

SAINT SHRI NARSI BHAGAT – A GREAT DEVOTEE OF LORD KRISHNA

Dr Yatendra Sharma



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OBJECTIVES OF SHRI RAM KATHA SANSTHAN PERTH (INC)

- Shri Ram Katha Sansthan Perth (Inc) is a Vaishnav non-profit religious organisation based on the principles established by Bhagwan Swami Shri Ramananda Ji Acharya (14th century).
- Shri Sansthan is non-discriminatory to any religion, caste, sex and social status of the devotees. Its main principle is, 'Hari Ko Bhaje, So Hari Ko Hoi', the one who worships the Lord, is dear to the Lord.
- Shri Sansthan believes that the worship of the Lord with pure heart and unselfish attitude is very dear to the Lord. All the devotees of the Lord are brothers and sisters.

Concept of Brahman (Supreme)

- Lord Ram, Mother Sita and their incarnations are the 'Supreme Brahman'. They are omnipresent and preserver of the Universe.

Concept of Jiva (Soul)

- The existence of Jiva (Soul) is dependent on Brahman. Lord Ram, Mother Sita and their incarnations (Brahman) are the means to achieve salvation (Moksha). Their eternal and omnipresence help Jiva to move forward towards the achievement of salvation (Moksha).

Concept of Maya (Illusion)

- Maya is the cause of Prakrati (Nature/ World). Prakrati is the combination of three Gunas (Qualities) - Sat, Raj and Tamas. By these three Guns, Prakrati creates the world. Maya is controlled by Brahman. Brahman (Lord Ram, Mother Sita and their incarnations) alone can provide salvation from Maya.

Concept of Moksha (Salvation)

- The abode of Lord Ram, Mother Sita and their incarnations is 'Saket-Dham'. By meditating on and praying Lord Ram, Mother Sita and their incarnations, the devotees get salvation (Moksh) and never come back into this world. The cycle of birth and death is eradicated forever.
- Shri Sansthan continues to publish religious books, booklets, magazines etc to fulfil these objectives. Time to time, Shri Sansthan also organises Shri Ram Katha and other religious Kathaen (stories) of the great Sanatan Rishies, Devs, Devis and great devotees.

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25 December 2021
(Paush Krishnapaksha Shasthi)
(Saint Shri Narsi Mehta Jayanti)

DEDICATED TO

SANATAN DHARMA FOLLOWERS

WITH

LOVE, ADMIRATION AND GRATITUDE

स जीवति गुणा यस्य धर्मो यस्य जीवति ।
गुणधर्मविहीनो यो निष्फलं तस्य जीवितम् ॥

***Sa Jeevati Gunaa Yasya Yasya Dharma sa jeevati |
Guna Dharma vihinasya Jeevitam Nishprayojanam ||***

*'Only he survives who is virtuous. Only he lives who is firm in his
Dharma. He who is devoid of virtues and Dharma is existing in vain.'*

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Foreword

It is thanks to the efforts of organisations like Shri Ram Katha Sansthan Perth (Inc) that younger generations of Pravasi Sanatan Dharma are able to stay connected to their Vedic roots - in the form of books, booklets, bhajans, poetries that glory the Lord and His devotees. I am grateful to SRKS for this opportunity to contribute a few words in the glory of the great Krishna Bhakt, Shri Narsi Bhagat.

**बहूनां जन्मनामन्ते ज्ञानवान्मां प्रपद्यते ।
वासुदेवः सर्वमिति स महात्मा सुदुर्लभः ॥**

***Bahūnām janmanāmante jñānavānmām prapadyate
Vāsudevaḥ sarvamiti sa mahātmā su-durlabhaḥ. (Bhagavad Gita 7-19)***

After many births and deaths, he who is actually in knowledge surrenders unto Me, knowing Me to be the cause of all causes and all that is. Such a great soul is very rare.

A self-realized soul, Shri Narsi Bhagat preached that material prosperity does not support us at the time of death and that, chasing material pleasures or desires is a waste because this does not pave the path for union with God. Using adjectives like, '**Atmaram and Ratnachintamani**' he believed that the soul is as pious as the Lord (Atmaram) and that being born as a human is like receiving that precious gem which can fetch whatever one desires (Ratnachintamani). However, he always encouraged people to use their human life to attain oneness with God. Using his compositions, Shri Narsi Bhagat tried to show the difference between a spiritually awakened life and spiritually ignorant life and that, if human life is spent without recognizing the true nature of the soul, it is like living a dormant life. Serving Sadhus, composing and singing poems in the glory of the Lord, Shri Narsi Bhagat's compositions use love as a form

of surrender and teach us that, unconditional love for Krishna can bring one into complete devotion, faith and surrender to the Lord.

यो मामेवमसम्मूढो जानाति पुरुषोत्तमम् ।
स सर्वविद्भजति मां सर्वभावेन भारत ॥

Yo māmevam asammūḍho jānāti puruṣottamam.

Sa sarva-vidbhajati mām sarva-bhāvena bhārata. Bhagavad Gita 15-19

Whoever knows Me as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, without doubting, is the knower of everything. He therefore engages himself in full devotional service to Me, O son of Bharata.

A staunch devotee of Lord Krishna and a social reformer of great courage, Shri Narasinh Mehta not only penned the priceless literary gem, "Vaishnava Janato Tene Kahiye" but also hundreds of other bhajans, kirtans and texts that have enriched Saurashtra region (Gujarat) for centuries and continue to nourish the global roots of Sanatan Dharma. As Srila Prabhupad explains in 'Bhagavad Gita as It Is' (15-19), "There are many philosophical speculations about the constitutional position of the living entities and the Supreme Absolute Truth. The imperfect knower goes on simply speculating about the Absolute Truth, but the perfect knower, without wasting his valuable time, engages directly in Krishna consciousness, the devotional service of the Supreme Lord". Shri Narsinh Bhagat was such a perfect and rare devotee.

चतुर्विधा भजन्ते मां जनाः सुकृतिनोऽर्जुन ।
आर्तो जिज्ञासुरर्थार्थी ज्ञानी च भरतर्षभ ॥

Catur-vidhā bhajante mām janāḥ su-kṛtino 'rjuna.

Arto jijñāsuraṁ arthārthī jñānī ca bhāratarṣabha.

(Bhagavad Gita 7-16)

O best among the Bhāratas, four kinds of pious men begin to render devotional service unto Me – the distressed, the desirer of wealth, the inquisitive, and he who is searching for knowledge of the Absolute.

**तेषां ज्ञानी नित्ययुक्त एकभक्तिर्विशिष्यते ।
प्रियो हि ज्ञानिनोऽत्यर्थमहं स च मम प्रियः ॥**

***Teṣāṁ jñānī nitya-yukta eka-bhaktirviśiṣyate.
Priyo hi jñāninotyarthamaham sa ca mama priyaḥ. (Gita 7-17)***

Of these, the one who is in full knowledge and who is always engaged in pure devotional service is the best. For I am very dear to him, and he is dear to Me.

We can learn so much from Shri Narsi Bhagat's life. Always in the mood of Kevala Bhakti and always chanting the name of God (Hari), he surrendered and submitted completely to the Lord's will, with pure trust and unconditional love. There are incidents in his life when the Lord intervened but he did not ask for himself and accepted whatever the Lord wished to give. Directly blessed on multiple occasions by Shri Krishna, his constant companion, Bhakt Shromani Shri Narsi Bhagat's life was his message: Simple living and high thinking.

As the Lord himself says in the Bhagavad Gita (9- 34):

**मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु ।
मामेवैष्यसि युक्तवैवमात्मानं मत्परायणः ॥**

***man-manā bhava mad-bhakto mad-yājī māṁ namaskuru.
māmevaiṣyasi yuktvaivamātmānaṁ mat-parāyaṇaḥ.***

Engage your mind always in thinking of Me, become My devotee, offer obeisances to Me and worship Me. Being completely absorbed in Me, surely you will come to Me.

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May we learn from his teachings and strive to serve The Lord in all that we think, say and do. Once again, I would like to congratulate Shri Ram Katha Sansthan Perth (Inc) for authoring this booklet on the biography of Shri Narsi Mehta on his Jayanthi Divas, 25th December 2021 (6th lunar day of Krishnapaksh of Paus month).

Yours, in the service of the Lord,

Dr Sadhana Bose, *MBBS MD MPH MFPHM FFPHM*



Vice President

Hindu Council of Australia (WA Chapter)

Introduction

We all know the favourite Bhajan of Bapu Mahatma Gandhi, '**Vaishnava jana to tene kahiye, je peed paraayi jaane re,**'. This famous Bhajan was composed by the great devotee of Lord Krishna, 15th century Saint Shri Narsinh Mehta, popularly known as Shri Narsi Bhagat. Shri Narsi Bhagat does not need any introduction to the followers of the Sanatan Dharma. Responding to the call of the 'Bhakti Movement' of 14th and 15th century which was originated by Bhagwan Swami Shri Ramananda Acharya Ji, Shri Narsi Bhagat composed more than 700 Bhajans in the glory of Lord Krishna. His Bhajans attracted people by the depth of his love and faith to Lord Krishna and his simplicity.

Shri Narsi Mehta was a contemporary of another great devotee of Lord Krishna, Bhakt Mira Bai of Chittor, Rajasthan, a disciple of Saint Raidas of Shri Ramanandi Sampraday. Though there are no citations that Shri Narsi Bhagat did join Shri Ramanandi Sampraday himself as such, but he adopted the same principles as of Shri Sampraday, for example, 'Hari Ko Bhaje, So Hari Ko Hoi'. He had no discrimination among religion, caste, social status and sex of the devotees. It is clearly noted from his preaching through his Bhajans that the true Vaishnava is the one who is free from differences between such classes/ castes, etc. The human life of those is wasted who distance themselves from other caste people.

He had Sakhaa Bhav with the Lord. He would address Lord Krishna in terms of equality. A simple-minded Bhakta (Devotee), he saw Lord Krishna everywhere and in everything. He proved by his devotion that the Lord would be forced to appear in person before you to remove your obstacles, if you pray Him with sincerity, faith and pure heart. Many miracles did happen in Shri Narsi Bhagat's own life. He had direct Darshan of Lord Krishna on several occasions. One instance is provided here. Once he was travelling with his elder brother Bansidhar to a faraway

place. They could not get any food on the way and became very hungry. Narsi Bhagat prayed to Lord Krishna to provide some food for him and his brother. Lord Krishna did appear in the form of a shepherd boy and invited them to his little cottage, and offered food. His brother would not accept this food offered by a person of lower caste shepherd. Shri Narsi Bhagat requested his brother to accept the food as it was Lord Krishna Himself who was serving them, but his brother had no such faith in the Lord. Shri Narsi Bhagat ate food to his full satisfaction, and then they continued their journey onwards. They had travelled few yards only when Shri Narsi Bhagat's brother realised that he had forgotten his water vessel in the cottage. He returned back to the cottage to collect his vessel. He found that there was neither cottage nor shepherd boy there, however his vessel was lying there.

It was the grace of Lord Krishna, who served His Bhakta to keep up His word as described by Him in the Gita:

अनन्याश्चिन्तयन्तो मां ये जनाः पर्युपासते ।
तेषां नित्याभियुक्तानां योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम् ॥

**Ananyāśh chintayanto mām ye janāḥ paryupāsate .
Teṣhām nityābhiyuktānām yoga-kṣhemam vahāmyaham .**

'There are those who always think of Me and engage in exclusive devotion to Me. To them, whose minds are always absorbed in Me, I provide what they lack and preserve what they already possess.'

Shri Narsi Bhagat is regarded as Gujarat's "Adi Kavi" or pioneering poet. He not only invented the Gujarati poetic form, but raised it to the level of the highest musical and philosophical expression. The much of what Shri Narsi Bhagat composed as poetry, songs, bhajans and verses became widely feted, celebrated and embedded into the popular consciousness

of the people. His literary creations had pervaded the air of the Saurashtra region for centuries, handed down to the generations as a collective treasure. He was not only a staunch devotee of Lord Krishna, but also was a social reformer of great courage.

This booklet is an effort to depict few words about this great Saint. It is said that Lord is pleased when the glory of His devotees is sung. The Lord Himself has said:

मैं तो हूँ भक्तों का दास, भगत मेरे मुकुट मणि ।

Main To Hoon Bhakton Kaa Das, Bhagat Mere Mukut Mani.

'I look after my devotees. My devotees are the jewel in the crown.'

Please accept my humble prayers, and enjoy this brief biography of the great Bhakt poet of Sanatan Dharma, Shri Narsi Bhagat.

I greatly acknowledge the encouragement, good wishes and blessings of all my great friends, especially Shri Sunil Garg Ji, who took time to read the manuscript and edit it. Though my mother tongue is Hindi and thus I am an author and poet of Hindi, I have made an attempt here to author this booklet in English on the request of my several non-Hindi speaking friends. Please forgive me if you find literary errors in the booklet.

Yours, in the lotus feet of the Lord,



**Dr Yatendra Sharma, President
Shri Ram Katha Sansthan Perth (Inc)**

25 December 2021, (Shasti Day, Krishnapaksha, Pausa) Shri Narsi Bhagat Jayanti

Birth and Parents

According to a poem by Saint Shri Narsi Mehta himself, he was born in a village Telaja in Bhavnagar district of Gujarat State of India in 1414 AD.

गाम तेलजा जन्म मारो थायो |

Gaam Telaja Janm Maaro Thayo.

'I was born in the village Telaja.'

There have been various versions on actual date of birth of Saint Shri Narsi Mehta. However, most of the historians agree that he was born on Shashti day of Krishnapaksha of Paus month of Vikram Samwat 1471 (1414 AD). According to the historians, his family moved to Junagarh after few years of his birth as his elder brother Bansidhar got a job as senior police office (Thanedar) in Junagarh.

His father Shri Krishna Damodar Das and his mother Shrimati Lakshmi Gauri belonged to a high Nagar Brahmin caste of Gujarat. As stated above, he had an elder brother too, whose name was Shri Bansidhar.

When Shri Narsi Mehta was only 5-year-old, unfortunately his both parents died. He was then nourished by his grandmother Shrimati Jaykunwari and elder brother Bansidhar, who was 22 years older to Shri Narsi.

Shri Narsi Mehta was dumb when he was born. He could not speak a single word till he was 8-year-old. His grandmother was very worried about his dumbness, and continued to pray Lord Shiva for his welfare. She had great faith and trust that her prayers would surely be listened by

the Lord one day. She knew that there was only one way to please Lord, His devotion and seeking His protection through His devotees. Whenever she would come to know that a Saint or Hermit had arrived in her town, she would go to him and serve him with great devotion. At last, the Lord listened her prayer. It was a beautiful day of Phalgun month Suklapaksha Panchami of 1419 AD. A great festival to worship Hatkeshwar Mahadev was being celebrated in her town. A huge crowd gathered in the Hatkeshwar Mahadev temple of the town. She also went to the temple to pray the Lord with his grandson Narsihn. After she offered milk and flowers to the Lord, she saw a Hermit sitting in one corner of the temple chanting 'Narayan, Narayan'. His face was glowing with divine light. He looked like a great seer possessing supernatural powers. She went to him and bowed by placing his grandson in the feet of this seer. Very humbly, with tears in her eyes and folded hands, she spoke to the seer, 'O great Saint, this boy is my grandchild. His name is Narsinh. Unfortunately, his parents died when he was only 5-year-old. He is now nearly 8-year-old, but cannot speak even a single word. Everyone in the village calls him 'dumb'. This pierces my heart. I pray to you O great Saint, please bless him so that he could speak.' Saying thus, she also fell at his feet. The heart of a Saint is very soft like butter. Goswami Tulasi Das Ji has said.

**संत हृदय नवनीत समाना, कहा कविन पै कहहि न जाना ।
निज परताप द्रवइ नवनीता, संत द्रवहि परताप पुनीता ॥**

**Sant Hirday Navnit Samaanaa, Kahaa Kavin Pai Kahahi Na Jaanaa.
Nij Partaap Drawai Navneetaa, Sant Dravahi Partaap Puneetaa.**

'The poets have described the heart of a Saint like butter. However, in my (Goswami Tulsidas) opinion, they have not described this very well. Butter only melts when heat is applied, but the heart of a Saint melts on listening the troubles of others.'

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The Saint took the boy Narsinh on his laps, and said, 'Do not lament revered lady. This boy will be a great devotee of the Lord one day.' Then he asked the boy to repeat with him the words, 'Radhe Krishna, Radhe Krishna.'

A miracle did happen. The dumb boy started chanting "Radhe Krishna, Radhe Krishna".

We can imagine the joy of grandmother Shrimati Jaykunwari when she heard her dumb grandson chanting Radhe Krishna, Radhe Krishna. She fell at the feet of the great seer, and invited him to her residence for a meal. The great seer declined to visit her home, but blessed her by saying, 'O mother, I am not a person with any supernatural powers. This has happened only with the blessings of the Lord. Now go home, and always keep on chanting His sacred name. The Lord will continue to bless you and your family. I normally do not visit the house of any Grahasth (householder). I am on my way to Kailash Parvat (mountain). I also tell you that when the time comes, he will get married to a great devotee of the Lord.' Saying this, the seer disappeared in the crowd.

The grandmother Shrimati Jaykunwari returned home with her grandson Narsinh, who could speak now. She narrated the whole story to his elder son Bansidhar. Bansidhar was a senior police officer (Thanedar) of that area. He also wanted to see the seer to get his blessings. He asked his subordinate police officers to search the great seer everywhere, but no one could find him. It was believed that perhaps Lord Shiva appeared Himself to bless Narsinh.

Education, Marriage and Family

After the child Narsinh got his voice with the blessings of a seer, his elder brother Banshidhar sent him to a Sanskrit school (Vidyalaya) for his education. Narsinh was never interested in normal school learning. He used to sit in a corner of the class room, and rather learning the school curriculum, would continue his Radhe Krishna chant. He frequently used to visit the nearby Lord Krishna temple early in the morning, and sat there before Lord Krishna's idol chanting His holy name. The teacher was fed up with this sort of behaviour, and requested his elder brother Banshidhar to take him home. Banshidhar had no choice than to bring him back home. He scolded the young child for not paying any attention to his studies, but in vain. To teach him a lesson, he gave him laborious jobs to do, such as looking after his horses, cutting the grass in the field etc. To his surprise, Narsinh did not mind doing these laborious jobs. While doing these jobs, he continued to chant and sing the glory of the Lord. Sometimes he was so engrossed in his love to Lord Krishna that he would commence dancing while singing His glory. His brother was very disappointed. He thought that perhaps if he was married, he would understand the responsibilities of the life. He arranged his marriage with a beautiful girl Manik Gauri from the same community. Manik Gauri was also a great devotee of Lord Krishna from her childhood. After marriage, both husband and wife would sing the glory of the Lord together, and paid no attention to the worldly matters.

When Narsinh was 16-year-old, he became father of a beautiful girl Kunwar Bai. After couple of year, he was blessed with a son too. He named his son Shamal Das.

Unfortunately, Shri Narsi's sister-in-law (Bhabhi) Durit Gauri could not become mother. She became highly jealous of Manik Gauri, wife of

Narsinh. Unfortunately, Narsinh was not an educated person so he could not find any good job to earn money. Thus, he and his family were dependent on his elder brother Banshidhar for their livelihood. This gave a good chance to Durit Gauri to taunt and torture both of them. Kunwar Bai and Narsinh were doing all sorts of laborious jobs of the house as per instructions from sister-in-law Durit Gauri, but she was never satisfied. She always kept on abusing them. His elder brother Banshidhar understood all the bad intentions of his wife, but could not dare to speak out against his wife.

Somehow, the time passed on. Kunwar Bai, daughter of Narsinh and Manik Gauri, was now 10-year-old. Grandmother Jaykunwari was now 95-year-old. She was no doubt seeing all these cruelty by Durit Gauri on this young couple, Narsinh and Manik Gaur. But what a poor old lady lying on her death bed might have done? She thought that if she died before the marriage of Kunwar Bai, Durit Gauri might not allow the marriage of her beautiful granddaughter in a good family. Thinking so, she called her son Banshidhar to her bed side one day, and asked him to find a groom in a good family for Kunwar Bai. Those were the days when child marriages were very common. Banshidhar promised her mother to do so, and immediately sent his Purohit to look for a good groom for Kunwar Bai. Purohit Ji found a suitable groom for her in Shri Vasant Rai, son of Shri Rangdhar Mehta of village Una in Kathiawar district of Gujarat. He fixed this marriage which was celebrated with great pomp and show in due course. Grandmother Shrimati Jaykunwari spent all her savings on this marriage. As the wish of Shrimati Jaykunwari was now fulfilled, she left this world for heavenly abode three months after this marriage.

Even after his daughter was married, Narsinh continued to serve his elder brother and Bhabhi (sister-in-law) in menial jobs as before, such as looking after horses, cutting grass etc. His wife Manik Gauri continued to

do all household jobs. Whenever Narsinh would get time from his work, he would pray Lord Krishna, and used to go for Sadhu Satsang. Even though Narsinh and his wife worked very hard day and night without any remuneration, Bhabhi was never satisfied. She would always find some excuse to abuse the couple. Narsinh was very afraid of his Bhabhi, and always tried to please her. As a matter of fact, he would return home only when his brother too had come back from his work. Somehow, his elder brother had love and affection towards his young brother Narsinh. In the presence of his brother, Bhabhi could not scold Narsinh and his wife Manik Gauri. However, whenever Banshidhar was away from home for few days due to some official work, those days were worst for Narsinh and his wife. Bhabhi used to torture both of them to her heart's content in those days. Narsinh used to recite a Shlok from Shrimadbhagwad Gita to console his wife,

**दुःखेष्वनुद्विग्नमनाः सुखेषु विगतस्पृहः ।
वीतरागभयक्रोधः स्थितधीर्मुनिरुच्यते ॥**

**Duḥkheṣvanudvignamanāḥ Sukheṣu Vigatasprahaḥ,
Vītarāgabhayakrodhaḥ Sthitadhīrṁnirucyate.**

'He whose mind is undisturbed in the midst of sorrows and amid pleasures is free from desire, from whom liking and fear and wrath have passed away, is the sage of settled understanding.'

Narsinh and his wife were true exemplary Saints as per this saying of Lord Krishna. They were tolerating all the scolding of Bhabhi without any complaint.

One day when Banshidhar was away on official duties, Narsinh went early in the morning to cut grass for the horses. He did not even have his

breakfast that day. It was a very hot summer day. It took him long to get the required quantity of grass to feed all the horses. When he came back home in the afternoon, he was very hungry. He asked Bhabhi to give some food to him. Instead of giving food to Narsinh, Bhabhi started scolding and hurling all sorts of abuses on him. She started shouting on Narsinh, 'Look at this fraud so called devotee of the Lord. Pretending as if he went to cut the grass for the horses, he was enjoying the day with his fraud friends so called Sadhus. His brother Banshidhar works so hard every day, and I do all the household work. These both, husband and wife, with a son are burden on us. How long can we keep on going feeding these useless people?'

Narsinh could not take abuses any more. He prayed to the Lord and requested Him to look after his wife and son, and then left the house. His wife Manik Gauri was away at that time to collect flowers for Pooja. When she came back home and learnt that her husband had left home, she tried hard to find him everywhere in the town, but in vain. She also wanted to leave the house, but where she could have gone with a young son? With very heavy heart, she stayed at home praying to the Lord that her husband would be safe and return back soon.

When Banshidhar returned back the next day from his tour, he became very sad to hear that his brother had left home. He tried in all possible ways to search for his lost brother, but unfortunately, his search efforts were also not successful.

Blessings of Lord Shiva

After leaving the house of his brother and nowhere to go, Narsinh kept on running towards the forest chanting the name of the Lord. He himself did not know where was he going? After some time, he ended up in a depleted temple of Lord Shiva. The Sun was setting now and night was approaching. Narsinh had not drunk water or taken any food for long. As soon as he reached the temple, he lost his consciousness. When he regained his consciousness in the middle of the night, he found himself lying over a Shivalinga. Calmly and without any fear, he again started chanting the holy name of the Lord. Thus, seven days passed. Lord Shiva was very pleased with his devotion, and on the seventh day, appeared before him. Lord Shiva told, 'O my son, I am very pleased with your devotion. Ask a boon which you may like.'

Narsinh bowed to the Lord and replied, 'O Lord, I do not desire to have any boon, but I cannot disobey your command too. So, please give me whatever You like most.'

तमने जे वल्लभ होए दुर्लभ, आपो रे प्रभु जी मुने दया रे आनी ।

**Tamane Je Vallabh Hoe Durlabh,
Apo Re Prabhu Ji Mune Dayaa Re Ani.**

Lord Shiv immediately understood that Narsinh wanted to see (Darshan) Lord Krishna. So, He took him to the heavenly abode of Lord Krishna.

When Lord Shiva and Narsinh arrived in Saket Dham, Lord Krishna was chairing a religious gathering (Dharm Sabha) with all His ministers. He was seated on the gold studded throne with Goddess Rukmini. All his ministers, Maharaj Ugrasen, Balram, Akroor, Uddhav, Vidura, Arjun etc,

were also seated on their respective places. As soon as Lord Krishna and all other ministers saw Lord Shiva entering the Dharm Sabha, they immediately got up from their seats, and welcomed Lord Shiva by worshipping Him.

**धर्मसभा मा जहां उग्रसेन तहां, संकर्षणद जी संग बैठा ।
तहां वासुदेव ने देवकीनंदन, राजराजेश्वर कृष्णा बैठा ॥**

**Dharmsabha Ma Jahan Ugrasen Tahan, Sankarshand Ji Sang Betha.
Tahaan Vasudev ne Devakeenandan, Raajraajeshwar Krishna Baitha.**

Lord Krishna gave Lord Shiva a divine seat, and with folded hands, stood before Him.

Lord Shiva then spoke to Lord Krishna, 'O the Lord of the Universe Lord Krishna, I introduce this brahmin boy Narsinh to You. He prayed on Shivalinga continuously for 7 days without eating and drinking water. Pleased with his devotion, I appeared before him. I asked him for a boon of his choice. He requested me to grant a boon what I like most. O Lord, you know that You are my Isht, and I like You most. So, I brought him to You so that You may bless him'.

Hearing these soft and kind words of Lord Shiva, who is the dearest to Lord Krishna, He moved His head towards the young boy Narsinh, and blessed him by putting His hand over his head. Narsinh fell at His feet. Tears started flowing from his eyes. He washed the holy feet of the Lord with his tears.

Lord Krishna said to Narsinh, 'O child, there is no difference between Me and Lord Shiva. Lord Shiva is My Isht Dev, and as He said, I am His Isht Dev. Your worship and prayer to Lord Shiva is the prayer to Me. Now you

be fearless, and always keep remembering Me. I will look after you always, this is My promise to you.'

After Lord Shiva introduced Narsinh to Lord Krishna, He left Saket Dham for Kailash. Then, Lord Krishna took Narsinh to His palace. Narsinh lived in the palace of Lord Krishna for some time. The day of Sharad Poonima arrived. This was the day when Lord Krishna used to celebrate 'Raas Leela' with His wives, Gopies and all friends. Lord Krishna invited Narsinh to join 'Raas Leela'. Narsinh became so engrossed in singing the glory of the Lord, that he started dancing with Gopies, and forgot his existence.

**शरद पूनम तनो दिवस तहां आवीयो, रास मज्ञादनो वेन वाधो ।
नरसहिये तहां ताल साधो, सखी रूप थयो गति गावा ॥**

**Shaard Poonam Tano Divas Tahan Aavio,
Raas Magyaadano Ven Vaadhyo .
Narsahiye Tahan Taal Saadhyo,
Sakhee Roop Thayo Gati Gaavaa .**

Lord Krishna was so pleased with the devotion of Narsinh that He covered his body with His Pitambari (Lord Krishna's favourite yellow shawl).

प्रेमे पीताम्बर आपीयूं श्री हरी, रीझिया कृष्ण जी ताल वाहातां ।

**Preme Pitaambar Aapeeyoon Shree Hari,
Reejhiyaa Krishna Ji Taal Vaahaataan .**

Then Lord Krishna put a lighted earthen lamp on the hand of Narsinh. Narsinh continued his singing and dancing with lighted earthen lamp on his hand. Unfortunately, the fire of the lamp did spread to his arm and started burning his clothes thereon. When Lord Krishna saw this, He

immediately extinguished the fire and applied ointment of love on the burn wound. The burn wound was healed instantly. Everyone was astonished at the engrossment of Narsinh. Mother Rukmani was so impressed that She took out Her gem studded garment from her neck and put that on the neck of Narsinh. Lord Krishna blessed him by saying, 'Narsinh, you are one of my greatest devotees. Whomsoever will listen and admire your devotion, I will consider him or her as My great devotee'.

Few months passed on. Narsinh was enjoying every moment in Saket Dham. Then, one day Lord Krishna appeared before him and asked for a boon. Narsinh stood before the Lord with folded hands and said humbly, 'O Lord of the Universe, tell me one thing. If someone gets Chintamani (a wish fulfilling gem), will he desire for anything else? I have got Chintamani by having Your Darshan. I do not need anything now'.

Pleased with his devotion, then Lord said to Narsinh, 'O Narsinh, let me enlighten you to attain final aim of the human life, that is liberation (Moksh). There are three debts for any human being born on earth, and unless these are repaid, one cannot attain the aim of the life, that is liberation. The first debt is towards his wife and children. Second debt is towards his ancestors, and third debt is towards the Gods and Goddesses. You still have to repay these debts. So, I advise you to go back to your home and repay these debts. Once you are debt free, you will achieve liberation. When you are at your home, keep chanting My name. Whenever you are in any trouble, just call Me, and I will be there to help you. Always remember My words:

अनन्याश्चिन्तयन्तो मां ये जनाः पर्युपासते ।
तेषां नित्याभियुक्तानां योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम् ॥

**Ananyāśh Chintayanto Mām Ye Janāḥ Paryupāsate .
Teṣhām Nityābhiyuktānām Yoga-Kṣhemam Vahāmyaham .**

‘There are those who always think of Me and engage in exclusive devotion to Me. To them, whose minds are always absorbed in Me, I provide what they lack and preserve what they already possess.’

Obeying the command of Lord Krishna, then Narsinh decided to return back to earth to his home on earth. Lord Krishna gave him His Idol and a Catalan (Kartal), and covered his body once again with His Pitambari.

Lord Krishna commanded Garud Ji to take Narsinh back to his home on earth. Garud Ji followed the command and dropped Narsinh at his home town Junagarh early in the morning near a pond there. Narsinh took bath in the pond, and after becoming fresh and chanting the name of the Lord, started moving towards his house. He was dressed like a Sanyasi with Pitambari covering his body and Kartal in his hand. His elder brother Banshidhar was first overjoyed to see his brother Narsinh alive, but seeing him dressed like a Sanyasi, soon got angry on him.

Angrily he said to Narsinh, ‘O stupid man, you are a married person now with two children. Even though your daughter is married; you still have responsibility towards your wife and son. Give up this dress of Sanyasi immediately and think about nourishing your family. If you do not want to work in my house for me, that is fine. I may find a menial job for you in the kingdom.’

Humbly and with folded hands, Narsinh replied to his brother, ‘O my brother, you are elder to me and like my parents. You have every right to instruct me whatever is good for me. But this dress and Kartal is given to me by Lord Himself. I cannot give up this.’

Banshidhar laughed at Narsinh, and said, 'O stupid Narsinh, it looks as if you have met with some fraudulent. You yourself are an idiot, so I am not surprised that you met with someone deceitful. There is a saying:

जैसे को तैसा मिला, इसमें कौन नवाइ ।
मूरख को मूरख मिला, आओ मूरख भाई ।।

Jaise Ko Taisa Milaa, Ismein Kaun Navaai .
Moorakh Ko Moorakh Milaa, Aao Moorakh Bhai .

Now listen to me. If you want to live with us, immediately take out this Sanyasi dress, and be prepared to do the jobs as you were doing previously.'

At this juncture, Bhabhi also jumped in the discussions and said to Narsinh, 'Yes, if you are not prepared to do as your brother is saying, then you should leave our house immediately with your wife and son'.

Narsinh, with folded hands and humbly, accepted the dictum of his Bhai and Bhabhi and left the house with his wife and son.

As there was no place for him to go, he took his wife and son to a Dharmshala (spiritual dwelling/ sanctuary). The Dharmshala manager knew Narsinh very well, and was his admirer. He obliged him by giving a room free of charge. Though he got the room to stay, but had no means to feed his family. He continued to think on how to make a living. When he could not think of any suitable mean, he prayed Lord and engrossed in singing His glory in a very melodious voice. A traveller, who was also staying in the same Dharamshala, listened the melodious singing of Bhajan by Narsinh, and was attracted towards him. He looked like a rich man (Seth). He asked Narsinh who he was, and why he was staying in

Dharamshala? Narsinh told him all the story. The Seth wanted to help Narsinh, and asked him politely if he could be of any help to him. Narsinh humbly said that though he wanted nothing, but as a householder he had a responsibility to look after his family. If the Seth could organise for him a place to stay and some means to feed his family and serve the Saints, that would be all he might desire.

The Seth then arranged his stay in a nearby depleted temple. He made all the arrangements to repair and to make it worth living. He also arranged enough food for three years for his family, and also took the responsibility to continue to feed all the Saints which might visit Narsinh.

Narsinh was surprised on the generosity of this gentleman. With folded hands, he asked who really he was? Then, the Seth could not hide his identity. He said, 'O Narsinh, the great devotee of Lord Krishna, Lord Krishna was very concerned about your welfare. So, he sent me to earth to make all the arrangements for you. My name is Akroor, and as you may know I am a close friend of Lord Krishna. Now live your life comfortably. If you wish anything in future, just call on the Lord or me.' Saying this, Akroor Ji left to Saket Dham.

Narsinh, now known all over the region as 'Narsi Bhagat', continued to live a simple life by serving Saints and singing glory of the Lord in a depleted temple. He was a great poet. Every day he would compose several Bhajans and sang them in melodious voice. Though he had blessings of Lord Krishna and had the power to acquire anything he might desire, but only accepted which was just enough for the livelihood of his family and serving the Saints. In a way, he was living his life like a poor, but very satisfied person.

Shamal Das, Son of Shri Narsi Bhagat

As stated above, Shri Narsi Bhagat had one daughter Kunwar Bai who was married now, and one son Shamal Das. Shamal Das was now 12-year-old. In those days, this was the marriageable age. Manik Gauri, wife of Shri Narsi Bhagat was getting worried to get her son married. Shri Narsi Bhagat and his family were living in poverty, and she wondered who would give hand of his/her daughter to Shamal Das. She alerted her husband about that, who as usual asked her to pray Lord Krishna who would look after this matter.

At the same time, daughter of Shri Madan Mehta, Sursena Bai, was also of marriageable age. Shri Madan Mehta was the resident of Vadnagar, and a rich business man. He asked his Purohit to find a suitable groom for his daughter. The Purohit advised him that it did not appear that any one was a suitable groom for his daughter here in Vadnagar area, so he would look for a suitable groom in Junagarh. Shri Madan Mehta liked the idea and requested his Purohit to go immediately to Junagarh. Shri Madan Mehta had a friend by the name of Shri Sarangdhar Mehta in Junagarh. He gave an introductory letter to his Purohit addressed to Shri Sarangdhar Mehta. Purohit Ji reached Junagarh and found Shri Sarandhar Mehta. He handed over the letter from Shri Madan Mehta Ji to Shri Sarangdhar Mehta, and requested him to find a suitable groom for the daughter of Shri Madan Mehta Ji.

A search for the groom then commenced. However, all the boys suggested by Shri Sarangdhar Mehta Ji were rejected by the Purohit one by one for one or other reasons. Shri Sarangdhar Mehta became fed up with such a behaviour of Purohit Ji. Finally, he suggested the name of Shamal Das. He told the Purohit that father of Shamal Das, Shri Narsi Mehta, though belonged to a very reputed Nagar Brahmin family, was a

very pious, religious and true gentleman, but was a poor person. He showed the house of Shri Narsi Mehta.

Purohit Ji then went to the house of Shri Narsi Mehta and met his family including Shamal Das. Purohit Ji was very much impressed with the personality of Shamal Das, and decided that Shamal Das would be the most suitable groom for Sursena Bai, the daughter of Shri Madan Mehta. He fixed the marriage of Sursena Bai with Shamal Das then and there.

The Purohit returned to Vadnagar and narrated all story to Shri Madan Mehta. When Shri Madan Mehta heard that Shri Narsi Mehta was a very pious, truthful, honest and a devotee of the Lord, though a poor person, he did not mind giving hand of his daughter to the family of Shri Narsi Mehta. Shri Madan Mehta thought in his mind that Lord had given him everything. He might give enough dowry in the marriage of his daughter with Shamal Das for them to live a comfortable life.

The news of the engagement of Shamal Das with Sursena Bai, the daughter of Shri Madan Mehta, a rich businessman of Vadnagar, spread like a wild fire in Junagarh. There were lots of people in Junagarh who did not like Shri Narsi Mehta and were jealous to him. They hatched a conspiracy so that this marriage was not to be solemnised. They wrote a letter to Shri Madan Mehta Ji mentioning that Narsinh was a very poor, beggar like person. His family had been outcasted by the Nagar Brahmins of Junagarh. It would be disgraced for him to get his daughter married to such a pauper. Shamal Das too had no future.

When this letter was received by Shri Madan Mehta Ji, he did not know what to do? His Purohit had already fixed this marriage. If he did not go ahead with this marriage, his prestige would be at stake. After thinking a lot on this matter, he came out with a solution. If this engagement was

broken by Shri Narsi Mehta, then he could save his prestige. He decided to write a letter to Shri Narsi Mehta. He invited Shri Narsi Mehta to perform the bride shower ceremony (Godh Bharai) before the marriage. He asked Shri Narsi Mehta to bring clothes, ornaments, cash etc, to fill the lap (Godh) of the bride (Godh Bharai) befitting to his wealthy status. He categorically mentioned in this invitation that if the Godh Bharai ceremony was not performed according to his wealthy status, he would be forced to cancel the engagement.

This invitation of Godh Bharai ceremony was sent to Shri Narsi Mehta through the Purohit. When Shri Narsi Mehta received this invitation, very calmly, he took Kartal in his hands and commenced singing glory of the Lord Krishna. Lord Krishna realised that his devotee was in trouble. He appeared before him and told him not to worry. All arrangements would be made at the proper time.

At the fixed date of Godh Bharai, Shri Narsi Mehta prepared to proceed to Vadnagar to the house of Shri Madan Mehta with few of his Sadhu friends. When Manik Gauri saw him getting ready to go to Vadnagar for Godh Bharai ceremony without any gifts such as clothes and ornaments etc for the bride, she got worried. She requested her husband to take a debt from one of the money lenders to buy clothes and ornaments etc for the girl, and then only to proceed to Vadnagar. Shri Narsi Mehta replied, 'Manik, you are always worried about these materialistic things. Shamal Das is not only my son, he is a son of Lord Krishna too. Why to worry when his father is also Lord Krishna?' Saying this, he left to Vadnagar with his few Sadhu friends.

When he was approaching Vadnagar, he saw a person dressed as accountant (Munim) of a rich business man (Seth) coming towards him. The person saluted Shri Narsi Mehta and told him that his master Seth

SAINT SHRI NARSI BHAGAT – A GREAT DEVOTEE OF LORD KRISHNA

had sent few items for the Godh Bharai ceremony for the bride Sursena Bai. Shri Narsi Mehta immediately understood that Lord Krishna had made all these arrangements for him.

Shri Narsi Mehta then went with those items to the house of Shri Madan Mehta Ji, and performed Godh Bharai ceremony. Delighted and feeling pleasure on this, Shri Madan Mehta Ji repented on writing such a letter to Shri Narsi Mehta and apologised.

Few days after this Godh Bharai ceremony, the marriage of Shama Das was performed with Sursena Bai with great pomp and show.

Sursena Bai was a very pious, religious and Sanskari (cultured) girl. She was very happy to live with her husband and parents-in-laws even in poverty. The time passed on. Shri Narsi Mehta, now called as 'Sant Narsi Bhagat' by everyone, continued to have his similar simple life style as before, praying to the Lord, serving Sadhus, composing and singing poems in the glory of the Lord.

Shraadh of Father of Shri Narsi Mehta

Whenever the month of Pitrapaksh arrived, usually elder brother of Shri Narsi Bhagat, Shri Banshidhar Mehta, used to perform this ritual at his home. Since this was a family ritual, he always used to invite family of his younger brother Shri Narsi Mehta to participate in the ritual. This year also, he went to invite the family of Shri Narsi Mehta and instructed him to be present early in the morning at 7 AM at his house to perform this ritual. The morning of the day was the usual time for Shri Narsi Mehta to chant his prayers to the Lord, to offer Him Naivaidya and serve the Sadhus. He politely said to Shri Banshidhar Mehta, 'O respected brother, usually you used to perform this ritual in the mid of the day. Now, you have shifted to perform this ritual for early in the morning. You know this is the time for me to be with my Lord and Sadhu friends. I have to offer Naivaidya (food offering to the Lord) to the Lord and feed Sadhu friends in the morning. I will join you in this ritual later in the day.'

Shri Banshidhar Mehta was furious on disobeying his instructions by his younger brother. He left the house of Shri Narsi Mehta in anger saying there was no need for him and his family to come to his house. He should perform this ritual by himself in his house, if he desired so.

Shri Narsi Bhagat accepted the dictum of his brother and said, 'if that is what you want my respected brother, I will try to do so. I know I am not a rich person like yourself, so may offer feast to only few Brahmins and perform this ritual at my home.'

श्रद्धा दीयते अनेनेति श्राद्धं ।

Shraddhaa Deeyate Aneneti Shraaddham .

‘Shraddh should be performed according to the faith.’

There should not be any pomp and show to show off one’s wealth by inviting and feeding numerous people to the Shraddh ceremony.

When the day of Shraddh arrived, there was nothing in the house of Shri Narsi Mehta to cook for the feast of the Brahmins. Manik Bai gave her gold ear rings to Shri Narsi Bhagat to sell and get some money to buy food items to cook for the feast of the Brahmins.

Tulasi Das Ji has said that a pious wife will do everything to share the grief of her husband and stand with him in the time of difficulties.

धीरज धरम मित्र और नारी, आपत काल परखिये चारी ।

Dheeraj Dharam Mitra Aur Naaree, Aapat Kaal Parakhiye Chaaree .

‘Patience, religion, friend and wife, these four should be tested during the time of troubles.’

Shri Narsi Bhagat sold the ear rings of his wife, and bought necessary raw food items for the feast of the ritual to be cooked. However, he forgot to buy Ghee. When he reached home with those items, Manik Bai told him that the food cooked from these items would only suffice for 6 to 7 people, so he could invite four or five Brahmins for feast. While going to invite Brahmins, he should buy Ghee also from the market.

‘That is fine’, said Shri Narsi Bhagat, and left to invite few Brahmins.

When he reached the central market of the town, he met with some so-called dignified people of his community. They asked him, where was he

going? A simple hearted Bhagat told them that he was going to perform the ritual of Shradh of his father, and was going to invite few Brahmins for the feast.

‘Why few Brahmins Bhagat Ji? We all should have the right to participate in the ritual and partake Prasadam’, mocked these so-called dignified community members. They knew very well that poor Bhagat Ji had no financial means to feed all of them.

‘You are certainly right. Of course, you all have the right to partake Prasadam. However, I guess all of you would have been invited by my rich elder brother Banshidhar tomorrow for the feast. Who will accept invitation of this poor person?’, said politely Shri Narsi Bhagat.

“Do not worry about invitation of feast at your brother’s house, Bhagat Ji. We all will be happy to come to your house in the morning, offer Naivaidya to the Lord and then share Prasadam with you and your family”, said all the Brahmins present there in one voice.

This is how the evil people always become very polite when they want to mock a gentleman. These evil Brahmins wanted to make fun of this simple hearted Bhagat. Knowing that this was not within the means of his financial resources, they forced him literally to invite them.

Shri Narsi Bhagat thought in his mind, ‘Look at the devotion to the Lord and simplicity of these kind hearted Brahmins. They want to participate with me in Naivadya offering to the Lord and then share Prasadam. How I can refuse them not to take part in this great service to the Lord?’

Shri Narsi Bhagat then told them, 'Of course, why not? All of you are welcome to my house tomorrow to participate in the offering of Naivaidya to the Lord, and then partake Prasadam.'

On the day of Shraddh, Shri Narsi Bhagat got up early in the morning in Brahm Muhurta as usual, and went for his daily routine. He took bath in the pond, and then commenced praying and chanting the name of the Lord. He was so engrossed in his devotion and meditation on the Lord, that he forgot the concept of time. He remembered the following Shlok, and engrossed in meditation.

ॐ पार्थाय प्रतिबोधितां भगवता नारायणेन स्वयं व्यासेन ग्रथितां
पुराणमुनिना मध्ये महाभारतम् ।
अष्टैतामृतवर्षिणीं भगवतीम्- अष्टादशाध्यायिनीम् अम्ब त्वामनुसन्दधामि
भगवद्-गीते भवद्वेषिणीम् ॥

**Pārthāya Pratibodhitām Bhagavatā Nārāyaṇena Svayaṁ .
Vyāseṇa Grathitām Purāṇa-Muninā Madhye Mahābhārate .
Advaitāmṛta-Varṣiṇīm Bhagavatīm Aṣṭādaśādhyāyiniṁ .
Amba Tvām Anusandadhāmi Bhagavad-Gīte Bhava-Dveṣiṇīm .**

“O Bhagavad Gita, destroyer of rebirth(s), thou hast been instructed to Partha (son of Prutha) by Lord Narayana himself and later included by the ancient sage Vyasa within the Mahabharata. Showerer of the nectar of Advaita, of eighteen chapters, Oh Mother! I meditate upon thee”

It was early mid-day now, but Manik Bai saw no sign of Shri Narsi Bhagat. She cooked the food for few Brahmins with her daughter-in-law from whatever raw ingredients she had. She started thinking, 'It looks that either my husband is engrossed in the prayer of the Lord, or has fallen sick. O Lord, take care of my husband. What should I do now?'

Her son Shamal Das and daughter-in-law were also worried about the welfare of Shri Narsi Bhagat, and commenced praying the Lord.

When she was thinking in such a way, she heard footsteps on the door. 'O, it looks like that my husband is back,' a smile came back to her face. She saw her husband with few people carrying utensils filled with food. 'What is this Swami? Why have you brought so much food?', asked Manik Bai. Shri Narsi Bhagat calmly told her that he had invited all the Brahmins of the community, and this food was for them. He asked her not to worry from where the food came, but to get ready to serve the Brahmins who would be on the door at any moment.

Soon, tens of Brahmins came to the house of Shri Narsi Bhagat. Manik Bai fed them all to their satisfaction. This was such a divine and delicious food that they had never eaten such a food in their life time. Satisfied, they left the house of Shri Narsi Bhagat, repenting on their thinking of mocking him. They bowed to the Idol of Lord Krishna in the house of Shri Narsi Bhagat, and asked for His forgiveness.

When Shri Narsi Mehta, who was still meditating on the Lord near the pond, returned to his consciousness, he realised that it was already afternoon. He rushed to the house chanting the name of Lord Krishna. 'O Lord, how would Manik Bai would have managed without me when she would have seen tens of Brahmins turning at the doorstep for food? My prestige would have gone down the hill. These Brahmins would have been mocking me,' murmured Shri Narsi Bhagat.

When Shri Narsi Mehta reached home, he saw Brahmins returning to their respective houses after having sumptuous meal. He could not understand how did this happen and asked Manik Bai, 'I am sorry Manik. I got engrossed in meditation to the Lord, and thus got late. What happened? I

am seeing tens of Brahmins chanting my admiration, and returning to their respective homes very satisfied.'

Manik Bai replied, 'Why are you joking with me? You just performed the ritual of Pitrapaksha for your father and fed these Brahmins with the food you brought in several utensils.'

Shri Narsi Bhagat sat on the floor and murmured, 'O my Lord, how I could I ever repay your kindness. You saved my prestige today'.

He said to Manik Bai, "My dear, it was not me. I was near the pond engrossed in the meditation of the Lord. It is obvious that the Lord Himself came in my disguise, did all the ritual, and fed these Brahmins.'

Shri Narsi Bhagat, Manik Bai, Shamal Das and daughter-in-law, then, bowed to the Lord, and commenced singing His glory.

Shri Narsi Bhagat then composed the Bhajan and all sang with him.

वैष्णव जन तो तेने कहिये जे पीड़ परायी जाणे रे ।
वैष्णव जन तो तेने कहिये जे पीड़ परायी जाणे रे ॥
पर दुख्खे उपकार करे तोये मन अभिमान ना आणे रे ।
वैष्णव जन तो तेने कहिये जे पीड़ परायी जाणे रे ॥
सकळ लोक मान सहुने वंदे नींदा न करे केनी रे ।
वाच काछ मन निश्चळ राखे धन धन जननी तेनी रे ॥
वैष्णव जन तो तेने कहिये जे पीड़ परायी जाणे रे ।
सम दृष्टी ने तृष्णा त्यागी पर स्त्री जेने मात रे ॥
जिह्वा थकी असत्य ना बोले पर धन नव झाली हाथ रे ।
वैष्णव जन तो तेने कहिये जे पीड़ परायी जाणे रे ॥
मोह माया व्यापे नही जेने द्रिढ़ वैराग्य जेना मन मान रे ।
राम नाम सुन ताळी लागी सकळ तिरथ तेना तन मान रे ॥

वैष्णव जन तो तेने कहिये जे पीड़ परायी जाणे रे ।
वण लोभी ने कपट रहित छे काम क्रोध निवार्या रे ।।
भणे नरसैय्यो तेनुन दर्शन कर्ता कुळ एकोतेर तारया रे ।
वैष्णव जन तो तेने कहिये जे पीड़ परायी जाणे रे ।।

Vaishnav Jan To Tene Kahiye Je, Peed Parae Jane Re,
Vaishnav Jan To Tene Kahiye Je, Peed Parae Jane Re,
Par Dukhe Upkar Kare Toye, Man Abhiman Na Aane Re.
Vaishnav Jan To Tene Kahiye Je, Peed Parae Jane Re,
Sakal Lok Maan Sahune Vande, Ninda Naa Kare Keni Re,
Vach Kachh Mann N ishchal Rakhe, Dhan Dhan Janani Teni Re.
Vaishnav Jan To Tene Kahiye Je, Peed Parae Jane Re,
Sam Drishti Ne Trishna Tyagi, Par Stri Jene Maat Re,
Jivha Thaki Ashatya Na Bole, Par Dhan Nav Jhali Hath Re.
Vaishnav Jan To Tene Kahiye Je, Peed Parae Jane Re,
Moh Maya Vyape Nahi Jene, Dradh Vairagya Jena Mann Maan Re,
Ram Naam Sun Tali Lagi, Sakal Tirth Tena Tan Mann Re.
Vaishnav Jan To Tene Kahiye Je, Peed Parae Jane Re,
Van Lobhi Ne Kapat Rahit Chhe, Kaam Krodh Nivarya Re,
Bhane Narsaiyo Tenun Darshan Karta, Kul Ekoter Tarya Re.
Vaishnav Jan To Tene Kahiye Je, Peed Parae Jane Re,

'One who is a Vaishnav (Devotee of Vishnu), knows the pain of others. He always does good to others without letting pride enter his mind. A Vaishnav tolerates and praises the entire world. He does not speak ill of others. He keeps his promises. His actions and thoughts are pure. His mother is blessed indeed. A Vaishnav sees everything equally. He rejects greed and avarice. He respects women as he respects his own mother. Though his tongue may be tired, but he will utter no untruth. He never touches the property of others. A Vaishnav does not succumb to worldly attachments. He has renounced lust of all types and anger. The poet Narsi

will like to see such a person by whose virtue, the entire family gets salvation.

Shri Narsi Bhagat was a true ascetic as described by Lord Krishna in Shrimadbhagwad Gita.

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

**अनाश्रितः कर्मफलं कार्यं कर्म करोति यः ।
स संन्यासी च योगी च न निरग्निर्न चाक्रियः ॥**

Shrī bhagavān uvācha.

**Anāshritaḥ karma-phalaṁ kāryaṁ karma karoti yaḥ.
Sa sannyāsī cha yogī cha na niragnir na chākriyaḥ.**

'The Supreme Lord said: Those who perform prescribed duties without desiring the results of their actions are actual Sanyāsīs (renunciates) and Yogis, not those who have merely ceased performing sacrifices such as agni-hotra yajña or abandoned bodily activities.'

Nirvan of Shamal Das and Manik Gauri

The time passed on. Shri Narsi Bhagat and Manik Gauri Bai were very happy with their daughter-in-law, Sursena Bai, who was indeed Lakshmi incarnate. She won the heart of not only her parents-in-law but everyone in the community. Only few years have passed to their happily married life, then, one day Shamal Das fell seriously ill. The physician did his best to save him, but unfortunately, he could not be saved.

The shock of the death of Shamal Das had tremendous effect on the health of his mother Manik Bai and his wife Sursena Bai. Shri Narsi Bhagat tried his best to console both of them. Though Shri Narsi Bhagat himself was devastated by the death of his young son, but he was a true devotee of the Lord. In his eyes, there was always some good hidden in any materialistic sorrow. Perhaps, Lord wanted his all attention towards Him, so he was taking away all his materialistic affiliations one by one. He remembered an incident of the life of Kunti. After the great war of Mahabharat was over, and evil Ashwathama had killed all the five sons of Draupadi too, Kunti was though greatly devastated by the loss of her all grandchildren, still when Lord Krishna asked her to get a boon from Him, she requested Madhav to give her more sorrows. In sorrow, we continue to remember the Lord and seek His protection. In pleasure, normally we forget remembering the Lord, and engross ourselves in enjoying the pleasure which is transient.

He composed a poem to console his wife Manik Bai and daughter-in-law Sursena Bai.

भलुं थयुं भंगी जंजाल, सुखे भजीशुं श्रीगोपाल ।

**Bhalum Thayum Bhangee Janjaal,
Sukhe Bhajeeshum Shree Gopaal.**

'Thanks Lord, you have taken away the whirlpool. Now we can sing the glory of the Lord with great pleasure.'

The faith and preaching of Saint Shri Narsi Bhagat had some effect on Manik Bai, but after all, she was a mother. Her health continued to deteriorate.

On one Ekadasi day, Shri Narsi Bhagat was invited by one of his low caste followers to conduct Kirtan in his house. He knew that his wife Manik Bai was not well and she needed his company. Still, he could not refuse to conduct Kirtan at the house of his devotee. He requested his daughter-in-law Sursena Bai to look after her, and left to conduct Kirtan at devotee's house.

The Kirtan went on for whole of the night. When he returned next day morning from the Kirtan, Manik Bai was counting her last breaths. As a matter of fact, she was just waiting for her husband to return so that she could leave this mortal body to go to her heavenly abode on his lap. Realising that the condition of Manik Bai had worsened, he did everything to save her, but in vain. Manik Bai had attained nirvana.

Bhakt Shiromani Shri Narsi Mehta was devastated by the death of his wife. But he was a true devotee of the Lord. He tried to calm his mind by remembering the words of the Lord Krishna in Shrimadbhagvad Gita.

**यो न हृष्यति न द्वेष्टि न शोचति न काङ्क्षति ।
शुभाशुभपरित्यागी भक्तिमान्यः स मे प्रियः ॥**

**Yo na hrīṣhyati na dveṣṭī na śhochati na kāṅkṣati .
śhubhāśhubha-parityāgī bhaktimān yaḥ sa me priyaḥ .**

‘Those who neither rejoice in mundane pleasures nor despair in worldly sorrows, who neither lament for any loss nor hanker for any gain, who renounce both good and evil deeds, such persons who are full of devotion are very dear to Me.’

The death of Manik Bai spread like a wild fire in the town. Manik Bai was very kind hearted and loving person. She was always prepared to help others. Even though many people were jealous of Sant Shiromani Shri Narsi Bhagat Ji, but everyone liked Manik Bai. Thousands of people gathered at the house of Shri Narsi Bhagat Ji to take part in the funeral procession of Manik Bai.

Shri Narsi Bhagat performed all the last rites of his wife according to Shruti. It was usual those days that funeral procession was led by another respected person of the community as the family was absorbed in the grief, and not in position to entertain the guests. As such, this procession was led by Shri Sharangdhar Mehta, a respectable person of the society. Shri Sharangdhar Mehta never liked Shri Narsi Bahgat Ji. Apparently, he was showing sadness and offering his condolences on the death of Manik Bai, but internally, he was looking for an opportunity to find a way to insult Shri Narsi Bhagat. He found an opportunity to do so.

Shri Sharangdhar Mehta advised Shri Narsi Bhagat Ji, ‘O Bhagat, it is tradition of the Nagar Brahmin Samaj that all the people attending funeral ceremony should be invited to the funeral feast on the thirteenth day of this ritual. So, on your behalf, as I am leading the funeral procession, I invite all the Nagar Brahmins to come to your house on 13th day for a funeral feast.’

Narsi Bhagat Ji replied to Shri Shrangdhar Mehta, 'O holy and pious Brahmin Shrangdhar Ji, you know I am a poor Brahmin, and have no means to feed such a large community in hundreds. The Shruti says that one should perform the ritual ceremony according to his means. I am thinking of inviting couple of Brahmins to complete the ritual.'

Shri Shrangdhar Mehta reacted to this statement of Shri Narsi Mehta Ji, 'No, no, you cannot do this. This is against our tradition. Unless you get blessings of all the community members, the soul of your wife will not rest at peace. There is no excuse. You have to invite all the Nagar Brahmins for the funeral feast.'

Before Shri Narsi Mehta would have uttered any words, Shri Shrangdhar Mehta addressed all the Nagar Brahmin community present there, and invited all of them on the thirteenth day of the ritual for a grand feast.

Shri Narsi Bhagat Ji started thinking, how he might do that? He went to the traditional chef for an advice on how much money he might need for the feast of nearly 1,000 people. The cook advised him that it might cost around Rupees 700.

Rs 700 was a very big amount for Shri Narsi Bhagat Ji. He did not even have Rs 7 in his pocket. He thought of arranging the money by taking loan from a money lender. He had nothing to mortgage to money lender. Why a money lender should risk giving loan to a poor person like Shri Narsi Mehta who had nothing to mortgage, and no means to repay? He sat in the prayer to the Lord. When he finished his Kirtan, he decided to go to the money lender anyway, and to try if he could get a loan of Rs 700.

The town money lender knew Shri Narsi Bhagat Ji very well. He knew that his wife had died just now. He welcomed him and offered his condolences.

He, then, asked the reason for his visit to him. Shri Narsi Bhagat Ji, hesitantly, asked him if he could give extend him a loan of Rs 700 to perform funeral feast rite of his wife. He had nothing to mortgage, but he promised that as soon as he could, he would repay this money with any interest money lender might charge to him.

Money lender looked at him and said, 'Bhagat Ji, I know you are a very honest person, a devotee of the Lord and will stick to your words. Sure, you will repay my money, I have no doubt about that. But I have a principle. I do not lend the money without mortgaging something from the borrower. I cannot deviate from this principle. If you do not mind, I will accept one hair of your moustache as mortgage. As far as interest on the money is concerned, I have to show my face to the Lord one day. I will rot in hell if I charge any interest from a great devotee of the Lord like yourself. So, if you accept my conditions, that is, mortgage your one hair of moustache and agree not to insist me to charge any interest, I am happy to give you a loan of Rs 700. You may repay this at your convenience.'

Shri Narsi Mehta thanked the Lord, accepted the conditions of the money lender, gave one hair of his moustache to the money lender as a mortgage, and took the money.

He, then, performed the grand funeral feast for his wife with all Nagar Brahmins joining him.

The funeral ceremony was over with due rites according to Shruti including grand feast. Shri Narsi Bhagat continued to think how to repay the money he took on loan from the money lender? The Lord was listening his prayers, and making arrangements for Shri Narsi Mehta Ji to repay this loan.

Few pilgrims of the town were planning to go to the pilgrimage of Dwarka to pay their respects to Lord Krishna. Those were the days when there was no banking system that one could deposit money at one place and withdraw at other place. It was very risky to travel with cash because of thieves and dacoits on the way. Those days, a Hundi system was in place. A Hundi was an unconditional order in writing made by a person in his own town directing another person in other town who was usually his associate to pay a certain sum of money to a person named in the order. The pilgrims approached the money lender of the town to accept the money from them, and to write a Hundi for them for Dwarka to his associate. Perhaps it was the God's Will. The money lender advised them that he had no associate in Dwarka, but he knew of a person who had an associate in Dwarka, and might write Hundi for them. It was Shri Narsi Bhagat. His associate Krishna is in Dwaraka.

The pilgrims believed the money lender and then arrived at the house of Shri Narsi Bhagat. Shri Narsi Mehta tried to convince them that perhaps they were misguided by the money lender. He had no associate in Dwarka. The pilgrims however insisted that the money lender had told them that Shri Narsi Bhagat had an associate in Dwarka by the name of Krishna. As soon as Shri Narsi Bhagat heard the name of Krishna as his associate, he understood that this is the Leela of the Lord. He agreed to write the Hundi. The amount of Hundi the pilgrims wanted was Rs 700, exactly the same amount Shri Narsi Mehta had to repay to the money lender. Shri Narsi Bhagat then accepted Rs 700 from the pilgrims, and wrote the Hundi in the name of 'Shyamla Girdhari' of Dwarka.

The pilgrims went to Dwarka with the Hundi, and after reaching Dwarka were looking for Seth Shyamla Girdhari. They looked everywhere, but could not find anyone by the name of Seth Shyamla Girdhari in Dwarka. They sat very sadly thinking they had been cheated by Shri Narsi Bhagat.

In the meantime, Shri Narsi Bhagat was continuing to pray Lord and composed a Bhajan in His glory.

म्हारी हुंडी स्वीकारो महाराज रे, सांवरा गिरधारी,
म्हाने एक छे थारो आधार रे, सांवरा गिरधारी,
म्हारी हुण्डी स्वीकारो महाराज रे, सांवरा गिरधारी ।।
राखि पत प्रहलाद की, धर नरसिंह अवतार,
खम्भ फाड़ प्रकट भए, तारयो भूमि को सारो भार रे,
सांवरा गिरधारी, म्हारी हुण्डी स्वीकारो महाराज रे,
सांवरा गिरधारी ।।

पूजी गोपी चंदन मेरो, तुलसी सोने रो हार,
साँचा गहना सांवरा, म्हारी दौलत छे,
झांझ कड़ताल रे, सांवरा गिरधारी,
म्हारी हुण्डी स्वीकारो महाराज रे, सांवरा गिरधारी ।।

राणा जी ने विष दियो, छल मीरा रे साथ,
प्याला विष अमृत भयो, राखि भक्ता की जाती लाज रे,
सांवरा गिरधारी,
म्हारी हुण्डी स्वीकारो महाराज रे, सांवरा गिरधारी ।।

म्हारी हुंडी स्वीकारो महाराज रे, सांवरा गिरधारी,
म्हाने एक छे थारो आधार रे, सांवरा गिरधारी,
म्हारी हुण्डी स्वीकारो महाराज रे, सांवरा गिरधारी ।।

mhaaree hundee sveekaaro mahaaraaj re, saanvara giradhaaree,
mhaane ek chhe thaaro aadhaar re, saanvara giradhaaree,
mhaaree hundee sveekaaro mahaaraaj re, saanvara giradhaaree.

**raakhi pat prahalaad kee, dhar narasinh avataar,
khambh phaad prakat bhe, taarayo bhoomi ko saaro bhaar re,
saanvara giradhaaree, mhaaree hundee sveekaaro mahaaraaj re,
saanvara giradhaaree.**

**poonjee gopee chandan mero, tulasee sone ro haar,
saancha gahana saanvara, mhaaree daulat chhe,
jhaanjh kadataal re, saanvara giradhaaree,
mhaaree hundee sveekaaro mahaaraaj re, saanvara giradhaaree..**

**raana jee ne vish diyo, chhal meera re saath,
pyaala vish amrt bhayo, raakhi bhakta kee jaatee laaj re,
saanvara giradhaaree, mhaaree hundee sveekaaro mahaaraaj re,
saanvara giradhaaree..**

**mhaaree hundee sveekaaro mahaaraaj re, saanvara giradhaaree,
mhaane ek chhe thaaro aadhaar re, saanvara giradhaaree,
mhaaree hundee sveekaaro mahaaraaj re, saanvara giradhaaree..**

When the pilgrims were sitting sadly in Dwarka in the temple of Lord, then a person in the costume of a Marwari businessman (Seth) approached them and asked if they were looking for Seth Shyamla Girdhari.

‘Yes, yes, we are’, said the pilgrims.

‘O, that is fine. I just got a message that you have a Hundi for Rs 700 addressed to me. Give it to me and take your Rs 700,’ said the Seth.

The pilgrims gave the Hundi and collected Rs 700 from the Seth. Their joy knew no bounds. From their hearts, a voice of ‘Jay Jaykar’ emerged for the Lord Krishna and Shri Narsi Bhagat.

SAINT SHRI NARSI BHAGAT – A GREAT DEVOTEE OF LORD KRISHNA

Here in Junagarh, the Lord appeared in the dream of Shri Narsi Bhagat and said, 'O Bhagat, your Hundi of Rs 700 has been encashed by the pilgrims. Now you go and repay Rs 700 to the money lender'. Shri Narsi Bhagat then repaid the loan of money lender.

Shri Madan Mehta, father of Sursena Bai was also very devastated on the death of his young son-in-law Shamal Das, and now Manik Bai. He came to Junagarh and requested Saint Shri Narsi Bhagat to send Sursena Bai with him to Vadnagar for few days for a change. Saint Shri Narsi Bhagat gladly agreed. Though Sursena Bai did not want to leave her father-in-law alone in such a condition, but her father persuaded her to come with him only for few days. Unfortunately, shocked with the death of her husband, and then mother-in-law, she also died after few months of this episode.

Shri Narsi Bhagat Outcasted by Brahmins

Shri Narsi Bhagat was a true devotee of the Lord and believed in the principle:

हरि को भजे, सो हरि को होइ ।

Hari Ko Bhaje, So Hari Ko Hoi

'The one who worships Lord, belongs to the Lord.'

He did not believe in discrimination based on religion, caste, social status, sex of devotees etc. On the request of his lower caste devotees, he used to freely go to their houses to conduct Kirtan. This did not go well among other Nagar high caste Brahmins of Junagarh. All the Nagar Brahmins of Junagarh held their so-called religious meeting, and outcasted Shri Narsi Bhagat.

Shri Krishna Rai, a respected Nagar Brahmin of Junagarh, organised a grand religious ceremony. He invited all the Nagar Brahmins of the town for a grand feast on a concluding ceremony of a function except Shri Narsi Bhagat. Lord is never happy if His devotee is insulted in any way. A miracle did happen during the feast of Shri Krishna Rai. When the feast was going on, every Brahmin noticed that a lower caste person was sitting and partaking meal side by side with him. The Brahmins thought that they had been polluted by Shri Krishna Rai, so left immediately without eating the food. Shri Krishna Rai was devastated. His offerings were not accepted by the Lord.

He told all the Brahmins that he did not do anything of this sort to displease them. He did not invite any lower caste person in the feast. He

requested all the Brahmins to gather again and forgave him. He also asked them to find a solution so that such things or illusions did not happen again.

There was a pious person by the name of Shri Anant Rai in that assembly of Brahmins. He told all the Brahmins that Shri Narsi Bhagat was a great devotee of the Lord. This all happened because we insulted him by not inviting him. The Lord would never accept the insult of His devotees. We should go and apologise to Shri Narsi Bhagat Ji. We should bring him back to our community by cancelling our dictum to outcaste him. Few other pious Brahmins also supported him. So, they decided to go to the house of Shri Narsi Bhagat to beg forgiveness from him. Saints have very soft heart. When the Brahmins approached to him with an intent to seek forgiveness, he immediately embraced them.

**सुहृन्मित्रार्युदासीनमध्यस्थद्वेष्यबन्धुषु ।
साधुष्वपि च पापेषु समबुद्धिर्विशिष्यते ॥**

**Suhṛin-mitrāryudāsīna-madhyastha-dveṣhya-bandhuṣhu .
Sādhuṣhvapi cha pāpeṣhu sama-buddhir viśiṣhyate .**

‘The yogis look upon all well-wishers, friends, foes, the pious, and the sinners with an impartial intellect. The yogi who is of equal intellect toward friend, companion, and foe, neutral among enemies and relatives, and impartial between the righteous and sinful, is considered to be distinguished among humans.’

Shri Narsi Mehta came with all the Brahmins to the house of Shri Krishna Rai, took part in the feast, and thus the offerings of Shri Krishna Rai were accepted by the Lord.

Mameru Ceremony of Kunwar Bai

As stated above, Kunwar Bai, daughter of Shri Narsi Bhagat was married in a well-to-do family with Shri Vasant Rai son of Shri Shrirang Mehta of Una village, Kathiawar, Gujarat. Kunwar Bai was very sacramental lady and fully dedicated to the family of her in-laws. She would do all the household work of her in-laws without complaining. Still, she was ill-treated in her in-law's family. Kunwar Bai was living with her husband in a joint family with parents-in-law, sister-in-law etc. Her mother-in-law and sister-in-law, both, were of very wicked nature. Her father Shri Narsi Mehta, being a poor person, was not able to send gifts on each festival of the year as was the custom in Gujarati families those days, and this was one of the reasons she had no respect in that materialistic family. Very often, she had to face taunts and ill words of her mother-in-law and sister-in-law. Secondly, unfortunately, she could not become mother for a long time. Her husband Shri Vasant Rai, who was a profligate, drunkard, and always irritable, used to threaten her to marry with another woman for progeny. Her contact with father Saint Shri Narsi Mehta was completely cut off. She was never allowed to visit her father after marriage. Unfortunately, lots of tragedies did happen in the life of her father such as death of her brother, mother and sister-in-law (Bhabhi), but she did not know of these happenings. Her only console was a good-natured father-in-law Shri Shrirang Mehta, who understood her inner feelings, but was unable to do anything for her because of fear of his wife and son.

She used to cry and pray alone in the prayer room in front of Lord Vitthal to be blessed to become mother. Finally, Lord listened her prayers and she became pregnant. When her pregnancy was in eighth month, as a custom in traditional Gujarat families, Mameru (Baby Shower) ceremony was to be performed. In this ceremony, father of the would-be mother brings gifts to the in-law's family. As her mother-in-law knew that her

father was a poor person and could not afford to give any gift, she did not even bother to invite him to this ceremony. Kunwar Bai had not seen her father for a long time, so she wanted to invite them. Her father-in-law could not see her daughter-in-law in that predicament and decided to invite her father for the Mameru ceremony. He asked his Purohit to go to Junagarh personally to invite Saint Shri Narsi Mehta.

This was afternoon time of the next day when Purohit arrived at the house of Shri Narsi Mehta with an invitation to participate in the Mameru ceremony of his daughter. Shri Narsi Bhagat had just finished his lunch. He welcomed the Purohit, offered him lunch and accepted the invitation with pure heart. The Purohit left to Kathiawar next day.

Shri Narsi Bhagat thought in his mind that perhaps this might be the last family (Sansaarik) duty he had to perform. He should try his best to please her daughter and her in-laws. But, how could he do that? He was a very poor person, not having even a single rupee in his pocket. How could he perform this grand Mameru ceremony appropriate to the status of the family of in-laws of his daughter? Pondering on this matter, he commenced Kirtan on the glory of the Lord, and prayed Him to be his saviour.

The day fixed for the Mameru ceremony was very close. He should leave now to Kathiawar so that he could reach in time for the ceremony. He requested some of his devotee friends (Sadhus) to accompany him, and they gladly accepted the offer. He then discussed the matter with them (Sadhus) on how they could go to Kathiawar? They advised him that as he was a well-known person in the town, if he could make a request to one of his acquaintances, that person might lend him an oxcart. He did so, and finally one of his acquaintances loaned him an oxcart, which was in a very depleted condition, with old oxen.

Shri Narsi Bhagat and Sadhus commenced their journey to Kathiawar in this old oxcart with old oxen singing the glory of the Lord. As oxcart was in a very poor shape, it broke down in the middle of the way. Shri Narsi Bhagat did not know what to do, and commenced praying Lord to rescue him. Then, all of a sudden from nowhere, to surprise of every one, a young man approached them and asked if he could help. Shri Narsi Bhagat talked about the broken oxcart. The young man said that he was a carpenter by profession and he could fix the cart. Shri Narsi Bhagat, very politely, told him that he was a very poor person, and had no money to offer him as his remuneration to repair the cart. If he could help voluntarily, Shri Narsi Bhagat would accept his kind gesture.

'Sure, no worries. I will not charge anything from you for my labour. Is it true that you are going to Kathiawar? I am also going to the same town to see one of my dear friends. If you could give me a lift in your oxcart, I would consider that as my remuneration', said the young man.

'Oh sure, that will be our pleasure', immediately nodded Shri Narsi Bhagat.

The young man who had tools in his bag, took them out and immediately commenced repairing the cart. In no time, he fixed the cart. Then, all started their journey to Kathiawar. As usual, Shri Narsi Bhagat commenced his Kirtan in the glory of the Lord.

दर्शन दो घनश्याम नाथ मोरी, अँखियाँ प्यासी रे ।
मन मंदिर की जोत जगा दो, घट घट वासी रे ॥

मंदिर मंदिर मूरत तेरी, फिर भी न दीखे सूरत तेरी ।
युग बीते ना आई मिलन की पूरनमासी रे ॥

द्वार दया का जब तू खोले, पंचम सुर में गूंगा बोले ।
अंधा देखे लंगड़ा चल कर पहुँचे काशी रे ॥

पानी पी कर प्यास बुझाऊँ, नैनन को कैसे समजाऊँ ।
आँख मिचौली छोड़ो अब तो मन के वासी रे ॥

निर्बल के बल धन निर्धन के, तुम रखवाले भक्त जनों के ।
तेरे भजन में सब सुख पाऊँ, मिटे उदासी रे ॥

नाम जपे पर तुझे ना जाने, उनको भी तू अपना माने ।
तेरी दया का अंत नहीं है, हे दुःख नाशी रे ॥

आज फैसला तेरे द्वार पर, मेरी जीत है तेरी हार पर ।
हर जीत है तेरी मैं तो, चरण उपासी रे ॥

द्वार खडा कब से मतवाला, मांगे तुम से हार तुम्हारी ।
नरसी की ये बिनती सुनलो, भक्त विलासी रे ॥

लाज ना लुट जाए प्रभु तेरी, नाथ करो ना दया में देरी ।
नरसी की ये बिनती सुन लो, भक्त विलासी रे ॥

Darshan do ghanashyaam naath moree, ankhiaaen pyaasee re.
Man mandir kee jot jaga do, ghaat ghaat vaasee re.

Mandir mandir moorat teree, phir bhee na deekhe soorat teree.
Yug beete na aae milan kee pooranamaasee re.

Dvaar daya ka jab too khole, pancham sur mein goonga bole.
Andha dekhe langada chal kar panhuche kaashee re.

**Paanee pee kar pyaas bujhaon, nainan ko kaise samajoon.
Aankh michaulee chhodo ab to man ke vaasee re.**

**Nirbal ke bal dhan nirdhan ke, tum rakhavaale bhakt janon ke.
Tere bhajan mein sab such paoon, mite udaasee re.**

**Naam jape par tujhe na jaane, unako bhee too apana maane.
Teree daya ka ant nahin hai, he dukkh naashee re.**

**Aaj phaisala tere dvaar par, meree jeet hai teree haar par.
Har jeet hai teree main to, charan upaasee re.**

**Dvaar khada kab se matavaala, maange tum se haar tumhaaree.
Narasee kee ye binatee sunalo, bhakt vilaasee re.**

Everyone was enchanted and fascinated with the melodious singing of the Bhajan by Shri Narsi Bhagat. They did not realise the time and soon reached at Kathiawar. On reaching Kathiawar, the young man bid good bye to Shri Narsi Bhagat and his companions. Shri Narsi Bhagat, then, approached to the house of Shri Shrirang Mehta Ji.

Unfortunately, Shri Shrirang Mehta Ji was not present in the house at that time. On hearing that some old poor man was waiting for her husband on the door of the house, his wife came to see him. She recognised Shri Narsi Bhagat. When she saw poor old Shri Narsi Bhagat with his devotee friends in an old oxcart without any gifts, she was furious. However, she could not turn him away. She ordered her maid to make arrangement to stay for Shri Narsi Bhagat and his companions in her cow ranch (Gaushala). Shri Narsi Bhagat politely accepted that offer and went to Gaushala with his companions.

When Kunwar Bai came to know that her father had arrived and was forced to stay in Gaushala, she was very sad. But what a poor lady could have done who was dependent on the mercy of her evil mother-in-law? She went to see her father at dawn. She saw him after a long time. Shri Narsi Bhagat was looking like a skeleton, an old weak person. She embraced her father and cried a lot. Shri Narsi Bhagat tried to console her. When she became normal after sometime, she asked about the welfare of her mother, brother and sister-in-law. Shri Narsi Bhagat first kept quiet, and after some time said, 'Do not worry, all are looked after by the Lord.'

Next day was the day of Memuru ceremony. It was a custom of those days that before offering any gift, father of the would-be-mother had to take bath, and be in wet cloths to offer first prayer then gifts. Perhaps, this was considered as part of the purifying ceremony. When Shri Narsi Bhagat arrived at the house of Shri Shrirang Mehta Ji from Gaushala, he was taken to an open courtyard of the house to take bath. The crooked wife of Shri Shrirang Mehta intentionally sent a bucket of boiling water to Shri Narsi Bhagat to take bath. Shri Narsi Bhagat politely asked for some cold water to mix into this hot water. The mother-in-law of Kunwar Bai then spoke in a rude and satirical tone, 'O Bhagat, I have heard that you are very dear to the Lord. Why do not you pray to Him that He showers some cold water for you from the sky?'

Hearing these disrespectful words of mother-in-law of Kunwar Bai, Shri Narsai Mehta asked his devotee companion to give Kartal to him. He then commenced praying and singing Bhajan in the glory of the Lord. He became deeply engrossed in singing Bhajan. Then, all of a sudden, cloud came from nowhere in the sky, and rain started pouring. Shri Narsi Bhagat took bath in the shower provided by the Lord.

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Everyone was curious to see the gifts which he might have brought. At the nick of the time, a gentleman, dressed as Marwari business man (Seth), approached the prayer place where Mameru ceremony was to be performed and asked for Shri Narsi Bhagat. He said that he had come from Dwaraka. He was son of a devotee of Shri Narsi Bhagat. During their difficult time, Shri Narsi Bhagat blessed them and gave some money which helped in their survival. With the blessings of Shri Narsi Bhagat, their business was now flourishing. He had come here to repay his debt. He had brought some gifts for this Mameru ceremony.

Seth Ji then opened the baskets of the gifts. Everyone in the family and those present in this ceremony got the gifts which they would have never imagined. There were 'Jay Jaykar' of Seth Ji and Shri Narsi Bhagat Ji all over. The mother-in-law of Kunwar Bai was very ashamed and fell at the feet of Shri Narsi Bhagat and begged forgiveness. Shri Narsi Bhagat, a kind hearted saint, forgave and embraced her.

Shri Narsi Bhagat knew that this Seth was none other than Lord Krishna Himself. He continued to pray Him. After completing the ceremony, he left next day to his hometown Junagarh, with his companions.

After returning to his native town, Shri Narsi Bhagat completely dedicated his life to the Lord. He continued to compose Bhajans and sing His glory. In Vikram Samvat 1577, he left this mortal world to live with his Lord for the eternity, and attained salvation.

The Poetic Work of Shri Narsi Bhagat

Shri Narsi Bhagat was a great Gujarati poet and an unparalleled devotee of Lord Krishna. He was such a great devotee of Lord Krishna that no worldly affair could deviate him from his ultimate goal to attain oneness with Lord Krishna.

The devotional poet Shri Narsi Bhagat's poetry is deep in pure devotion (Ananya Bhakti), mysticism and preaching for the purity of the immortal soul over the mere cleanliness of the mortal body. Many of his poems advocate the removal of the social evils like class and caste differences. He sings Krishna kirtan '**Vina Nar Sada Sootaki, Vimal Kidhe Vapu Shuddha Na Thaye**' (one who is away from devotion to Lord Krishna is untouchable, that is not worth human. Mere cleaning of the body does not assure purity). As stated above, Shri Narsi Bhagat's upper caste family could not accept his frequent visits and devotional musical evenings (Kirtans) at the lower-class habitats. Because of his peaceful, but revolutionary actions to bridge the gaps between class hierarchies and spread love and praise of Lord Krishna among them, Shri Narsi Bhagat's family boycotted him. Whenever his community people tried to show him the prevalent line of discrimination between upper and the lower class, Shri Narsi Bhagat laughed at them. He used to sing, '**Halva Karma No Hu Narsaiyo Mujne**' to '**Vaishnav Vhala Re Hari-Janthi Je Antar Ganesh Tena Fogat Fera Thala Re**' (I am the poet named Narsi who is a man of normal deeds. I love the Vaishnavas, who are free from differences between classes. The human life of those is wasted who distance themselves from the Harijans (God's people), that is lower caste people).

Shri Narsi Bhagat's poetry is simple, but deep in revoking the context from the Indian scriptures like Vedas and Upanishads. Shri Narsi Bhagat

affirms hope for the world peace and faith in the unison with the supreme Godhead Lord Krishna. He preaches to drop hypocrisy and vanity from human nature so that the path leading to the Supreme Being becomes smooth and thus one attains the real and true meaning of human life. Shri Narsi Bhagat infuses in his readers faith and confidence by saying, '**Hari Hari Ratan Kar, Kathan Kali Kal Ma, Dam Besenahikamsarse**' (Keep chanting the name of Hari (the name of God) in this Kaliyuga. It does not cost any money and your work will be done easily). He says that though material prosperity has always been the biggest desire of humans, but one who wants to be really prosperous should not compromise with ethics and loyalty towards Dharma. One should never forget the Supreme God who has been kind in bestowing blessings. Shri Narsi Bhagat says that material prosperity would not support you at the time of death. So, keep chanting the name of the God (Hari). Shri Narsi Bhagat says that a greedy person is a fool who does not take support of the trunk of a tree (the central support system) but a tiny branch that is vulnerable to the slightest unfavourable situation.

Many of Shri Narsi Bhagat's poetic lines are famous as proverbial statements. These lines are short but replete with deep philosophy and the truth of life. These lines also depict Shri Narsi Bhagat's personal life. Such proverbial poetic lines carry moral wisdom, universal truth, power of the Almighty, the role of destiny, and meaninglessness of vanity, arrogance and self-praise. At times, Shri Narsi Bhagat sounds a bit bitter when he unleashes his anger on the arrogant and hypocrite people who pointlessly claim for the credit for the tiniest success observed. Shri Narsi Bhagat says, '**Hu Karu Hu Karu Ej Agyanta, Shakat No Bhar lem Shwan Tane**' (It is the biggest ignorance to take credit for all the deeds. It is like a dog that walks beneath a cart and considers that it is he who carries the load of the cart).

Shri Narsi Bhagat's verses have distilled essence of devotion concerning Vedic wisdom that sings the glory of the Brahman, the Supreme Godhead. Shri Narsi Bhagat was born in the conservative society that misguidedly considered that applying a sandalwood Tilak, or wearing a Tulsi rosary or going to temples or worshipping a tree, river or mountain would bring you closer to the Lord. Shri Narsi Bhagat says that you may come closer to Almighty due to good deeds only. Like other Bhakta poets of the 15th century in India, Shri Narsi Bhagat also preached that the individual soul is a part of Brahma, so one should search the 'Supreme Element of God' within the inner self instead of applying any pretentious technique to be recognized as a knowledgeable devotee. In one of his verses, Shri Narsi Bhagat ridicules all the ornamental approaches to showcase love for religion and says, '**E Cheparpanchsahu Pet Bharva Tana Aatmaramparibrahmnajoyo Bhane Narsaiyo Ke Tatvadarshan Vina, Ratnachintamani Janm Khoyo**' (One who lives life under the fallacy of being recognized as the spokesperson of Dharma and God, can easily cheat on the ignorant people. Such people are actually wasting their human life as they are far away from the **Tatvadarshan** (the auspicious sight of the Truth incarnate). Shri Narsi Bhagat preaches to love God unconditionally instead of making efforts to impress Him by the pretentious manners.

Shri Narsi Bhagat addresses man with adjectives like '**Atmaram and Ratnachintamani**', meaning the soul itself is as pious as Lord and the human birth itself is like 'Ratnachintamani', the precious gem which can fetch whatever one desires. The wish for material pleasures or carnal desires, even if fulfilled, is vain as it does not pave the path for union with God. The human birth is to be used to attain oneness with God. The Soul, **Atmaram**, is indestructible even if the body is vanished (**Na Hanyate Hanyamane Sharire – Shimadbhagwad Gita**). The human body should be involved in the deeds that keep the soul as virtuous as it was

at the time of birth. Shri Narsi Bhagat is very suggestive in using these adjectives. There are many such philosophical verses that are simple in composition but deep in the contextual reference to the **Brahmgyaan**, the knowledge of the Supreme Godhead Brahma. He repeats the teachings of Lord Krishna, '**Janma karma cha me divyamevamyovettitattvatah Tyaktvadehampunarjanmanaiti mam eti so Arjuna**' (O Arjuna, one who knows the transcendental nature of my appearance and activities does not, upon leaving the body, take his birth again in this material world, but attains my eternal abode).

Shri Narsi Bhagat's verses sing the praise of the transcendental self of the Eternal God who can free humans from all kinds of worldly wretchedness and defencelessness. This is not possible with materialistic speculations. The serenity is attained when the intelligence is free from all doubts and suspicions regarding God's eternal existence. Shri Narsi Bhagat says, '**Jeev Ne Shiv To Capacocha E Thaya, Rachi Parpanch Chaud Lok Kidha Bhane Narsaiyo E Te J Tu**', **Ene Samryathi Kai Santsidhya** (God has created this world of His own Will. He parted the Jeev (human soul) from Shiva (Supreme Generous Soul). So, I, the poet Narsaiyo, announce that you are the same as the Supreme Soul. Those who keep faith in Him, they attain Him. Such pure souls (Punya-Jeevas) live for eternity who experience the invisible omnipresent God. On this divine level, where the devotee feels unison with God, his spiritual odyssey from Nirguna Brahma (the invisible and Impersonal form of God) to Saguna Brahma (the visible and personal form of God) commences.

There are incidents in Shri Narsi Bhagat's life when he surrenders completely to God's will with fathomless trust and devotion, and God himself intervenes in his life and solves the problematic situations. Shri Narsi Bhagat does not know how the puzzle of his worldly problem is solved, but he is sure about God's personal involvement in his life. It has

been highly exemplified how the function of Mameru at his daughter Kunwar Bai's home successfully got over without a single paisa in Shri Narsi Bhagat's pocket.

Shri Narsi Bhagat talks about dream and reality, and explains this co-existence of the 'Supreme Self' within the human self. The distance between **Chitt and Chaitanya** can be bridged over only by knowing the awakened and the sleeping state of the human life. The soul needs to be courageous to fight against pleasures and worldly temptations. With the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation and the sword of the spirit, the human soul should protect the divinity that it is born with. If the human life is spent without recognizing the true valour of the soul, it is like living a dormant life. But if this true Self is actualized, the life is worth living. The poet Shri Narsi Bhagat shows the difference between the awakened life and the sleeping life. He says, when awake, we live the material life and thus we live for worldly matters and completely forget our relation with the Supreme God. When asleep, we dream the unbelievable pleasures of life. The mystery lies in differentiating between the **Jagrit Awastha** (awakened status) to **Nidraa Awastha** (sleeping status). He explains that the **chitt** (the human soul) and the **Chaitanya** (the supreme Soul) are one and the Same. Chitt is the finite (**Apoorna**) entity and Chaitanya is the infinite (**Poorn**) one. The finite travels to attain infinity, and eventually arrive at the state of infinite happiness.

Shri Narsi Bhagat's words, '**Te J Tu**' (you are the same as the Almighty Supreme Soul) iterate the Vedic lines '**Tat Tvam Asi**' and thus instil confidence in us to have faith in the omnipotent God who is elusive yet tangible and invisible yet pervasive.

In fact, it is often believed that a powerful imagination has the capacity to manifest itself in the world of phenomena where potential energy gets

transformed into kinetic energy. At a deeper level, we could say that Shri Narsi Bhagat calls the world an illusion.

The poetic structure of Shri Narsi Bhagat rests on praise, love, faith and complete submission towards Lord Krishna. Shri Narsi Bhagat's poems use love as a symbol of surrender. His poems have the natural potential of complete devotion, faith and surrender to Lord Krishna. These poems are powerfully yet effortlessly written in a lucid flow of unconditional love of the poet.

The metaphors, allegories and symbols are drawn so accurately that a reader devotee will almost take a devotional plunge into the ocean of ecstasy created by the overwhelmingly emotional heart of Shri Narsi Bhagat. The heartfelt recitation of these poems is instrumental in awaking the dormant emotions and expressing them in the manifestation of love and surrender towards the Supreme Being. Shri Narsi Bhagat's poems have transcendental effect. For the one who understands Shri Narsi Bhagat's pure love for the Supreme Being, self-submission (**aatm-samarpan**) becomes natural and also evident.

His poetic collections based on his autobiography include, **Putra Vivah, Mameru, Hundi, Har Same No Pada, Jhari Na Pada**, and compositions depicting acceptance of Harijans. These works deal with the incidents from the poet's personal life and reveal how he encountered the Divine in various guises. They consist of 'miracles' showing how Narsaiyya's Lord helped his devotee in the time of crises.

There are other miscellaneous narratives, which include, **Chaturis, Sudama Charit, Dana Leela**, and episodes based on Srimad Bhagwatam. These are the earliest examples of **Akhyana** or narrative type of compositions found in Gujarati.

There are 52 compositions resembling **Geeta Govinda** dealing with various expressions of love of Radha and Lord Krishna. **Dana Leela** poems dealing with the episodes of Lord Krishna collecting his dues (Dana is toll, tax or dues) from Gopies who were going to sell buttermilk to Mathura.

Sudama Charit is a narrative describing the well-known story of Lord Krishna and his childhood friend Sudama.

Govinda Gamana (Departure of Govind) relates the episode of Akroor taking away Lord Krishna from Gokul.

Surata Sangrama (the Battle of Love) depicts a battle, the amorous play, between Radha and Gopies on the one side and Lord Krishna and his Gwaal Baals on the other.

There are hundreds of padas dealing with the Shrangar adventures and the amorous exploits of Radha and Lord Krishna like Ras Leela, referred as **Songs of Shrangar**. Various clusters of padas like **Rasahasrapadi** and **Shrangar Mala** fall under this category. Their dominant note is Shrangar. They deal with stock situations like the ossified Nayaka-Nayika Bheda of classical Sanskrit Kavya poetics.

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Dr. Yatendra Sharma, the author of this book, was born in a Sanatan Dharma Hindu family. Following his family traditions, he developed an interest in reading, listening, and narrating religious scriptures since his childhood. He learnt Sanskrit in his childhood from his grandfather Shri Bhagwan Das Ji and Shri Saligram Sharma Agnihotri Ji, the great scholar of Sanskrit and retired Principal of Naravar Sanskrit Mahavidyalay. He completed his Doctorate in chemical technology from the Technical University of Graz, Austria, and now serving the mining and mineral industry of Western Australia for more than three decades.

In 2016, with the help of some like-minded friends, he founded a religious organisation 'Shri Ram Katha Sansthan Perth', based on the teachings of Bhagwan Swami Ramananda Ji Acharya Maharaj, and following the traditions of 'Shri Ramanandi Sampraday'. Shri Ram Katha Sansthan Perth is continually publishing books and booklets on the life stories of the great Sanatan Dharma Saints, Devs, Devis etc, to create awareness about the Sanatan Dharma culture to the followers of Sanatan Dharma.



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