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Issue 2

Ghanshyam Youth Vision

by Ghanshyam Youth Mandal – Shree Swaminarayan Mandir, Grand Prairie, Texas

Inspired by H.H. Acharya Shree Rakeshprasadji Maharaj
Vadtal – Shree Laxmi-Narayan Dev Gadi



Shree Ghanshyam Maharaj
Grand Prairie, Texas

SPECIAL VISHABDI MAHOTSAV ARTICLES:

- Vastras of Shree Ghanshyam Maharaj
- Rukmani Vivah
- Shobha Yatra
- Annakut Utsav

DEEPOTSAVI by Shastri Hariprasaddasji Swami

Deepotsavi is the celebration of light and happiness. It is not just one holiday but a combination of several, Dhan-Teras, Kali-Chaudash, Diwali, New Years Day, and Bhai-Beej. Each of these five days brings five unique ancient messages to our lives every year.

Dhan-Teras – The day of Laxmi Puja (Honoring the Goddess of Wealth). Laxmiji is considered our mother and is respected. The message behind this day is that since Laxmiji is our mother, then we should treat her with respect and treat our wealth with the same respect not squander it carelessly.

Kali-Chaudash – This day is also known as “Narak-Chaturdashi” or “The day of Darkness” because the demon Narkaaraar imprisoned 16,000 women in jail and Shree Krishna Bhagwan and Satya-Bhaamaa got together and killed the demon and freed the women. So on this day, all of the evils in our life such as laziness, procrastination, immoral thoughts, and others should be cleaned out and removed from life and we should pray to Hanumanji to help us with this task.

Diwali – On this day, all of the merchants balance their profits and losses and settle any debts to get a clean start on the year so like the merchants we should also do the same in our life. We should look into our soul and remove any forms of hatred, jealousy, ego, spitefulness and fill with love, happiness, excitement, and faith.

New Year Day – Nootan Varsh. This day is also known as “Bali-Pratipadaa”. On this day, the demon Bali, even though he was a demon, he was also very generous. He would only see the good qualities in everyone. So on this day, we should forget and forgive old misunderstanding and begin the year with positive thoughts.

Bhai-Beej – This day is also known as “Yam-Dwitiya”. On this day, Yamunaaji invited her brother Yam Raja to her house for a feast. Yam Raja was happy with Yamunaaji and granted her a wish. Yamunaaji asked Yam Raja that any sister invites their brother for a feast on this day to shower their lives with love and happiness.

Tilak Chandlo by Dhiren Patel

An auspicious ‘U’ mark on the forehead with circular mark inside it is a symbol of Shreeji Maharaj. This is a sign of dedication.

The mark reminds that we are servants Maharaj, and we should follow his orders. We should be ashamed of doing

bad things. We would be saved from being spoiled. He will protect us.

This is the symbol of our Sampraday, we must have it always. ‘U’ mark is the symbol of Shreeji Maharaj’s feet and the circular red mark inside is a symbol of Devotee.



Vishabdi Mahotsav - Vastras of Shree Ghanshyam Maharaj by Pushti Mehta



Vastras during Raas Utsav



Vastras during Rukhmani Vivah



Vastras during Annakut

As good as everyone was looking at the "Vishabdi Mahotsav"; the best dressed was of course, Shree Hari. I couldn't help but notice how Bhagwan Swaminarayan has different vastras and alankars every day. Each day was something new but, the vastras always matched the celebration being held. There were nine days in the Mahotsav and Shreeji Maharaj looked just spectacular each day. It is going to be very difficult for me to describe the vastras in detail because even the details had details. But, here are the vastras as good as I can describe them.

The first day was Krishna Janmotsav. The jarakasi jamo was beautiful silver with lots of beautiful designs in it that day. And for alankar, Shree Ghanshyam had two necklaces, each one as beautiful as Shree Hari himself. Also He had a mala made out of flowers. With the Jarkasi Jamo he had on orange khes.

The next day was Makhan Utsav. That day prabhu had worn a beautiful combination of pink and green. On top he had a pink and green Jarakasi Jamo. And the bottom (dhoti) was pink with silver lining. On Makaan utsav, Swaminarayan Bhagwan had on countless pearls which suited him well. And as always: "Mastak upere re dharyu molidu amul."

The next day of the Mahotsav was Govardhan Utsav. This day, Shreeji Maharaj had on a combination of brown and pink. The top was a chocolate brown and pink. The bottom was all pink and had silver and blue lining. There were beautiful malas on Shree Hari with a little mala on his vastra.

The next day of Mahotsav was Raas Utsav. That was the day everyone was amazed by the vastras of Bhagwan Swaminarayan because, Shree hari was dressed only with flowers of five different colors.

The next day in the exciting Mahotsav was Kid's program. Shreeji Maharaj was dressed in a combination of different shades of brown and blue. The top was two different shades of brown and the blue. The bottom was blue and had silver and red lining. Also, Shree Hari had on lots of alankar making it impossible to see his blue khes.

The next day was Rukhmani Vivah. Shree Hari had worn a beautiful Jarkasi Jamo which was green just like the bottom except the top had a beautiful design much like an engraving in it. Swaminarayan Bhagwan sure looked like he was celebrating a wedding with all the alankar he had on.

On the day of the Yagna and Shobha Yatra, Shree Ghanshyam Maharaj was dressed appropriately like a king. His dress consisted of blue and red with very intricate embroidery. It also had two white swans near the middle of the surval which highlighted the whole dress. On the final day, Shree Hari had worn one dress for the Maha-Abhishek and another dress during the annakut. During the Abhishek, He was dress in all pink with a blue khes. The Khes has intricate golden embroidery design. The best vagha was saved for the final event which was the annakut. The colors were brown and teal blue. The whole vagha was filled with diamond embroidery. In the bright colorful light, Shree Hari gleamed and sparkled. So now you know how beautiful Bhagwan Swaminarayan looked each day. This was a brief description of Shree Hari's vastras throughout the Vishabdi Mahotsav.

Vishabdi Mahotsav – Annakut Utsav By Shyam Patel

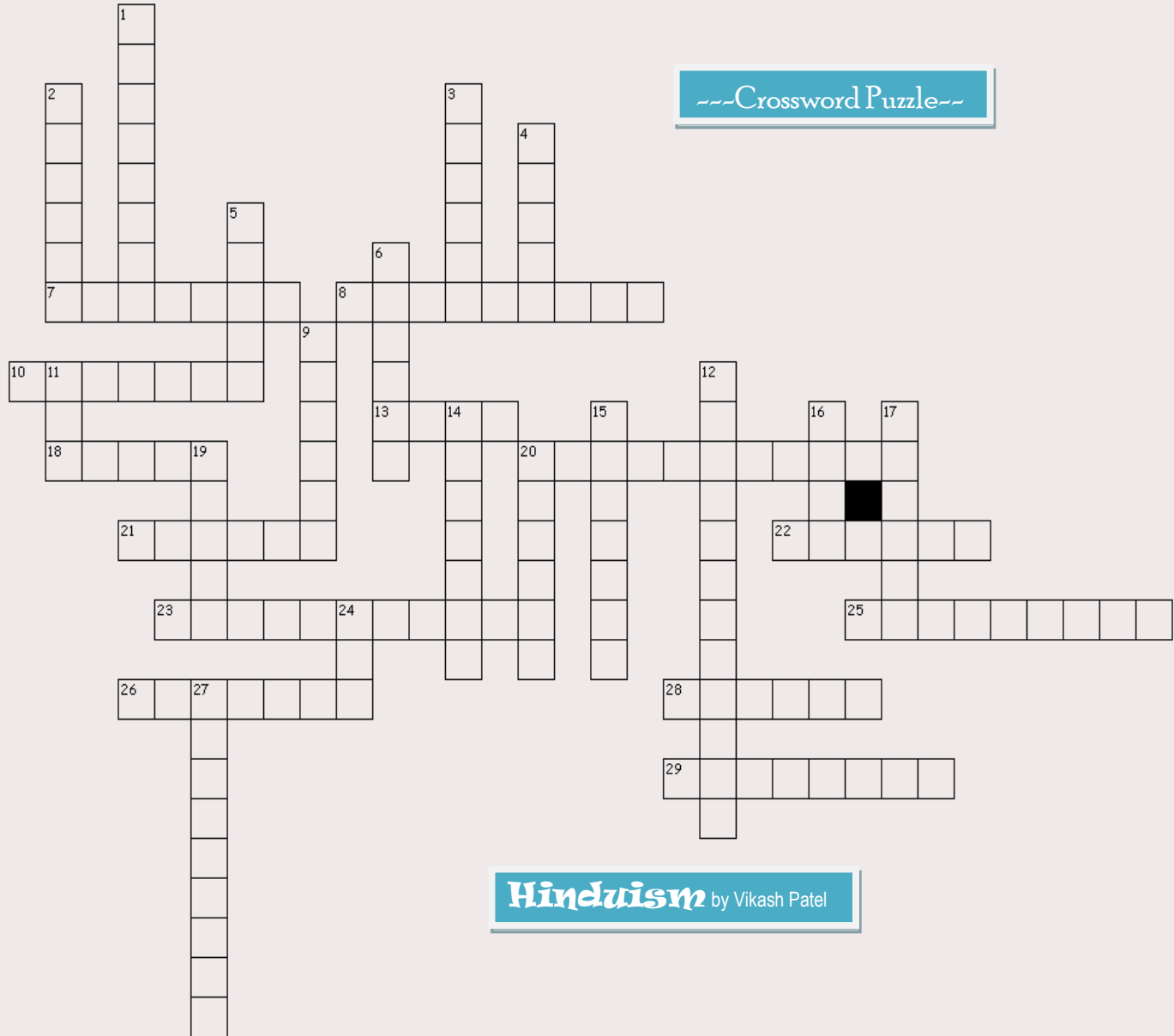
We ended the ten day celebration of Patotsav on July 3rd, with Annakot Utsav. We had a lot of food, a whole bunch of cool decorations and a lot of fun. I came inside the hall about thirty minutes before they presented the Ankot. Many haribhaktos were on the stage behind the curtains getting everything set while Gopesh uncle gave out many awards. During the award ceremony I could only think about the Annakot. But before I knew it, it was time for the presentation!!!

Finally the curtains opened. IT WAS AMAZING! While everybody was looking, the swami was saying a whole bunch of facts such as... We were the first Swaminarayan Mandir in India and America with a floating Annakot. Another thing was that one of the girls of the Ghanshyam Youth Mandal, Dhara Amin, made 20 cakes in honor of the 20th anniversary.

The way everything was set out was amazing. It was colorful, bright, and awesome. I kind of felt bad for the people who couldn't make it because, of how cool it was. You should probably check out the pictures at www.eswaminarayan.com.



---Crossword Puzzle---



Hinduism by Vikash Patel

Across

- 7. The cycle of life
- 8. The Protector
- 10. Weapon is sudarshan chakra
- 13. path of peace
- 18. releasing of the soul
- 20. Scripture about Krishna
- 21. Spiritual teacher
- 22. The boar
- 23. Hinduism brought about this social structure
- 25. Man with the axe slaying kings
- 26. Epic war between good and bad
- 28. Half lion half man
- 29. Original language of Hinduism

Down

- 1. Poly-theistic religion
- 2. Created Hinduism
- 3. The preserver
- 4. The destroyer
- 5. The turtle
- 6. The fish
- 9. Major idea of Hinduism:Duty
- 11. Slayed Ravan
- 12. Weapon is love
- 14. Son of Shiva and Parvati
- 15. Wife of Shiva
- 16. Wife of Ram
- 17. The dwarf
- 19. Where Hinduism was founded
- 20. The creator
- 24. Doing something bad
- 27. Epic war between two families

Vishabdi Mahotsav - Rukmani Vivah by Parth and Devak Mirani

Rukmani Vivah is a ceremony in which Shri Krishna and Rukmani are symbolically married. One family acts as the groom's family while the other acts as that of the bride, and the wedding is celebrated with the same joy and festivity as an actual marriage. As part of the Vishabdi Mahotsav, Swaminarayan Mandir Grand Prairie celebrated this event.

The story of Rukmani Vivah originated in the Bhagavata Purana. Rukmani was the daughter of Bhishmaka, king of Vidarbha. Bhishmaka wanted Rukmani to marry Krishna, but his eldest son, Rukmi, opposed this on political grounds. Vidarbha fell under the jurisdiction of Jarasandha,

Kansa's father-in-law and enemy of Krishna. Rukmi arranged for Rukmani to marry Shishupal instead.

However, Rukmani had her heart set on marrying Krishna and declared that she would rather die than marry someone else. She secretly sent Sunanada, her trusted aid, to Dwarka with a letter for Krishna. In it, she asked Krishna to kidnap her, so that a battle in which her relatives might be killed could be avoided. Krishna was to meet her at the temple of Parvati on the day of the wedding. Upon receiving this letter, Krishna and Balrama set out for Vidarbha immediately. On the day of the wedding, Rukmani arrived at the temple as she had arranged but could not see Krishna anywhere. When she was

about to leave, she saw Krishna, who quickly swept her into his chariot and began to leave. Soon thereafter, they were spotted by Rukmi, who quickly led his army to stop them. Balrama managed to hold them off while Krishna was escaping but Rukmi managed to get ahead and challenge Krishna. Rukmi was defeated quickly, but as Krishna was about to kill him, Rukmani begged that He spare her brother's life. Krishna obliged, but shaved one half of Rukmi's head and one half of his mustache as a sign of his defeat. The couple returned to Dwarka and was married in a joyous ceremony.



Vishabdi Mahotsav – Shobha Yatra by Virag Patel

The Vishbadi Patotsav was a fun and entertaining experience for all the kids, including me. Out of all the patatsovs we have celebrated at the mandir, this was the one that had the most kid's involvement.

From the kids helping with the decorations, to kids having their own day, in which some made speeches and a brand new project was introduced to the satsangis of the mandir, this magazine, Ghanshyam Youth Vision. But the day that I liked the most and had the kids involved the

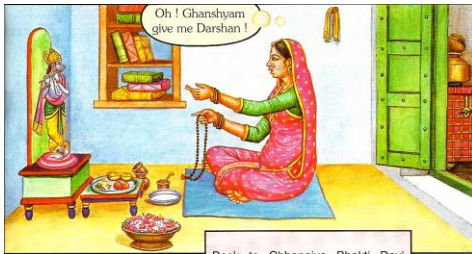
most was the Sobha Yatra. In the Sobha Yatra kids dressed up in various costumes. Savan dressed up as Shankar Bhagwan, while Raghu dressed up as Hanumanji. The other kids and I were dressed up as normal village people of India, and some dressed up as kings and we rode on a truck. The atmosphere in the mandir that day was joyful, everyone was happy. There was no one fighting and everyone got along. It was just so amazing.

The persons I saw doing the most seva was the

santos. They were the ones who got us ready for the Shobha Yatra. Not only did they help us during the parade, but anytime that we had to dress up, the swamis were there to help us. They were nice and joyful. Without them the patatsov would not have been this big of a success. I would like to thank Gopesh uncle and the committee for holding such a wonderful patatsov.

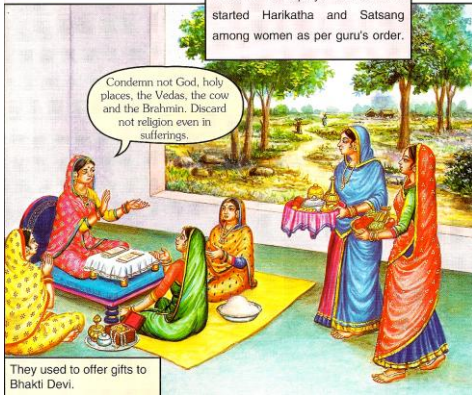


Bhaktimata (Part 2) by Neerali Patel



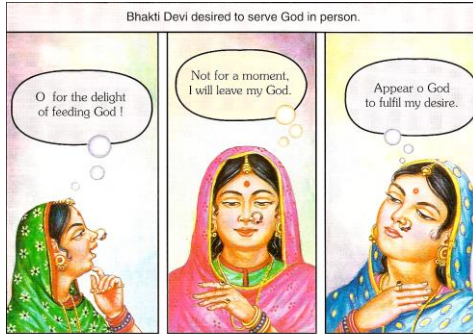
Oh! Ghanshyam give me Darshan!

Back to Chhapaiya Bhakti Devi started Harikatha and Satsang among women as per guru's order.



Condemn not God, holy places, the Vedas, the cow and the Brahmin. Discard not religion even in sufferings.

They used to offer gifts to Bhakti Devi.

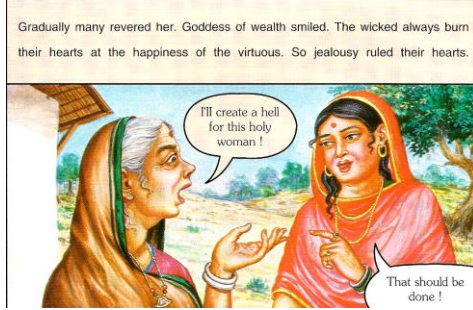


Bhakti Devi desired to serve God in person.

O for the delight of feeding God!

Not for a moment, I will leave my God.

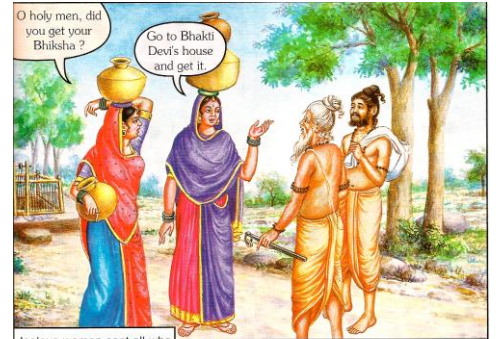
Appear o God to fulfil my desire.



Gradually many revered her. Goddess of wealth smiled. The wicked always burn their hearts at the happiness of the virtuous. So jealousy ruled their hearts.

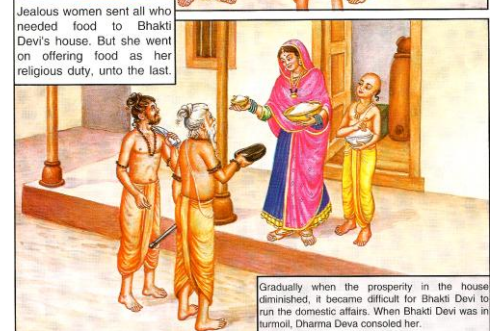
I'll create a hell for this holy woman!

That should be done!



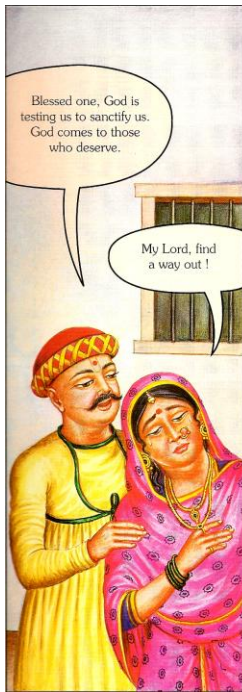
O holy men, did you get your Bhiksha?

Go to Bhakti Devi's house and get it.



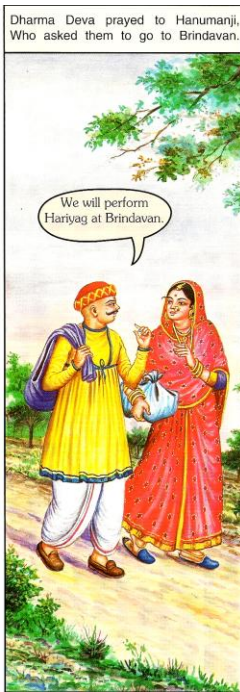
Jealous women sent all who needed food to Bhakti Devi's house. But she went on offering food as her religious duty, unto the last.

Gradually when the prosperity in the house diminished, it became difficult for Bhakti Devi to run the domestic affairs. When Bhakti Devi was in turmoil, Dharma Deva consoled her.



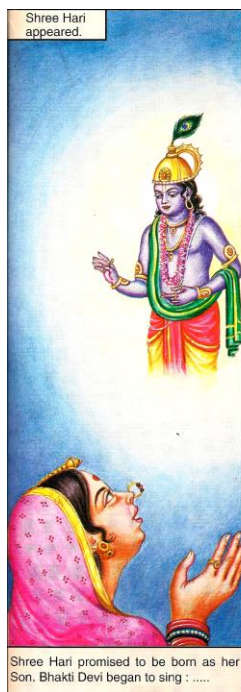
Blessed one, God is testing us to sanctify us. God comes to those who deserve.

My Lord, find a way out!



Dharma Deva prayed to Hanumanji, Who asked them to go to Brindavan.

We will perform Hariyag at Brindavan.

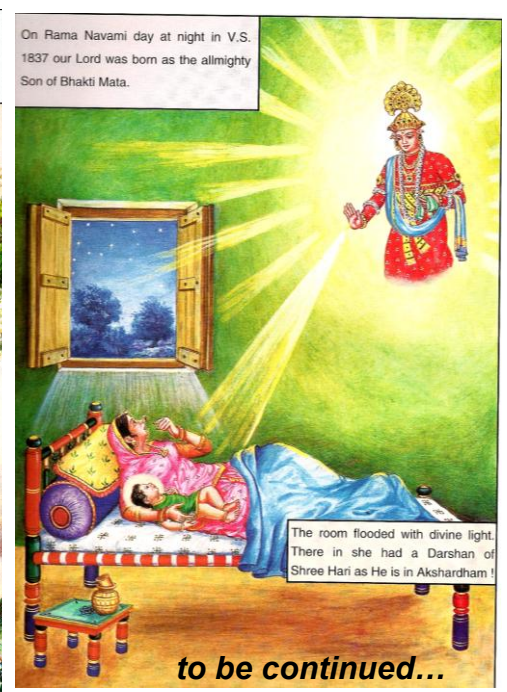


Shree Hari appeared.

Shree Hari promised to be born as her Son. Bhakti Devi began to sing :



"Go beyond the sky o birds and pray my Lord to come. I wait and wait for Him to be my saviour Son."



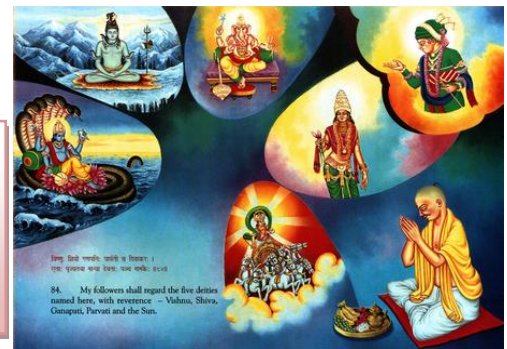
On Rama Navami day at night in V.S. 1837 our Lord was born as the almighty Son of Bhakti Mata.

The room flooded with divine light. There in she had a Darshan of Shree Hari as He is in Akshardham!

to be continued...

Pictorial Shikshapatri

My followers shall regard the five deities named here with reverence - Vishnu, Shiva, Ganapati, Parvati and the Sun.



54. My followers shall regard the five deities named here, with reverence - Vishnu, Shiva, Ganapati, Parvati and the Sun.

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We're on the Web!

See us at:
www.eswaminarayan.com

Janmangal by Arzoo Patel

6. **Om Shree Ajanmane Namah**
- I bow down to the Eternal.
 7. **Om Shree Krishnaya Namah**
- I bow down to Shree Krishna (the enchanter of Devotees.).
 8. **Om Shree Narayanayah Namah**
- I bow down to Shree Narayana.
 9. **Om Shree Haraye Namah**
- I bow down to Shree Hari Krishna
(the remover of miseries of His beloved ones.).
 10. **Om Shree Harikrishnaya Namah**
- I bow down to Shree Hari Krishna
(the remover of miseries and the giver of bliss.).
- to be continued...**

A Brief History of Vadtal Dham by Shivani Amin



Shree Vadtal Dham

A Message...

Shree Swaminarayan Mandir – Grand Prairie (Dallas) Texas was inaugurated on July 4th, 1991. Over the years, the temple has grown in many different ways. Ghanshyam Youth Mandal is a significant part of the temple. Kids of all ages participate in different activities throughout the year.

There is a Hinduism class held every Sunday from 4:00pm to 4:45 pm. The class is conducted by the residing sadhu, Shastri Hariprasaddasji Swami.

The intent of this newsletter activity is to please Shree Hari by increasing interest and knowledge of our culture and heritage through self study and research. Thank you for your continuous support throughout the years.

JAY SWAMINARAYAN



Shree Hari Krishna Maharaj
Shree Radha Krishna Dev



Shree Ranchhod Rai
Shree Laxmi-Narayan Dev



Shree Vasudev
Shree Dharmadev-Shree Bhakti Mata

Bhagwan Shree Swaminarayan overlooked the construction of six major temples including Vadtal, which currently houses the Laxmi Narayan Dev Gadi. The required land necessary to build this mandir was donated by Joban Pagi, a bandit who converted into a devotee of Shree Swaminarayan Bhagwan.

On the day of Nirjala Ekadashi, devotees from Vadtal went to Gadhada to meet with Swaminarayan Bhagwan. The following day, Swaminarayan Bhagwan was requested by these devotees to assemble temple of Shri Krishna Bhagwan in Vadtal.

Under the direction of Brahmanand Swami, the temple in Vadtal was completed in fifteen months and on the twelfth day of the bright half of the month of Kartik on Vikram Samvat year 1881, the murtis of Shree Laxmi-Narayan Dev were installed. Shree Laxmi-Narayan Dev and Shree Rannchod-Rai reside in the center shrine of the Mandir; the northern hemisphere houses Shree Dharma Dev, Shree Bhakti Mata and Shree Vasudev; the southern hemisphere houses Shree Radha Krishna Dev and Shree Hari Krishna Maharaj. Shree Ganesha and Shree Hanumanji reside near the entrance of the Mandir. The mandir is in the shape of a lotus and contains nine domes. The inner done contains stone idols of the ten incarnations of God.