



Lord Swaminarayan's Timeline

VS 1837

Birth

Chaul sanskar & killing of Kalidaata

Yagnopavit ceremony

Study of scriptures

Departure from home

Pilgrimage – Van Vichran

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Nav lakh Mountain

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Lord Swaminarayan's Farewell



Birth

Almighty Lord Swaminarayan took birth on this earth in Chhapaiya (Uttar Pradesh) at 10:10pm on Monday 9th day of the bright half of the month Chaitra VS 1837 (2 April 1781 AD), also the birthday of Lord Ram.

Markendey Muni gave Lord Swaminarayan the names of Hari, Krishna, Hari Krishna and Nilkanth. The family of the Lord addressed Him by His pet name of Ghanshyam.

Chaul Sanskar (hair removing ceremony) & killing of Kalidaata's

The first hair removal of a child after birth is sacred. The removal of this hair should be performed under certain ceremonial conditions. Ghanshyam Maharaj had this ceremony performed at the age of three.

During the ceremony the demon Kalidatta came to Chhapaiya to kill the Lord with his evil forces. Ghanshyam used His divine powers to kill the demon Kalidatta at that young age.

Yagnopavit ceremony (sacred thread)

At the age of 8, Ghanshyam's parents conducted the Janoi ceremony for Ghanshyam Maharaj.

A Yagnopavit ceremony is when a male adorns 3 sacred strands. The 3 strands represent Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, being the creator, preserver and destroyer respectively.

The ceremony places emphasis on celibacy (Brahmcharya) and moral behaviour. Those who wear the janoi ensure that the sacred thread is never taken off, just as with kanthi.

Throughout childhood Ghanshyam wanted to escape from family life and leave for pilgrimage. On completion of the Janoi ceremony Ghanshyam left home. But His Vishram Mama chased after Him and persuaded Him to stay.

Study of Scriptures (Shastras)

Ghanshyam Maharaj commenced the studies of the scriptures at the age of five. Dharmadev was a learned scholar and was the Lord's personal tutor. Ghanshyam was a divine student with extraordinary learning powers. Ghanshyam would bathe daily in the River Saryu and then attend the religious discourses at the numerous temples in Ayodhya.

Ghanshyam mastered the Vedas by the tender age of 10. From His experience and knowledge He prepared a summary booklet that captured the nectar of all scriptures.

Pilgrimage – Van Vicharan

Ghanshyam always wanted to lead a life of penance. Once Ghanshyam Maharaj's parents had departed to Akshardham, He decided to go on



pilgrimage to rid evil and establish moral behaviour in society. He wanted to teach people how to lead a moral and righteous life and give them darshan of his divine spirit.

On the 10th day of the bright half of Ashadh month VS 1849, early in the morning Ghanshyam went to the Saryu River in Ayodhya. He was aged 11 years, 3 months and 1 day. Ghanshyam departed from Ayodhya by swimming deep into the river and emerging at another location, He headed for the Himalayas. Ghanshyam started His pilgrimage (van vicharan) here and was now known by the name of Nilkanth Varni.

Nilkanth Varni took with Him the following items; kanthi, tulsi mala, deerskin, kamandal (water pot), bowl, gutko (small notebook), undergarment, waist wraparound garment, waist rope, stick and Shaligram purse.

At Pulhashram, Nilkanth Varni undertook severe penance for four months during the monsoon season to impress Suryanarayan, who then came to have darshan of Nilkanth Varni.

Gopalyogi

Nilkanth Varni travelled into the dense forest and jungle. In the jungle He met Gopalyogi, who was adept in the art of Ashtang yoga. Nilkanth Varni stayed with Gopalyogi, respected him and learned yoga from him. Nilkanth revealed his divine form to Gopalyogi during His stay. On the death of Gopalyogi, Nilkanth Varni himself performed the funeral rights of Gopalyogi.

Nav-Lakha Mountain

Nilkanth Varni arrived at Nav-Lakha Mountain, now known as the Chittagong Hills in Bengal. On the mountain there were 900,000 sages doing penance to their own divine spirit. Here Nilkanth Varni gave darshan of His own divine presence to all the sages at the same time. All the sages realised that Nilkanth Varni was Almighty God Supreme.

Dense Forest, South India

Nilkanth Varni walked through the dense forest of South India without food and water for five days. On the sixth day of travelling, he found a well and sat down to do Pooja of Shaligram. Lord Shiva and Parvati came for darshan of Nilkanth Varni in the forest. Knowing that Nilkanth Varni had not eaten for several days, they offered sathavo (food comprising of seven different grain types) to Nilkanth Varni.

Loj

Having travelled across all the corners of India for 7 years, 1 month and 11 days, Nilkanth Varni finally arrived in Gujarat, in the town of Loj on the 6th day of the dark half of the month of Shravan 1856, aged 18. He arrived at Loj in the morning and sat beside the step well in the town. He ended His epic Van Vicharan here.



Sukhanand Swami, a disciple of Ramanand Swami saw Nilkanth Varni doing meditation at the step well. Sukhanand Swami was amazed on seeing the luminous personality of Nilkanth. Sukhanand Swami approached Nilkanth and asked him to come to the ashram of Ramanand Swami.

Nilkanth Varni went to the ashram and had darshan of Muktanand Swami and asked him 5 questions, "What is Jeeva, Ishwar, Maya, Brahm and Parbrahm?" Muktanand Swami was astounded at the quality of questions posed by young Nilkanth Varni. Muktanand Swami answered all 5 questions. Nilkanth Varni was pleased with Muktanand Swami's answer and therefore decided to stay in Loj.

Meeting of Nilkanth Varni and Ramanand Swami in Piplana

After a period of 9 months in Loj, Nilkanth Varni received a message from Ramanand Swami through a Satsangi, Kunverjibhai. Ramanand Swami asked the Nilkanth Varni, Muktanand Swami and other saints and satsangis to meet him at Piplana near Junagadh.

Nilkanth Varni, Muktanand Swami and others arrived in Piplana on the 12th day of the dark half of the month Jeth VS 1856 at the residence of Narsinh Mehta, where Ramanand Swami was staying after arriving from Bhuj.

On seeing Nilkanth Varni, Ramanand Swami got up from his feet and heartily and lovingly embraced him, realising that He was Almighty God Supreme.

Maha Bhagwati Diksha Ceremony in Jetpur

Five months after meeting Ramanand Swami, Nilkanth Varni was initiated in a grand ceremony (Maha Bhagwati Diksha) in Jetpur.

On Prabodhini Ekadashi, the 11th day on the bright half of the month of Kartik VS 1857 Ramanand Swami initiated Nilkanth Varni. Nilkanth Varni was given the names of Sahajanand Swami and Narayan Muni by Ramanand Swami.

Establishment of Swaminarayan Sampraday

Exactly a year after initiating Sahajanand Swami, Ramanand Swami throned Sahajanand Swami as the leader of the Sampraday in Jetpur. He did this because Sahajanand Swami was none other than Almighty God Himself.

Sahajanand Swami initially declined to accept the throne. Ramanand Swami urged him to take the throne as he himself was old and only He (Sahajanand Swami) was capable. Sahajanand Swami took responsibility of the satsang at the young age of 20 years and 7 months.

Over the next three decades Lord Swaminarayan worked endlessly to rid society of evil and wrong doing. Ultimately he wanted satsangis to lead a peaceful and moral life in order to attain salvation and reach Akshardham.

Over the coming years Lord Swaminarayan established the necessary framework for a strong and ever lasting sampraday. He personally did this by constructing temples, installing idols of God and composing scriptures.



He initiated Acharyas to lead the sampraday and saints to maintain and promote the well being of the sampraday. He demonstrated to all human beings how one should lead a moral and peaceful life.

Aarti of Lord by Muktanand Swami

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.

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..."

The Lord comes to Gadhada

Lord Swaminarayan first came to Gadhada on the 11th day of the bright half of the month of Magsar in VS 1861.

The King of Gadhada was Ebhelkhachar (father of Dadakhachar), who went to take darshan of Lord in Kariyani and had realised that he was none other than God. Ebhelkhachar invited Lord to visit Gadhada. On Lord's arrival to Gadhada, Ebhelkhachar graciously received him and asked Lord Swaminarayan to stay there with his family.

Ebhelkhachar felt extremely humble and fortunate to be blessed with the presence of Lord Swaminarayan. Within a short time he handed over all his wealth and the royal palace in Gadhada to God before passing away. The main palace in Gadhada is known as 'Dadakhachar's Darbar.' A courtyard is the focal point of the darbar and at the centre of the courtyard there has always been a neem (limbdo) tree.

Lord Swaminarayan made Gadhada His home, centre of the divine sampraday and stayed here for most of his life. Lord Swaminarayan conducted hundreds of assemblies in the courtyard, royal rooms and verandas.

Lord Swaminarayan reunited with His brothers

Lord Swaminarayan had left His family at a young age. On settling in Gujarat he had lost contact with His brothers and their families.



To regain contact, he sent a saint to search for his brothers, Rampratapji and Iccharamji, in the region of Ayodhya. After searching high and low the Swami located and found the brothers of Lord Swaminarayan.

Rampratapji and Iccharamji came to Gujarat with their families and were reunited with their Brother, Lord Swaminarayan in Vadtal after 26 years of separation. Rampratapji, Iccharamji and their families thereafter stayed with Lord Swaminarayan.

Debate of Vadodara

Vadodara was a city famous for being a centre and focal point of great scholars. There were many scholars residing in Vadodara who did not accept that Lord Swaminarayan was Almighty God Supreme. The satsangi's of Vadodara could not tolerate this and they visited Lord Swaminarayan and explained the situation to him in Vadtal.

On hearing the difficulty of the satsangi's of Vadodara, Lord Swaminarayan decided to send Muktanand Swami to Vadodara to prove to the scholars that Lord Swaminarayan was God.

Muktanand Swami attended a large assembly in Vadodara arranged by the King of Vadodara, named Siyaji Rao. Here many scholars doubting Lord Swaminarayan had gathered.

The debate between the scholars and Muktanand Swami commenced. The scholars posed numerous questions to Muktanand Swami. Muktanand Swami answered each question to prove that Lord Swaminarayan was none other than Almighty God Supreme. Each answer was fully supported by direct reference to Vedic scriptures.

Lord's final farewell

Residing in Gadhada Lord Swaminarayan had established a strong sampraday. He had achieved all He had come to earth for and therefore decided it was now right for him to return to Akshardham.

Lord Swaminarayan knew that the saints and satsangis would suffer indescribable pain on His departure, so many would plead him to stay and some would prevent him from leaving.

Lord Swaminarayan told Gopalanand Swami of his intention to leave his mortal body. Gopalanand Swami was given the overall responsibility of the sampraday. Here Lord Swaminarayan held the hands of both Acharyas and asked Gopalanand Swami to take care of both of them.

Lord Swaminarayan called a meeting of all saints and satsangi's present and said, "I have fully completed all my intentions for coming to earth. I will now return to Akshardham. I promise you I will be ever present here on earth, through my idols, scriptures, Scharyas and Saints. You must all remain strong and not come after me by committing suicide."

SHREE SWAMINARAYAN BAL YUVAK MANDAL
S.K.S. SWAMINARAYAN TEMPLE (LONDON)
Westfield Lane, Kenton, Harrow, Middlesex, HA3 9EA
TEL: 020 8909 9899 FAX: 020 8909 9389



On hearing this, saints and satsangi's exploded into cries of pain. Lord Swaminarayan sat down with prominent saints and servants, closed His eyes and peacefully left His mortal body and returned to Akshardham, on the 10th day of the bright half of the month of Jeth VS 1886 (1st June 1830 AD), aged 49 years 2 months and 1 day,

Lord's body was prepared for cremation and was taken to the grounds of Laxmiwadi in Gadhada. Here the Acharyas, Ayodhyaprasadji and Raghuvirji cremated Lord Swaminarayan.