

(1) We didn't agree about fennel (વરિયાળીનો વદાડ નથી કર્યો)

Shreeji Maharaj was once residing at **Bhaktaraj Vashrambhai Suthar's** home in **Bhadra**. At that time, **Premji Sheth** came to visit Him from **Dhrol**. He bowed down to Shree Hari and sat near Him. Sheth had decided to do *thal* for Shree Hari for quite a while but he was slacking off on actually doing it because of the expenses incurred from it.

Thinking about Sethji's well-being, Shreeji Maharaj reminded him, "Premji Seth why don't you do *thal* for Me today since you have thought of doing so for a while now? If you are not in a position to do *thal* today, then have these two cups of wheat and some of the jaggery before you leave."

Sheth was starving. He had a strong urge to eat prasad so he said, "Sure Prabhu, I will have the wheat and jaggery. Let's not do the *thal* today. We will do it when you come to Dhrol".

Shree Hari gave the bucket of wheat and jaggery to Premji Sheth. Sheth's mouth started watering looking at the tender grains of wheat and fresh jaggery. He sat there and ate all of the prasad while sitting in the sabha listening to the katha. He emptied the bucket and then got up to have some water.

Next day Sheth came back for darshan to listen to the discourses from Shree Hari. Shree Hari said, "Sheth, today no one is offering any *thal* so if you want, it's a perfect opportunity."

Hearing this Sheth was somewhat shocked and confused as to what to do. Seeing this Shree Hari quickly changed the topic and said, "Sheth, if you want to like to do the *thal* at a later time, it's ok. Have some of the ladoos from the bucket. You can do *thal* at some other time that is more convenient for you."

“Sure Maharaj, as you wish. If I can have these ladoos for prasad even without offering any thal, let me just do that.” replied Sheth. He started eating the ladoos while rubbing his hands over his stomach. He ate eight ladoos (500 grams each) and then went out to wash his hands and mouth and to drink some water. At that time Shreeji Maharaj said, “Premji Sheth is himself an incarnation of greed. He has collected Rs. 10,000. Due to his greed he has never had any good food, nor has he let anyone in his family have any good food or wear good clothes. He has worked all his life just to keep collecting money. I have been asking him to do thal for the past two times for the betterment of his soul, but because of his greed he’s not willing to spend any money to do the thal. I have to do something to help him get rid of his greed. If his wealth can come of some use for these saints and devotees, it will liberate his soul.”

On the third day, Sheth came for Shree Hari’s darshan. He bowed down at Maharaj’s feet and sat down next to Him. Shree Hari said, “Sheth, today you have to eat 5 sher (1 sher = 500 gm) penda and if you are not able to, you would then provide thal to all the saints and devotees. Are you willing to accept the challenge?”

“Of Course Prabhu, I accept the challenge. Give me those 5 sher penda and watch me eat it quickly” replied Sheth with a smile.

“But Sheth, you have not kept your promise in the past. You have been on & off in your words so no one trusts you anymore.” said Shree Hari.

“If so, here’s my gold jewellery. Now no one should have any reason not to trust me anymore, right?” said the Sheth eagerly.

Seizing this opportunity, Shree Hari took the jewellery and gave it to **Ratna Patel** to put it away safely. He then brought 5 sher penda and gave it to Sheth. Sheth’s mouth started watering by the smell of the penda. He said, “Jay Maharaj” and started putting the pendas one by one in his mouth.

Seeing this **Ratna Patel** said, “O Maharaj, this greedy Sheth can easily 10 sher penda forget about eating 5. Your trick will not work with him, just watch.”

“Just watch me eat now. I will finish all the pendas within no time and won’t leave any crumbs behind.” said the Sheth while eating the pendas.

Sheth easily gobbled down 3 sher penda. Now he just had 2 sher penda left to finish. Just about then, Sheth started feeling full for the first time but he continued to put the pendas in his mouth. Slowly there were only a handful of pendas left in the basket. Everyone had their eyes on the Sheth. Sheth felt like he was unable to finish the rest but still tried to stuff his mouth with the remaining pendas. He felt like throwing up so he stopped chewing. Maharaj asked, “Why did you stop eating the pendas, Sheth? You only have five more pendas left. Finish them and you will win.”

“I don’t think these penda will go down my throat anymore. Just looking at them is making me nauseous” replied the Sheth with a smirk on his face.

“Sheth you have to finish all the penda otherwise per our agreement, you will have to feed all the saints and the devotees.”

“O Lord, I can’t even look at these pendas anymore. If I try eating even one more, I will throw up all the ones I have eaten so far” expressed the Sheth sadly.

Hearing this, everyone started laughing. Maharaj said, “Sheth then quit trying anymore. You might end up making it worse.”

“I accept my defeat and I will provide thal today of ladoos. But please make sure that the ladoos are made up of gooey jaggery so that we use less ghee. Only one person to be invited from each household” clarified the Sheth.

Maharaj replied, “O Sheth, the thal should not be so simple for someone your caliber. We will make dudhpak instead so you don’t have to worry about ghee at all.”

“Okay Maharaj, why don’t you invite about a hundred people and order about **40 litres of milk** not more. We don’t want the milk to go to waste!” said the Sheth.

“O Sheth why are you saying that? That much milk won’t be enough. We won’t be able to serve everyone generously. I want to feed everyone today with love so it’s okay if we order more milk. I won’t let it go to waste. Okay?” Maharaj said convincingly.

Maharaj ordered **100 litres extra milk** and arranged for a nice thal of puri and dudhpak. Maharaj Himself had the thal that was prepared. Everyone did the darshan of Shree Hari eating small bites. When the saints started prasad, Maharaj Himself served them five times. Everyone was overjoyed to see the saints have the prasad.

When it was time for the devotees to have the prasad, Sheth said, “Everyone please make sure not to bring little kids along with you.”

“Premji Sheth, please have a good heart. We have enough food for everyone. I will be responsible if we run out so don’t worry and let everyone have prasad. Don’t be restless.” Maharaj said to Sheth.

Maharaj served all the devotees with lots of love and affection. Sheth also had prasad with everyone. Not much dudhpak was left over after all. Everyone was extremely happy.

After eating everyone was headed towards the sabha. Someone jokingly said, “Sheth you fed us all a really good prasad. Can you also give us fennel for mouth freshener?”

Hearing this Sheth got really angry and said, “You want fennel seeds as mouth freshener? Are you not ashamed of asking? Go ask Maharaj. Did he make any agreement for fennel seeds?”

Seeing his anger Maharaj replied with a smile, “Yes bhai, Sheth is right. We had only talked about prasad. We didn’t agree that there will be fennel seeds as mouth freshener along with the prasad.”

(2) Timely action of a saint (संतनी समयसूचकता)

This event happened about a hundred years ago. There was a Swaminarayan temple in the **Danapith region of Rajkot**. There was no Shikhar Bandh temple then.

Once **Dharma Dhurandhar Acharya Chudamani Shri Viharilalji Maharaj** was visiting Rajkot. Everyone in the Rajkot Satsang Community had prepared for his warm welcome. A huge welcome assembly was arranged in the Swaminarayan temple. About 200 saints, state officials and a huge number of devotees were seated in the assembly hall. Everyone was chanting Bhagwan’s name in the assembly hall while they were waiting for Pujya Maharaj Shri’s arrival. A divine atmosphere prevailed in the assembly hall.

Right then, **Divan** (minister) **Shri Kotak Saheb**, arrived for the darshan of Acharya Shri. Volunteers of the assembly gave him a place to sit right in the front. Everyone was eagerly waiting as there was some delay in Maharaj Shri’s arrival.

There was pin drop silence in the assembly hall. At that time a kothari (someone who manages finances) haribhakta of the temple, **Karshanjibhai Parekh** requested **Sadguru Shri Balmukunddasji Swami** “Swami, why don’t you ask one of the learned saints to do a discourse about God.” Swami looked around but couldn’t find **Purani Gopinathdasji Swami**, who he thought would be a perfect

fit to address such a huge assembly. Purani Swami and few other capable saints were all engaged in the welcome of Maharaj Shri. The Kothari looked at a few other saints who were equally capable of addressing the assembly but no one dared to speak. Just then a young saint seated in the last line, took advantage of the opportunity & came forward. He started addressing the assembly. **He started singing lines from Nishkulanand Kavya and started talking about Bhakt Prahlad.** Everyone was surprised hearing his fluent and eloquent speech. They were all listening very carefully. Divanji was quite impressed to hear the young saint talk. Right then, Acharya Shri arrived and the bodyguard announced his arrival. The young saint concluded his discourse and took his seat.

Acharya Shri got seated in the assembly. Divanji and other devotees requested Kothariji to seek permission from Acharya Shri to let the young saint finish his discourse. Acharya Shri happily gave the permission and the young saint spoke enthusiastically for another thirty minutes before he concluded. Everyone was extremely impressed and applauded him. Everyone then gave a warm welcome to Acharya Shri.

After the assembly was over, Acharya Shri called the young saint near him. Some saints thought that Acharya Shri would scold him for unnecessarily delaying the assembly. The saint himself thought the same but Acharya Shri expressed immense pleasure for his courage and timely action in addressing the assembly. He adorned a garland on Swami's neck and gave him the title of '**Sadguru**'. Swami and other saints were quite astonished by this act. This saint was **Sadguru Brahmachari Shantanandji** who was a disciple of **Guru Achintyanandji Swami**. It was because of his guru's blessings that Swami was able to get these blessings.

Pujya Acharya Shri intelligently recognized the eloquence of Swami and always took him along for discourses.

Blessed by his guru, Brahmachari Shantanandji was a great storyteller. He was extremely impactful in his speech and delivered powerful messages to the devotees.

(3) Why don't you test Me? (અમારું પારખું તો કરતા જાવ !)

Bhagwan Shree Sahajanand Swami was seated on the outskirts of the village **Pipalav** along with saints and devotees delivering religious discourses in an assembly under a huge tree. Everyone seated was soaked in the religious talks of Shree Hari.

On this auspicious occasion, some travellers who happened to be passing saw the assembly and started heading in that direction. They were surprised to see such a huge assembly and started walking in that direction. They were wearing a Tripundra Tilak on their forehead and were carrying cloth sacks on their shoulders. These brahmins were amazed at the assembly and started discussing amongst themselves.

One brahmin said, "Believe it not, this is an assembly of Lord Swaminarayan."

"I agree with you. Is it even possible for so many saints to sit peacefully if not for Swaminarayan?" replied another brahmin.

"If that's the case, then be careful. Swaminarayan seems to have magical powers. He has casted His spell on many people" added a third Brahmin.

"I agree that Swaminarayan Bhagwan is known to cast a spell on people with his magical powers" added a fourth brahmin.

"He's very smart. He has shown his magical powers and made many people bow down to him. No one has won against him in spiritual competitions. We have all heard of that but none of us has seen it to believe it. Let's test him today. We are

six of us so it's nothing to be afraid of. I will start and you all will just have to give me support. We will deal with the consequences together.” said an elderly brahmin expressing his opinion.

After discussing the plan among themselves, the bhudevs (brahmins) came to the assembly where Shreeji Maharaj was seated. Maharaj is omniscient so was aware of their plans. He welcomed them and said, “Please come bhudevs”. “You all are brahmins so if you want to ask me any questions, please do so. Don’t hesitate at all” Maharaj added.

Seeing the respectful welcome, the brahmins were pleased but some felt skeptical what if Swaminarayan Bhagwan had figured out their plan.

The head of the group said, “We are amazed to see so many tyagis (saints) but then a thought comes to our minds that what if everyone would renounce the materialistic world after listening to your preachings, then how would this world function properly? Have you all ever thought of this?”

Hearing this hilarious question, Maharaj started smiling with a handkerchief on his mouth. The entire assembly started laughing along.

Maharaj raised both his hands and calmed them all down. He said, “Bhudev, you are the protectors of the Arya Sanskruti so it's very natural for you to show such concern. How many people are in your group?”

“We are altogether twenty of us.” answered a middle aged brahmin.

“If all twenty of you brahmin renounce the world & become saints, I will make twenty more people like you appear from this tree. I would spare you from your concerns of how this world would function. Do you want to try?” asked Shreeji Maharaj sharply.

Hearing this question unexpectedly, the brahmins were astonished and started looking at each other. No one dared to say anything. Shree Hari said, "Think about it and let me know what you have decided."

Despite this, no one said anything. Seeing this Shree Hari gave them a little encouragement and said, "Well if all twenty of you don't have the guts why don't only ten of you become sadhus. I will make ten more people appear from the tree. Tell me, are you willing to? Do you want to try?"

Hearing this the brahmins were even more shocked. Everyone was afraid to experiment and no one was ready to test Shree Hari.

Seeing them standing there ashamed, Shree Hari repeated, "Forget about ten. Only five of you can try to become sadhus. Why don't you test whether I am capable or not?"

The whole assembly was silent. The brahmins was utterly worried. Shree Hari insisted again. "O Brahmins, at least an aged Brahmin can try to become a Sadhu. Why are you all staring at each other? Why don't you test my capabilities? Why are you sighing away?"

Feeling guilty and sad about the situation, other brahmins started poking the head brahmins and said, "You were wanting to test Swaminarayan, now why are you afraid? If you all don't have the courage, then let's all leave. How much more do we want to get insulted?"

The head Brahmin wanted to back out and so he said, "We don't want to test you. You are probably capable of not just bringing twenty more people but even forty. We are social human beings. What if we get stuck in this for life long. We won't be able to survive with you all. It seems like we would be tested in this rather than you." saying this the brahmins left on their merry way.

(4) We did not ask for watermelons (तरबूय अमे नथी मंगाल्यां)

The waters of **Bhadravati** river is flowing swiftly. The greenery on the river bank is serene. The lush green farms planted by the **Vaghri**s near the river banks are pleasant. The vines of watermelon plants were seen grown on the sand. There were huge leaves and even bigger watermelons grown on it. There were some cucumbers hanging in certain places and then there were eggplant, peppers, tomatoes, guvar etc planted in the farm.

One afternoon, a group of 8 - 10 saints passed by these farms when going to bathe in the river. They freshened up and took a bath in the river while remembering Bhagwan. They put their wet clothes on the shores to dry and sat down with their eyes closed to meditate on God.

On the other hand, one Vaghri who was plucking the watermelons that were ready, kept looking at the saints. He was afraid that they would come asking for something. He thought to himself that they would come to him and ask him for some watermelons. But the saints didn't even look at the farms but instead left in the same direction that they came from. The same thing happened for 3 - 4 days. The vaghri was keeping an eye on each and every action of the saints. He finally thought to himself - 'These saints were different from the others. They are not coming to ask for his watermelons instead they are not even coming near the farms. Believe it not, these saints seem to be nice and of a good lineage. If I can feed watermelons to these saints, I will get lots of blessings. They have left for the day but if they come tomorrow, I will give them watermelons without them asking me.'

It was evening and the sun was about to set. The saints went to the river to bath in it. Remembering God, they all bathed and as usual wore dry clothes while putting away wet clothes to dry. They sat down, closed their eyes and started meditating on God. As soon as they opened their eyes, they saw the Vaghari

coming towards them carrying two to three watermelons. He kept all 3 watermelons in front of the saints and said “Here bapu, I have brought these for you from my farm.

Hearing this the elderly saint, **Krupanand Swami** said, “Brother, we have not asked for the watermelons.”

“Even if you haven’t asked, I have brought them for you.” replied the Vaghari happily.

‘Is it? If you have brought it with your heart, then only one is enough for us. Please take the other two back.” replied Krupanand Swami seeing his heartfelt wish.

“No Maharaj, take all three of them. You all eat them to your heart's content. Many saints come here asking for watermelons. They argue for them and take the watermelons from me forcibly. But I have been watching you for the past three days. None of you asked for them and neither did you come to even look at the farm. Hence I felt like I wanted to give them to you. There’s a presence of God in saints like you.” replied the Vaghari. Saying this he came and sat near the saints. The saints talked to him about God and asked him to follow the path of righteousness.

The saints then cut the watermelons. They offered it to God and then they all had the prasad. They gave the prasad to the Vaghari as well. Seeing this the Vaghari was elated. He saw good virtues in the saints.

Here we saw that the good virtues of the saints, their piousness & their attachment to God, can’t leave anyone without making a positive impact on them. Because of such saints many people change themselves from being *kusangis* to becoming *satsangis*.

(5) On the way to Moraj (मोरजने मार्गे)

“Hit them! Hit them!” hearing this the **Kathi Darbars** who were riding the horses became alert. Right then they heard another roar, “Watch, no one will leave alive today! Capture them from all sides & start attacking!” Hearing this the Kathi Darbars dropped all their weapons and started looking around to see where the voice came from. They looked everywhere. Before they could figure out anything, they heard loud voices of wild horses that came roaring towards them. Hearing this the horses of the Kathi Darbars became confused and anxious. They all panicked and started running here & there. In this chaos, some kathi darbar’s weapons fell off of their hands. Some even lost their turbans. Some lost shoes from their feet. A few of them even fell off their horses.

None of the horses were under control except **Shreeji Maharaj’s Manki, Alaiya Khachar’s Rojo and Somlo Khachar’s Tajan**. There was a complete chaos for few minutes. Even the most experienced horsemen were left shaken up. They said, “Maharaj, what just happened all of a sudden? Please save us from this difficult situation.”

Maharaj raised his hand to bless them and gave them some strength. He called them near Him. They came closer and asked Shree Hari, “Prabhu who made that scary noise? Where did they disappear?”

Maharaj replied, “Many years ago, a battle took place in this area. Many soldiers lost their lives fighting the battle and went to heaven. But there were some cowards who ran for their lives leaving the battlefield. The enemy chased them and stabbed them in their backs and killed them. They then became ghosts. Those ghosts got scared when they heard our horses and hence they started screaming and roaring.”

“Oh! Is that what happened? We got so scared where did this voice come from all of a sudden?” replied Sura Khachar with a sigh of relief.

This tragic incident happened when Swaminarayan Bhagwan along with the Kathi horsemen were passing by **Golana, crossing the river Sabarmati, towards the Barra region, going from the village of Budhej to Moraj.**

Listening to the request of the Kathi devotees, Shree Hari asked someone to go fetch some water. Somlo Khachar and Naja Jogiya took their horses, went to the nearby lake, washed a pot, filtered the water and brought it for Shree Hari. Shreeji Maharaj had the water and sprinkled the rest of the water in the area. Upon this, the ghosts said, “O Prabhu, you have showered us with your mercy. Please bless us and relieve us from this.”

Hearing their prayers Shree Hari replied, “O Ghosts! You will now be free from the form of a ghost. You will all take birth in good satsangi families where you will pray to me and worship me. Then you will go to my Akshrdham.”

Then Shree Hari along with the horsemen came to the **village of Moraj.** They stayed at **Gokaldas Gadhvi’s house for the night.**

(6) A staunch devotee of Methan (મેથાણના મહામુક્ત)

In the holy place of **Siddhpur**, after feeding Churma Ladoos full of ghee to the brahmins, Supreme Godhead Shree Swaminarayan Mahaprabhu was getting ready to leave along with the kathi darbars. The sun was about to set and it was evening time. The head of the brahmin, **Navalshankar Pandit** and other brahmins were present to bid farewell to Mahaprabhu.

“Dear brahmins, you are all content and pleased right?” asked Shree Hari happily.

“O Prabhu, you satisfied us really well by feeding us our favorite modaks. You all gave us good alms. Our entire brahmin community is extremely happy and

satisfied with the feast. Everyone is praising you today but I have some wish that remains unfulfilled” said Navalshankar expressing gratification.

“Tell me, what wish of yours remained unfulfilled. I will fulfill it.” said Shree Hari.

“Prabhu, it's nothing important but seeing these nice horses of Kathiyawad, I have a desire that if you can give us one ordinary horse, it would become convenient for us to ride it and go have feast wherever we are invited,” requested Navalshankar humbly to Maharaj.

Aiming to satisfy the Bhudev with the gift of a mare and to show other devotees of the understanding of a unique devotee, Shree Hari started looking around but that devotee was nowhere to be seen. However Shree Hari was able to spot the devotees mare Tajan. Shree Hari called the horseman who was holding the noseband of Tajan in his hands near him. All the other Kathi darbars who were patting their own horses kept looking at them. As soon as Tajan was brought near, Shree Hari took the noseband rope in his own hands. Everyone was astonished seeing what was happening. Shree Hari ran his hand lovingly on Tajan's head and handed the noseband to Navalshankar and said, “Krushnarpan”. Hearing this the rest of the kathi darbars remained shocked & skipped a beat. The horseman said, “But Prabhu, this mare is not mine. It belongs to **Kakabhai**. He asked me to watch Tajan on his behalf while he went to get a wet towel from his accommodation place.”

When the kathi darbars saw Kakabhai returning back after fetching his wet towel, they all looked at him. Kakabhai came near as he was chanting God's name. At that someone said, “Kakabhai, where did you go after giving Tajan to someone to look after?”

“Why? Did you all have to wait for me?”

“It’s not about having to wait for you. Look Maharaj gave away your amazing mare to the brahmin. What are you going to do now?” taunted one Kathi friend.

Hearing this, the great devotee **Kakabhai of Methan** said, “My Tajan is very fortunate that she was handed over by Shree Hari Himself to a brahmin. Maharaj only gave away my mare to the Brahmin, if He had given me away to the brahmin as well, I wouldn’t mind. I would happily go do his dirty chores free of charge.”

“O Kakabhai, bless your heart! You have such a good understanding. We just realized that today!” said **Matro Dhadhal**.

“Well someone like me is not that great with understanding but I have come to know the greatness of Maharaj and also come in the acquaintance of great saints like Muktanand Swami. Since then I have given my mind, my body and my wealth to God and his deeds. Whatever possessions I have, are only because of Maharaj’s blessings. Maharaj had given me this mare to take care of until now. So now He took it back because He wanted to give it to the Brahmin.” said Kakabhai humbly.

Hearing this not only were the Kathi Darbars shocked but also everyone else who was standing there. Everyone praised him, “Very nice Darbar! You have a very good perspective and understanding. Your mother and your upbringing are both admirable.”

Shree Hari Himself came to Kakabhai. He was extremely pleased with his reply. He put both His hands on Kakabhai’s head and also embraced the darbar and gave him a hug.

“Darbars you all are always with me wherever I go but how many of you have the same perspective and understanding as Kakabhai? If I had given any of your mares away without asking you, how would you all have reacted? What would

you be thinking about me in your minds? Just think about it.” Shree Hari asked the Kathi Darbars.

“Maharaj, Kakabhai of Methan, is a staunch devotee. If it was anyone else in this situation they would have not taken it positively and would have started worrying. They would lose their calm, Maharaj.” said **Sura Khachar** expressing his opinion.

If we think about it, we would realize the greatness of the understanding that Kakabhai had. What he did was not an easy thing to do. For the Kathi Darbars, they are more obsessed with their horses than their own sons. Especially if the horses are well behaved and trained, they are even more attached to them. They can never detach from the horses even if they tried hard. But Kakabhai was a great devotee who had not built an attachment for materialistic things like a horse. He was a staunch devotee of Lord Swaminarayan. Forget about the horse, he had dedicated himself to Lord Swaminarayan. Kakabhai’s surrender, devotion and understanding are truly inspirational for us. We bow down to such a staunch devotee of Methan.

(7) Fire test (અગ્નિ પરીક્ષા)

“Prabhu, you are going to Kutch, right? I want to come along with you if you allow me to.” said one darbar of **Devaliya village in the Zalawad region** who had come for Shreeji Maharaj’s darshan.

“Sure Darbar, if you like to come to Kutch, then please come.” agree Shree Hari.

Next day, Shree Hari along with all his friends left early in the morning. They crossed the desert of Kutch and once they reached the other side, they all stopped to take some rest. In the light moments of resting, Shree Hari said, “There have been such truthful devotees in the past. **Harishchandra, Shibi, Mayurdhwaj, Nal**, etc. They went through so many hardships in order to stand strong for their promise and to be in favor of truth! They had to pass through the

test of time. We should be thankful to them” saying this Shree Hari looked at everyone with love and affection. He added, “Do you all think there would be such devotees in the present times? We should test them to find out, right?”

Hearing this everyone started looking at each other & started thinking but no one said anything. The darbar from Devaliya who had joined them said, “Maharaj, those kind of devotees exist even today. With You being around and having your acquaintance, how is it possible that such devotees won't exist in current times? Why don't you test us and let's find out.”

The Almighty God was well aware of this devotee's mental state but He wanted to prove to others so Shree Hari said, “If you want me to test, then let's do it. Why don't you enter that *kubo* (cone made of dry grass). Let's test you.”

Hearing this the devotees quickly moved towards the empty *kubo* without hesitating even a bit. All the remaining devotees were standing getting impatient to see what was just about to happen.

Shree Hari ordered the remaining devotees and said, “Bhaguji, Somlo Khachar! Now you both go gather some dry thorns from nearby and cover this *kubo* up from all around.”

Hearing Shree Hari's order, all the devotees dispersed and went looking for dry wood and thorns. They covered the *kubo* from all sides.

“Naja, why don't you get burning charcoal ready.” demanded Shree Hari.

Following Shree Hari's command, Naja went and got burning charcoal and other supplies ready to light a fire. Everyone got an idea of what was about to happen. They kept observing the scene in silence.

Naja tactfully lit the wick and got the fire ready. Shree Hari said, "What are you all staring at? Whoever among you all is courageous enough to take a fire test, can take this wick and light the kubo on fire."

Shree Hari gave his orders but no devotee came forward because this was not any ordinary test that any ordinary person could take. They had to be rough and tough like Vishwamitra or Durvasa muni. Such a test could also result in having to pay for hurting a devotee. Everyone just stood still with their heads down listening to Shree Hari's order.

Seeing everyone standing still, Shree Hari repeated, "Did you all hear me? We want to test this darbar so just light the fire so we will find out the truth."

Even then no one moved. Everyone stood sadly with their heads down. Shree Hari became aggressive & ordered everyone loudly to light the fire. Even then no one moved an inch. An awkward silence prevailed in the atmosphere.

Seeing that Shree Hari's orders were not being followed, the darbar who was sitting in the kubo for being tested said loudly, "What are you all afraid of? If none you have the courage then give me the wick and fire. I will light the kubo on fire myself. You all don't delay this anymore. I am fortunate that I am being tested this way. I am eagerly waiting for this test so please don't delay it any further."

Drawing everyone's attention to the lion roar from the kubo, Shree Hari said, "Did you all hear him? He is so eager to be tested. He tested his true valor." He added, "Dardar, you are amazing. You fulfilled your promise. Your test is over so please come out carefully."

Hearing this order from Shree Hari, the devotees ran towards the kubo and removed all the woods and thorns from around the kubo. The brave darbar came out of the kubo. He was filled with courage. He came and bowed down in front of

Shree Hari. Shree Hari asked him to get up. He embraced him with love and affection, patted him in the back and praised him.

Putting his hands on the darbar's head, Shree Hari said emotionally, "Darbar, you passed the test throughout. You sustained it all. Everyone witnessed that you fulfilled your promise. Not only that, you are equally in line with the great devotees of the past."

The brave devotee who passed through the fire test was **Gaudji Darbar of Taavi Devaliya**. He had strong faith & courage to obey the orders of Shree Hari.

(8) Realization of mistake ભૂલનું ભાન કરાવ્યું

"Maharaj, with your blessings, we have made four new rooms this year. We kindly request You and all the saints to come for Padhramani. Please bring everyone to **Kalali**" said **Ranchhodbhai Amin**

Without expressing anything Maharaj just remained silent. Seeing this **Muktanand Swami** tried to help Ranchhodbhai Amin & said, "Yes Prabhu, Ranchhodbhai has made a new house. He's the head of the village and is pretty well off as well. It would be very good, if You can accept his invitation to go to his house."

Even then Shree Hari didn't reply so the head of the village felt insulted. He felt like he didn't get the respect he deserved so he got agitated and said, "Swami, Maharaj only values rich landlords like Dada Khachar. Ordinary people like us don't hold any importance for Him. After all, he just stays in Gadhada. He even hides in Gadhada sometimes so he doesn't have to go anywhere!"

Hearing these baseless accusations of Ranchhodbhai Amin, Shree Hari got the opportunity he was waiting for. He wanted to teach him a lesson so Maharaj said

to Muktanand Swami, “Swami, didn’t you all stay in Kalali for one and a half months just recently?” At that time, did Ranchhodbhai Amin mention about doing Padhramani or Uttara at his newly built home? The rooms were all ready but still you and all the other saints stayed on the outskirts of the village under a tree in a farm, right? There were about 20 - 25 saints. Didn’t you all go ask for alms for your daily needs? Did Ranchhodbhai Amin ask you if you all needed any food supplies even for the sake of formality?” Swami shook his head in reply.

Then Shree Hari said to Ranchhodbhai Amin, “Mukhi, you have come here to invite me but when these saints were in Kalali for one & a half months, did you even care to ask them about food supplies?”

Hearing the Almighty God ask these direct questions, Ranchhodbhai Amin was ashamed. He realized his mistake and nothing to reply back. He started feeling bad about it. He thought to himself, “Oh no. Either because of my greed or my laziness, I didn’t care for the pious saints like Muktanand Swami. Despite being in my village, they had to ask for alms for their day to day survival.”

Shree Hari added, “Dada Khachar is a landlord but still if I insult him by hitting with dirty shoes without any fault of his, he would not utter a single word against Me nor would he feel anything against me. Every single day, there are so many saints and guests who have food at his house! He takes such good care of all the devotees who come here for My dashan. There’s so much expense incurred from the day to day activities but he doesn’t mind anything at all. He is just happy every single minute of the day because of my presence here. His entire family does anything and everything I wish for just to keep Me here. He has sacrificed everything for Me. He went through so much trouble because of Me. No one would be able to pass the harsh tests that I have made him go through.”

Shree Hari looked at Muktanand Swami with affection and said, "Swami, you know it all. Please explain it to Ranchhodbhai Amin peacefully." Shree Hari conveyed a message to Ranchhodbhai Amin and also showed him what it means to be honest and humble even though you are a rich landlord.

Hearing this Ranchhodbhai Amin realized his mistake. He accepted his mistakes and said. "Prabhu, You have shown me my mistake. I am grateful for that and I now understand what a true devotee Dada Khachar is and I also understood how generous his heart is. Please forgive me for whatever bad things I said in haste." His eyes were filled with tears and he was repenting for his mistake.

Shree Hari was touched by this and gave **Lalji Murti** for daily poojan with His own hands. Ranchhodbhai Amin built a temple in Kalali and kept this Lalji Murti in it for everyone's darshan. Shree Hari saw the affection from Ranchhodbhai Amin and decided to go to Kalali and fulfil his wish. Everyone was overjoyed to have Shree Hari's darshan.

The idol of Lalji is present even today in the Swaminarayan Temple in Kalali.