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# Satsang Times

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## Note from the Editor:

2012 is off to an amazing start! We'll celebrate the birthdays of Gopalanand Swami, Shastriji Maharaj, Bharatbhai and the Shikshapatri at the end of January and then have the grand celebration of Guruji's 75<sup>th</sup> Birthday and Kakaji's 60<sup>th</sup> Sakshatkardin in Delhi! I hope to hear from you about those events or any other feedback at [rucha0402@yahoo.com](mailto:rucha0402@yahoo.com).  
From Chicago,  
Richa Shah's  
Jay SwamiNarayan



Samadhiyala  
12/31/11-1/1/12  
more photos  
on yds.org

## *Samadhiyala Mahotsav*

We celebrated **Nirmal Swamiji's 75th birthday** at Samadhiyala, Gujarat on **December 31, 2011 and January 1, 2012**. The occasion was graced by Gunatit Saints including **Swamiji, Saheb, Dinkaruncle, Bapu, Bharatbhai, Vashibhi, Jyotiben**, and saints and devotees. In the two days, approximately 25,000 devotees attended the samaiyo (function). It is interesting to note that Samadhiyala is a town with a population of about 2500 people and they were able to accommodate ten-fold people! All of the credit goes to Swamiji's saints who worked day and night for several days prior to the samaiyo to make it such a grand success.

### **Blessings:**

- **Swamiji** - Swamiji talked about his initial meeting with Yogibapa and how Bapa's extreme simplicity, saintliness and love appealed to him and brought him closer to Bapa. Swamiji mentioned that Bapa had a unique 'Guru-Shishya' relationship with Nirmal Swamiji. He had great love for Nirmal Swamiji and had full 'adhikaar' on him. He would point out the minutest mistakes of Nirmal Swamiji, yet Nirmal Swamiji would always take it positively. Swamiji asked all of us to pray every single day that we build a similar relationship with our Guru, where he can show us our mistakes and take us closer to God.
- **Saheb** - Saheb mentioned that it was 210 years ago that Lord Swaminarayan gave us the mahamantra, which is our strongest weapon to fight maya. He said that God had 500 very powerful paramhanso, yet Gunatitanand Swami remained das (humblest servant) and hence we pray to him. Just like one doctor cannot take care of all the worlds' patients, we need many Gunatit Saints on the earth today to take care of devotees. Nirmal Swamiji was one of the first saints to whom Bapa gave diksha (initiation).
- **Nirmal Swamiji** - Nirmal Swamiji focused on clarifying the several misconceptions about the Swaminarayan religion that people may have today. He started with the message, "We are all one!" referring to the different Swaminarayan branches - that we all follow the same rules, same scriptures, etc. He mentioned that we have never claimed that these Gunatit Saints are God, but definitely believe that God resides in these Gunatit Saints. God Himself has said that "aavaa Santo naa darshan hu icchu chhu" (even I desire to be with such Saints). He challenged everyone to join the saints if they think that saints are living a luxurious life! He said that our saints are experts in all fields - they can work on diverse activities, which can include farming and also flying a helicopter!
- **Dinkaruncle** - In the interest of saving time, Dinkaruncle spoke very briefly. He prayed and sought the blessings from the other Gunatit Saints present at the occasion.

## *Samadhiyala Mahotsav (cont.)*

### Other Highlights from the Samaiyo:

- This entire land near Samadhiyala can be considered as Swaminarayan Bhagwaan's 'karma bhoomi'. Several towns like Gadhada, Sarangpur, Kariyani, etc. (where God stayed and many of the Vachanamruts were written) are within short distance of Samadhiyala. Due to the samaiyo, many devotees got the opportunity to visit these holy villages.
- The samaiyo started with a rally from the temple to the sabha hall. A devotee had gifted a new Toyota van to Nirmal Swamiji. Also, they had a youth dressed as Lord Swaminarayan riding a decorated 'Manki' horse. Both the van and Manki were part of the procession.
- Saheb came to the samaiyo despite severe lower back pain.
- There was a Bhagvat Parayan from Pujya Rameshbhai Shukla on all 3 sessions.
- The Cultural Program consisted of a few folk dances and a drama. The local youths performed a simple yet impactful drama showing 3 incidences of Yogi Bapa's life, where he endured several hardships and the physical and verbal abuses of his guru Vignyan Swami and yet he continued to pray and took no abhaav (negativity) of anyone.
- We spent the 31st night at the Swaminarayan temple in Lathidad Gujarat with Dinkaruncle, Babu, Bharatbhai, Vashibhai and HariSwaroop Swami (the mahant of the temple). The entire bus with Powai devotees was able to start the New Year in the divine company of these Gunatit Saints.

*Bhaveshbhai Shah*

## *Being Brahmroop by Matured Understanding* by Parixitbhai Modi

New Year's Eve is very special for every individual. It is a time to celebrate the year gone by and welcome the New Year. Some people introspect on the events that took place in their lives in the past 12 months. Some celebrate New Year's Eve by attending parties, while others gather around in public venues such as Times Square in New York City to count down the closing seconds of the old year. Some go to temples or a place of worship to get inspiration and blessings from the deities or images of God. Similarly, for aspirant devotees, it is a time to receive a spiritual goal for the New Year from their spiritual master. It is a time for them to resolve that whatever commands are given by their master, regardless of how much effort or time it requires, they will perfect it.

On such an occasion, when 2011 gave way to 2012, Dinkar Uncle emailed from India:

"Dear Amitbhai and all. Jay SwamiNarayan and Happy New Year to you all. Our focus for this year is to be Brahmroop by Seva (service) and Samajan (matured understanding). Jay SwamiNarayan."

If we closely look at his command, Dinkar Uncle has said to *be* brahmroop, which is different than *become*. *Be* indicates the present while *become* indicates the future. So, by using 'to be brahmroop', Dinkar Uncle has given us an indication that we are already brahmroop, now we must accept it. It is said that the essence of the whole Shikshapatri is verse 116, which again emphasizes to be brahmroop. Its English translation reads,

"Understanding the soul to be brahmroop and separate from the three bodies (gross, subtle, and causation), at all times, offer devotion to Shree Krishna Bhagwan."

Similarly, Yogi Bapa said, every morning one should think "I am gunatit and God is manifest in my heart." This indicates three things: 1. We are already brahmroop. 2. We have forgotten it, and 3. Now, we have to remind ourselves that we are brahmroop. Seva and Samjan will help us realize this. In this article, based on my limited understanding, I will express my views on being brahmroop by samjan.

Given in Bhaktachintamani, the saints tell Maharaj that we can do anything for you - we will not blink our eyes, we will not eat anything, we will not drink any water, we will not take care of this body, and we will stay in the Himalayas without any clothes. Maharaj replied that I know you can do all of this, but more important and difficult is to believe yourself to be brahmroop (reference Swami Ni Vato chapter 14, number 229).

In Vachanamrut Gadhada First 21, Shreeji Maharaj has mentioned the kind of understanding we should have to be brahmroop:

“Furthermore, this body should not be believed to be one's true self. Nor should one's bodily relations be regarded as one's true relations. This is because the jiva has previously taken birth in each of the 8.4 million life forms. In fact, the jiva has taken birth in the wombs of all females in this world; it has also taken birth numerous times in the wombs of all of the dogs, cats, monkeys and other types of life forms in the cycle of 8.4 million life forms. Moreover, of all the different types of females in this world, which has it not previously made its wife? All have been its wife at one time or another. Similarly, assuming numerous female bodies, that jiva has also made all of the different forms of males its husband. Hence, just as one does not believe the relations of those previous 8.4 million life forms to be one's true relations, and just as one does not believe the bodies of those 8.4 million life forms to be one's true body, similarly, one should not believe this present body to be one's true self, nor should one believe the relations of this body to be one's true relations. Why? Because just as no relationship remains with bodies from the previous 8.4 million life forms, similarly the relationship with this body will not remain either. Therefore, having realized the body, all possessions and all objects to be asatya (false); and having realized one's own self to be distinct from the body, indriyas and antahkaran; and while observing one's own dharma, one should offer bhakti to God which is devoid of all desires for its fruits.”

This is the fundamental principle. We must understand that we are here for God and His saints.

Cell phones are ubiquitous today and have made life vastly efficient and comfortable - and when used to make emergency calls, a life-saving tool. Yet, in 2009, of the 5,474 people that were killed in the U.S. because of accidents that involved distracted driving, 995 involved the cell phone as a factor. Thus, based on one's understanding, the latest invention can be used for one's progress or to one's detriment. Similarly, we are given this body for a specific purpose: to be brahmroop and serve God. We must understand this concept; otherwise instead of liberating us, this body will become a bondage to us by keeping us in the cycles of birth and death.

Whenever something is presented to us, we always interpret it according to our own understanding. In other words, we read what we want to read, we listen what we want to listen to, and we see what we want to see. That is the root cause of most of the religious quarrels in the world today. No religion teaches animosity, hatred or violence - but rather friendliness, love and humanity. But due to a lack of matured understanding, the teachings are interpreted incorrectly and scriptures that were meant for liberation become a means of destruction. Similarly, injunctions prescribed by God need to be understood thoroughly. For example, in Gadhada First 58, Maharaj says that one must behave as a servant of the servant of God. Many times, out of ignorance, we limit its application to only in satsang. For example, as soon as we enter our homes, we forget that our house members are also devotees of God. So instead of remaining humble, we get upset at them - in P.P. Hariprasad Swamiji's words, we thus fail. Many times, we justify that our master is omniscient, so we don't need to disclose everything to him. P.P. Gururji explained - if one truly believes his master to be omniscient, then how can one harbor ill thoughts? How can one even think about doing something bad? Similarly, after being brahmroop, we must understand that the real purpose of being brahmroop is to serve God, otherwise it will become a hindrance to our journey towards God. We all know the story of Shankracharya and his devotees. We must understand that we want to be brahmroop to serve God and His devotees, not to indulge in mundane material pleasures. We must understand that we have to be brahmroop in order to become closer to God, not to distant ourselves from God by seeing negative or insulting others. The key is that the power is in the understanding with which we practice spirituality, not in regards to the distinctions made by human interpretations.

Today, we are very fortunate that we have Gunatit Saints who can explain to us the real essence of all of the scriptures. By their blessings, with matured understanding we can enjoy loving devotion to God.

## *Bhakti Sutras*

In memory of Yogi Bapa and Kakaji, who left their physical body on January 23, 1971, and March 7, 1986, respectively, our Gunatit Samaj centers hold Bhajan Sandhya every month. Vashi Uncle makes each Bhajan Sandhya special by selecting bhajans centered on a topic. In January, the topic was "The Glory of Bhakti/Devotion." For that, Vashi Uncle also referenced the Narad Bhakti Sutra and the Shandilya Bhakti Sutra. Below are a few verses from the Sutra and links to the complete English translation.

### **Narad Bhakti Sutra**

1. Now, therefore, I will try to explain the process of devotional service (*athato bhaktim vyakhyaanamah*).
2. Devotional service manifests as the most elevated, pure love for God.
3. The pure love for God is eternal.
4. Upon achieving that stage of transcendental devotional service in pure love of God, a person becomes perfect, immortal, and peaceful.
5. A person engaged in such pure devotional service neither desires anything for sense gratification, nor laments for any loss, nor hates anything, nor enjoys anything on his personal account, nor becomes very enthusiastic in material activity...

(see all 84 verses: <http://vedabase.net/nbs/en>)

### **Shandilya Bhakti Sutra**

1. Now, therefore, I will inquire into devotion (*athato bhaktim jijnasa*).
2. Devotion is the unshakeable attachment to the Supreme God.
3. Pure devotion to god makes one immortal and eternally blissful...

(see all 100 verses: [nitaaiveda.com/All\\_Scriptures\\_By\\_Acharyas/Shandilya\\_Muni/Shandilya\\_Bhakti\\_Sutras.htm](http://nitaaiveda.com/All_Scriptures_By_Acharyas/Shandilya_Muni/Shandilya_Bhakti_Sutras.htm))

## *Moms to Moms (and Dads to Dads)*

This year our satsang is going to have 3 new muktas! Dinkar Uncle and Bapu always say that the babies that are born to devotees are not ordinary souls, but muktas or blessed devotees specially sent by God and Gunatit Saints. This is a special column in which Moms and Dads can share their experiences with the Mothers and Fathers-to-be. This month's tips come from Jignaben Shah, the proud mother of two very bright children!

- 🕯 For pregnant mothers, try to relax and remain stress-free because whatever you experience your baby experiences too.
- 🕯 Eat all varieties of food.
- 🕯 Talk to your baby. It might feel silly, but don't underestimate the power of communication. The baby can always hear you.

Requesting all parents to give tips to our new parents and help make things easier for them! Please email [rucha0402@yahoo.com](mailto:rucha0402@yahoo.com) to contribute to this new column.

SwamiNarayan Bhagwan loves us so much that on February 12, 1826, He wrote us a letter called the Shikshapatri...

Verse 103: Bhakti should be known as great love for God supported by true knowledge of His glory.

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*Medium Level Sudoku* →