influence of dangerous poison and unbearable pain.

The Santo prayed and bowed down to Maharaj. "Oh, Maharaj! Thank you very much for giving us *darshan* at this difficult time and saving us from death." They added, "Maharaj! If you did not come, we would not be alive today." While saying so, they all bowed down again, and Maharaj disappeared. In this way, Maharaj protected his beloved santo from the effects of the poison.

# 19. Pulled into a Whirlpool

Once, Anantanand Swami along with several saints went to the city of Buranpur for spreading *satsang.* They stayed on the outskirts of the city on the bank of the river Tapi.

In the morning, the saints passed through each street and home. They preached Shreeji Maharaj's principles of worshipping God and about the code of conducts. More and more people would come to listen to their pious talks. In result, many people gave the santo grains as a gift.

The saints would later head back and cook food by the riverbank, and then offer it to an idol of God, and they partake in the meal afterward. Afterward, they would bathe in the river. However, on one occasion, the river was flooded. Innocently, they entered the water, but in just moments they were carried into whirlpools and eddies and swept into the vortex of water. None of the saint knew how to swim. Within a few seconds, they disappeared into the water, and then soon after drowned.

However, the most compassionate Bhagwan Swaminarayan appeared there beneath the water in divine form and restored their lives. After receiving such *darshan* of their beloved God, Anantanand Swami and the other santo were overjoyed and felt fulfilled. Then, Maharaj brought them all outside from the water onto the bank of the river.

At the riverbank, other santo and people had gathered to watch the impossible. They were all surprised on witnessing this scene, and when asked, Anantanand Swami narrated how Maharaj divinely gave *darshan,* took them out of the water, and saved all of their lives.





# 20. Jivaram's Close Call

There was a Brahmin devotee by the name of Jivram who lived in a village called Vankaner. He was a *Brahmin* by caste and firmly abided by Shreeji Maharaj's code of conducts. Thus, by following the commands of Shreeji Maharaj, he worshipped Him wholeheartedly.

He was a businessman by occupation. He used to travel to the Sindh region (presently known as Pakistan) by ship, to purchase grains and then return and sell to buyers accordingly. Once, he went to Sindh by a chartered ship with his workers. He very much enjoyed doing bhajan and remembered Bhagwan Swaminarayan in his travels.

On their way, the captain spotted a suspicious boat coming towards them. He sounded the alarm alerting the crew members and Jivram. He informed Jivram that the suspicious boat might have pirates.

Shortly, the boat docked with the ship and came aboard the ship. The crew and captain jumped into the ocean but Jivram did not know how to swim so instead of jumping overboard, he started to chant the 'Swaminarayan' mantra.

Jivram was tied up by the pirates. The leader of the pirate gang stabbed jivram six times. The wounded Jivram was thrown overboard into the salty waters of the ocean. Then the pirates left with the ship.

The crew swam with haste and reached the shoreland shortly. Jivram did not meet his death even though he was stabbed six times. Maharaj divinely kept him afloat. Floating the ocean alone, half-conscious, Jivram could not figure out how he was still alive and floating. Then he began to pray to

Maharaj, "Oh Maharaj, please come and take me with you!" He did not pray for his life to be saved!

Jivram's prayers were answered as Shreeji Maharaj came to the rescue. Maharaj appeared there with a small boat and untied Jivram's hands. Then, Maharaj had him rest while he paddled the boat to the shoreline. Maharaj healed the wounds of his devotee with a single touch, provided food and water, and direction leading to the village.

The crew reached Vankaner and informed the family members of Jivram dilemma. By hearing such tragic news, the relatives who lived nearby gathered at Jivram's home to mourn his death. However, Jivram's mother didn't believe such talks. Even when close relatives tried to convince her, she didn't accept that her son was dead.

The relatives explained to her that, "If we do not perform the post-death ceremony and rituals, people of the village will criticize us. We understand as a mother you cannot acknowledge this, but what is done is done." Finally, due to the many people influencing her, she accepted the disappointing news and became extremely saddened. She remembered Bhagwan Swaminarayan.

Immediately, Maharaj gave her divine *darshan* and informed her that Jivram was alive and will come home the following day. He advised her to tell everyone, 'Jivram will come home the next day.' According to Shreeji Maharaj's wish, the mother shared this news with everyone.

Many were quite surprised, and the crew members and relatives asked him how he could have possibly remained alive on his return. Jivram narrated the story of how Shreeji Maharaj divinely rescued him, and how Maharaj healed his wounds without any medicine. As a result of this, the entire crew was inspired and became devotees of Bhagwan Swaminarayan.





## 21. The Brave Brothers of Golida

Golida is a remote village located in Gujarat. Four Rajgar *Brahmin* brothers lived there and were born from a virtuous family of Ramjibhai and Rupbai. Ramjibhai had four sons; named Bhimbhai, Vashrambhai, Raghavbhai, and Ranabhai. Before they became satsangis of Bhagwan Swaminarayan, Ramjibhai had faith in Lord Shri *Krishna.* His faith and devotion were so admirable that once he had completed a pilgrimage from Jagannathpuri to Dwarika by prostrating the whole way there.

When Ramanand Swami heard about Ramjibhai's devotion, he went to Golida to bless him with *darshan* and shared various discourses. Ramjibhai's family became devotees of Ramanand Swami. After Ramanand Swami's departure, the Rajgar *Brahmin* family became devotees of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. After Ramjibhai's death, Rupbai raised her four children with *satsang.*

Once Maharaj was in the village of Sardhar. Finding out that Maharaj was near, Rupbai sent her sons to invite Him into their village. Shreeji Maharaj accepted their invitation and came to Golida. Maharaj further graced them by doing *padharamni* at their home.

Slowly after some time, the whole village was drawn into *satsang.* However, there was a wicked person who had hatred towards the *satsang* fellowship and did not accept to be part of it. At the time of his death, the servants of Yama (Yamduts) came to take this person to hell. However, upon reaching the outskirts of the village, they came to know that the villagers were devotees of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. They thought, "There is nothing wrong in taking away the soul of an evil man."

Meanwhile, the four brothers were coming back home from their farm. They saw the servants of Yama (Yamduts) and thought, "We are devotees of Shreeji Maharaj, so we should stop these Yamduts from entering our village. Let's go with the remembrance of Shreeji Maharaj." By discussing and deciding, they finally approached the Yamduts and requested them to flee away. One of the Yamduts replied frighteningly, "You should take care of your home; do not try to protect the whole village." The four brothers said, "We are not cowards; we are devotees of Bhagwan Swaminarayan." The Yamdut replied, "Regardless, I cannot go back without taking the evil person's soul." The brothers replied, "You will run only after being punished by our sticks." Then upon hearing such words, one of the Yamduts angrily said, "You were warned. Now, feel my wrath." The Yamdut swung his fist. Bhimbhai and Ranabhai were very brave. They hit the Yamdut in the mouth with a stick, breaking its tooth. As a result, the other Yamduts ran away and went back to Yampuri.

The Yamdut requested the four brothers for forgiveness. He said, "You are true devotees of Bhagwan Swaminarayan." The four brothers marched through the streets of the village carrying the huge tooth to exhibit to the villagers. Later, the evil man also understood the glory of Bhagwan Swaminarayan and became a satsangi. In the end, saints of Shreeji Maharaj came to take him to *Akshardham.*

## Fulfilling his Promise

Out of the four brothers, Bhimbai and Ranabhai were married. Raghavbhai and Vashrambhai wanted to become sadhus, but their mother refused by saying, "If you were to become sadhus, then who will look after me?" Then, Ranabhai explained to his mother, "Please, permit my brothers to





become sadhus. Do not worry. I will serve you." Then, the mother permitted them to go to Gadhada. Maharaj initiated them as sadhus. Raghavbhai was renamed Raghavanand Swami, and Vashrambhai became Vishvatmanand Swami. Both were popularly known as Jam-tageda sadhus as they had driven away the Yamduts.

Years passed, and Ranabhai's death was near. Maharaj gave him divine *darshan* and informed him that after eight days, He would come to take him to *Akshardham.* Therefore, Ranabhai shared this exciting news to his mother. Rupbai, asked, "Who will look after me now? You had given me a promise." Ranabhai replied, "I'll come with Maharaj to take you to *Akshardham* twelve days after my death."

On the eighth day, Shreeji Maharaj came with His celestial chariot to take Ranabhai to His abode. At the time, Ranabhai asked, "Those who want to come to *Akshardham* with me should get ready." No one but his son was ready. On the twelfth day, Ranabhai came with Maharaj to take his mother to *Akshardham.* Many witnessed this divine incident and developed firm conviction in Bhagwan Swaminarayan. Shreeji Maharaj Himself had praised him in the Vachanamrut Loya-3.

## 22. Eating Human Flesh

There was a village named Mandavdhar located near Gadhada. A female lived there who did not believe in God. Instead, she committed sins throughout her life and moreover, had many other intense immoral desires remaining in her mind. At the time of her death, she thought, "I have eaten everything, but I have not eaten human flesh." With this thought, she met her death. So, she received the body of a ghost to fulfill her desires.

After attaining a body of a ghost, she came to the same village. She could see everything and everyone yet no one could see her. She wanted to eat human flesh, so she took the form of a marki (a disease) and, entered human bodies and ate people's flesh from within, killing them. She desired more and more, so she entered one human body after another, in result many people died. The devotees of Bhagwan Swaminarayan sensed that the incidences were not because of a disease but because of an evil female ghost. Family members performing the funeral rites of their relatives eventually died of the same cause, one after the other.

Some wise devotees gathered and went to Gadhada. They performed the *darshan* of Shreeji Maharaj and santo. They explained the situation and prayed, "Maharaj! Please grace our village with your presence. Merely, your presence is enough to chase the female ghost away from our village. So, please come to our village."

Shreeji Maharaj was pleased due to their understanding. He then said, "I'll come with my santo to Mandavdhar. Go and





prepare for our stay there." When Maharaj and santo graced the village by entering into the village outskirts, the female ghost could not bear the divine presence of Maharaj and His santo, so she flew away from Mandavdhar forever. In this way, Maharaj saved the villagers of Mandavdhar by chasing the ghost away.

# 23. Red-hot Iron Ball

There was a beautiful village by the name of Kundal, near the city of Kadi in northern Gujarat. Kala Bhagat was landlord, continuing the family legacy. The farm he owned was located outside of the village.

After Swaminarayan santo visited the village, Kala Bhagat became a satsangi and listened to the meaningful discourses of santo. He started to follow every command as prescribed by Shri Hari. As a result, his brothers and friends despised him. They would spend less and less time with him. Kala Bhagat saved his time from gossip and entertainment and concentrated more, on his farming. The other villagers wasted their time away. So, naturally, they didn't earn profits from farming. Kala Bhagat had a couple of brothers as well, but they were against the Swaminarayan religion.

Instead of giving up their bad habits, they became jealous of Kala Bhagat. They didn't like him for worshipping Bhagwan Swaminarayan. On the other hand, Kala Bhagat was inspiring others to join *satsang* and would say, "Bhagwan Swaminarayan is the manifest form of the Supreme God. So, whoever wants ultimate liberation, please join this *satsang* fellowship and give up other beliefs."

The villagers could less and wasted their time doing other things. They decided to take away his land and declare him as an outcast. They thought, "If we take his land, he would not complain to the community leaders as he would be an outcast. Finally, he would come to us requesting for the return of his farm, and at that time, we'll apply the condition to give up his





religion in exchange."

Kala Bhagat thought differently though. He thought, "I am a devotee of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. Moreover, I didn't harm anyone, nor have I made a mistake. So, I will go to court."

When his brothers heard about Kala Bhagat going to court, they reached there before him and bribed the judge. When Kala Bhagat arrived, the officer didn't submit the appeal and asked instead for proof of the land as his property. At that time, there were no written documents so, Kala bhagat said, "I do not have any written documents with me for the land but, all the villagers know the farm belonged to my family." The officer said, "That's not evidence. I'll only believe you if you hold a red-hot iron ball while walking around the boundaries of your farm. If nothing happens to you, then this will be evidence of your legacy on the land." Kala Bhagat had unflinching faith in Bhagwan Swaminarayan, and so he confidently accepted the challenge.

The next day, the officers of the county, Kala Bhagat, his brothers and villagers gathered by the farmland. The officer ordered his assistant to heat the iron ball until it became fiery red. Within a few minutes, the red-hot iron ball was ready, and the officer announced, "If Kala Bhagat is a true bhagat and if this land belongs to him then, he will not be burned by holding this ball."

Kala Bhagat prayed, "Maharaj! You know who is right and who is wrong. But today, only you are on my side. So, please help me to provide evidence of your divine power." Suddenly Bhagwan Swaminarayan gave him divine *darshan*. Maharaj said, "Do not worry about anything. I am here, and everything will be fine. Hold the iron ball; nothing will happen to you."

By receiving divine *darshan* and blessings from Maharaj, Kala Bhagat held the red-hot iron ball and began to walk around the boundaries of his farm. Everyone was amazed by watching this scene. After circumambulating around the limits of his farm, he returned to the officer and placed the iron ball on the ground. The grass started to burn immediately. The officer and others observed Kala Bhagat's hands, and surprisingly nothing had happened. Everyone believed Bhagwan Swaminarayan to be God and that Kala Bhagat's possessed true genuine devotion. In this way, Maharaj protected his devotee by providing evidence to others about his ever presence on earth.





## 24. Innocent as a Child

There is a village by the name of Nandasan in north Gujarat. A devotee of Bhagwan Swaminarayan by the name of Bhula Bhagat resided there. He was very frank and straightforward and understood that "Bhagwan Swaminarayan is the all-doer." His character was pure and innocent. Due to this other cheated him. He was a farmer by occupation. Nevertheless, he had absolute faith in Bhagwan Swaminarayan.

Once he desired to have the *darshan* of Shriji Maharaj. However, he didn't know where Maharaj was present. Due to his intense desire, he left home to meet Maharaj without any direction or company. Moreover, he didn't take food, water, or money. Bhula Bhagat walked for many days in hopes that he will have the *darshan* of Maharaj.

On the other hand, Shreeji Maharaj was in the city of Bhuj at the time. He worried about Bhula Bhagat. So, he took the form of a *Brahmin* and went to help and guide His devotee. Maharaj met Bhula Bhagat from the opposite direction. Bhula Bhagat didn't recognize Maharaj. The Brahmin asked, "Where are you going?" Bhula Bhagat replied, "I am going to Bhuj for *darshan* of my Lord." The *Brahmin* said, "I am also going to Bhuj, but you are headed in the wrong direction. Bhuj is in this direction; come with me." Bhula Bhagat asked, "Are you showing me the right path or just trying to cheat me?" The *Brahmin* said, "I am a *Brahmin*, you can trust me. Since you are a devotee of Bhagwan Swaminarayan, I want to guide and help you reach your destination; please follow me."

Bhula Bhagat trusted the *Brahmin* and changed directions. While walking, the *Brahmin* spoke to relieve the loneliness and

moreover, asked about hunger and thirst. The *Brahmin* even fed Bhula bhagat. Bhula Bhagat ate some food but did not recognize that the *Brahmin* was Bhagwan Himself.

After walking for many days, they reached their destination, Bhuj. The *Brahmin* guided Bhula Bhagat towards a home, where Maharaj was present. Then, the *Brahmin* disappeared. Upon reaching the home, finally Bhula Bhagat did the *darshan* of his beloved Maharaj, who was adorned in lavish garments and ornaments seated on a beautiful dais. Santo and devotees were seated in an assembly before Him.

Bhula Bhagat was satisfied in having the *darshan* of Shreeji Maharaj. Maharaj then asked him, "How did you get here?"

Bhula Bhagat replied with folded hands, "Maharaj, I met a *Brahmin* who guided me and provided me food and water. He came with me all the way and then disappeared, after indicating to me this location." Maharaj was laughing while listening to Bhula Bhagat's story.

Then, He said, "It was I, in the form of the *Brahmin.* I provided food and water to you, and guided you here." Then Maharaj explained in detail and gave hints to what had happened along the way. While saying so, Bhula Bhagat began to cry. He fell at Maharaj's feet with great appreciation.





## 25. Leap of Faith

There was a village called Koteshwar located in northern Gujarat. A devotee of Bhagwan Swaminarayan lived there. His name was Zaver Bhagat. He performed devotion of Shreeji Maharaj with firm faith. He sought the refuge of Bhagwan Swaminarayan and performed devotion daily. The other villagers tried to break Zaver Bhagat's faith by speaking discouragingly about the fellowship. However, he was initiated into the *satsang* fold since a very young age, so his *satsang* was very firm and stable. Compared to his village, only Zaver Bhagat's family worshipped Bhagwan Swaminarayan while the others didn't believe in *satsang.*

Therefore *kusangis* of the village despised him and made false accusations against him. However, nothing disturbed or deviated him from worshipping Bhagwan Swaminarayan.

They told him, "You have committed a grave sin by converting religions. You have made a grave mistake. Your Bhagwan Swaminarayan is a fake. If you and your Bhagwan are true, then show us a miracle. If your Bhagwan shows us a miracle, we will believe he is true."

Zaver Bhagat replied without hesitation, "Even if my Bhagwan shows you a miracle, you will not believe it. But if you want to see a miracle, I will pray to him, and it will come true."

The kusangi villagers asked Zaver Bhagat to jump off of the Shiv *mandir,* and if nothing would happen to him, then they would believe Bhagwan Swaminarayan to be true. Immediately, Zaver Bhagat prayed to his beloved Bhagwan and went to the top of the Shiv temple. While chanting the mahamantra, 'Swaminarayan, Swaminarayan', he jumped from the top.

Everyone's heart skipped a beat, believing that Zaver Bhagat would come to his death.

To everyone's surprise, Zaver Bhagat stood up and started walking! Bhagwan Swaminarayan was present throughout the scenario.

However, the kusangis were still not ready to accept the *satsang* fellowship due to their arrogance. After the incident, no one in the village ever spoke ill regarding the satsang fellowship or Zaver Bhagat because their hearts felt the power of Shreeji Maharaj.

## Fulfilling his Wishes

Once, Shreeji Maharaj visited the village of Karjisan and celebrated the festival of Janmashtami. After the festival, He, along with many saints and devotees left for Ahmedabad and arrived at the village of Motera. They stayed there for the night. Motera was very near to the village of Koteswar, so Nishkulanand Swami narrated Zaver Bhagat's unflinching faith in Shreeji Maharaj. Maharaj decided to pay Zaver Bhagat a surprise visit at his home.

Zaver Bhagat did not know about Shri Hari's arrival, so he didn't have time to make preparations to welcome Shri Hari and the saints. However, he spread a nice new embroidered cloth on a cot and prayed to Shri Hari to sit upon it. He further prostrated before Maharaj and requested to partake in some food at his home. Shreeji Maharaj said, "We are in a hurry so we cannot stay here for a long time. We came only to grant you *darshan* because of your outstanding feats.

Nevertheless, I have become very pleased due to your firm faith and devotion. So, I will fulfill your desire to feed the saints. So please bring the food you have prepared." Zaver Bhagat requested, "Maharaj, I did not know about your arrival, so





nothing is prepared. I only have milk to offer."

Maharaj told him to bring the pot of milk. Shri Hari drank some and told the saints to partake in some as well. The saints replied, "Maharaj! We don't have our wooden bowls with us, so how will we be able to drink the milk." Then Maharaj told all the saints, "Join your palms and form a bowl." Maharaj Himself then served milk to all of the saints in their palms to fulfill beloved Zaver Bhagat's devotion.

Zaver Bhagat became elated as his desire to feed the saints was fulfilled. He expressed his feelings of appreciation for Shreeji Maharaj. He prayed to Maharaj, "Maharaj please bless me so that my home becomes a *mandir."* Shreeji Maharaj blessed him, "One day, your home will be converted into a *mandir."* By giving such blessings, Maharaj and the saints returned to Motera.

Many years after this event had passed, Shreeji Maharaj returned to *Akshardham.* Once, Zaver Bhagat visited Swaminarayan *Mandir* Ahmedabad and requested Acharya Ayodhyaprasadji Maharaj. "Please, initiate me into the sainthood. I want to donate all my property to the *mandir.* Please, turn my home into a *mandir."* Acharya Maharaj fulfilled Zaver Bhagat's wish and made the home into a *mandir* by installing a *murti.* In this way, Zaver Bhagat surrendered everything to Bhagwan Swaminarayan.

# 26. Resurrected Back to Life

Pranvallabh was a Brahmin who lived in Ahmedabad. He had learned from scriptures that God forever resides in His *murti*. So, he desired to surrender his life to God. For that sole purpose, Pranvallabh traveled to all parts of India. He had made a golden necklace and prayed in front of every *murti*. "Oh! Lord! If you come out of this idol and ask for this golden necklace, I'll serve you by thought, word, and deed until my last breath." He didn't get a response from anywhere. So, he returned to his home in Ahmedabad.

There, he met Swaminarayan santo who were traveling to different areas of the city, preaching about the principles of *satsang*. Pranvallabh described to them how he wandered to places of pilgrimage in search of God but unfortunately received disappointment. Then he asked, "Do you know where I can fulfill my desire of receiving the *darshan* of God who will come out from His *murti* and ask for my golden necklace?" The santo told him, "Pranvallabh! You are a spiritual aspirant. We know you are in search of God. But at the present time, Bhagwan Swaminarayan has manifested on this earth, and He is Parabrahm Purushottam - the Supreme Almighty. He had installed the idol of *Nar-Narayan* in Ahmedabad *mandir.* If you want to do darshan of God, go there to the *mandir* and pray. God will fulfill your wishes."

Pranvallabh was eager to meet God. So, he trusted Santo's words and the very next day; he went to the *Mandir* to have the *darshan* of *Nar-Narayan Dev*. He did *darshan* and prayed. Surprisingly, *Narayan* Bhagwan came out of the idol and asked for the golden necklace. Receiving *darshan* of God made





Pranvallabh overjoyed and satisfied. He was amazed and thought, "Is this real or a dream?" Pranvallabh bowed down, embraced Bhagwan, and offered the golden necklace.

Bhagwan *Narayan* said, "You should do bhajan of the Supreme Lord Swaminarayan. I am also doing his bhajan. So, accept his *vartman* and *kanthi.*" In this way, Pranvallabh became a devotee of Maharaj. From that day onwards, Pranvallabh began his devotional journey by worshipping only Bhagwan Swaminarayan.

Once, he went to south India to bathe in the sacred river of Godavari. At that time, there was an epidemic disease spreading across the region. Thousands of people were affected by it, and many met with their deaths. Pranvallabh also became infected. Within a few days, he became seriously ill and also met with his death. At that time, Shreeji Maharaj came in divine form with santo to bring him to *Akshardham.*

During their journey to *Akshardham*, Shreeji Maharaj asked Pranvallabh, "Do you have any desires that remain unfulfilled?" He replied, "Maharaj! I have not informed anyone that you have come to take me to *Akshardham*. So, people figured that I have died because of the plague just like the others."

Then Maharaj said, "You may go back into your body and tell everyone that I have come to take you to *Akshardham."* People understood that Pranvallabh died just as others due to the plague. So, they were preparing to perform his funeral. His dead body laid on a funeral pyre, and just as it was to be lit, the body stirred and moved. All were surprised and ceased lighting the pyre. With surprise, Pranvallabh got up. A person asked, "How did you come back to life? What happened to you?"

He was eager to tell his story and said, "I went to the divine abode of *Akshardham,* but I came back only to inform all of you that the epidemic disease spread throughout this region is killing many people. If you want to remain safe from this disease, then chant the Swaminarayan mantra with me. By chanting this mantra, you will not meet with death." Then, Pranvallabh himself chanted while clapping and told everyone to repeat after him.

He did chanted for some time, and then said to everyone, "Jai Swaminarayan" and added, "I am now going back to *Akshardham* with Bhagwan Swaminarayan." By saying so, Pranvallabh gently laid down again on his funeral pyre and went to *Akshardham*. Such divine incidents only happen in the Swaminarayan *Sampraday* because Bhagwan Swaminarayan is forever present with His devotees.





## 27. Shri Hari Disappears

Jetalpur is a small town near Ahmedabad. It is a place of pilgrimage because Bhagwan Swaminarayan Himself visited it many times. Bhagwan Swaminarayan had performed grand sacrificial ceremonies and fed Brahmins there on numerous occasions. He also graced the town by giving a boon which said, 'Any person who would die in this village will never have to go to Yampuri (hell).' Bhagwan Swaminarayan showed many miracles in Jetalpur, especially in the grand *Yagna.*

There was a *Brahmin* devotee by the name of Dayaram who resided there. He was very firm in observing *dharma* and offering devotion to God. He desired to have Bhagwan's *darshan.* His desires remained unfulfilled and yet he continued worshipping Bhagwan Swaminarayan. Once, Bhagwan came to Dayaram's home. Maharaj came in divine form riding on Manki. He knocked on the door. Dayaram opened the doors to his surprise he received *darshan* of Shreeji Maharaj. Maharaj had a garland of flowers around his neck and was dressed extravagantly. Dayaram first fed grass to Manki and then invited Maharaj inside. Then, he prepared a wooden seat with a cylindrical pillow and requested Maharaj to sit on it. Bowing to Maharaj with great affection, he prostrated.

Then, he requested, "Maharaj! Please accept my devotion. I have a desire to feed you some food. So, please allow me to prepare *thal* for you. Before Maharaj could say anything, Dayaram again requested, "Maharaj! My sister is in the other room, so if you allow me to call her, then she can also have your *darshan.*"

Maharaj replied, “Dayaram, I came here without inform-ing anyone. So, I do not want you to tell anyone. Moreover, I do not have that much time to stay. I came here while going to Dabhan. I want to take someone to *Akshardham* from that village. So, I cannot stay for long. So, accept this flower garland as my blessing, and quickly call your sister with haste.” In this way, Maharaj put a flower garland around Dayaram’s neck, and Dayaram speedily went to inform his sister to have Maharaj’s *darshan.*

When Dayaram returned with his sister, Maharaj was nowhere to be found. He searched the whole house, but could not find Maharaj. Dayaram told his sister, “Maharaj was sitting here on this wooden cot, he also gave me this flower garland, and I got a chance to feed grass to Manki.” They concluded that Maharaj must have gone to another home to give *darshan.* So, they started inquiring about if Maharaj had come to their neighbors. All of the neighbors told them that, “Maharaj was in Kutch, in the village of Tera. He has not come to our village.” Dayaram then showed the flower garland to them and said, “Look at this flower garland. Maharaj gave this to me today!” He narrated his experience to everyone. Then all the devotees said, “Dayaram! You are the most fortunate amongst all of us because you received the divine *darshan* of Bhagwan Swaminarayan.”





## 28. One Month Countdown!

Another *Brahmin* devotee by the name of Joita Bhagat lived in the village of Jetalpur. He was a very firm devotee of Bhagwan Swaminarayan who had no worldly desires. Throughout his life, he worshipped Bhagwan Swaminarayan with singular devotion.

Maharaj came with his saints to bring Joita Bhagat to His divine abode of *Akshardham* during death. Maharaj gave His divine *darshan* to Joita Bhagat who was thrilled about receiving such divine *darshan* a month earlier than expected. He bowed down to Maharaj and gave Him a nice seat to sit on. Then, he prostrated to Maharaj and requested, “Please give me a chance to cook food for you. Maharaj, please eat my food from my hands.”

Maharaj became pleased and graced him with loving words and said, “Yes! Go ahead and cook. I will eat your food.” Joita Bhagat immediately left and eventually invited Maharaj to the dining hall when everything was ready. He lovingly served food he’d prepared, and Maharaj happily and delightfully accepted it.

Joita Bhagat was doing *darshan* of Maharaj observing His every movement. Maharaj finished His meal and was provided mouth freshener.

Then Maharaj said, “Joita, I want to talk to you about some serious matter. So please, listen attentively. You have only one month remaining until your death. After a month, you will go to take a bath at the well outside of the village and there when you are taking a bath, one side of the well wall collapse

resulting in you falling inside. You will instantly die. However, do not worry. I will be there at that time and will bring you to *Akshardham.* You will not feel any pain at all."

Then He added, "Do not feel grief, continue my bhajan and remembrance. Do not tell anyone. If you want to tell someone, make sure he or she is a firm devotee."

When Maharaj finished, Joita Bhagat said, "Maharaj, my sister is your devotee, and she wishes for your *darshan*. If you want to grace her with your *darshan,* I'll call her." Then, Joita Bhagat went to call his sister; meanwhile Maharaj disappeared.

After a while, Joita Bhagat came back with his sister, but to their surprise, they did not find Maharaj. They found only an empty dish. They felt remorse and wondered why Maharaj did not give *darshan* to them.

Then Joita Bhagat described to his sister, "Maharaj came for me and informed me about my death that will occur after a month." Later, he explained in detail the whole story and also requested not to share this news with anyone.

After a month, Bhagat went to the village well for taking a bath. He was reminded of Maharaj's words but still, without having any fear of death, he went to the well.

There were many people in the well's general vicinity. Some of them fetched water, and others washed their clothes, utensils, cows, and oxen. Joita Bhagat got a chance to take a bath on the other edge of the well. He was fetching water with the remembrance of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. The crowd began to disperse after a while and eventually, all the other people were on the opposite side of the well. Joita Bhagat took a bath while chanting 'Swaminarayan, Swaminarayan...'. Suddenly, the edge collapsed, and Joita Bhagat fell into the well with heavy rocks





falling on top of him. He was seriously injured, and as Maharaj had told him, he died on the spot. Shreeji Maharaj himself brought Joita Bhagat's soul to his divine abode, *Akshardham*. Those who were nearby witnessed this incident. They were graced with the *darshan* of Maharaj bringing Joita Bhagat's soul to *Akshardham.*

# 29. Visible Yet Invisible

There was a small village called Chamara near the bank of the river Mahi. Most of the villagers were devotees of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. There was one devotee by the name of Dayalji, who lived in the village. He was a carpenter. He was very frank and straightforward and did not have any worldly desires and passed his days with the remembrance and chanting of Bhagwan Swaminarayan, even while working. Moreover, he had steadfast faith in the form of Shreeji Maharaj.

When his life was over, near the time of his death, Shreeji Maharaj along with thousands of divine saints came to bring Dayalji's soul to *Akshardham.* When Maharaj and all of the saints entered, the villagers did *darshan*, and everyone headed towards Dayalji's home.

Out of their surprise, there was no one besides Dayalji's relatives there. Dayalji Bhagat was sick in bed. He heard the commotion, so he woke up and did *darshan* of Maharaj and saints. However, his relatives could not see them.

Dayalji Bhagat instructed to provide a nice seat for them. He said to give green grass to the horses, and prepare delicious food so that Maharaj and the saints could partake in it. He was very eager to welcome them. Finally, when no one understood, Dayalji rose up from the bed, bowed to Maharaj and the saints. His relatives thought he became mad as they can't see Maharaj or santo. At the same time, the villagers pointed out that they too saw Maharaj coming towards the home.

Dayalji Bhagat immediately said, "Why are you all talking like that? Maharaj and all the saints are here." Then he spoke again, "I am going with Maharaj", and by saying so, Dayalji soon





after passed away. All of the relatives and villagers were surprised seeing this miracle, and of how Dayalji went to *Akshardham.* They all discussed with each other that, "Such things never happen in *Kaliyug.* It could only happen because of the Supreme Lord Swaminarayan, and because Dayalji was a true devotee of Swaminarayan Bhagwan."

That is why Nishkulanand Swami wrote:

*Mara janne antkale, jarur mare avavu;*
*Birud maru e na badale, te sarve janne janavavu*

(I will come to take my devotees at the end of their life (to *Akshardham*); this is my promise which will never waver.)

All of the relatives and non-devotees accepted that Bhagwan Swaminarayan was the Supreme Godhead and His *satsang* was also true." Then they added, "To die in this way is near impossible for even great yogis." In this way, Maharaj took Dayalji, to *Akshardham.*

## 30. Intense Thirst for Darshan

There was a female devotee of Bhagwan Swaminarayan by the name of Kushalbai. She had an intense desire for doing *darshan* of Shreeji Maharaj. So, she left her village with other devotees to go for Maharaj's *darshan.* During their journey, they had to stop for a night in the village of Dabhasa. She could not bear the separation of Maharaj so much so that she fell unconscious.

In Dabhasa, Kushalbai was nearing her death. Maharaj, knowing His devotee was in trouble with only the desire for His *darshan,* manifested in front of her. The charming beauty of Maharaj's divine form was different and unique from other forms. Moreover, Maharaj was smiling while standing there and lovingly calling, "Kushalbai...Kushalbai..."

By listening to the melodious voice of her beloved Shreeji Maharaj, Kushalbai woke up. Then Maharaj said, "Look, I am here." Kushalbai prayed, "Maharaj! You are the most compassionate, and that is why you have come here to give me *darshan."* Maharaj replied, "I knew you could not survive without my *darshan,* so I came for you." While saying so, Maharaj gave His mala to Kushalbai. The mala was made from sandalwood. Maharaj also gave her a *kanthi.*

*Sadguru* Nishkulanand Swami wrote that he had witnessed this incident by his divine vision.





## 31. Standing on Water

There was a village called Rajula near the district of Bhavnagar. Many devotees of Bhagwan Swaminarayan resided there. Nagdan Soni was a senior and great devotee of Shreeji Maharaj. He had developed an import-export business between Rajula and Mumbai. He had four sons that lived in Mumbai. Making such a journey was compared to traveling to an entirely other country. The easiest way to cross the distance was by ship.

Nagdan Soni was engrossed in his business affairs all day long, yet he made time to worship Bhagwan Swaminarayan daily. His steadfast faith and firm *upasana* were cultivated through the association of saints. He had firm conviction and belief in only the Swaminarayan religion.

Once, he was headed to Mumbai by ship for his business. He went to the port of Shiyalbet to begin his journey for the grand city of Mumbai. The boat held two sailors who knew Nagdan Soni personally through their business travels. After departing from the port, the sailors speedily navigated the boat.

Nagdan Bhagat was about sixty years of age at the time. He did not know how to swim, and he had a hefty body. He sat at the edge of the ship even though he was instructed by the crew not to sit there. However, he indicated that he just wanted to sit for a short time.

After a while, the boat took a sharp turn. In result, Nagdan lost his balance and fell into the ocean. Due to his bulky body, he couldn't swim, and the sailors were busy maintaining the speed and direction of the boat so, they didn't realize Nagdan Soni had fallen into the water. Therefore, they continued on

their journey.

Nagdan Soni was afraid and confused at the same time, thinking of what will happen to him next. So, he started remembering Bhagwan Swaminarayan. He knew that survival in the ocean was slim to none. He prayed, "Maharaj! Please come as soon as possible to take me to *Akshardham.* I do not have any worldly desires remaining. So, please come soon."

Listening to the humble plea of His devotee, Bhagwan Swaminarayan manifested there in the middle of the ocean. Maharaj lifted him from the water to the surface. Within seconds it appeared as if Nagdan Soni was standing on the water. Nagdan was astonished by the miraculous feat. Then, Maharaj said, "Nagdan, do not worry about anything. You won't drown. I am supporting you."

Maharaj inspired the sailors to check for Nagdan Soni. The sailors looked around but could not find him, so they concluded that he had fallen into the ocean. They immediately took a U-turn to rescue Nagdan Soni. The boat quickly stirred back towards him. The sailors used binoculars to search for Nagdan. They spotted him on the surface of the ocean. When the boat came closer, the sailors saw that Nagdan Soni was standing on the water. They couldn't believe what they were witnessing. Finally, the ship reached Nagdan, and they pulled him aboard the ship.

The sailors were astonished and asked, "How were you able to stand on the water?" He replied, "It was Bhagwan Swaminarayan who kept me afloat." The sailors desired to know more about this divine incident. Nagdan Soni narrated the glory and greatness of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. Then He narrated divine episodes from the life of Bhagwan Swami-





narayan, along with His saints and devotees. Then Nagdan Soni explained the importance of Maharaj to them. The sailors listened to Nagdan's narration very attentively, resulting in a desire to have the *darshan* of Bhagwan Swaminarayan.

Soon without knowing where the time had passed, they had reached the great city of Mumbai. The four sons welcomed their father at the port upon his arrival. Their names were Lakhabhai, Alabhai, Bhagabhai, and Hamirbhai. They were genuine devotees of Bhagwan Swaminarayan who followed the commands of God.

Nagdan Soni stayed in Mumbai with his sons for seven days. During his stay, he narrated the incident as to how he fell into the ocean from the boat, and how Maharaj divinely appeared there to save his life. That very night, Nagdan had a dream. In his dream, Shreeji Maharaj came and told him, "If you want to have my *darshan,* come to Bhatvagar within five days." After waking up in the morning, he shared this dream with his four sons.

Nagdan Soni had a grandson by the name of Ramu. He lived in the village of Rajula. Maharaj gave him divine *darshan* and told him the story of Nagdan's rescue. Back in Mumbai, Nagdan Soni finished his work and business and departed for Rajula. He returned with the same boat and same sailors. During the boat ride back, they discussed about the glory, greatness, and powers of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. The sailors became interested about Bhagwan Swaminarayan and his *satsang* fellowship. So, they requested to Nagdan Soni, "Please, arrange our meeting with Bhagwan. We want to become satsangis." Nagdan said, "If you want to meet Bhagwan Swaminarayan, you have to come with me to the village of Bhatvagar." They

agreed.

They reached Bhavnagar, and at the time, Maharaj arrived with many saints and devotees to stay for Dada Khachar's marriage ceremony. Maharaj, santo, and bhakto stayed there for several days. When Nagdan Soni and the sailors arrived at where Maharaj was staying, Maharaj was in assembly, with santo and bhakto.

Maharaj Himself welcomed Nagdan Bhagat with sweet words. Nagdan Soni came close to Maharaj, and bowed down and sat. Then, Maharaj asked what had happened during his journey. Nagdan explained in detail with moist eyes to the assembly the whole incident. Then he said, "Maharaj! You are the most compassionate in this world. You are almighty. If you did not come to my rescue, I would not be alive." While explaining, he broke down into tears. Then he introduced the two sailors to Maharaj. They both came close to Maharaj, bowed down and said, "You are the Lord of Lords. Otherwise, such kind of miracles are not possible in this age of *Kaliyug."* Then, they requested, "Maharaj, please bestow mercy upon us and accept us into your holy fellowship." Seeing their humble request, Shreeji Maharaj initiated them into the *satsang* fellowship.





## 32. Betting on Faith

Nagdan Soni had four sons Lakhabhai, Alabhai, Bhagabhai, and Hamirbhai. All of them followed the rules and regulations of *satsang* and devotedly offered their services to Bhagwan Swaminarayan. Amongst the four brothers, Bhagabhai was very devoted. He worked as a goldsmith and held a strong inclination to remember Bhagwan Swaminarayan. Every day, while working he would recall Bhagwan's beautiful form and the divine actions He had performed.

Once, a man from the Muslim faith visited his shop. His name was Mullaji. He started to talk about his God, Allah. He said to Bhagabhai that, "Your Bhagwan Swaminarayan is not the supreme almighty lord of lords. My Allah is supreme and all-powerful." Bhaga Bhagat observed the man's intention to create a dispute. So, Bhaga Bhagat knew that there was no significance in discussing the matter further; to provoke the conversation from getting out of control, Bhaga Bhagat calmly replied, "You are right. I am wrong."

However, one who decides to establish himself higher than others never stops a dispute. So, Mullaji, remarked with pride, "By saying so you cannot conclude our discussion. For our conversation to end, you have to give me proof of your Bhagwan."

Then, without giving a chance to Bhaga Bhagat, Mullaji proposed, "We both will go to the top of a multi-story building and jump off. If you remain alive without any serious injury, I'll worship Bhagwan Swaminarayan, and if I remain alive without any harm, I'll forcefully convert you into a Muslim."

Mullaji insisted, "We will go to the top of the building." After some time, Mullaji and Bhaga Bhagat both reached the top. First, Mullaji readily jumped off the building. He was seriously injured and had many fractures in his body. He cried loudly with great agony and shouted, "I was wrong. I made a mistake. Bhaga, you do not need to jump. You are a devotee of God. Your Bhagwan Swaminarayan is true, and He is almighty."

The people of the village gathered to watch this incident. They gossiped with one another, "Bhaga Bhagat's Bhagwan Swaminarayan is true, and protected His devotee from serious injury." In this way, Bhagwan Swaminarayan supported his devotees to the most extreme extent.





## 33. Meeting Jhinabhai in Akshardham

Rajabhai was a devotee of Bhagwan Swaminarayan who lived in the city of Bhavnagar. The city was filled with followers of Bhagwan Swaminarayan at that time. A devotee by the name of Rupabhai was a close by neighbor of Rajabhai.

Rajabhai frequently visited the home of Rupabhai. They had a mutual bond with one another through *satsang*. They had similar inclinations of speaking and listening about the glory and greatness of Shreeji Maharaj. So, whenever they met, they would engage themselves in talks regarding Shreeji Maharaj. They had developed a very high spiritual state, where they were able to meditate upon the form of God with little ease.

One day, after engaging in discussion and contemplation on the divine form of Shreeji Maharaj, they went into deep thought regarding the very form of Bhagwan Swaminarayan that resides in *Akshardham.* After sometime, while meditating upon the form of Maharaj, Rajabhai entered into *samadhi.* There, he saw a mass of divine luminous light. Amidst the divine sensational light, he saw the divine form of Shreeji Maharaj. He also had the *darshan* of many divine *mukto,* who were engrossed in the form of Maharaj at the center. Surprisingly he had the *darshan* of Jinabhai of Panchala as well. Rajabhai went to where Maharaj was residing. He bowed down submissively and did the darshan of Maharaj's glorious and captivating form. He could not move. He felt so attracted towards the radiating form; he didn't want to leave the serene environment. So, he stood in front of Shreeji Maharaj, who then remarked, "Rajabhai, now you should return." Rajabhai

pleaded, “Maharaj, please allow me to stay here. I do not want to go back.” Maharaj said, “Rajabhai, you cannot stay here; you must return to your body.” Rajabhai then said, “Maharaj, if it is your wish for me to go back into my body, I’ll return with Jinabhai.” Maharaj clarified, “Rajabhai, Jinabhai cannot come with you. He has already left his mortal body, and I brought him into my divine *Akshardham.”* Maharaj added, “Jinabhai had left his body in my presence on earth. There were many saints and family members of Dharmdev who witnessed him leaving his mortal body and going to *Akshardham.* I then returned with Jinabhai’s soul.”

So, according to Maharaj’s instruction, Rajabhai returned to his body from *samadhi.* When he regained consciousness, he eagerly narrated to Rupabhai what he had experienced in *Akshardham* while in *samadhi.* Rupabhai became ecstatic upon listening to Rajabhai’s experiences. Rajabhai described Jinabhai’s departure to *Akshardham* as well.

Upon understanding the passing of Jinabhai, they became saddened. After four days, the news finally arrived from Panchala regarding Jinabhai’s departure to *Akshardham*. Rajabhai narrated the incident he had experienced during the *samadhi* to others, to help clarify about Jinabhai’s permanent stay in *Akshardham* with Shreeji Maharaj.





## 34. A Voice from the Sky

Punja Dodiya was a devotee who lived in the village of Panvi. Before he joined *satsang,* he had decided to end his life, if he failed to find God. Once, he went to Koliyak beach, where he found a *shivling* in the water. The *shivling* would become submerged when tidal waves would come and then immerge back when the waves would regress. Punja Bhagat went near the *shivling* and started worshiping it. He thought, “I have waited many years without getting *darshan* of God. So, it is better to die than to live without God.” Then, Punja Dodiya grabbed and held on to the *shivling,* hoping that the tidal waves would submerge and kill him.

However, to his surprise, the powerful tidal waves threw him a half-mile down shore. So, again as a second attempt to end his life, he walked towards the powerful tidal waves. He was thrown back to the coast. All of a sudden he heard a divine voice, “God has incarnated, and you will meet His sadhus at your village. Bhagwan Swaminarayan is the supreme lord who has manifested on earth. Go and surrender to him. He will accept you as his devotees.” Listening to such divine utterances, Punja Bhagat departed for his village.

When he reached Panvi, he found Swaminarayan saints. He prostrated before the saints and requested to be initiated into the *satsang* fellowship. Then, he narrated in detail the incident that happened at Koliyak beach. He also explained how the divine voice informed him of their arrival to Panvi, and invited the saints to his home for food.

The saints told him about the glory of Shreeji Maharaj and inspired him to follow the divine path of *satsang.* Punjabhai

became a devotee of Bhagwan Swaminarayan.

Punja Bhagat then went to Gadhada, as per instructed by santo. There, he received *darshan* of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. His inclination of affection for Maharaj gradually increased. Throughout his life, he performed single-minded devotion for Bhagwan Swaminarayan with pure love. When he heard that Bhagwan Swaminarayan had departed to *Akshardham,* Punja Bhagat felt immense separation. He went immediately to Gadhada and met with senior santo. They consoled him. However, due to, his intense affection for Shreeji Maharaj he had a loss of appetite. Instead, continuously cried in the memory of Maharaj. He fasted, for twelve days and performed seva for saints and devotees. On the 13th day of Shreeji Maharaj's departure, he left his physical body and went to *Akshardham.*





## 35. Titaram Bhagat's Divine Exit

There is a village by the name of Naradipur located in northern Gujarat. In this remote village there was only one follower of Bhagwan Swaminarayan living there. The devotee's name was Titaram Bhagat. He was born in the *Brahmin* caste. The villagers always spoke negatively about Titaram Bhagat. They said, "Titaram is performing unique and unparalleled bhakti of a new God. So, his God should come at the time of his death with a celestial *chariot."* They remarked in a fashion to tease Titaram's devotion and faith towards God.

On the other hand, Titaram Bhagat wasn't disturbed on his path of devotion. He worshipped Bhagwan Swaminarayan by following the prescribed commands. He firmly followed the five religious vows of *Satsang.* He chanted the mahamantra 'Swaminarayan' daily.

Those non-believer villagers tried to distract Titaram Bhagat by talking with one another, saying things like, "Titaram is a great devotee of God. So, everyone looks after him. Also, his Bhagwan would come to take him in a divine *chariot.* Everyone, remain alert, for the *darshan* of Swaminarayan." Some would say, "I'll go with Tita by grabbing onto the *chariot*... ha... ha... ha..." In this way, people made fun, teased, and laughed at Him.

Tita Bhagat would endure his critic comments with silence. Moreover, instead of faltering from the righteous path, his devotion strengthened. Tita Bhagat was ridiculed often. He believed it to the ignorance of the villagers. He wished good of that person. Therefore, his heart remained filled with devotion to Bhagwan Swaminarayan.

Many years passed and Tita Bhagat had aged considerably. It was noticeable to everyone. His loyalty and devotion towards *satsang* remained undiminished. One day, he became gravely ill. He remembered Bhagwan Swaminarayan all day.

One day, Shreeji Maharaj desired to bring Tita Bhagat to His divine abode *'Akshardham'.* So, Maharaj came with a celestial *chariot* with numerous saints to Nardipur village. Maharaj and all the saints filled the whole village with their presence. All of those who teased Tita Bhagat were astonished beyond belief. Some saw the chariot flying over their homes, and others witnessed the divine light.

Everyone then understood that Tita Bhagat's, Bhagwan Swaminarayan came to take him to His divine abode. Everyone went to Tita Bhagat's home and saw divine light radiating from within. They saw a swan-shaped chariot with Bhagwan Swaminarayan sitting in it which was surrounded by numerous santo.

Tita Bhagat was overjoyed as he had *darshan* of Shreeji Maharaj. He bowed in reverence and turned to the villagers and said, 'Jay Swaminarayan'. With that, he discarded his physical body and assumed a divine form. The divine soul paid respect to Maharaj and all the santo, and sat in the *chariot*.

People of the village stared at one another dumbfounded. Suddenly, the *chariot* rose and disappeared into the sky. Tita Bhagat ascended to *Akshardham.*

The divine light slowly disappeared. The villagers regretted teasing Tita bhagat, but it was too late to apologize. They felt remorse, "We should be ashamed of ourselves for not recognizing the greatness of Tita Bhagat."





## 36. Firm Conviction

The town of Prantij is located in northern Gujarat. Many devotees of Bhagwan Swaminarayan lived in the village. The reason for increasing *satsang* within Prantij was due to the efforts of Bhagwan Swaminarayan's santo. While staying in the village, saints continuously delivered *satsang*-related discourses and lead people towards righteousness. The saints preached to others without any prejudice, jealousy, greed, or self-interest. In result, the words of the saints touched the hearts of people.

Every evening, many came to listen to their talks. The villagers worked all day and at times became exhausted. But surprisingly, by listening to the divine discourses of the santo, all of their fatigue would be relieved. Many became satsangi of Bhagwan Swaminarayan.

There was one particular aspirant whose name was Kanji Kansara. Before he joined *satsang,* he followed the beliefs of the Kabir. However, he saw the vast difference between the two faiths. In the Kabir beliefs drinking alcohol, eating meat, and even adultery was allowed. Whereas, Swaminarayan strictly prohibited such kinds of acts. Kanji was a spiritual aspirant so, he decided to join satsang and discard the Kabir sect.

Others from the Kabir sect tried to persuade Kanji Bhagat to remain in their sect. However, Kanji said, "I am in the right place. I do not want to engage in your false beliefs." They became angry and said, "Why have you left the Kabir *sampraday?* What's wrong with it? And what did you see

better in Swaminarayan *sampraday?"* In this manner, they attempted to take Kanji into their fold but failed to do so. So, they thought of a different method to convince Kanji. They told him, "If your Bhagwan Swaminarayan is true, and if your *satsang* is true, then give us proof." Before Kanji Bhagat could reply, they pushed him and said, "If you hold a red-hot iron ball in your hands, and nothing happens to your hands then we will believe that you and your Bhagwan Swaminarayan are true."

Again, before Kanji Bhagat could respond, they brought a red-hot iron ball and asked him to hold it. Kanji Bhagat remembered his beloved Bhagwan Swaminarayan and prayed with a pure heart, "Oh Maharaj! This is a time of difficulty. Only you can save me in this situation." After praying, he took the red-hot iron ball in his hands. He held it for some time and then put it down. After observing, surprisingly his hands were completely unharmed. "Look at my palms. Nothing has happened to me. Bhagwan Swaminarayan has done this miracle. Now, believe that my Bhagwan is true."





## 37. Jamunabai's Wish

There was a village by the name of Vaso in the region of Charotar where a devotee named Dadabhai lived. He was a *Brahmin* and had a daughter named Jamuna. She was a devotee by birth, and because of Bhagwan Swaminarayan's grace, she had attained the ability to go into *samadhi.* So, she was able to go to *Akshardham* at her will.

She had received the ability to go into *samadhi* during the Dabhan Vishnuyag. In V.S. 1866, Shri Hari was performing a grand vishnuyag in Dabhan. At the time, Jamunabai along with her brother Ishwar, visited that grand celebration. However, due to the immense amount of public, she was unable to have the *darshan* of Maharaj closely. So, she stayed in her room and meditated upon Shri Hari. Due to her devotion, Maharaj granted her the ability to go into *samadhi.*

One time, Jamunabai went to meet Maharaj via *samadhi.* She did *darshan* of Maharaj and spoke to him as well. Shreeji Maharaj talked on many religious sermons, and she not only listened but engrained His words in her heart. When she realized that Maharaj was in a pleasant mood, she requested with folded hands., "Oh Maharaj! You are the most compassionate! Please grace me with a piece of cloth as a perfect memory."

At that time, Maharaj was taking a bath. Afterward, He dried His body with a towel and changed clothes. Then, He gave that towel to Jamunabai as per her request.

Then Maharaj instructed her to head back to her home. Obeying Maharaj's instructions, Jamunabai returned to consciousness with the gift given by Maharaj. Astonishingly, the towel given by Maharaj was in her hands after she came back from *samadhi.*

## 38. Samadhi to Children

There was a village named Changa, where a devotee by the name of Nathu Bhatt lived. His family members and relatives were devotees of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. In his entire family, all the children engaged themselves in the devotion of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. They had a natural dislike to play with other kids.

Moreover, all of Nathu Bhatt's children were graced with the capability to go into *samadhi* as per their wish. So, every day, the children meditated on the divine form of Bhagwan Swaminarayan and enjoyed the eternal bliss of *Akshardham.*

After some time, Maharaj gave them *prasad* of *penda*, *patasa,* and *sakar*. Also, He gave them a band of flower to tie around their wrist, along with a garland of flowers and rose bunches. After providing this prasadi, Maharaj sent all of them back. The children returned from *samadhi* and regained consciousness.

Amazingly, upon waking from *samadhi,* they saw all the items given by Maharaj in *Akshardham.* Then they distributed all of the *prasad* amongst the devotees and family members. Those who witnessed the event were much pleased and started telling others about the glory of Bhagwan Swaminarayan.





## 39. Vasandas the Cobra

Vasandas Patel was a farmer by occupation and lived in the village of Changa. He was engrossed with his farm work, so he had little to no time to engage in devotional activities. Due to the lack of *satsang,* Vasandas was overwhelmed by his vices to the point where they became uncontrollable. He tended to become angry at everyone. Due to this very factor, mostly all of the villagers were frightened by him. At the time of his death, he held an intense desire for his farm to stay adequately maintained and to keep it only under his family name. He died with such kinds of desires. In result, he received the birth of a black cobra. Moreover, that cobra lived in that very farm.

The cobra would guard the farm with great vigilance. Even if an innocent animal mistakenly entered the farm's premises, the cobra would bite and kill it on the spot. If any human besides his former family members tried to enter the field, they would meet with the same fate.

Once, Shreeji Maharaj along with many saints and devotees came to the village and stayed for a night. Early in the morning, Shreeji Maharaj went to the farm for taking his morning bath. Maharaj sat under a small creek to clean His teeth. The cobra came to the creek to observe who was there. Immediately having the *darshan* of Bhagwan Swaminarayan, he realized that "It is my great fortune to have the *darshan* of God Himself." So, it decided, "I received the *darshan* of Bhagwan so from today, I will take an oath not to kill any living being. Nor will I become angry towards anyone."

Since this occurrence, the villagers found out how the cobra had changed his vicious nature, so they started to

torment it. One day, Vasandas' grandson found the cobra in the farm. He didn't know that it was his grandfather in that form. So, he hit it with a stump, and it immediately bit him, and on doing so, Vasandas entered the body of his grandson and spoke out, "Why are you hitting me without any reason? I have changed my ways, for the better due to the grace of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. Every day, I remember the darshan of Maharaj and santo. At the end of my life, Maharaj Himself will come to take me to His divine abode."

When the villagers and Vasandas' family members listened to the story, they all realized the glory of Shreeji Maharaj as the Supreme Lord. When the cobra died, Maharaj Himself came to bring Vasandas' soul to *Akshardham.*





## 40. Sharing is Caring

There was a female devotee whose name was Hetbai, who lived in the village of Piplav. She often went into *samadhi.* She went to *Akshardham* every day to have the *darshan* of Shreeji Maharaj.

Amazingly, when she sat for meditation, she held nothing in her hands, and when she came out of samadhi and open her eyes, she would find *sakar* given to her by Maharaj in *Akshardham.*

Not only Hetbai but whoever witnessed this phenomenon, realized the glory of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. Hetbai always distributed *sakar* to all of the devotees. The devotees said, "Such kind of miraculous incident has never occurred before. Moreover, Bhagwan Swaminarayan has a compassionate nature and grants divine power to His devotees according to their capabaility."

There are thousands of miracles which have happened to devotees. No one can write or narrate all of those incidences because, where Bhagwan Swaminarayan is divinely present, nothing is impossible.

## 41. 1 Month to Go!

Rajpur is a small village located in northern Gujarat which was populated with the followers of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. There was a devotee by the name of Jekarna who lived in the village with his family. All of his family members were firm believers of Shreeji Maharaj.

Once, Maharaj divinely came and informed Jekarna of his death. Maharaj said, "Jekarna, exactly after twelve months from today, you will meet your death. So, if you have any desires, fulfill them within the upcoming twelve months." Jekarna Bhagat held no worldly desires in his mind. However, he became more conscious of *satsang.* He increased his devotion and utilized most of his time in the worship of God. Slowly, time started to pass and the day came closer.

When there was only one month remaining, Maharaj divinely appeared to remind Jekarna about his death. Maharaj said, "Jekarna, you only have one month remaining before your death. Afterward, I will come to take you to my divine abode, *Akshardham.*" By saying this, Maharaj disappeared.

Jekarna Bhagat shared his divine experience of how he had the *darshan* of Maharaj with other satsangis. Then he said, "I only have one month remaining before my death. So, I desire to construct a *mandir* so everyone can have a place to worship God. Also, saints will have a place to stay when they come to visit our village. If a *mandir* is built, followers will greatly benefit by engaging in sant samagam. So, I wish to start the work from tomorrow onwards." The devotees requested, "Jekarna Bhagat, please do not tell anyone your





death will occur in one month. We will begin construction from tomorrow and will complete the work within a month. Please do not worry; we will fulfill your wish."

Within just a couple of weeks, the *mandir* was completed. A day before his death, Jekarna Bhagat told his wife, "I will go to *Akshardham* tomorrow. So, I would like you to go to *Akshardham* today." Both Jekarna and his wife possessed a very high spiritual state. Due to this factor by the grace of Maharaj, they were able to release themselves from the human body by their own will.

Jekarna's wife sat in deep meditation, and within a few hours, Shreeji Maharaj came and took her soul to His divine abode. Jekarna performed the final ritual and funeral ceremony of his wife with other satsangi bhakto. Then he returned home and addressed to all the devotees, "My wife has reached *Akshardham* due to the grace of Shreeji Maharaj. Now, Maharaj and many saints have come with a celestial chariot to take me to *Akshardham.*" He added, "If anyone wants to ask me anything, please do so, and I'll ask Maharaj and let you know what he says. I am also taking my son with me there as well."

No one had any questions so; finally, Jekarna Bhagat went to *Akshardham* with his son. Lastly, he remarked, "Bhagwan Swaminarayan is the Supreme Lord, and by accepting His refuge, all of your sins will be burned to ashes." Then he said, "Jay Swaminarayan" to all, closed his eyes, went to *Akshardham* with Shreeji Maharaj and many saints, within a divine celestial chariot in the presence of many devotees.

# 42. Not Death, but Liberation

There was a village named Por situated in northern Gujarat. Many pious devotees of Bhagwan Swaminarayan lived in the village. Jatanbai was a female devotee who observed the niyams of a *sankhya yogi* from the village. She lived alone and passed her time by performing devotion. She cultivated an inclination to perform meditation of the divine form of Shreeji Maharaj. So, most of the time, after finishing her duties, she would meditate.

She didn't have any worldly desires in her mind. After receiving the divine *satsang* fellowship, she developed steadfast faith in Shreeji Maharaj. Her *satsang* became so firm that at the end of her life, Maharaj would have to come to take her to *Akshardham.* Without any worldly desires, she engaged more and more in *satsang.* Due to her steadfast faith, Bhagwan Swaminarayan came at the end of her life to bring her to *Akshardham.* Maharaj came there in divine form along with thousands of saints and celestial chariots.

Upon receiving the *darshan* of Shreeji Maharaj, she became elated and humbly performed *panchang pranam.* She invited Maharaj to her room and sat him on a beautiful chair. Maharaj said, "Jatanbai, I have come to take you to my divine abode, *Akshardham.* Come, sit inside the chariot."

Jatanbai was eagerly ready to go with Maharaj. But, at the time, the region was affected by an epidemic. The cholera disease had affected the village of Por and surrounding villages.





Thousands of people were dying due to the lack of medical attention. Therefore, the saints who came with Maharaj requested Maharaj not to take Jatanbai's soul yet.

Maharaj inquired, "Why not?", The saints replied, "Maharaj, this is not a proper time to take any devotees to *Akshardham.* Because currently, the area is infected by an epidemic and thousands of people are dying every day. So, if you take Jatanbai to *Akshardham,* all of the villagers would believe she died because of Cholera. They would think, "If she is a devotee of Bhagwan Swaminarayan, why did He not come to rescue her. So, please come in the future after the epidemic to take her."

Shreeji Maharaj considered the saints' request to be valid, so they returned to *Akshardham.* All of the villagers witnessed the incident. They did not understand it but they watched the chariots head back into the sky. Everyone realized the glory of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. When they met Jatanbai, she narrated what had happened. After this incident, all of the villagers spoke with one another regarding the supremacy of Bhagwan Swaminarayan.

# 43. Wait! Wait! - My Meal is Ready for You

There is a village by the name of Umreth in the charotar region of Gujarat. Due to the company of Gopalanand Swami and Nityanand Swami many *Brahmin* families accepted the fellowship of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. So, during the time of Bhagwan Swaminarayan, many *Brahmin* scholars became devotees. Also, many females of the village started to worship Bhagwan Swaminarayan as well.

Once, Shreeji Maharaj arrived in the village with many saints and devotees. Maharaj stayed there for seven days. He would preach to all the villagers during the evening assembly.

Jamunabai and other female devotees did the *darshan* of Maharaj and listened to his divine discourses. When Maharaj departed for the nearby village of Pansora, she remembered that she had forgotten to feed Maharaj. In result, she lamented very much and lost consciousness. Shreeji Maharaj was in Pansora, giving *darshan* to devotees and villagers.

However, by His omniscient power, Maharaj also longed for meeting His beloved devotee. So, Shreeji Maharaj continued traveling and assumed another divine form and manifested in front of Jamunabai in Umreth. At the time, Jamunabai was unconscious. Upon waking, she found her beloved Shreeji Maharaj standing in front of her eyes. She received spiritual and physical energy merely by having Maharaj's *darshan.*

Maharaj lovingly called her, "Jamuna, look at me. I returned to eat your food. So, cook what you want to feed me. I'll take today's dinner in your company."

Jamunabai got up and began to prepare food for Maharaj. When she finished cooking, Maharaj came to take dinner. He





ate everything she offered with great affection. While eating Maharaj said, "Jamuna, today, I came here specially to eat food made by your hands." She replied, "Maharaj! For me, you are my one and only. I do not have affection for anyone else. So, I desired to cook food for you. It is due to your mercy upon me that you came to fulfill my wish." While saying this, Jamunabai again served Maharaj. Maharaj ate half and gave the remaining to her as *prasad.*

Thus, Shreeji Maharaj came in divine form to accept his devotee's devotion. The villagers and devotees realized that Jamunabai was a great devotee of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. Also, they realized the supremacy of Bhagwan Swaminarayan who manifested and graced her with His *darshan."*

# 44. Returning from Akshardham

There was a devotee named Prabhudas, who lived in the village of Moraj located in Northern Gujarat. He performed the worship of Bhagwan Swaminarayan every day. As a satsangi, he abided by all *satsang*-related rules. He worshiped God by discarding inner enemies such as lust, anger, avarice, jealousy, etc. He never wished bad for anyone and was only concerned with the form of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. Even though Prabhudas was engaged in worldly relations, he remained aloof from them. He was just attached to the form of God. No worldly pleasures or people could bind him.

At the end of his life, Maharaj Himself came to bring Prabhudas to His *Akshardham.* At that time, Prabhudas received *darshan* of many divine muktos in the mass of divine light. The divine light was cool and pleasant. Bhagwan Swaminarayan was situated in the middle of the divine light.

Prabhudas prostrated before Maharaj again and again. He was extremely excited and experienced great joy with such divine *darshan* of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. He wanted to stay with Maharaj forever. Shri Hari told him, "We have come to bring you with us to our divine abode *Akshardham.* So, get ready." Prabhudas replied, "Maharaj! Your mercy upon this meek soul is boundless. I am ready to go with you."

Prabhudas desired to stay in *Akshardham* permanently but soon after Maharaj said, "Prabhudas! Go back to your home. I'll come later to bring you back to my divine abode."

Even though Prabhudas did not want to go back, but due to Maharaj's wish, he returned. Upon returning, his relatives were preparing for his cremation ceremony. They were all surprised





to see him open his eyes and rise from the funeral pyre. Some of them ran away believing that a ghost had entered inside of him. The satsangis presently there asked Prabhudas, "How did you return from death?" Prabhudas explained his experience in *Akshardham.*

Upon listening the devotees commented, "Prabhudas is a great devotee and fortunate to have *darshan* of Shreeji Maharaj and his divine *mukto* in *Akshardham."*

## 45. Maharaj Everywhere

Avalbai of the village Gana was not originally a devotee of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. She had heard the glory of Bhagwan Swaminarayan through the company of other devotees. However, she had not realized Bhagwan Swaminarayan as the Supreme Lord of Lords. Slowly through their association, her desire to have the *darshan* of Maharaj's form increased.

Once, Shreeji Maharaj arrived at the village of Gana with saints and devotees. Avalbai seized the opportunity and went for *darshan* of Maharaj. She performed *darshan* with great concentration.

As a result, when she returned, she could not forget the form of Shreeji Maharaj. Wherever she cast her eyes, she saw the manifest form of Bhagwan Swaminarayan.

Moreover, Maharaj's form remained with her while she stood, sat, slept, ate, and drank. She developed firm faith in Maharaj, and her ultimate liberation was confirmed.

Gradually, she experienced more divinity, day by day feeling that Maharaj was speaking through her. When looking at something or someone, Avalbai experienced that Maharaj Himself was looking through her eyes. Sometimes, she felt that Bhagwan listened through her. The divine experience lasted for many days.

However, she began to share her experience with others. She narrated her divinity with devotees and non-devotees. Then, Shreeji Maharaj's form disappeared from Avalbai's vision. When she listened to the greatness and importance of Bhagwan's form, she lamented and grieved for losing the constant *darshan* of His form. Then, she understood the glory of Maharaj as well as the rarity of such divine *darshan* of Bhagwan Swaminarayan.





## 46. I am Sahajanand

There was a village by the name of Pij. Avalbai was a senior and steadfast devotee who lived in the village. She had an inclination of meditation. Avalbai followed the vow of *Sankhya Yog*. Without engaging in social or worldly activities, she preferred to join in devotion and meditation of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. Meditating upon the divine form of Maharaj became oxygen for her.

Once, while meditating upon the form of God, she forgot her body consciousness. She wasn't even aware of where she was and forgot everything besides the form of her beloved Maharaj. She was engrossed so much so that Maharaj started speaking through her. So, Avalbai said to other devotees to worship her. Moreover, she said, "If anyone wants to ask me anything, please ask." She added, "I am Sahajanand Swami, the all-knower. I know everything and everyone's thoughts." By saying so, she began to disclose their thoughts.

Then, the devotees began to worship her, understanding her to be a divine soul. They gave her a higher seat and sat before her. On the fourth day Avalbai surprisingly asked, "Why are you sitting in front of me? And why have you prepared this higher seat for me? I am not God. I am a devotee of Bhagwan Swaminarayan." By saying so, she bowed down to everyone, and she sat with them as an ordinary devotee, discarding the higher seat.

Such greatness and oneness with God were attained by worshipping and meditating on the form of Bhagwan Swaminarayan because He truly is the Supreme Almighty.

# 47. The Wonderous Gopalanand Swami

There was a very beautiful village by the name of Todala, situated near the town of Idar. Many *Brahmin* families lived in this village along with others. There was a pious *Brahmin* family of Motiram Thakar, living with his wife Kushala Devi. The senior most *mukt* from *Akshardham* took birth to the religious family on the auspicious day of October 17, 1781 (V.S. 1837). The child was virtuous from birth. Motiram and Kushala Devi named their newborn baby Khushal, as everyone experienced eternal happiness merely by his birth. Gradually, Khushal Bhatt grew up with the good and guiding care of Motiram and Kushala Devi. He descended from *Akshardham* and so was a master of *Ashtang-Yog* by birth. He looked like one who had completed all spiritual practices and attained perfection.

Moreover, he had a natural dislike for all kinds of worldly pleasures. He always tried to shun all of his desires and also frequently observed various types of penance, even though he was complete, only to please God.

From childhood, Khushal didn't like the way of worldly life. So, he changed his schedule and engaged more and more in devotional activities. While doing devotion and worship of God, once, Khushal Bhatt became absorbed in God's form with intense love and because of him merging into the form of Maharaj, a mass of light illuminated from his body. The mass of divine light spread through the sky, brighter than million suns.

Everyone was astonished on seeing the divine light, and suddenly, they heard three loud booming sounds. People of the village were frightened at first and feared for their life. They figured that the frightening sound was the sound of the final





destruction of the Earth. The divine light and sound traveled twenty miles far.

After a few minutes, the mass of divine light merged back into Khushal Bhatt's body. So, everyone became free from the fear of death. They felt Khushal Bhatt's divinity and greatness when they inquired about the divine light. Khushal Bhatt explained to them that the mass of divine light was originally from the form of Maharaj. All of the villagers understood the greatness of Khushal Bhatt and felt peace.

Another time while worshipping God, Khushal Bhatt forgot his self, i.e., body consciousness. So, he experienced and attained a divine vision. Due to the transcendental vision, he had darshan of the Supreme Lord in *Akshardham.* He received *darshan* of God during the evening time. There was a divine light that spread throughout the village. Those who had witnessed this celestial mass of light became pure by discarding the ignorance of their minds. However, Khushal Bhatt firmly believed that whatever happened was truly miraculous, and it was all through the grace of the Supreme God.

After that incident, Khushal Bhatt received magical divine powers. The people of the surrounding areas knew about Khushal Bhatt's greatness. So, everyone considered him a master yogi who had achieved divine powers.

At one time, there was no rain for many months, and due to it, there was a shortage of water, grass, and grains. So, the people of the region suffered from a drought. Even animals wandered here and there for grass and water. The villagers then came to Khushal Bhatt, and while folding their hands, they prayed to him for rainfall. They requested, "This is a time of drought, and without water, all living creatures will suffer. If you

do something and it rains, we will return to our homes. Please take pity upon us your mighty. Please, bring rain." By listening to their request, Khushal Bhatt prayed to Maharaj. Immediately, the rain began to fall. The heavy rain lasted non-stop for three days.

On the fourth day, the villagers again came to Khushal Bhatt and bowed down to him. They said, "You are great and compassionate. You have direct contact with the Supreme Lord, and due to your prayer, it rained."

## The First Meeting

As a scholar, Khushal Bhatt started to teach the language of Sanskrit to kids. Many *Brahmin* kids came to learn from Khushal in Todala. Khushal Bhatt explained them for a particular time and then engaged them in the worship of God.

Due to the grace of Khushal Bhatt, all of the kids achieved perfection in meditation, and they even attained the state of *samadhi.* They would narrate to others upon returning from *samadhi* what they had experienced. Everyone was surprised to hear such divine experiences from such the mouths of young kids. *Samadhi* is a tough feat to achieve even for yogis, yet by the grace of Khushal Bhatt they experienced it with little ease.

Once, Khushal Bhatt asked one of the kids to enter *samadhi* and to see where Maharaj was. The boy immediately replied, "Maharaj is coming to guide you along your way. He will assume the form of a *Brahmin."*

Later, when Maharaj arrived in Todala, Khushal Bhatt renounced his home and joined with Maharaj, who was in the form of a *Brahmin*. Both Maharaj and Khushal Bhatt traveled to the village of Jetalpur. When they reached Jetalpur, Maharaj in the form of the *Brahmin* suddenly disappeared pointing to the





place where Maharaj was staying.

Khushal Bhatt had the *darshan* of Maharaj and then narrated how he reached Jetalpur from Todala. Maharaj listened to the talks of Khushal Bhatt, and then disclosed the fact that the *Brahmin* was none other than Himself. He gave hints of their journey and said, "You are blessed, as you received such a miraculous experience."

## Sant Jeme Te Bhedo Hu Jamo Re

On one occasion, Khushal Bhatt went to the city of Vadodara. After Muktanand Swami's victory over the envious scholars, *satsang* quickly spread in the city. Many other scholars like Shobharam Shastri, Krushnaram Shastri, etc., became satsangis of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. Also, many *brahmins* accepted the refuge of Bhagwan Swaminarayan, alongside their families. Amongst them, Sadashiv was a very staunch follower of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. He always invited Khushal Bhatt for dinner at his home. He said, "I have enough money for you to come and take a meal at my home. So please come every day; you are most welcome."

Accepting the invitation, Khushal Bhatt went to Sadashiv's home and surprisingly, Maharaj was also divinely present there. Only Sadashiv and his wife could see Maharaj. Sadashiv bowed down to Maharaj and then prepared delicious food. Then, he offered it to Maharaj. Maharaj ate all the food they provided. Only Sadashiv and his wife could witness this event. They observed how the glass of water became empty. When Maharaj finished his meal and was eating *mukhvas,* others could see that it has lessened. They even witnessed the half-eaten betel nut given by Maharaj, but could not see Him.

Such incidences occurred for a month. Every day, when Khushal Bhatt ate his food, Maharaj also ate with him. In this

way, such divinity happened due to Khushal Bhatt's immense love for Bhagwan Swaminarayan.

Due to his extreme detachment from worldly activities, and his intense desire to become a saint, Maharaj gave Khushal Bhatt *diksha* (initiation) and made him a *sadhu.* He was given the name Gopalanand Swami. He was appointed as a senior *sadguru* by Bhagwan Swaminarayan due to his noble saintly qualities, which he'd cultivated by the company of Muktanand Swami.

By the instructions of Maharaj, Gopalanand Swami traveled to different towns and villages for the benefit of spiritual aspirants. He provided true guidance to such seekers and helped them to attain ultimate liberation.

On one occasion, Gopalanand Swami arrived at the city of Vadodara along with a group of saints. Devotees came from far for swami's *darshan.* They bowed down to Swami and prostrated. Everyone was thrilled to have the company of swami. They joyfully organized the celebration of *Janmashtmi.* They requested Gopalanand Swami to stay for the upcoming festival. Swami accepted their request and blessed them by saying, "Maharaj will do according to your wishes during the celebration."

On the day of *Janmashtmi,* the saints and devotees performed a fast. At night, devotees had prepared a *hindola* (decorative swing) for God, according to the proper customs and traditions. At the time of *arti* and celebration of the birthday of God, devotees, and non-devotees received *darshan* of Bhagwan Swaminarayan on the swing. He was seated, giving a smile to everyone. On one hand, he held the supportive rope of the swing and with his left hand, he gave blessings. Everyone experienced divine bliss upon having the *darshan* of Maharaj.





They all expressed the joy of receiving such divine *darshan* of Bhagwan Swaminarayan.

After several hours, Maharaj disappeared, and then everyone realized that they had received divine *darshan* of Maharaj only due to Gopalanand Swami.

## Making it Rain

Once, there was a drought in the city of Vadodara. There was no rain for several months. In result, drinking water was scarce. Without water, there was no farming, no grains, or vegetables. Therefore, many people died due to the lack of food and water. So, devotees decided to request Gopalanand Swami, as they had experienced Swami's divine power. A group of devotees arrived at where Gopalanand Swami stayed.

After doing *darshan,* they requested to Swami, "Swamiji! Food and water have become scarce. There has been no rain for the last couple of months. So, many people and animals have died. There are no grains available to buy. You are merciful, so please pray to Maharaj on behalf of us for rain. If there will be rain, everyone will be saved."

Gopalanand Swami asked the saints to pray to Maharaj. Within a short period, it began to rain. Everyone became relieved and happy. Even though there was no possibility for rain, it was only due to Gopalanand Swami's power, that this miraculous feat occurred. The rain continued for three days. Everyone expressed feelings of joy with one another. They understood the greatness of Gopalanand Swami and Bhagwan Swaminarayan.

After the rain stopped, they again came to Gopalanand Swami to express their feelings of appreciation. With folded hands, they remarked, "Swami! If you hadn't used your powers, there would be no rain, and we would have died. So,

you are our savior."

Immediately Swami replied:

*Bolya Gopal Swami te pratye, je thayu te Shrijini samarthye;Bija thaki te kai na thay, khalo bhulo fogam fulay.*
(Meaning Below)

Swami replied, "Whatever happened was due to Maharaj's wish. Only Maharaj is the all-doer. If anyone believes something happened due to my powers, one is still in the dark. Therefore, I am only a servant of Bhagwan Swaminarayan; I have done nothing. Shreeji Maharaj is the all-doer, and he has showered us with rain." Gopalanand Swami explained this concept to devotees, and even though he was given tremendous power by Bhagwan Swaminarayan, he remained a humble servant.

*End of Part-1*







# Glossary

A

***Akshardham:*** The highest abode of God where Purushottam Bhagwan Swaminarayan, is seated before divine limitless muktos.

***Arti:*** Hindu religious ritual of worship, a part of puja, in which light (from a flame) is offered to God.

***Ashtang-Yog:*** A system of yoga comprising eight progressive steps; restraint, observance, posture, mastering divine breathing, withdrawal, concentration, meditation, and spiritual trance.

***Atma*:** The purest form of the soul - distinct from the physical, subtle, and causal bodies, or any trace of *maya.*

B

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

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

***Buddha*:** One of 24 avatars of God.

***Bhuva*:** One who knows and practice strange charms and black magic.

***Brahmachari*:** A Brahmin who is initiated as a renunciant in Swaminarayan fellowship. They are bestowed with special responsibilities that are priestly.

***Brahmin*:** An educated and religious scholar who performs rites and rituals, and is assigned other duties involving the worship of God.

***Brahmchorasi*:** A ritual of feeding brahmins within the 84 sub-castes according to their wishes.

C

***Chandan:*** Sandalwood

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

***Chintamani*:** A wish-fulfilling jewel within Hindu tradition, the equivalent of the philosopher's stone in Western alchemy.

D

***Dattatrey*:** One of 24 avatars of God.

***Darbargadh*:** A term for a formal residence belonging to a king, or a ruler. Traditionally with a central courtyard surrounded by rooms with balconies.

***Darshan*:** It means looking at Bhagwan (God) and the *Satpurush* with devotion, admiration, and reverence, internally or externally.

***Deva*:** A demi-god who has powers and responsibilities within the universe, and lives in a different and higher abode than humans.

***Dharma*:** A term used interchangeably to include responsibility, duty, morality, and righteousness relative to morale cause.

***Dhanvantari*:** One of 24 avatars of God.

***Diksha*:** A formal initiation, in the context of the Swaminarayan Sampraday, to where one is brought into the holy fellowship as a renunciant.

***Dhoti***: A garment worn by males. It is typically worn around the waist and passes around the legs.

***Diwan*:** a chief treasury official in a government or kingdom in ancient time.





E

***Ekantik*:** An elevated spiritual state where one possesses the four attributes of *dharma*, bhakti, gnan, and *vairagya*.

***Ekantik Dharma*:** Collective term for *dharma*, gnan, vairagya, and bhakti coupled with the knowledge of Bhagvan's greatness. This will lead a person to become an ekantik bhakta who crosses Bhagwan's maya and attains His dham. Also called bhagvat *dharma*.

G

***Guru-bhakti*:** Having, holding, and expressing devotion for one's guru.

H

***Hari***: Known as one of 24 avatars of God.

***Hans*:** Known as one of 24 avatars of God.

***Hath-Yoga*:** This is an ancient yoga that is indicated to bring peace to one who practices it; it involves a myriad and complex series of breathing and yogic exercises.

***Hindola*:** A festival in the Hindu religion celebrated in which decorative swings are made for Bhagwan to swing in. This festival is a form of devotion to Bhagwan.

***Hayagriv*:** Known as one of 24 avatars of God.

I

***Indriyas*:** 'Senses', through which one can 'know' and perform actions – the organ of which is the physical aspect of the sense, e.g., sight (eyes), hearing (ears), smelling (nose), etc. There are ten in total – the five gnãn-*indriyas* (cognitive senses) and the five karma-*indriyas* (conative senses).

***Ishwar*:** Is comprised of demigods who were involved in the creation, destruction, and sustenance of universes.

**J**

***Janmasthmi*:** A celebration for the birthday of Shri *Krishna*.

***Jiva*:** Refers to the soul that is still bound by *maya*, and undergoes the series of life & death.

**K**

***Kachchha*:** One of 24 avatars of God.

***Kaliyug*:** 'Age of Darkness'. Fourth and present of the four ages that mark the time-scale of the world. Lasting 432,000 human years - it is when purity and righteousness have thoroughly diminished in comparison to what they were in Satya-yug.

***Kalki*:** One of 24 avatars of God.

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

***Kapil*:** One of 24 avatars of God.

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

***Krishna*:** The most historically well-known divine avatar described in ancient scriptures, out of the 24 avatars.

***Kusang*:** Most commonly referred to as 'bad company'; those that deviate from the fellowship and Maharaj's ordained commands.

***Kusangis*:** This refers directly to the individual, one or more, who have deviated from the fellowship, or are otherwise not a part of it, and who spread negativity to other regarding *satsang*.

**M**

***Machchha*:** One of 24 avatars of God.

***Mandir*:** Temple. Sacred Hindu place of worship.

***Matsar*:** Similar to envy. But when mentioned together with





jealousy, taken to mean the inability to tolerate the rise and gain of anyone else – whether it be of a person of equal standing or otherwise.

***Maya*:** Instrument or power of God used as the fundamental 'substance' of creation. By nature, it is composed of the three gunas, is both jad and chaitanya, eternal, nirvishesh, and in its dormant state – before the time of creation – houses all jivas and ishwars, and all elements.

***Mukta (Mukto)*:** A liberated soul. A resident of any abode of God who has been freed from a lower plane of existence to a more spiritually elevated state.

***Mukhvas*:** A mouth freshener commonly consumed after meals.

***Murti*:** Sacred idol of God used to offer worship

**N**

***Narad*:** One of 24 avatars of God.

***Nar-Narayan Dev*:** One of 24 avatars of God who resides in Badrikashram.

***Narayan*:** One of 24 avatars of God.

***Nawab*:** A ruler of the Muslim descent in ancient Indian states.

***Niravaran Drashti*:** The ability to see or go anywhere bypassing all hindrance.

***Nrusinh*:** One of 24 avatars of God.

**P**

***Padharmani*:** The visit of a pious saints in homes of householders.

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

***Panchang Pranam*:** A ritual where female devotees offer their respects as a symbol of worship, gratitude, and divine respect

to God.

**Paramhansas:** 'Supreme swan'. A male sãdhu of the highest order, characterized by his ability to discriminate between sat and asat – just as swans were traditionally considered to be able to distinguish between milk mixed with water.

***Parashurama*:** One of 24 avatars of God.

***Patasa*:** A sweet served on happy occasions; a kind of sugar drop.

***Penda*:** A famous sweet containing milk, sugar, cardamom seeds, saffron, and pistachio nuts, served in a small, pressed, circular form.

***Prabhatiyas*:** Hymns which are sung in the morning hours to wake up God.

***Pradakshina*:** Walking clock-wise around the idol or temple of God.

***Prasad*:** Food that has been blessed and sanctified after offering it to Bhagwan.

***Pruthvi*:** Earth' or solid matter. One of the five gross elements, from which the sthul body of Virãt-Purush, i.e., the physical world, is formed. By nature, it supports all jivas, and in the form of a celestial body, is their place of residence.

**R**

***Rajipo*:** A holy and divine series of blessings from God, his *satpurush*, saints, and devotees.

***Ram*:** One of 24 avatars of God.

***Rushabhdev*:** One of 24 avatars of God.

**S**

***Sadguru*:** Used interchangeably with '*Satpurush*', both referring to the 'True Guru'.





***Sadhu*:** A renunciant devotee who is initiated such under the commands of the *satpurush*.

***Sakar*:** Crystal sugar.

***Samadhi*:** A transcendental state bestowed by Swaminarayan Bhagwan, though is typically only achievable by mastering *Ashtang-Yoga* at its last and final step. It is constituted with a divine experience with God.

***Sampraday*:** Another term is referring to the Holy Fellowship.

***Sankadik*:** One of 24 avatars of God.

***Sanskars*:** Impression. Refers to the pleasant and unpleasant impression of a karma performed earlier in the present life or in a previous life. It is imprinted and accumulated in the kãran body. This impression in turn influences actions and achievements in the present and/or later lives.

***Sankhya Yog*:** This refers to a renunciant committed to the ways of the Holy Fellowship (rather than living a worldly life). Most frequently, the term 'sankhya yogis' is used to denote female renunciants.

***Satpurush*:** An alternate term used for the 'True Guru,' who is considered a living embodiment of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. God is manifest within the True Guru. The *Satpurush* is considered to be the gateway for achieving liberation from the cycle of life and death.

***Satsang*:** Company of those who practice the teachings within the Holy Fellowship, while observing all rites, rituals, and religious vows associated with it.

***Shivling*:** A short cylindrical pillar-like symbol of Shiva, made of stone, worshipped as a form of Shiva.

***Shraddha*:** A virtue that incorporates the virtues of faith, trust, hope, patience, persistence, and zeal.

**T**

***Thal*:** Food devotionally offered to Bhagwan as a form of bhakti, which in turn blesses the food – turning it into prasad.

***Til*:** A small mole (beauty spot).

***Tilak*:** A marking of one's devotion and allegiance to Bhagwan Swaminarayan, notably worn on the forehead in the form of a U-shaped mark.

***Trishul*:** A short-handled weapon which may be mounted on a staff.

***Tutiyu*:** A plague-like condition which is contagious (in the story from this particular text, referred to in a state similar to a ghost that can enter others).

**U**

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

**V**

***Varah*:** One of 24 avatars of God.

***Vairagya*:** Detachment from worldly pleasures.

***Vartman*:** Ritual to take an oath to follow 5 religious vows in Swaminarayan *Sampraday*.

***Vaman*:** One of 24 avatars of God.

***Vishnuyag*:** A *Yagna* performed to seek the blessings of Vishnu, and Bhagvan.

***Viman*:** A celestial vehicle, a celestial c*hari*ot.

***Vrutti*:** The 'focus' of the *jiva*'s attention, through which the *jiva* experiences the physical and material world around it.

***Vyas*:** One of 24 avatars of God.

**Y**

***Yagna*:** A general term for a sacrifice or ceremonial worship conducted to earn positive tidings and blessings of the Gods.





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**Vairagyamurti**
**Sadguru Shri Nishkulanand Swami**

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

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

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