



Pujya Bapuji during his sadhana period

The great festival for Vrata, fasting, and night vigil **11** Mahashivaratri: 26th February



Pujya Sant Shri Asharamji Bapu

These eight flowers quickly please God.

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Faith



Mercy on innocent creatures



Concentration of the mind



Controlling the senses



(Cows saved from slaughterhouse)

Non-violence



Raja Harishchandra

Truthfulness



Forgiveness



Meditation

The alleged offence for which Asharam Bapu was sentenced to prison was false. He had no fault. It is a terrible insult and wrong done to him.

– Former Union Law and Justice Minister Subramanian Swamy





These eight flowers quickly please God.

– Pujya Bapuji

King Ambarish asked divine sage Nārada Ji, “Which flowers does God like to be worshiped with?”

Nārada Ji said, “O King! God likes eight types of flowers. God reveals Himself in the heart of the one who worships Him with those flowers. His intellect, by way of remaining engrossed in Bhagavad-jnāna (divine knowledge), turns into Ritambharā Prajnā (Consciousness full of Truth absolute). He emancipates his 21 generations.”

Ambarisha said, “Mahātman! Please let me know about them at the earliest. If those flowers are not in the garden, I shall order the plants that bear those flowers, and plant them in my garden; and then, I will worship God every day with those very flowers.”

Nārada Ji gently smiled and said, “Ambarisha, those flowers are not grown in the garden of any gardener. They can be grown only in the garden of your heart.”

Ambarisha said, “Mahārāj, if those flowers can be grown in my heart, I shall certainly sow their seeds and grow them in my heart; and I shall offer those very flowers to God. Divine sage, please tell me quickly, which are the flowers that please the Lord (Shri Hari), and make the worshipper absorbed in God.”

Saying this, King Ambarisha fixed his gaze curiously on the divine sage.

Nārada Ji said, “O virtuous soul Ambarisha, God is pleased with these eight flowers, and manifests Himself on being worshipped with them, and merges the devotee with Himself. Just as water (in the ocean) merges its waves into itself, or mahākāsha (universal ether) merges ghatākāsha (the portion of ether contained in a pot) into itself, even so Brahman (the Absolute, Supreme Self) merges jiva (the individual soul) into itself. Then, even though one may appear to be a king on the outside, but from within, he becomes one with the Supreme Self. Such are those eight flowers.”

King Ambarisha lost his patience. He said, “Divine sage, please do not delay; tell me now.”

Nārada Ji said, “Those eight flowers are as follows:

(1) Indriya Nigraha (sense control): Restraining the senses from habitually looking here and there, smelling, thinking, and wandering in vain – this is called the flower of Indriya Nigraha.

(2) Non-violence: To not cause pain or harm to any living creature, either by thought, word, or deed.

(3) Mercy on innocent creatures: Not to torment meek and innocent creatures. Even if the guilty needs to be punished, punish him keeping his interests in mind.

(4) The flower of forgiveness

(5) Manonigraha (Shama – mastery of the mind): Practice of fixing the mind at one place; concentration.

(6) Dhyāna: Meditating on God.

(7) Truthfulness

(8) Shraddhā: To have firm faith in God and the great men who have attained God.

God is immediately pleased with these eight flowers, and turns the sādḥaka (seeker) into a siddha (Perfected One).”

Pujya Bapuji's Sacred Message

Establish yourself in your own Dharma

The Bhagavad Gitā (3.35) says:

स्वधर्मे निधनं श्रेयः परधर्मो भयावहः ॥

“Better is death in one’s own Dharma; the Dharma of another is fraught with fear.”

If your ego and desires must be sacrificed for *Swadharma*, then it is fine and desirable, but following another’s dharma is dangerous. If you need to renounce wealth for the realization of the Self, Supreme Self, then do it. People have done it – Mansur, while being hoisted onto the gibbets, was chanting ‘Anal-Haqq (I am the Truth)’.

People said, “If you say Anal-Haqq, you will be hoisted onto the gibbet.”

Mansur said, “Arre, God is my Self. I have realized it. If needed, I am prepared to be hoisted onto the gibbet.”

And brave Mansur was hoisted up onto the gibbet, but did not agree to say that he was separate from God.

The sun is engaged in its *swadharma* (own duty) according to seasonal changes; the wind is engaged in its *swadharma*. When human beings follow their *swadharma*, their humanity blossoms.

Sant Bholā Bābā said:

होली हुई तब जानिये, पिचकारी सद्गुरु की लगे,
पिचकारी गुरुज्ञान की लगे ।
सब रंग कच्चे जाँय उड़, एक रंग पक्के में रँगे ॥

“True Holi is celebrated when SatGuru sprays the colour of His knowledge on you. All worldly colours fade away, and you take on the fast colour.”

What is the fast colour? It is Guru’s wisdom. What is Guru’s wisdom? The act of moving closer to your true nature, the Self, is known as *Swadharma*. Conversely, those acts that lead you away are *adharma*.

For instance, if a person engages in good

deeds, meditation, and chanting during *Amāvasyā* (new moon) or *Pūrṇimā* (full moon), that is *swadharma*. But if, blinded by worldly desires, they engage in conjugal sex with their spouse on these sacred days, it becomes *paradharma*. If a child is conceived by this, it may be born disabled, and even if a child is not born, the sin of *paradharma* will diminish life energy. This will make the person prone to disease that will not be cured quickly.

What is *Swadharma*? *Swadharma* brings health and purity to the body. Action that brings sickness and *Tamas* (inertness) to your body, are *paradharma*. *Swadharma* is that which uplifts you. ‘*Swa*’ means you – not this body composed of flesh and bones, nor the mind, intellect, or ego, nor the body made of the five elements. The one who knows all these is your ‘*Swa*’, your true being. One day, you must depart this life and leave your wealth. If wealth or life must be sacrificed to protect the internal organ useful in attaining ‘*Swa*’, do so, but attain the Self-Supreme Self.

If one stands firm in *Swadharma*...

Many merchants, I’ve seen, remained steadfast in their *Swadharma* while conducting their business. Initially, people would ridicule them, saying, “This is not how business is done.” But their dedication bore fruit, and their trade flourished.

One such example is Dayāldās, a cloth merchant from Godhra. He always quoted a fixed price for his goods, refusing to negotiate like others. People would say, “Others quote three rupees, then reduce it to one and a half. If you quote one and a half, reduce it to one and a quarter.”

The great festival for Vrata, fasting, and night vigil

The festival of *Mahāshivarātri* falls on 26th February. What makes this festival unique among other festivals, and what is its significance and usefulness? Pujya Bapuji explains it in his *satsang*-discourse:

There are four great nights: *Holi*, *Janmāshṭami*, *Narak Chaturdashi* or *Diwāli*, and *Mahāshivarātri*. These nights are helpful in getting established in the essence, the Truth absolute. *Mahāshivarātri* is a festival of penance among all the festivals of *Sanātan Dharma*. Scientifically, planets and constellations exert such an influence during *Mahāshivarātri* and other great nights that by keeping a night vigil one can attain his desired results.

According to Vedanta philosophy, there are six *anādi* (beginningless) substances. The *shuddha chetan* (pure consciousness that is Brahman), *Māyā*, the Ishwara, (the Brahman with attributes), *jiva* (individual soul), ignorance, and their mutual relationships. How long have all these substances been existing? They have no beginning. Among them, five substances are *sānta* (having an end) *anādi*, and *Parabrahma Paramātma-Tattva* is beginningless and endless (eternal). When Self-knowledge is attained, *jiva* (individual), *Ishwara* (God), *avidyā* (ignorance), the difference between the *jiva* and *Ishwara*, and the relation between pure consciousness and *avidyā* are negated and along with it all kinds of *bhedas*, the differences between *jiva* and *jiva*, *jiva* and *Ishwara*, *Jiva* and the world, and the differences between inert and inert are also

negated. When the five types of differences are negated, the five substances become unreal (their existence ends), but in whose presence do they become unreal? That Supreme Self (*Shiva-tattva*) is beginningless and eternal.

During the four great nights, the planets and constellations are conducive to steadying one's mind in *Brahman*, the beginningless and eternal being. Therefore, observance of fasts, vows, and vigils throughout these nights holds great importance.

Make a resolve for spiritual welfare.

'Shiva' signifies the embodiment of well-being. When the *Pāndavas* resolved for their spiritual welfare, they organised the great celebration of *Mahāshivarātri*. Similarly, when bhagavān Rāma resolved to build a bridge over the ocean, he first installed the *Setubandha Rāmeshwaram* (a *Jyotirlinga* of Lord Shiva).

These mythological stories convey that to accomplish any Herculean task, one needs to develop concentration of the mind, worship, and adoration. Infinite power is in the Supreme Brahman, Supreme Self, and from that Supreme Brahman, Supreme Self, which is of consciousness-nature, arises the mind. So there is also infinite power in the mind. When the mind follows the senses and becomes extroverted, it diminishes its powers. When the same mind turns inward and follows the *Shiva-tattva* or *Ātma-tattva* it starts manifesting wonderful powers.

The Message of Lord Shiva's external appearance.

While festivals like *Diwāli*, *Uttarāyan*, etc.,



26th February: Mahashivaratri Special

The message of Holikotsav Untie the knot of your Heart and awaken your True Nature.

This year the festival of *Holi* (*Holikādahan*) falls on 13th March and *Dhulendi* on 14th March. Pujya Bapuji explains in his *satsang*-discourses how to take the complete benefit of *Holi*.

The festival which blesses one with ultimate happiness, peace, and health; weakens attachment and aversion, and gives the opportunity to attain the state of equanimity, spontaneity, and peace in the Self is *Holikotsav*. This festival has been being celebrated since Vedic times. Sant Bhole Bābā said,

होली हुई तब जानिये, पिचकारी सद्गुरु की लगे,
पिचकारी गुरुज्ञान की लगे ।

सब रंग कच्चे जाँय उड़, एक रंग पक्के में रंगे ।

“True Holi is celebrated when SatGuru sprays the colour of His knowledge on you. All worldly colours fade away, and you take on the fast colour of One reality.”

The fading colour is *paradharma*. The fast colour is that of meditation and knowledge of the Supreme Self. How does one get dyed with that fast colour?

उद्यमः साहसं धैर्यं बुद्धिः शक्तिः पराक्रमः ।

षडैते यत्र वर्तन्ते तत्र देवः सहायकृत् ॥

“Wherever there are these six: industriousness, courage, fortitude, intelligence, strength, and valour, there divine co-operation is present.”

If you become industrious, courageous, intelligent, strong, and brave, Supreme Self, *Swadharma*, will protect you at every step.

Holi means ‘Ho... Li...’ let by-gones be by-gones. Forget what happened in the past, don’t grieve over past incidents, untie the knot of the heart and awaken in your true

nature. Your true nature is joy, not animosity. Hatred is nothing; your true nature is *Rāma*-nature. *Rāma* is pure, being free from passion, lust is a passion. *Rāmarasa* (Self-bliss) is eternal. The pleasure of sex exhausts the person in a short time. This is absolutely true. Awaken in your true nature. Wake up O Yogi! Om Bliss...!

Yogis attain *Samādhi* (state of Self-absorption) through the practice of self-control, discipline, *āsana*, and *prāṇāyāma*, and then experience the joy and peace of the mind. But once they come out of the state of *Samādhi*, they again feel the reality of the world. Until one attains Self-realization, the world will continue to appear real. But once the realization of the absolute truth is attained, the reality of the world is sublated. Then, despite doing worldly activities, one is always in the state of *Yoga*, Shri Krishna named this yoga the tremorless yoga (steady and permanent establishment in the experience of the Self).

There is yoga in the state of *Samādhi*, which gives power, fame, strong willpower, and understanding but that *Yogis* are unsteady and impermanent. However, the *Yoga* that Shri Krishna ji, Shri Rāma ji, King Janaka Ji attained is *Avikampa yoga*. So, Holi is capable of giving the gifts of *Avikampa yoga*, intelligence, and health.

Sleeping during this time means missing good fortune.

Whatever *sādhana-bhajan* is performed in the night of Holi, Mahāshivarātri, Diwālī





For Students



Is scholarship a burden ?

(From the ambrosial *satsang*-discourses delivered by Pujya Bapuji)

(Shri Chaitanya Mahāprabhu Jayanti: March 14)

तपस्विभ्योऽधिको योगी ज्ञानिभ्योऽपि मतोऽधिकः ।
कर्मिभ्यश्चाधिको योगी तस्माद्योगी भवार्जुन ॥
योगिनामपि सर्वेषां मद्गतेनान्तरात्मना ।
श्रद्धावान्भजते यो मां स मे युक्ततमो मतः ॥

“A yogi is higher than men of austerity (ascetics); he is considered higher even than men of knowledge (mere scholars). The yogi is also higher than men of action. Therefore, O Arjuna, do you become a yogi. And among all yogis, he who, full of faith, with his inner-self merged in Me, worships Me, is, according to Me, the best of the yogis.” (The Gitā: 6.46-47)

Bhagavān Shri Krishna said, “The Yogi is greater than the ascetic; he is greater than even the scholar of four Vedas and *shāstras*, greater than the men of great ritual works (with the expectation of fruit, and with selfish motives), and even among all the yogis, he who adores Me with his mind fixed on Me and with faith, is the best of the yogis.

तपस्विभ्योऽधिको योगी... The yogi is higher than the ascetic because the fruit of asceticism is reaped in another age or time, whereas the fruit of yoga is obtained while practicing it. The joy of *Bhakti yoga* is obtained while practicing it and the joy of *dhyāna* yoga is obtained while practicing it.

ज्ञानिभ्योऽपि मतोऽधिकः... *He is considered higher even than men of knowledge (mere scholars) – one may have secular*

knowledge or the knowledge of spiritual *shāstras*, that scholarship is a burden until one attains repose in the Supreme Self. Even a scholar may still have an ego, but the ego of the person who meditates on God, is immersed in God. A true yogi, immersed in the remembrance of the Lord, dissolves his ego in the Divine.

When Nimāi (Gaurānga, Chaitanya Mahāprabhu) was a youth, a scholar from Kashmir who defeated all scholars in debates on *shāstras*, came to Nadiā to engage in debates.

One day, this scholar, after having a ritual bath in the River Gangā, saw some students discussing *shāstras* on the bank of the River Gangā. Curious, he approached them. Young Nimāi spread his cloth on the ground, offering the scholar a seat.

Nimāi said, “Panditji, please recite something to us.”

The scholar said, “O child! What will you understand of my knowledge?”

Nimāi said, “Recite something I can comprehend.”

The scholar immediately composed over a hundred Sanskrit verses eulogising the River Gangā.

After listening, Nimāi asked, “Panditji, could you point out the errors and correctness in your Gangā hymns?”

The scholar said, “Errors in my composition? Impossible! I am a celebrated scholar!”

Nimāi said, “If you cannot see any errors, may I have your permission to point them out?”

The boy, by the grace of the Lord, began pointing out grammatical errors in

Observance of this vow brings victory in all tasks

– Pujya Babuji

Yudhishtira Mahārāja asked Lord Krishna, “What is the name of the Ekādashī that falls in the dark half of *Phālguna* (Māgha according to Amāvasyānta month) and what is the manner of observing it?”

Shri Krishna said, “Whoever wants to be victorious in any task, any big task for that matter, the observance of this Ekādashī brings success to him. Hence, its name is ‘Vijayā Ekādashī’. Once, Nārada Ji had asked the very same question to Brahmā Ji.

Brahmā Ji said, “Nārada! The willpower and intellectual prowess (to overcome poverty, down-troddenness, difficulty, and hindrances in tasks at hand, etc.) of the one observing the vow of Vijayā Ekādashī would surely increase; besides, Nature also favours such a person.

Formerly, when Lord Rāma found out that Rāvaṇa had abducted Sitā Ji and he was based across the ocean, he made it to the ocean shore to attack Lankā, and wondered, ‘Crossing such a big ocean, the forces of monkeys fighting against the huge, monstrous demons there...! By what means will I be able to conquer them?’

Wondering thus, Lord Rāma asked Lakshmaṇa, “O brother, due to which religious merit can this very unfathomable abode of Varuṇa (the ocean) full of aquatic animals, be crossed? I do not see a means of how this ocean can be crossed easily.

When a wise person takes up any task, he thinks about it beforehand and then plans it. No big task is executed properly without planning.”

Lakshmaṇa said, “You alone are the first god, and the ancient, best man. Nothing is unknown to you. On this island lives the sage Bakadālbhya. O Rāghava, his hermitage is at a distance of half a *yojana* (4 miles) from here. He is an omniscient, great man of very high order. O best king, having gone (there), ask the best sage.”

Rāma Ji and Lakshmaṇa Ji went to see sage Bakadālbhya. With his head bent down he saluted the sage. Then the sage was greatly pleased and said, “O Rāma what for have you come?”

Rāma said, “O Lord, O sage, be favourable and tell me the means by which I can cross the ocean to conquer Rāvaṇa.”

The sage said, “O Rāma, regardless of how a person is, if one observes the vow of Vijayā Ekādashī, which falls in the dark half of the month of *Phālguna*, and carries out the tasks that he intends to, he will be victorious. O king, listen to the manner of this vow (in which the vow should be observed), which is fruitful.

Eat less on the tenth lunar day (Dashamī), and pray to God before going off to sleep at night, ‘I want to come out victorious in this particular task, and hence, I immerse myself in the state of Self-



**24th February:
Vijaya Ekadashi Special**

What are the remedies for constipation?

Constipation is a common health problem suffered by many people, but it is usually neglected. There are many causes of constipation, like weak digestion, lack of diet rich in fibre and oil, unwholesome diet and recreation, inadequate water intake, lack of physical activity, stress, and inappropriate lifestyle. The following are some remedies for constipation and its prevention:

What to eat ?

* Meals should be juicy and unctuous. Use whole-grain flour. Knead wheat flour mixing castor oil in it to prepare dough.

* Add seasonal fruits like papaya, āmlā (āmlā juice* or āmlā churna*, āmlā chutney*, āmlā murabbā*), lemon, mango, apple, orange, mousammi (a kind of orange), ripe banana, sapodilla plum (*Sapota achras*), etc. Green leafy vegetables like fenugreek, bathuā (*Chenopodium album*), spinach, amaranthus, ridge gourd, pointed gourd, pumpkin, round gourd, and sponge gourd should be consumed.

* Consumption of vegetables, like amorphophallus campanulatus and roasted brinjals are beneficial. One should consume cucurbita, cucumbers, tomatoes, small, thin, tender radishes, carrots, etc., in the form of salads.

* Take roasted grains like *sattu* (coarse flour made from parched grain, like barley, gram, etc.) (Consumption of *sattu* at night is prohibited.)

When and what to eat and drink?

* The best time for the morning and evening meals is from 9.00 a.m. to 11.00

a.m. and from 5.00 p.m. to 7.00 p.m. respectively. One should take meals when feeling very hungry, and when the right nostril is active, sitting in *sukhāsana* with a calm mind and observing silence – and with good mastication. After meals, one should take a 100-step walk and then sit in *vajrāsana* for a while.

* Avoid eating more than your appetite, avoid late night dinners; and the night dinner should be light, easily digestible, and small in amount.

* One should drink a little lukewarm water several times during the meal. One should not drink water immediately after meals, instead, one should drink lukewarm water 30 to 45 minutes after meals when thirsty, in an adequate amount. One should drink water according to thirst throughout the day.

* Take 1-2 teaspoons of pure ghee* with meals. This helps in chronic constipation.

Daily routine

* One should drink 200-250 ml of water kept in a copper vessel overnight after making it lukewarm before brushing the teeth, early in the morning before sunrise**; and should walk on their toes for a while. (During *chaturmāsa*, copper vessels should not be used, according to *shāstras*.) One should cultivate the habit of going to the toilet for defecation between 5.00 a.m. to 7.00 a.m. in the morning.

* *Yogāsana* and *Prāṇāyāma* help

** Before going to sleep at night, cleanse your teeth and face thoroughly. * These may be obtained from Sant Shri Asharamji Ashrams.



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The Fragrance of 'Parents' Worship Day' Begins to Spread



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Rishi Prasad



Rishi Darshan



Lok Kalyan Setu

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