



Outreach



A publication by the Samarvay Group,
a youth group inspired by Yogi Divine Society

Volume 6 | Edition 7

A Glimpse of a Divine Personality

The rich Hindu heritage is filled with many auspicious festivals and celebrations. One of the most sacred and divine occasions celebrated by millions around the world is the holy day of Ramnavmi, which marks the birth of Bhagwan Ram and Bhagwan Swaminarayan.

In each Yug (era), God sends an avatar purush (incarnate form of God) on this earth to uplift mankind. In Treta-Yug, Bhagwan Ram, the son of King Dashrath and Queen Kaushalya, was born on this very day of Ramnavmi in the kingdom of Ayodhya. His life right from childhood was filled with virtues and greatness.

He demonstrated that it is possible to live an ideal life with utmost respect, humility, ethics, and discipline. Despite being a prince, He left all His luxuries and chose the path of hardship in order to help mankind walk on the path of righteousness.

However, when Bhagwan Ram left Earth, the once peaceful and prosperous society began to crumble. Morality was lost and the great traditions of Hindu Dharma were rapidly crumbling. In this new era, called Kali-Yug (the current era), there was a dire need for God himself to descend on Earth and instill moral values, peace, and happiness.

For this reason, on the day of Ramnavmi, April

3rd, 1781, the supreme Bhagwan Swaminarayan, descended on this Earth in human form and graced mankind with His divine presence. He was born at 10:10 pm in the rural town of Chhapaiya, located in northern India. Even as a child, He radiated of divinity.

At the tender age of 11, He left His home and started a remarkable journey on foot. He walked for over seven years and nearly 8,000 miles, inspiring and guiding countless people along the way. He eventually settled in the pious land of Gujarat and accepted Ramanand Swami as His guru.

Soon after, Ramanand Swami initiated Bhagwan Swaminarayan and appointed Him as the head of the satsang fellowship. This marked the beginning of the Swaminarayan Sampraday.

Over the years, Bhagwan Swaminarayan uplifted and transformed millions of lives, elevating them from mere humans into true children of God. He guided them on the path of Ekantik Dharma. Through His divine personality, He conquered the hearts and minds of scholars. Through his compassion, He sowed seeds of bhakti (devotion), even in the hearts of the cruelest of people.

Even though there were over 2 million devotees, each person had a unique connection

to Bhagwan Swaminarayan. Some were inspired by His humility, some by His divinity, and some because they realized His true supremacy. As witnessed in numerous instances, His life was solely for the service and upliftment of His devotees.

Before He departed from this Earth at the age of 49, Bhagwan Swaminarayan bestowed mankind with three unique gifts. The first was a personally written scripture called the *Shikshapatri*, which provides 212 short guidelines on how one can live a successful life, both socially and spiritually. The second was the *Vachanamrut*, a collection of His discourses written verbatim. It is the most sacred and fundamental scripture that is relevant and practical even today. As His third gift, Bhagwan Swaminarayan proclaimed, "For as long as the sun and the moon remain in the sky, I will continue to remain on this Earth through a God realized Saint."

Today, that saint is Guruhari Hariprasad Swami Maharaj – the fifth spiritual successor of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. Under Swamiji's guidance, countless devotees (specifically youths) in India and abroad are living positive vice-free, and spiritual lives in line with the edicts of Hindu Dharma.



Student: I failed the safety and health course today.

Parent: How did you manage that?

Student: The question was, "In the event of a fire, what steps do you take?"

Parent: And...?

Student: Apparently, "Big Steps" was the wrong answer.

ATMIYA YUVA MAHOTSAV

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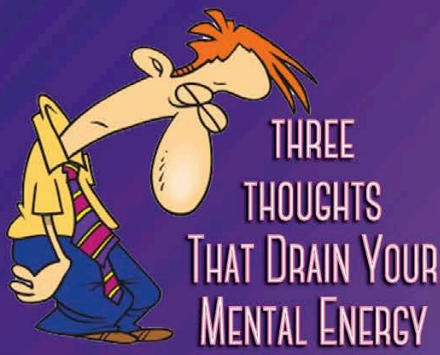


JAN
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Each youth who attends Atmiya Yuva Mahotsav will be inspired to recognize his/her true goal in life. Not only will they progress forward on a spiritual path, but will also be gifted with immense strength and profound wisdom to reach their true destination in life.

You may feel like you're standing still, but you're actually moving very fast. Depending on where you are on the globe, you could be spinning through space at just over 1,000 miles per hour. People on the equator move the fastest, while someone standing on the North or South pole would be perfectly still. And the Earth isn't just spinning, it is also moving around the sun at 67,000 miles (107,826 km) per hour.

Cool Fact



“If only I had done this differently”

Beating yourself up over the small mistakes you make is destructive and reduces your confidence. You cannot change the past. Learn from your mistakes and march forward.

“He/She should have done this differently”

You cannot control other people’s actions. So why spend time thinking about it? You can only control your reaction.

“If I do this, what will others think of me?”

Don’t let your peers’ judgment of you deflect you from your goals. In trying too hard to impress your friends and colleagues, you lose your naturalty and focus.

The Language of Divinity Inspires Transformation

The sun rises each morning and showers its light without any discrimination. The sun is never selective. It spreads its light and warmth equally to everyone on the land below.

God is just like a sun. He spreads rays of peace, wisdom, and happiness to everyone without any discrimination. When Bhagwan Swaminarayan (Maharaj) descended on this Earth, His radiating divinity enlightened, uplifted, and transformed countless individuals.

There is no greater example than the transformation of Joban Pagi. He was a thief stealing money, food grains, cattle, gold and other valuables items.

Once, Joban attacked a village, causing destruction and mercilessly killing innocent people. A terrified villager pleaded, “What pleasure do you get by killing innocent people? If you are truly bold and courageous, then prove it by stealing Maharaj’s horse (named Manki).”

These words provoked Joban to take up the challenge. Joban arrogantly declared “I won’t rest until I steal Manki!”

News of Joban’s declaration quickly spread. When Maharaj was notified, He just smiled and replied, “I also won’t rest until I uplift Joban’s soul and make him eternally happy.”

Disguised as a peasant, Joban entered the town of Vadtal at night and went straight to the stable where Manki was kept. Just as Joban goes to steal Manki, he sees Maharaj walking towards Manki. Maharaj did not leave until dawn and thus Joban’s plan was thwarted for the night.

The following night, Joban enters the stable and again Maharaj appears near Manki. Joban goes to the assembly and sees Maharaj giving discourses to devotees. This really confused Joban. He thought, “How can Maharaj be in the stable and the assembly at the same time?” This continued for several hours so the frustrated Joban retired for the night.

With a firm determination to steal Manki, he entered the stable on the third night. But this time, Joban saw the divine form of Maharaj standing by each horse in the stable. Joban was mesmerized, “Is my mind playing tricks on me? How can I see so many forms of Maharaj at the same time?” Realizing the supremacy of Maharaj, tears came into Joban’s eyes as he ran back to his hideout.

Joban decided “If Maharaj is really the supreme God, then He would fulfill my three wishes: 1) when I attend the assembly tomorrow, Maharaj shall recognize me and call me by my name, 2) Maharaj

shall give me the garland from His own neck, and 3) Maharaj shall reveal my reason for coming to Vadtal.”

The next day, Joban sits in the back of the assembly. Maharaj notices Joban, invites him on stage, and calls him by his name. Maharaj takes the garland off His neck and puts it on Joban. Finally, Maharaj says, “Why are your eyes red? Is it because you stayed awake for three nights and failed to steal Manki?” Joban realizes Maharaj’s supremacy and begs for forgiveness.

It was Maharaj’s divinity and compassion that inspired Joban to start a new life. In this way, Maharaj transformed and uplifted thousands of individuals into ardent and ideal disciples.

Today, glimpses of Maharaj’s personality and divinity can be seen in Guruhari Hariprasad Swamiji. Swamiji’s mission to guide and uplift individuals is truly remarkable!

Once, a distressed youth approached Swamiji and said, “Due to my current lifestyle, my parents told me to leave home and never come back. They were really relieved the day I left home.”

Swamiji consoled the youth and lovingly replied, “Your family members may be relieved because you left their house, but I am relieved that you came to me. I will be breathing easier now that I have the opportunity to guide you.”

Then Swamiji said, “All I want you to do now is to stay with the saints and help them do seva. In your free time, chant the Swaminarayan mantra. I want you to transform your life in such a way that your family willingly comes to take you back home with open arms.”

Thousands of youths have stumbled along their way. Without any judgment, Swamiji has picked them all up at their worst moment and enlightened their hearts. He has transformed youths into goal-oriented individuals who are now walking on the path of true happiness.



Maharaj’s divine intervention prevents Joban from stealing Manki



Youths receiving Swamiji’s divine blessings

Lasting Thought “Despite any amount of one’s own efforts, disturbing thoughts/habits are impossible to overcome. But if a Gunatit Sadhu casts just a single glance, all disturbing natures are instantly eradicated. Therefore, take refuge in a Gunatit Sadhu.” ~ (Swami ni Vaato 5-267)