

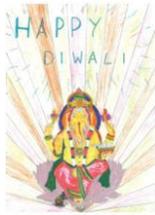


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'A religion that takes no account of practical affairs and does not help to solve them is no religion.'  
- Mohandas Gandhi

## Jay Swaminarayan Happy Diwali & Prosperous New Year



Bal Mandal, Shree Swaminarayan temple Cardiff took part in Diwali celebrations by creating these diwali cards.

The six winning Diwali cards were designed by:

- Smita Dabasia
- Priyanka Patel
- Krishna Kerai
- Phaishali Valji
- Chandni Kerai
- Divya Halai



You can support the efforts of the children and buy these set of six cards from Bal Mandal, Cardiff.



## The new beginning – new resolutions

People of Ayodhya celebrated the homecoming of Lord Ram, after fourteen years of exile, by lighting lamps in every home. After thousands of years, we still celebrate this event by lighting lamps and lighting fireworks.



The new year marks the beginning of Ram rajya (rule), when Ram becomes king. About five thousand years ago, Lord Krishna told the people of Vrindavan to stop worshipping Indra, who had become arrogant, and worshipped mount Govardhan instead. Indra sent heavy rains to punish the people but Lord Krishna protected them by lifting the Govardhan mountain and holding it up like an umbrella. The tradition has been carried on and we currently offer Ankut, a mountain of food, to God in temples.

### How should we celebrate Diwali and New Year?

Lord Ram returning to Ayodhya signifies Dharma returning to our lives and hearts. We should celebrate Diwali by welcoming God in to our hearts. We should also welcome Sita and Laxman who also returned from exile with Ram. Sita and Laxman represent Bhakti (Devotion) and Vairagya (detachment from the world). Hanuman automatically follows Ram and increases our strength, wisdom and weath.



Laxmi puja is carried out on Diwali, where people pray to Godess Laxmi to give them wealth. When we light the lamps and welcome God into our lives, his wife Laxmi will follow.

On Diwali, we should reflect on the Ramayan where the Leelas of Lord Ram teach us how to live our lives. Ramayan has all the answers to any of our problems in our lives.

So from now on let's welcome and keep God into our hearts and not send him into exile again.

Ravji Patel - Shree Swaminarayan Temple, Cardiff

## Nilkanth Varni (The incredible journey of Lord

### Salvation of nine Lakh (nine hundred thousand) Yogis

Nine Lakh yogis were living on Navlakha mountain. They were doing penance (tapasya) and devotion to God for thousands of years. These were divine yogis and were not seen by ordinary human beings. There were nine lakh individual ponds of water and yagna kundas with flames, where each yogi carried out yagna, tapa and worship everyday to please God.



One day all the yogis heard a voice from the sky which said, 'The Lord whom you are waiting for has been born on this earth and will be visiting this mountain to give you darshan and salvation.'



On hearing this, the yogis were very excited and started to gather fruit and flowers to offer to the Lord. In the morning of the next day, Nilkanth Varni came to Lavlakha mountain. The yogis welcomed him with flowers. Nilkanth took nine lakh forms and met and hugged each yogi individually. Nilkanth accepted the offerings and worship of each yogi individually.

The yogis were overcome with emotions and asked Nilkanth to stay in their hearts forever and gave them salvation. Nilkanth granted them their wish and said that he will take them to his divine abode, Akhsardham, in a few days.



### The poor man and the Maharaja – A true story



A poor man was very hungry and did not have a proper meal for several days. As he was walking through the city of Bhavnagar, he came to a high wall with a berry tree overhanging from the wall. There were juicy berries on the tree so he decided to get some by hitting the tree with stones. He found some stones and started to throw them at the tree.



The Maharaja of Bhavnagar was sitting in his royal gardens with his ministers, enjoying the tranquil atmosphere. One of the stones thrown by the poor man hit the Maharaja on the face and blood started to flow. There was a frantic shouting and running of people and soldiers.

'Who threw this stone?' shouted the prime minister, 'Find that person.'

The soldiers found the poor man outside picking berries. They beat him and when they brought him in front of the Maharaja, he was shaking with fear.

'Why did you throw the stone?' Maharaja asked.

'I was hungry your highness and wanted to eat the berries on the tree. I did not want to hurt anyone,' said the man.

'Did you get any berries?' asked the Maharaja.

'Yes I got a handful, your majesty,' said the man and showed the berries he had collected.

'Give this man a handful of silver coins,' Maharaja told his prime minister.

The prime minister was very confused and said, 'Your majesty, I think you should punish this man for injuring you, but you are rewarding him.'

Maharaja said, 'If a tree gives a handful of berries to a poor man who throws a stone at it, I should give him some reward for his labour as well. I should look after my people and endeavour to improve their lives before they start suffering.'

The true sign of greatness is in forgiving others and understanding their pains and needs.

Ravji Patel - Shree Swaminarayan Temple, Cardiff

'In a country well governed, poverty is something to be ashamed of.  
 In a country badly governed, wealth is something to be ashamed of.'  
 - Confucius

## Eleven Niyams – rules or Laws (Continued)

'Nirvikalp utam ati, Nishchaya tav Ghanshyam..' by Premanand Swami.



### Niyam two

'Par triya sang ko tyag..' – Non association with other's women (not your wife).

When Sheeji Maharaj (Lord Swaminarayan) wrote this niyam in Shikshapatri, there was a need for this, but at the present time there seems to be more need for this niyam. Many types of information like media, literature, photos and movies are constantly provoking the unnatural state of mind of a person. Even after living in this world and society, he who believes in one wife truly belongs to the family of Lord Ram, none others are worthy of this.

Our saints say that, 'One who follows the way of one wife is as holy as a person who has renounced the world, even though he is living with his family.'

'Non association with other's women.'

Shikshapatri makes us aware of when this can be achieved. One should not stay in a lonely place even with his mother, sister or daughter. Following these rules will save the family man from shame in society and many other diseases of which there are no medicine. This is why the second niyam 'Par triya sang ko tyag' is very important.

The mind of the person who does not have this niyam in his life becomes weak and he becomes a sinner. With mental weakness, he becomes depressed due to sinful acts. He is not able to advance in bhakti (devotion), devotional singing, spirituality and good deeds but attains yamapuri (hell) after death.

*Sashtri Swami Harikeshavdas*



## Earn to live and not live to earn

'Mum, how much does dad earn for one hour?' Asked her young son. 'Oh, about one hundred rupees per hour, why do you want to know?' Asked his mother. 'Can I borrow seventy rupees please?' Her son asked.

'Now I know why you were asking about your dad's earnings. You want some money to buy some silly thing or spend it on junk food. I think this kind of behaviour is going to make you a big spender when you grow up,' mum said in anger.

When dad came home, mum told him, 'Your son was asking about your earnings and wanted to borrow seventy rupees from me.' Dad became angry on their son and sent him to his room without giving him any food for supper. He wanted to teach his son that borrowing money and spending it was not a good habit.



After a while, when the boy's father had calmed down and started to think, he felt sorry for his son and thought that he had been too harsh. He went to his son's room and said, 'I'm sorry I shouted at you and here is the seventy rupees you wanted to borrow from your mum.' 'Thanks dad!', shouted the son who then took out some more notes of money from under his bed and started to count them. His father seemed confused and asked, 'You already had some money, so why did you want to borrow more?'

'Dad I now have one hundred rupees and can hire you for an hour. Can you come home one hour earlier and spend one hour with me please?' The dad was shocked and realised his neglect of his son.

**We give more importance to spending more time on earning money and neglect our family. We must find a balance and spend enough time with our friends and family.**

*Ravji Patel - Shree Swaminarayan Temple, Cardiff*



'To enjoy good health, to bring true happiness to one's family, to bring peace to all, one must first discipline and control one's own mind. If a man can control his mind he can find the way to Enlightenment, and all wisdom and virtue will naturally come to him.'  
 - Buddha

## Vachanamrut of Lord Swaminarayan (Gadhada PP 1)

### Vachanamrut 1 – Gadhada First chapter, First Sermon



**Q4 – Then, Harji Thakkar asked Shreeji Maharaj, 'Some have been practising satsang for quite some time, yet they do not have the intense priti (affection) for satsang as they do for their own body and their relatives. What is the reason for this?'**

Before we understand what the question is, we must understand in this instance why the question was asked.

Harji Thakkar's family was wealthy and satsangi. They lived in Pitthalpur and decided to visit Maharaj in Gadhpur for seva (selfless service). Harjibhai's mother was a staunch devotee. She saw a brahmchari warming up water for bhagwan in a small utensil. He had to warm water up a few times due to the size of the utensil. Harjibhai's mother thought that we have a big utensil which can be better used in maharaj's seva. However, harjibhai's younger brother Tejobhai objected and told his mother not give the utensil to Maharaj. Tejobhai's mother said, 'you are coming in my way by not letting me perform seva. O fool, go away! From this day I break all ties with you. From this day on, never show me your face'. It is due to this event that Harji Thakkar asked Maharaj the question.

Firstly we need to understand what satsang is?

If we divide the term in two, Sat (True) Sang (Company), we get the answer.

With whom should we keep company and who can be defined as true? Within the Satsangi Jeevan scripture, Bhagwan Swaminarayan states that the following are to be considered completely true:

1. Bhagwan (God)
2. Saints who have surrendered themselves to Bhagwan
3. Dharma stated by Bhagwan
4. Scriptures within which the above three categories are prescribed

This means that those who keep the company and association of the four above can be considered the highest Satsangi. Why is it then that a Satsangi cannot have the same Priti for Satsang as they have for their body and relatives?

Three types of Priti (intense affection):

- Lohini (for Blood – family, relations)
- Vijaatiya (for life Partner)
- Mahimaa (for Bhagwan, Acharya, Saint and devotee)

Even though all three are necessary, which one is most important in this life and the next?

Undeniably, the answer is Mahimaa priti, which is eternal whereas the other two are only relevant to this life and are temporary.

**Shreeji Maharaj answers, 'This is due to that person not fully understanding Bhagwan's greatness.'**

This greatness can be understood through Satsang, and in particular, association with saints. When the saint gives advice to the devotee for his own self betterment, but if instead the devotee looks at the fault in the saint, he is unable to develop the priti towards satsang.

When the saints talk about our good qualities we feel happy due to the praise, but when they point out our bad qualities, then we find fault in the saints.

Our satsang level drops as we are not willing to accept the truth from saints and carry on acting liberally. We then start insulting saints and those who associate with that saint as well. By keeping association with saints, our priti towards satsang will increase, otherwise by insulting them, our priti towards satsang diminishes.

This is why Brahmanand Swami wrote the kirtan – 'Jagatmahi sant param hitkaari' (In this world, saints are the most beneficial to us).

### Summary of vachanamrut Gadhada Pratham Prakaran 1

**Bram-may Deha** - *Divine body*. The final reward



**Akhand Vrutti on Bhagwan** - *Constant reflection on God*. The most difficult spiritual activity is achieved



**Maya** - *Illusion*. Satsang gives strength and understanding to overcome this



**Sant Samagam** - *Association with saints*. Will help increase affection towards Satsang

*Pradyuman Halai, Shree Swaminarayan Temple, Cardiff*



'Every gift which is given, even though is be small, is in reality great, if it is given with affection.'  
Pindar

## Different Forms of Baghwan (God)



Our Sampraday teaches us that Bhagwan has a form, which we use to help meditate upon.

When Bhagwan appears in one form He is also present in the other forms too.

So how many forms of Bhagwan are there?

Let's try and understand the five forms that Bhagwan takes for various reasons and decide which one is the ideal one for meditating upon.

The swaroop (one's own form) that Bhagwan takes are:

- ❖ Par - to be present in Akshardham
- ❖ Vyuha - to Perform tasks
- ❖ Vibhav - when baghwan takes an avatar
- ❖ Antaryami - to be present in all living beings
- ❖ Pratimah - the image form which is given by Baghwan for visual representation

All five forms of Bhagwan can be meditated upon but only the Pratimah Swaroop is easier to meditate upon.

Let's look at these forms as an analogy to water.

**Par** - We know that there is water vapour in the atmosphere yet we are unable to drink or use this water, the same is said for Par Swaroop we know that Bhagwan exist in Akshardham yet it is difficult to meditate upon this form.

**Vyuha** - The clouds hold the water yet again we cannot obtain or use this water, likewise we know that Bhagwan exists in the form of Vasudev, Shankarshan, Pradyumna and Annirudra but we are unable to meditate upon these forms.

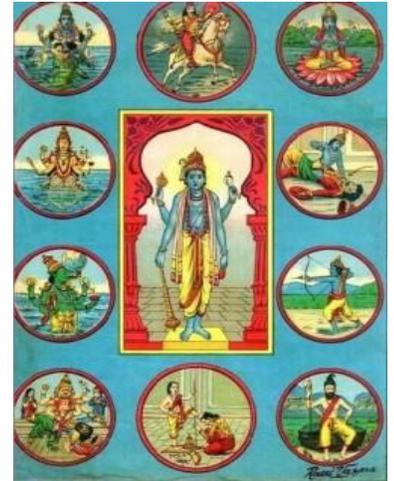
**Vibhav** - When the clouds release the water in the form of the rain not everyone could use this this and some falls in the ocean and waste land. Therefore not everyone can benefit from this rain.

Similarly, when Bhagwan takes an Avatar, only those who are present at the time, can meditate upon this form. Even though we know these Avatars have taken place but we can't meditate upon these forms easily.

**Antaryami** - Water is present in the Ground but we need special tools to bring this water to the surface for us to use. Likewise, we know that Bhagwan resides in all living beings, but unless we know how to expose this form and so we can't meditate upon this.

**Pratimah** - The water which we can keep within our possession is the one we can easily use. Hence the image or murti of Bhagwan which we can have in our possession is the form which we can easily meditate upon.

So just like the water in the bottle, which we can carry with us and take a sip whenever we feel the thirst, we could meditate upon the given image (murti) whenever we wish.



## Shibir 2011 – The Cycles of Life.



**In a nutshell, the shibir was truly amazing.** From the organisation to the presentations, the food to the activities, the late nights to the early starts, it was all brilliant. Not only did the theme, the cycles of life, teach us about which stage in our lives we are at, but how our sampraday is evolving to fit into modern day life.

The presentations were clear, concise and informative, and were presented with light-hearted comedy and confidence. The group activities allowed us to discuss various issues regarding the four ashrams of life. Being in groups with members from other mandirs not only allowed us to gain new friends, but knowledge too.

The team building activities involved a lot of frantic running and paper aeroplanes, but gave us an opportunity to strengthen our ties with fellow members of our sampraday.

The raas and dandiya we played on Saturday night was by far the best raas I have ever played in my life. The hall, the music, the different types of raas and lets not forget the glow sticks made it truly an experience of a lifetime.

Ice skating on Sunday afternoon was a thrill. Watching everyone fall over and enjoy themselves was brilliant. The bruises were definitely worth it all!! The shibir was a unique experience, being able to take part in satsang with so many different hari bhaktas from various places was remarkable.

The memories made over those four days will always be cherished, as will the new friends. The excitement for next year's shibir is already present. All I can say is, bring it on!!

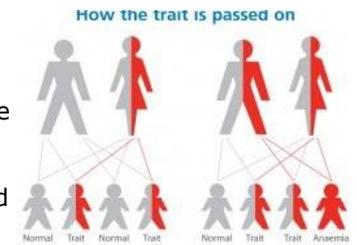


*Neha Ladhani Shree Swaminarayan Temple, Cardiff*



'I never teach my pupils; I only attempt to provide the conditions in which they can learn.' -Albert Einstein

## Sickle cell anaemia and Thalassaemia



### What are Sickle cell anaemia and thalassaemia?

Sickle cell anaemia and Thalassaemia are severe blood disorders can cause:

- **Iron overload** - There is too much iron in their bodies, either from the disease itself or from frequent blood transfusions. Too much iron can damage the heart, liver and endocrine system,
- **Bone deformities** - The bone marrow expands making bones thin and brittle.
- **Infection** - There is an increased risk of infection.
- **Enlarged spleen** - Thalassaemia is often accompanied by the destruction of a large number of red blood cells, and the task of removing these cells causes the spleen to enlarge.
- **anaemia** - *lack of blood*, is a decrease in number of red blood cells or less than the normal quantity of haemoglobin in the blood.
- **Slowed growth rates** - anaemia can cause children's growth to slow down. Puberty also may be delayed in children with thalassaemia.
- **Heart problems** - *such* as congestive heart failure and abnormal heart rhythms.

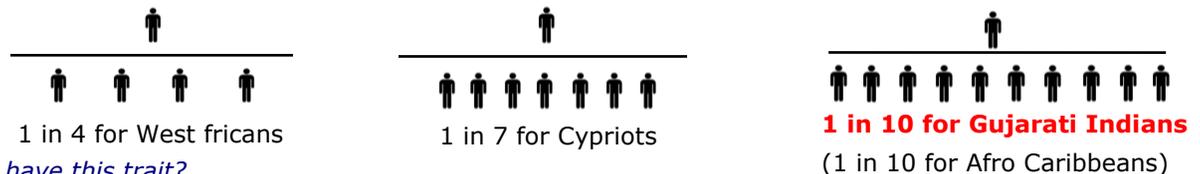
These disorders are largely found in individuals who originate from the following countries: Asia, Africa, Caribbean, Mediterranean and the Middle East. They are both hereditary disorders and so can be passed on from one generation to the next. In most cases the disorders are passed on to a generation in the form of a harmless carrier also known as a trait.

### What is a trait?

An individual with either a sickle cell trait or a thalassaemia trait is completely healthy. The traits are harmless carrier states and they cannot turn into sickle cell anaemia and thalassaemia. The traits tend to be quite common in certain ethnic origins as they provide some protection against malaria during childhood.

### Who can carry these traits?

An individual's ancestors play a huge role in determining whether a sickle cell trait or a thalassaemia trait is present. The illustrations below show the chances of carrying both these traits.



### Do I have this trait?

Individuals can find out whether they carry either of these traits by carrying out a simple blood test. Ask your doctor to test you for sickle cell or thalassaemia trait.

### I carry a trait. Is there anything else I need to know?

Traits can be passed on through generations yet individuals are still able to lead completely healthy lives. For unborn babies if only one parent carries a trait then there is no chance that a child can be born with sickle cell anaemia or thalassaemia. However the child has a 1 in 2 chance of inheriting the trait. If both parents carry a trait there is a 1 in 4 chance of a child being born with sickle cell anaemia or thalassaemia.

In the UK, the Department of Health now issues each individual tested with a card of the personal record of the result and will help avoid unnecessary blood tests in the future.

*Sonya Vagadia - Shree Swaminarayan Temple, Cardiff*

### About the blood

Blood contains a fluid called plasma, which includes three different types of cells:

- White blood cells are part of the body's immune system and defend it against infection.
- Red blood cells carry oxygen around the body in a substance called haemoglobin.
- Platelets help the blood to clot.

#### *Haemoglobin*

Haemoglobin is a transport mechanism for blood. When blood passes through the lungs, the haemoglobin takes in oxygen molecules and releases carbon dioxide molecules.

Then the haemoglobin delivers the oxygen molecules to the body's tissue in other parts of the body and absorbs any excess carbon dioxide molecules to transport back to the lungs.

#### *Bone marrow*

Red blood cells are produced in the bone marrow and contain haemoglobin. Millions of new cells are produced every day to replace old cells. Nutrients from food, such as iron and certain vitamins, ensure that the bone marrow remains healthy and produce a regular supply of red blood cells.

## Festivals and Holy days – September 2011



Navratri Ends

– Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> Oct

Sharad Poonan

– Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> Oct

Dhan Terus

– Monday 24<sup>th</sup> Oct

Kali Chaudas

– Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> Oct

Diwali

– Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> Oct

New Year (Ankoot)

– Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> Oct

Bhai Beej

– Friday 28<sup>th</sup> Oct

Ekadashi

Pashamkusha Ekadashi Fast – Friday 7<sup>th</sup> October 2011

Rama Ekadashi Fast – Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2011



If you have any interesting facts, stories, jokes, or feedback, please email them to us at [sstym@swaminarayanwales.org.uk](mailto:sstym@swaminarayanwales.org.uk) Editor: Sonal Patel - Shree Swaminarayan Temple, Cardiff

## e-Fun

## e-Knowledge

### It beggars belief!

A beggar goes to a seth's (rich man's) house to beg. The owner came out to see who rang the bell. 'Please give me something to eat or some money to buy food. I'm very hungry.' The beggar said. 'Sorry I never give anything to anyone, so you are wasting your time here.' The seth said.



The beggar said, 'Please do me a favour and give me some dirt from your yard.' The seth was happy to give him some dirt, and asked, 'Why did you ask for dirt? It will not fill your stomach.'

'I know this will not help me, but you might catch the habit of giving, and next time, maybe you will give someone more than a pinch of dirt.'

we are in Vikram Samvat 2068, in Indian calendar.

The Indian calendar is inventively based on both the sun and the moon; it uses a solar year but divides it into 12 lunar months.

A lunar month is precisely 29 days 12 hours 44 minutes and 3 seconds long.

Twelve such months constitute a lunar year of 354 days 8 hours 48 minutes and 36 seconds.

To help the lunar months coincide with the solar year, the practice of inserting an extra month arose. So 60 solar months = 62 lunar months. Hence an extra month, called the Adhik Mas, is inserted every 30 months i.e. every 2 ½ years.



Editor: Sonal Patel - Shree Swaminarayan Temple, Cardiff