Akram Youth

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Dada Bhagwan Parivar

Navratri

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Editorial

Friends,

Navratri (an annual Hindu festival that spans nine days is a great combination of Goddess Amba's devotion and garba (a traditional Gujarati dance)! Garba is an integral part of Gujarat's culture! Gujarat's garba is famous not only in India, but also around the world! As soon as we hear about Navratri, our mind starts dancing like a peacock to the tunes of the drums. But do you know how the celebration of this festival began? Why do we celebrate this festival for exactly nine days? Whom are we worshiping through garba?

Today, the real reason of worshipping Goddess Amba through simple garba is lost and it has been replaced with modern dance and disco. These days, this festival has become a fun filled event which continues throughout the night for the youth and is a major source of worries for the parents.

So, let's find out the real reason behind the celebration of this festival in this edition. Even though the true form of Navratri has changed, if we are familiar with our roots, we can keep them alive in our hearts even in these modern times. I hope that you will get this true understanding in this edition.

- Dimplebhai Mehta

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The Secret (

Behind Celebrating Navratri

Do you know that the celebration of Navratri is connected with the celebration of *shraaddh* (a Hindu ceremony that pays homage to one's ancestors)?

Anything that is given with conviction is *shraaddh*.

According to the prevailing customs, *shraaddh* means to give donations for the peace of our ancestors' souls. *Kaagvaas* means to offer rice pudding and fried bread to crows to satisfy our ancestors. It is believed that one pays off his ancestors by doing *shraaddh* for sixteen years after their death. But, do you know that the real reason for the celebration of *shraaddh* and Navratri is not our ancestors but science?

Every year, the period of *shraaddh* begins in the month of Bhadarva (the eleventh month of the Hindu lunar calendar) on the full moon day in the bright half of the lunar month and it lasts until the last day of the dark half of the lunar month. Dadashri tells us about a time in India years ago when no medicine for malaria had been found yet. At that time, during the Bhadarva month,outside each home, there would be a bed in which a sick person would be sleeping, covered by a blanket. He would have a high fever and all the symptoms of malaria. This is because there were a lot of mosquitoes in the month of Bhadarva, so malaria would spread a lot.

Malaria is considered a fever of *pitta,* not a fever of *vata* or *kapha.* During the autumn season, in the month of Bhadarva, *pitta* increases greatly. During the monsoon season, the mosquito population also goes up. So the fever of *pitta* spreads quickly from person to person, and because there was no medicine, many people used to die. Such a situation had arisen that if no solution was found, the population of India was going to become half!

So, to bring down the fever of *pitta*, the saints and rishis discovered that people should eat rice pudding daily during



this time. The milk and sugar in it would cause the *pitta* to decrease and in turn stop the spread of malaria. At that time, there were large families. So, people would not make rice pudding every day, as it required a lot of milk.

Therefore, a custom was started in the name of religion to feed people rice pudding for sixteen days starting on the full moon day of the month of Bhadarva. Everyone wouldn't follow this custom solely in the name of religion, so a societal reason was added on. People would say, "Do shraadh for your ancestors." So then people started doing it for family members that had passed away. If someone were to still refuse, then people would keep asking him, "How come you aren't doing shraadh for your own ancestors?" Due to this societal pressure, he would end up doing it. One day, one person would make rice pudding at his home and feed everyone. The next day another person would do it at his home. Like this, they would take turns. People found this to be suitable. In reality, doing *shraadh* in this way does not reach one's ancestors, but this was the reason behind it.

So, people ate rice pudding for sixteen days starting from the full moon day. By doing so the *pitta* in the body would calm down and people would not die of malaria. So, people used to say that if one lives past these sixteen nights of *shraaddh*, then he gets to see the 'Navi-ratri', which means he gets to see the 'new night'. So, Navratri is the celebration of surviving to live a new night. So, Navratri does not mean one, two, three or nine nights. But it is a celebration of surviving to see a 'New night'.

> In the Navratri festival, there is a special significance given to Goddess Amba's garba and aarti. We will learn about this as we continue further.

Navratri or Loveratri?

As soon as Goddess Amba's aarti started on the eighth night, Rushika remembered last year's event.

"Hi!" Rushika got a message from Rahul at 11 PM.

'A personal message so late at night? We just met in the group chat. It must be something important!' Rushika thought and replied.

"Hi!"

"I want to share something with you..."

Rushika thought that Rahul must be facing some difficulty. So, she immediately called him. Rahul shared about his daily fights with his dad. He was almost crying.

"Rushika... I can only share this with you because I trust you. Please don't tell anyone!"

Rushika felt sorry for Rahul and at the same time felt special.

Rahul and Rushika had met only a few days ago. Before that, in eleventh grade, D-class, Rushika, Shreya and Rashi were known for their friendship. They were childhood friends. They were known as "Best friends forever". However, that started changing as soon as Priya joined that class.

Priya used to come to school in her fancy car, wearing new, fashionable out-

fits and sporting the latest expensive gadgets. Everyone gradually became attracted towards her modern outlook. Priya easily mixed in with everyone due to her talkative nature. She became friends with Rushika in just one or two meetings. Rushika started going to different parties on Priya's insistence. Rushika started liking all this. Sometimes when Shreya and Rashi asked Rushika to join them to do school assignments, she would refuse to go with them, as she would already have made plans for a party or shopping with Priya.

Priya's friend circle had some boys from her old school. Once Rushika went to see a movie with them. Rushika's brother, Smeet saw them. Once at home, he told Rushika not to hang out with boys.

"You don't even know those boys, do you...?"

"Come on... Don't you trust me?"

"I do. But I don't trust those boys, Rushika! You better stay away from them!"

"What do you mean? Are you threatening me?"

"No. I am cautioning you. Please be cautious now, otherwise you will remember my words later on and repent!"

"Don't worry, brother. They are



boys, not tigers. After all, you are also a boy. Not all boys are bad."

Smeet tried to explain, but Rushika did not listen to him at all. Rahul, one of Priya's friends, was very handsome and he used to ride an expensive bike and wear expensive branded items. He used to spend money lavishly at parties. He gifted Rushika an expensive perfume on her birthday. Rushika hesitantly took it, but then she started using that perfume. Rushika started liking her friendship with Rahul because of his charming personality.

After that, Rushika and Rahul started talking every day on WhatsApp.

"Today, you had that perfume on. I liked it very much." Rahul messaged.

"Thank you!" Rushika sent a smiley face in return.

The days of Navratri were approaching. Priya told her, "Rushika, do not make any other plans this Navratri. You have to come with us." Then, she added with a smile, "And, you know? Rahul is also coming."

As every year, Rushika had plans to go for garba in Shreya's society with Shreya and Rashi. However, Rushika was now confused after hearing Priya's plans. She was excited to go to Navratri with Priya's group and especially with Rahul.

"I have already committed to going with Shreya and Rashi. But I will surely come with you on the seventh and eighth night." She replied.

"Okay! We will wear special dresses on those days. I am going shopping for that and you have to come with me!" Priya insisted. Rushika was enjoying all this. They both went to the mall to shop for their traditional outfits. Other boys including Rahul also came there. Rushika liked an orange outfit. She was about to buy that when Rahul showed her another dress and said, "This red and black combination will suit you more." Rushika smiled and bought the dress of Rahul's choice.

Navratri began. Priya uploaded Navratri pictures and videos every day in their group chat.

Rushika started feeling bored of doing garba with girls followed by aarti of Goddess Amba every day. She was waiting for the last two days. After three - four days, she skipped garba and chatted with Rahul instead Smeet used to nag her for sitting with her phone instead of doing garba, but Rushika did not





listen.

"Aarti time, I have to go!" Rushika messaged Rahul.

"Aarti...? How boring!" Rahul replied

"It's boring... but if I don't go, they will force me to." Rushika replied.

Rahul did not message for a few minutes.

"Rahul, are you there?" Rahul came back online.

"Today is your last day with boring people. We will have fun tomorrow." Rahul messaged with a smiley. Rushika liked this.

Rahul and Rushika chatted late into the night. The next day finally came. Rushika had eagerly been waiting for it. She dressed up nicely in that red and black dress. Everyone met at the party plot. But what was going on? Each girl sat behind a boy on their bike and left from the parking lot itself. As Priya left, she told Rushika.

"Rushika, if your mom calls, tell her that I am with you." Then she signaled towards Rahul and said, "And yes, you two enjoy. We will meet here at 1 AM. Then we will go home together."

All this was new for Rushika. She

was a bit scared and excited. Rahul and Rushika made a few rounds on the garba ground while talking to each other. Rahul kept on coming closer to her. Suddenly he grabbed Rushika's hand and said, "Let's go for a long bike ride. We will also have ice cream."

Rushika hesitated a bit. She took her hand back and said "No! Why right now? We can go when everyone comes, and we can also eat ice cream here."

Rahul left from there. Rushika did not like his behavior. She stood there. Rahul came back with ice cream after a few minutes. There was an awkward silence between them. When it was almost 1 AM, Rahul said, "Let's go now."

"Okay. Shall we meet again tomorrow?" Rushika asked.

"Not sure!" Rahul replied. Rushika was surprised with the change in his behavior. Just then, the other friends returned and went home.

On the eighth night, Rushika got ready once again and arrived at the party plot, but Rahul did not show up. She asked Priya, so Priya replied, "What would have happened if you had just gone on a bike ride with him?" Priya said this angrily and left to play garba with her other friends. Rushika felt sad and sat in a corner. At that time, she saw Rahul entering the party plot. But, what was this?

"Nirali? Priya's friend... She was holding hands with Rahul." Rushika kept wondering what was going on while the two of them started playing garba together.

Rushika started to understand everything. She had tears in her eyes and anger in her heart. She felt deceived but was also feeling guilty about having made the wrong decision. She was engrossed in all these thoughts and was looking for a quiet corner so she could cry without getting noticed. Suddenly she heard a voice,

"Nidhi, I can only share this with you because I trust you. Please don't tell anyone! Let's meet tomorrow."

Rahul was talking on the phone in a corner. Nirali was a bit far away. Rushika could see Rahul's back but was clearly able to recognize his voice and words. 'Yesterday, it was Rushika, today it is Nirali and tomorrow Nidhi?'She was shocked! Nirali came as Rahul ended his phone conversation. Both left the party plot on his bike and disappeared in the dark.

Rushika did not want to stay in the party plot for even a second. She wiped off her tears and pretended to be normal. She looked at Priya, but Priya had forgotten about her.

Rushika came to the parking lot and decided to leave for home, but her scooter would not start.

She remembered her brother, Smeet's words.

"Rushika! You better stay away from them!"

"What do you mean? Are you threatening me?"

"No. I am cautioning you. Please be cautious now, otherwise you will remember my words later on and repent!"

Rushika continued to cry while trying to start her scooter. Suddenly someone placed a hand on her head and said,

"Don't cry my sister... I am here."

Rushika turned around and saw Smeet standing there. Rushika started crying profusely.

"I am sorry, I did not listen to you."

"It's okay. I would never leave you alone even if you don't listen to me."

"It's good that there are boys like you in this world!"

Both started laughing. They left the scooter there and headed home in Smeet's car. On the way, they heard Goddess Amba's aarti playing in the distance. Smeet steered his car in that direction and parked in front of Shreya's house.

"This is called true Navratri!" Saying this, Smeet got down to attend the aarti. Rushika went directly to Goddess Amba and asked for forgiveness for her mistake.

Shreya and Rashi came running to Rushika. Rushika felt better meeting her best friends. She stayed with them that night. Smeet left and said he would come to pick her up in the morning. When Rushika woke up in the morning, Shreya's mom turned on the TV. Rushika heard the following words.





Pujyashree: No one plays garba for Goddess Amba in Navratri. They play garba to please the girls and then they flirt with each other! They engage in conduct that will make them lose their human birth. They have no moral values nor any limitations. And if we go to see such garba, then we are encouraging such behavior. We are encouraging the guilty. We are also guilty if we do it, make someone do it, or encourage someone to do it.

These days Navratri is not celebrated in the name of Goddess Amba. The entire environment is of intense illusory attachment! In that, only certain people like the musicians earn money. Everyone else is only there for illusory attachment and sexual pleasure! Many of them even find their match during Navratri. Is that what this is for? Is this a marriage bureau? These are all tools to indulge in illusory attachment. What does Kaliyug mean? Unnatural tools of illusory attachment keep arising. They arise out of nowhere. People enjoy the new forms of entertainment and keep on slipping. Then they enjoy even newer forms of entertainment and slip further. Therefore, this is referred to as a time where people slip or descend [to a lower life-form].



l Want to Play Garb<mark>a</mark>!

Dhol player, play the dhol, I want to play hitch, I want to play hitch and I want to play garba!

So let's do an activity.

1. First, stand up where you are.

2. Now stand in a place where no furniture or objects can get in your way.



3. Now count 1, 2, 3, 4... at the speed of the second hand of a clock. (You may keep the count slow in the beginning).



4. Stand straight on the first count and clap once.

5. On the second count, place your left foot behind your right foot, forming a 60-degree angle to the left side, while bending forward at the waist at a 45-degree angle to the ground. Place both hands on your waist.

6. On the third count, bring your left foot back in front, stand straight from the waist and clap.

7. On the fourth count, place your right foot behind your left foot, forming a 60-degree angle to the right side, while bending forward at the waist at a 45-degree angle to the ground. Place both hands on your waist.



So, friends, you got the hang of it, right? No? Alright then, you can scan the QR code below, and practice by watching the video.





8. On the fifth count, bring your right foot back in front, stand straight from the waist and clap one hand.

9. On the sixth count, spin around 360 degrees.

10. Again, start from the first count and repeat the above steps.

Now tell me, how did you learn it so quickly? Didn't you learn it quickly by watching the video? Similarly, not everything in life is learned by reading or listening. But it can be learned immediately by seeing.



Questioner: Please explain how to worship Goddess Amba.

Worshipping

Goddess Amba Through Garba

Niruma: This hall in this society was built based on the temple of Goddess Amba. They are constructing a temple behind this hall. We are inaugurating this hall today. So, we have placed Goddess Amba's idol here. Now we have to understand how to worship her.

We have so many Gods and Goddesses such as Goddess Amba, Durga, Kalika, and Padma. Lots of people worship Goddess Amba in Gujarat. Navratri is coming soon. So, people will worship Goddess Amba more during these days. Some will also fast for nine days. They will also chant her name and play garba. That is one type of devotion, indirect devotion. Another type of devotion is direct devotion. We have to understand the real form of Goddess Amba and then worship her. What is her real form? It is not an imaginary form. All the Goddesses are known as the original energy force. They are also known as divine energy. Original energy force means energy of the non-self. There are two things within us, the Self and the non-self (relative self). The relative self is the form of divine energy and the Real Self is the absolute Self.

There is a description of Narayan and Narayani, Shiv and Parvati. They are divided into two parts. One is the relative self. This mind-speech-body, the subtle mind-intellect-chit-ego, and angerpride-deceit-greed, all of which we have brought with us, that is known as the relative self. And on the other side, there is the Self, which is the absolute Self. So, there is the Self and the non-Self. The Vedas have said to differentiate between the two. Now the Gnanis can exactly differentiate between the two and put an exact line of demarcation!

Goddess Amba is the natural relative self. She is known as the Goddess of the relative self. When our relative self becomes completely natural.... Currently it is not natural. It is emotional. Especially for women, it immediately becomes emotional if something happens. She becomes so emotional that she cannot understand the right thing. Her understanding gets completely veiled. If she does not get emotional and remains in motion, then her relative self can remain natural. No matter what happens, it should not affect you internally. Anger-pride-deceit-greed, attachment-abhorrence shouldn't dominate you. When any type of outside circumstances does not affect you and you can remain natural and in equanimity, then understand that you have pleased Goddess Amba. If this happens, then understand that the divine energy has manifested within you completely. The Self is absolute, it is natural by nature, but we should have be aware of that natural state. We should get that Knowledge. Do you understand? Until we get that Knowledge, the demarcation between the Self and non-self does not arise. So, everyone worships this form of Goddess Amba. When my relative self becomes completely natural, that is when I will have achieved oneness with Goddess Amba in the true sense. Only then can I say that I have achieved a form like hers.

This mind-speech-body, the subtle mind-intellect-chit-ego, and angerpride-deceit-greed, all of which we have brought with us, is known as the relative self. And on the other side, there is the Soul, which is the absolute Self.

The Ointment of Internal Joy





Pujyashri's sight falls on Saket while doing Garba. Saket feels very happy.



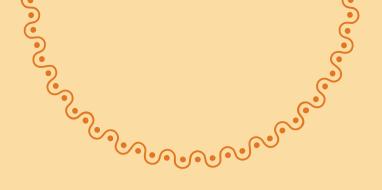


Friends: Saket was very happy during Garba. Do you know why? The garba where he was at, was not a simple Navratri garba. It was a special garba held in the presence of a Gnani. That joy is absolutely different, because by doing Garba in the presence of a Gnani...

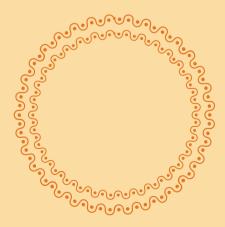
• There is so much happiness and joy that arises within, that all internal

wounds heal.

- There is so much bliss that all internal depression and tension go away.
- Etiquette For example, 'I cannot sing or dance or jump'. All this goes away.
- A natural state prevails on the inside and outside.
- The world is forgotten. There is no anger-pride-deceit-greed there.
- One feels blissful with the oneness that arises with the Gnani and Dada.



"The relative self becomes natural by doing devotion of Goddess Amba." - Dadashri



Dussehra

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Dussehra is the tenth and the last day after Navratri. As soon as the name of Dussehra is mentioned, we, especially in Gujarat, remember the breakfast of fafada-jalebi. After the buzz of garba all night, we see the hot fafada-jalebi shops opening early in the morning, right?

And then we see everywhere in India, the burning of the effigy of Ravana with ten heads! But before enjoying the burning effigy of Ravana without understanding, let us learn about Ravana and what an ardent scholar he was. He who subjugated all the nine planets by his knowledge and penance. Not only that, Ravana is going to become a Tirthankar Lord in the future. A Tirthankar is one who has conquered all internal weaknesses of anger-pride-deceit-greed. He will also lead millions of people to moksha. Now burning the effigy of such a great man leads to veils over our own Knowledge. So instead of condoning the burning of the effigy of Ravana on Dussehra, let's remember his greatness.

Ravana's steadfast penance:

Prince Ravana wanted to conquer Lanka. But to conquer Lanka, supernatural powers were needed. So Prince Ravana along with his two younger brothers, Vibhishan and Kumbhakarn went to do penance in the forest. The three began austere penance.

A deity named Anadat came to the forest. He saw the young men doing penance and thought of testing them. First, he sent beautiful women. "We have surrendered to you. Why do you want to do penance to acquire knowledge of other subjects?" Saying that, those women started making gestures that would break their penance. But the strongwilled men were not moved at all. Then Anadat himself came and assumed many monstrous forms, but the men were not afraid of that. His terrible enchantment had no effect on the men.

As no alchemy seemed to work, he finally took the form of these three men as an illusion. He approached Kumbhakarn as Vibhishan, Vibhishan as Ravana and Ravana as Kumbhakarn. Then he tormented those elusive forms and gave them so much pain, that those forms started screaming. Vibhishan and Kumbhakarn thought that their brother was really suffering, so they gave up the penance and went to save him. But Ravana did not waver.

Seeing this, Anadat was pleased with Ravana and came in his true form and apologized to Ravana. The deities showered flowers on Ravana. As the two brothers wavered in the last penance, they got only a few powers, but Ravana acquired thousands of powers.

Ravana's Devotion and Worldly Detachment

Ravana's devotion to God was also of a high caliber. Once, while worshiping in the temple, the string of his veena (Indian musical instrument) broke. So Ravana immediately pulled a thin vein from his hand and tied it to the string of the veena so that there would be no hindrance in the devotion and continued playing. Being pleased with him, Dharanendra Dev came to Ravana and said, "I am very pleased with your excellent devotion. Ask for whatever you want, Ravana!"

Then Ravana told him, "By giving, devotion increases and by asking, devotion decreases. And , devotion to God is priceless. So, what price can you give and what can I take?"

Ravana's devotion, strength and dedication were amazing!

Ravana's Respect For Women:

In order for Ravana to become the emperor of the six continents, he had to defeat King Nalkuber. But King Nalkuber refused to surrender to Ravana directly. So Ravana attacked his kingdom. Ravana, Vibhishan and Kumbhakarn took their army to the fort of King Nalkuber. As soon as the King came to know about this, he used sorcery and started a fire around the fort for about 8 miles. To extinguish it, they would need the knowledge of breaking this magic. These brothers did not have that knowledge. This fire could not be extinguished in any other way.

Ravana was thinking about this with his ministers, when one of the queen's maids came running to Ravana. She said, "I am the maidservant of Uprambha, the wife of King Nalkuber. Queen Uprambha knows how to extinguish this fire. But she will give you that knowledge on one condition. Queen Uparamba is attracted to you, so if you accept her demands, you can easily capture King Nalkuber. Then with the queen you will receive this kingdom and the honor of being the emperor of six continents. If you do not accept it, you will lose it all.

Ravana laughed upon hearing this. Seeing his laughter, Vibhishan thought that his brother liked this proposal. So on behalf of Ravana, Vibhishan said "Yes". But instead of being happy, Ravana got upset with Vibhishan. "Are you agreeing to their proposal? Have you gone mad? How can such a thing be done that tarnishes our clan?". But Vibhishan's "Yes" meant his brother's promise, which could not be broken. What could be done now? In such a situation, Vibhishan suggested a solution. Ravana liked the idea.

Ravana first met Uprambha and learned the magic from her. Then he defeated King Nalkuber using that knowledge. King Nalkuber bowed before Ravana and surrendered to him. Ravana released him with his kingdom. Then he told queen Uprambha, "I never accepted your demand. Because you have given me this knowledge, you are as venerable as a Guru to me. I consider other women as my mother and sister. So don't disgrace our and go back to your husband Nalkuber."

Such was Ravana's respect for women! Ravana's abduction of Sita was also due to his ego and past karmic account. He never even touched Sita.



Venue : Panchot Bypass Circle, Radhanpur Road, Mehsana. Contact : 9408 551 501





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Ulaas umang tano kevo saras utsav bhakti sabhar che... Maa adhyashakti ne devi prakruti bhajvaano pavitra avsar che...

Mataji tani bhajna thi uchaala marti prakruti sahaj thaashe... Malshe ene shakti je samjine mangshe maa shakti swarupa pase...

Pan chetine chaalvu avsar ne adine chale kusang bhayankar che... Jo pavitrata jalvaay nahi to pap tana parinaam dushkar che...

Ante samjo pavitra aa tahevaar mataji tani aaraadhana no che... Nahi ke kusang ma padvaano ne Raavan tani khoti viraadhana no che...

Amba na lal tani agna palta madi Amba raaji thaashe... Sampurna sahaj ne joi joine aapna thi pan sahaj thavaashe...



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