



## 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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### JOBAN PAGI

In his early years, Bhaktaraj Joban Pagi was formally a terror to the whole of Gujarat. Nobody would dare utter his name. Even the big cities were afraid of him. He spread terror far and wide committing treacheries and seemed to be uncatchable. He looted people of their very livelihood. The act of severing somebody's head or cutting a melon was the same to him. His brothers were Sunder, Shakaro and Dalo Pagi. There was great unity between them and indeed their whole family, which was very large. One day Joban called his younger brother Sunder and said, "A great soul has come to Patidar, which everyone believes to be God incarnate. Let us see if he is God.

There is a fine mare (Manaki). Go and get the mare (Manaki), let us see what sort of a God he is!" But Sundar refused remarking, "I have seen him and he is remarkable. The brilliance emanating from him would certainly stand out as God. I dare not tease such a great person." Joban was not convinced and so he himself decided to abduct Manki. He made his way to Bapubhai's home where Maharaj was residing. On opening the gate, the noise awoke Raiji. He immediately took up his sword and confronted Joban. His plan was foiled and so he went away. Maharaj left Patidar.

Many years later, Maharaj organised a yagna in Dabhan. Thousands of haribhakta's graced the event and elegant mares belonging to the biggest kathis and darbars filled the stables. The fame of Manaki had spread far and wide and Joban was tempted. He wished dearly to loot this Swaminarayan as news of his wealth had also spread wide, but Maharaj's mare had caught the mind of Joban. He thought to himself, "If I had such a mare, hundreds of miles would be covered in a single night. This would facilitate successful looting." Joban therefore decided to enter the stables that night. On entering the stables, he saw a brilliant light and in it was Maharaj tending to Manaki. He was disappointed but not disheartened as he thought to himself that he would return tomorrow. The next night the same thing happened whilst Maharaj was busy seeing to Manaki's needs grooming him. On the third day, he accepted defeated and in the sabha he fell at Maharaj's feet. Tears streamed from his eyes. He said, "O Lord, forgive me for my acts. I am a fool – I did not recognise you. O merciful one, free me from my sins." Maharaj lovingly patted him on his back. He pardoned him and made him promised to shed his evil ways and live a life according to the



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tenets of the Sampradaya. Joban, who once struck terror in Gujarat was now transformed into a devout devotee.

After this Joban became a faithful servant to the Lord and he and his brothers served as bodyguards to Maharaj during his visits in Gujarat. Pleased with Joban's service, Maharaj granted him a boon. Joban requested, "Please celebrate Holi festival here in Vadtal and allow us the benefit of serving you." The celebration took place with great pomposity in Vadtal. Niskulanand Swami got ready the swing with twelve entrances. Maharaj then sat in the swing whilst Muktanand Swami and others swung him. Maharaj took 12 forms, one at each of the 12 doorways. The next day, in Gnaanbaag, all the haribhaktas got together to celebrate the festival of colours by throwing gulal and sprinkling coloured water.

### Questions

1. Where was Joban Pagi from?
2. How many brothers did Joban Pagi have and what were their names?
3. Who did Joban Pagi try to steal?
4. Why was the whole of Gujarat scared of Joban Pagi?
5. What does this story teach us?