



S.K.S. SWAMINARAYAN TEMPLE (LONDON) – BAL YUVAK MANDAL

Westfield Lane, Kenton, Harrow, Middlesex, HA3 9EA Est. 1966 Charity Reg. No. 271034

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AKSHARJIVANDASJI SWAMI (Bhuj)

Sadguru Swami Aksharjivandasji was born in VS 1908 (1851 AD) in Rampur in India. His father's name was Meghajibhai and his mother's name was Amarbai. On the sixth day, he was given the name Shamji.

Shamji developed virtues right from childhood and was very obedient. He was gifted with such mystical powers that one day when four Yamdoots came to take the life of a resident in the village, Shamji rushed there and using his bullock-cart whip he hit two of the Yamdoots so hard that they both darted away screaming and wondering how they could ever had been seen by a human being. Shamji, though still a very young boy, caught and tied the other two gigantic Yamdoots to a tree and they tried in vainful attempts to escape all night. They finally prayed to Shamji to be released, and were set free on the condition that they would never come to Rampur again.

At the age of 12, Shamji came to Bhuj mandir and remained in the service of Nar Narayan Dev in Bhuj as a parshad (sevak in white robes). At the age of 16, he earned the praise of all senior saints and was given Maha Diksha (initiation into sainthood) by Acharya Shree Keshavprasadji Maharajshree. He was ordained the name Aksharjivandasji Swami, and became a disciple of Sadguru Mahant Swami Achyutdasji.

Aksharjivandasji Swami spread the fellowship far and wide into the hinterland of Kutch, especially to all the farming folk living in the villages and farmhouses in Kutch. In particular, he has been credited with the success of converting the craftsmen of villages such as Kumbhariya (claysmiths), Sinogra and Devaliya.

Jerambhai, a haribhakta in Kumbhariya village who was made a satsangi by Swami, had a wedding ceremony at his house. As was common pomp and glory in such functions, he organised for dancers to entertain the guests in the evening parties. Swami came to know of this and immediately summoned Jerambhai and demanded to be given back the pooja and kanthi he had given to Jerambhai, as though it was a social function where entertainment was common, such should not have been done by a true satsangi, or if necessary, should have been done moderately keeping in mind the rules of satsang and rules on social interaction of males and females.

In Anjar, a Brahmin named Jetha Upadhyay habitually beat his wife over immaterial issues and one day made up his mind to kill her. The woman ran away to save herself and hid in a large grain vessel. In the morning, the Brahmin went to the mandir for darshan. Swami saw him and told him to stay away from him, as he was a killer. The man wondered how Swami had come to know this, even though he had not yet killed his wife. Swami called the man and explained to him in a humble manner the importance of being a good householder and to treat women in the house with the respect they deserve. The Brahmin became a dedicated follower of the



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Swaminarayan Sampraday. This was Swami's approach; changing the thinking of the common man as he believed that the future generation could only be good if the current base (parent) generation was of good moral conduct.

In Baladia, the landowners were a dynasty of Jaagir Bawas (descendants of people who worshipped fire-god Agni). Our community at that time either worked for them or leased farms from them for their livelihood. As people were of a working class, they could not afford enough land to build a temple. Swami met a haribhakta called Gangjibhai Patel and with his help a farm worth 4000 koris was earmarked to be bought for the temple. The ownership of this farm was with Ais Bawa who was against the Swaminarayan faith. Swami quick-wittedly met Kasu, the personal aide of Aisbawa. Though a muslim, Kasu recognised and respected a great saint when he saw one and convinced Ais Bawa to sell the farm to build the mandir, and personally oversaw the land ownership deed executed. He took off his sandals and voluntarily worked barefooted in the building of the temple, and only wore his sandals again after the mandir was complete. Swami was impressed by his dedication. Later, when Ais Bawa and Kasu passed away at separate times, Swami came with Shreeji Maharaj on a white elephant to take them to Akshardham.

Swami was very strict about the rules of Shikshapatri as laid down by Maharaj. He was in particular fond of Dharmamrut, a code of rules in Satsangi Jivan, and wanted every satsangi to abide by these rules. He made particularly sure that all saints followed these rules, and even expelled some saints from Bhuj mandir as they had defaulted on their dharma. To make it easy for all, he wrote the famous Ekadashi letter in two parts and sent these to every temple under or affiliated to Bhuj mandir. To this day, this letter is read out on all Ekadashi days as a matter of principle in all mandirs. By following this guidance, not only the householder satsangis but all the saints all over the world continue to enjoy a pious and prosperous life.

Swami Aksharjivandasji became the third mahant of Bhuj mandir following in the footsteps of Swami Ananddasji and Swami Achyutdasji.

Swami had 21 disciples, and one of them became a saint at the elderly age of 60 and was named Balmukunddasji. Such was the mercy of Swami on him that by the grace of Swami, Balmukunddasji had divine vision of Shreeji Maharaj within 2 months after being initiated.

Swami went to Akshardham on the 9th day in the bright half of the month of Falgun in VS 1963. Swami Krishnacharandasji was made the Mahant of Bhuj Mandir after him.

JAY SHREE SWAMINARAYAN