



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

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### **Maharaj Saves Lalji Bhakta of Netra Village in the Dessert:**

Lalji Bhakta was a faithful devotee of Netra Village and had gone along with his son to Sindh country to find work and earn money. On their way back they had got a bit lost and were stuck in the Lakhpat dessert at nightfall. They had taken a wrong direction and ended up more towards the ocean side than the dessert side. They thought that because of the time of year the ocean may have come further inland but did not realise that they were on the wrong track. They continued on their way thinking that they were heading the right way but got to a point where the ocean water was in all directions surrounding them.

It was extremely dark and they were tired from walking with the heavy load of their possessions on their backs. They were also very hungry and thirsty from the salty dessert atmosphere. Under such great pressure the body had weakened, they had contracted a fever and the body was shaking from the cold. They lost all hopes thinking that they would die there. They prayed to Maharaj to come to their saviour. In that instant they heard the sound of cattle and they noticed an island in the middle of the ocean.

There they saw a group of shepherds and so they decided to walk towards that island. Two or three of the shepherds came towards Lalji Bhakta and began to say, "Oh Lalji Bhakta! What are you doing in this dark of night near this fearful ocean?" Lalji Bhakta could not speak as his mouth and throat had dried up due to lack of water. Some water was given to him. After their thirst was quenched, he also offered them some nice fresh warm goat's milk. After Lalji Bhakta and his son had drank the milk and were suitably satisfied he began to ask questions as to why there was an island there and who they were but the shepherds told them to rest for the night and all would become apparent in the morning.

When they awoke in the morning, the shepherd showed them the direction in which way to walk in order to cross the dessert and return home safely. They walked a fair distance in that direction. When they looked back they could not see the island or the shepherds. In all directions they could only see the water once again. They realised that this was a miracle that Lord Swaminarayan had sent to aid them! They continued their journey singing the Lord's name.

In no time they had crossed the dessert and reached their village of Netra. In the village they told everyone of how Maharaj had saved them. In this way, Maharaj saves his choicest and most faithful devotees from danger and even death.