



## 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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### Prabodhini Ekadashi

#### Other names

- Haribodhini
- Devotthani
- Uthhana

#### Meaning

'awakening'

#### Significant events which took place on this day

- Chaturmaas ends and Lord Vishnu awakes from his yoga nindra
- Lord Vishnu returns from Bali's residence in Patal

In a kingdom famed of being a land of peace & plenty, tolerance, reverence for intellectuals and feeling of fraternity between even the devas & danavas. Bali was surprised that this young man needed to ask for separate piece of land to carry out his normal, daily rituals. The young man informed him that "Whilst reciting my Gayatri and doing pranayam, owner of the land moved me on and hence, I feel that I need somewhere where I can do my most basic daily rituals without let or hindrance." The young man was Lord Vaman. After having got the King Bali to promise him land covered by His own three strides, Lord assumed a gigantic form and covered all areas Bali owned in just two strides. The king had nothing more to give. The Lord threatened him with dire consequences if he did not comply with this promise. As saha-dharma-charini, Bali's queen stepped in to help and suggested that Bali should offer his own self for the third step – surely, the ego / mind is greater than all that "it" owns. Lord Vaman, pleased with the reply, placed His foot on Bali's head and thrust him into the nether regions, placing him in a kingdom specially created for him. But, Prabodhini teaches us, there is no such thing as a "free lunch". Whatever you get, you have to pay for – in some form or the other. It is the eternal rule of Karma. God, having deprived Bali of all he had, by stealth, has to repay him – many fold. God promised to protect Bali till the next eon, when he will be made the king of heaven.

God promised to be with him at all time, especially for the monsoon season, protecting his nether region from floods.

God promised His maya and kala (time) will have no impact on Bali.

And all this meant Bali became a "chiranjivi" an immortal – a rare boon indeed.

- Tulsi Vivah

Lord Vishnu represents the "order" in the universe. Tulsidevi represents the power of "taap", the most powerful karma inducing act anyone can do. Taap is not penance. The Western interpreters had no word for taap and they saw it very much in their image of seeing everything as penitence for the "original sin". Sadly, we have become stuck on interpretations made by 18<sup>th</sup> Century Englishmen of our scriptures. Hindus do not believe in the concept of original sin, for we believe we are children of the divine and part of the immortal God. For us, taap is a way of purifying the self, acquiring religious merit and getting closer to our divine nature.

Tusli, also known as Vrinda, wanted to marry the lord Vishnu and did intense taap in the forest on the banks of river Yamuna. So great was her taap, the area became known as Vrindavan in her honour.



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Though her karmas had destined her to be married to a demon, the merit acquired by her taap, allowed her to later marry Lord Vishnu.

- Lord Indra is taught a lesson by Lord Krishna

During the annual Divali celebrations, the herdsmen of Vraj gathered to perform a great yagna to please Indra, King of the Devas. Lord Krishna, advised them to perform yagna in its truest spirit, and offer up the food to one and all in Vraj. He encouraged them to see the divine in the spirits of the forest and the hills, cows and the very people who formed their community rather than pour all that food into the fire and the bellies of the elite.

Lord Indra was not pleased that his yagna was used to teach this lesson to the people of Vraj. He decided to teach Lord Krishna and the Vrajvasi a lesson of his own. For seven days and nights he poured rain on Vraj to drown it, so that none would slight him ever again.

Lord Krishna lifted up the mountain Govardhan to protect the people and animals of Vraj. The great Shesha Naga formed a living wall around them to protect Vraj from a flood on ground level. Sudarshan chakra burned up the rains to save it from a down pour from above.

After seven ceaseless days of rain, Indra learnt his lesson and came to apologise. He bowed before the Lord and accepted his silliness in trying to assert his superiority in the leela of the Lord. The Lord forgave Indra and later even helped him recover celestial objects stolen by Narkasur.

On the day of the New Year, Lord worshiped mount Govardhan to reinvigorate the ancient ideals of the yagna.

On Labh Panchami, the Lord lifted mount Govardhan to protect Vraj from the childish rage of Indra.

On Prabodhini Ekadashi, the rains ceased and the Lord restored mount Govardhan to its original place. Indra came to seek forgiveness soon after.

Let us seek forgiveness from the Lord and ask Him to look kindly on our own spiritual temper tantrums. If through the year we have spoken harshly of how the Lord has treated us or berated our lot in life, let us seek forgiveness. Indeed, the Lord shelters us from the calamities caused by our own karmas. Even without our knowledge, the Lord protects us from ourselves.

Let us, like Indra, seek refuge in the Lord and seek His forgiveness and protection on this Prabodhini Ekadashi.

- Dharmadev is born – VS 1796 at 12 noon
- Maharaj was initiated into the Sampraday (obtained diksha) – VS 1857 in Piplana at Narsinh Mehta's house. **What were the names given to Him?**
- Maharaj was enthroned up the gadi of the Sampraday – VS 1858 in Jetpur at the age of 20 years and 7 months. It is here that Maharaj asked for two boons. **What were they?**
- Aarti was created on this day

Muktanand Swami was the leading saint of Ramanand Swami's satsang. He was older than Lord Swaminarayan and Lord Swaminarayan treated him as a guru and with great respect.

Muktanand Swami had found out that many satsangis coming for darshan of Lord Swaminarayan would enter into a spiritual trance, by merely looking at Lord. Muktanand Swami could not believe these actions of Lord Swaminarayan. Muktanand Swami thought Lord Swaminarayan did not have this power or authority. Muktanand Swami spoke to Lord Swaminarayan and questioned Him, but Lord said nothing to him.



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In the following morning Ramanand Swami gave Muktanand Swami divine darshan and said to him, “I told you before that I am a humble servant of Almighty God Supreme and the divine power is within Sahajanand Swami Himself and He is capable of anything and everything.” It was then that Muktanand Swami realised that Lord Swaminarayan was Almighty God Supreme and with an instant all his doubts were eradicated.

His love and bond towards Lord Swaminarayan was infinite. Muktanand Swami being an accomplished poet could not contain his love for Lord and compiled the words to the aarti in the town of Kalwani. He prostrated and sang the aarti to Lord, “Jay Sadguru Swami...”

- Bhagwan Swaminarayan established the two gadis and appointed the Acharyas and wrote the Desh Vibhagh no Lekh – VS 1882 in Vadtal.

### **How to observe vrat**

- Nirjala vrat upvas (no food no water) – one of the 5 vrats in the year which should be performed in this way