

In Sanidhya of Rashtrasant Pujya Gurudev Shree Namramuni Maharaj Saheb

Shree Bhagwati Jain Diksha Mahotsav



14th February, 2016



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Ordinarily *Extraordinary*

A Peek into the Life of 8 Diksharthis...

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A seeker can initiate the journey of Self Realization in two ways. One is a road where the echo of Truth arises from within his Soul, thus marking the beginning of his Journey towards Self Purification; the road adopted by revered souls like Tirthankar Mahavir, Lord Buddha and Lord Ram. The other path is the one where the *grace* of such revered souls touches the hearts of millions, awakens their Inner Voice, and inspires them to ignite their own Inner Journey. And history is replete with innumerable such stories, right from Gautam Swami to Chandanbala, Meerabai to Sant Kabir. There is a story of Divine Love, Surrender and Unconditional Devotion. And as they dissolve themselves in the sublime beauty of Divine Love, their transformation becomes a legend for generations to experience.

The 8 Diksharthis too prepare for this sublime, yet Divine transformation in Sanidhya of the One who has illuminated the light of Truth in their hearts, the One whose work, words and vibrations has left an indelible mark on their soul; the One who has inspired them to become *like Mahavir* - their **Guru**; Rashtrasant Pujya Gurudev Shree Namramuni Maharaj Sahab.

Highly educated in the outer world, the Diksharthis have been well trained and mentored in Pujya Gurudev's Sanidhya for the last 5 years. A great disciplinary and perfectionist himself, is his arduous



The GUIDING Light

training filled with Selfless Love and Compassion which has brought out the best qualities in each of them. His deep wisdom and his profound exposition of the Truth, has helped them to not just Know Mahavir, but to *experience* Mahavir. And it is *His Saiyam* which has been the greatest inspiration for the Diksharthis to discover their Inner Calling.

On the occasion of his 25th Saiyam Jayanti, they thus aspire to gift him a token of their *Aatmik Samarpan* by embracing the vows of Jain Diksha - a true ode to his 25 years of Diksha Jeevan.

Preface

14th February, 2016. A day when the world will celebrate Valentine's Day to express love for their partner, on this very same day, **8 souls** will begin a new journey to celebrate **DIVINE LOVE**, love which is selfless, pure and unconditional.

The year of 2014 witnessed a similar celebration of 9 souls who embraced Diksha in *Sanidhya* of **Rashtrasant Puja Gurudev Shree Namramuni Maharaj Saheb**. Today, when we look at those 9 *Dikshits*, our eyes are filled with immense respect and appreciation for their exceptional feat. They recently finished travelling over 1000 kms by foot, and yet, you see them full of joy and peace, without a shred of discontent. There was a time when we felt they were one of us but today, they have surpassed to an elevated *Aatmik* state.

Shree Bhagwati Jain Diksha Mahotsav, 2016 is yet another celebration which will mark a beginning of a new journey. But one often wonders,

How can a path of renunciation give so much joy, satisfaction and peace?

How does one find the courage to leave all the worldly comforts and live a life full of uncertainty?

How does the act of giving-up (*Tyaag*) result in eternal happiness?

'Ordinarily Extraordinary' aims to give an insight into the life of these 8 souls who have decided to lead an extraordinary life. As you read ahead, you'll discover that they've been just like us. They have been raised in the same societal framework like ours, and had a similar upbringing like we've had. Yet,

They choose to be DIFFERENT.

They choose to be BRAVE.

They choose to take a LESSER TRAVELLED PATH.

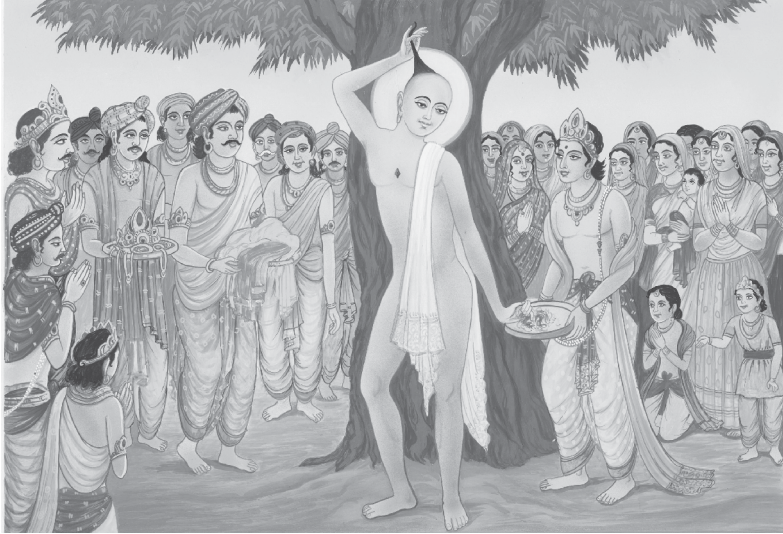
In today's youth, it is very rare to see a shift in liking from Pizzas & Pastas to a life of *PATRAAs* (vessels used by Jain saints to eat). Let's see what has led to this paradigm shift.

What is it that makes them **Ordinarily Extraordinary...?**

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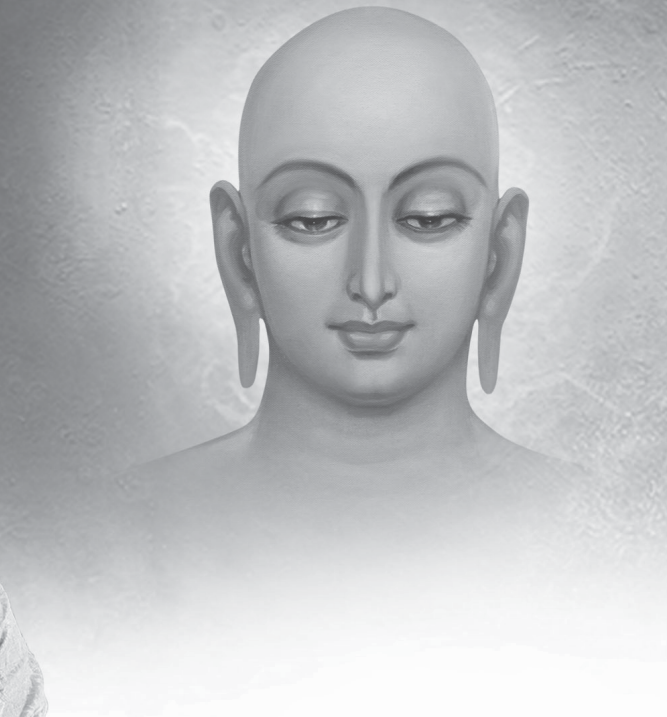
The Tradition of Jain Diksha



Jain Diksha is one of the most revered forms of renunciation. Right from Bhagwan Adinath to Bhagwan Mahavir, all the 24 Tirthankaras have embraced the five vows of *Ahimsa*, *Saty*, *Achourya*, *Brahmacharya* and *Aparigraha*. And blessed are these 8 individuals who will tread on the same path, adopting these vows to not just gain restraint over their body; but to set on a journey of Self Exploration, a journey of Inner Enrichment.

As it is rightly said, 'Dharma' is not a cult or a tradition, nor is it a set of rites and rituals. It is simply an understanding of the '*Reality*'. And the practice of putting this understanding into action, is called *Saiyam* or *Diksha*. Jain Darshan upholds the belief that every soul has the potential of becoming pure, of becoming *Mahavir*, by shedding the layers of ignorance and vices.

And *Saiyam* is one's ardent effort to not just worship Mahavir, but to initiate the journey of becoming *Mahavir*!



*“Engineering
the Inner Self”*

Mumukshu Mitul Mehta

B.E. (I.T.) | 24 Years

Guru Sanidhya: 5 years

Bill Gates, Steve Jobs and Mark Zuckerberg have one significant similarity. They all dropped out of college and created a billion-dollar company. It is hard to believe initially, but these college dropouts have been the brains behind Microsoft, Apple and Facebook respectively.

Mitul Bhai has a similar, yet different story. In his 3rd year of engineering, he dropped out of college. He was an excellent student academically and was on his way to a very promising and a lucrative career. Just one more year left to his Bachelor of Engineering (B.E.) degree, and he quit. No, he did not start a billion-dollar company. He did something much beyond the materialistic aspirations of a 20 year old boy. He defied the temporary existence of things and set on a search for something which is permanent. And after rigorous inner engineering, he surrendered himself to Pujya Gurudev in the year 2011.

EARLY LIFE

Born to Sejalben and Tusharbai Mehta, Mitul Bhai is the only child to his parents. When he was 8, his parents settled down at Rajkot where he spent the latter part of his childhood and teenage years. He has always been a good student academically and loved to explore new adventures. In his free time, he often went out for treks and scout camps. His love for adventure took a high and he decided to pursue it as his career by becoming an officer of the Indian Army.

He was in his 3rd year of engineering and had a couple of career options to choose from. A lucrative IT career awaited him and at the same time he also happened to clear the first qualifying round for joining the Indian Army. And yet, amidst this, he was always lost in the thought that everything he will achieve will one day go away. It's all temporary! This thought seemed causal at that time, but later, it sowed the seeds for a totally different life.

SPIRITUAL GROWTH

In the year 2011, Pujya Gurudev spent the *Chaturmas* at Chinchin. This was the time when Mitul Bhai was absorbed in deep dilemma. He was just a year away from getting his final B.E. degree. And on the other side, there was this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity at the Chinchin Chaturmas, which was going to focus on reflection on one's Right Identity through Sadhak sessions, Meditation Sessions, Sadhna, experiments and scriptural study. He expressed his Bhaav to Pujya Gurudev to take a drop for one academic year and focus on discovering his inner mettle. And the four months during the Chinchin Chaturmas became a turning point in his life, they changed his perceptions about life completely. For the first time, he felt extraordinarily blessed for being born in Jin Shasan. His heart was overwhelmed with gratitude for Pujya Gurudev, who addressed his Right 'I' and opened his Right 'Eye'.

Never looking back, Mitul Bhai spent every living moment to enrich his spiritual journey. A real diamond sparkles only when it is cut and polished. So also, Pujya Gurudev put Mitul bhai through innumerable tests to determine the consistency of his Bhaav. He was put through various situations to testify his reactions and feelings in different environments. Only when he proved himself worthy, did Pujya Gurudev finally accept him in his refuge.

Taking inspiration from Pujya Gurudev, Mitul bhai's heart too beats for *Shasan Prabhavna*. He constantly looks out for different ways and mediums which can possibly connect today's youth to Bhagwan Mahavir's infinite wisdom. A technology geek himself, he constantly pioneers different ideas which can help promote spirituality and a positive way of living amongst today's generation. Parasdham's various digital initiatives find their roots somewhere in Mitul bhai's vision of doing *Shasan Prabhavna* in a manner which the youth easily connects with!

Mitul Bhai, who once had an exceptional flair for technology and adventure, now eagerly waits for the day when he will begin the most extraordinary adventure of his life - 14th February 2016 - the day when he shall be ordained as a Saint in Jin Shasan under Pujya Gurudev's blessed *Sanidhya*.

IN CONVERSATION WITH MITUL BHAI

Q: What does the word 'Diksha' mean to you?

A: Diksha for me is a process of developing your INNER QUALITIES. Dharma is not just a set of ideologies and beliefs, rites and rituals. Any act which catalyzes our endeavour to nurture our Inner Qualities is called Dharma, and Diksha is a constant effort to keep moving towards Inner Purification and waging a war against my own set of impurities and temperaments. That's what Diksha means to me – An Inner WAR!

Q: Aren't you worried about the difficulty you would face in the *Saiyam* life?

A: Every path comes with its set of difficulties – be it *Sansar* or *Saiyam*. But the hardships in *Saiyam* are too insignificant in front of the unmatched joy of enlivening your Right Identity. Because however appealing the *Sansar* looks, the fact remains that it is only temporary and shall always remain temporary. People are constantly worried about achieving one thing after another. Be it their career or relationships, you will always find them struggling and juggling between things. And yet, at the end, what one achieves cumulatively is next to nothing. *Saiyam* is not a secret ingredient to happiness, if that's what matters to you then *Saiyam* cannot help you achieve it.

Saiyam is the master key to TRUTH, and if Truth is what you want, only then should *Saiyam* be your road. And that's the reason Bhagwan Mahavir also chose to renounce his life of luxury and embrace *Saiyam*.

Q: Don't you think that the lifestyle of Diksha comes with a lot of restrictions? Maybe if you hadn't taken this decision, you could have done much more for the society?

A: For a tree, it's extremely important that its roots become strong initially. Only then can it be useful to thousands and thousands of others. For a Sadhak too, it's very important to initially develop his Inner Self. If you closely observe the life story of Bhagwan Mahavir or even

Pujya Gurudev, you will realize that they spent the initial years in developing their roots deeper within. They developed their Inner Strength, their Knowledge and their *Sadhna*. Once they had accomplished that, they then extended what they had achieved to the whole world. The restraints (*Niyams*) which one accepts in the *Diksha Jeevan* too are not meant to hamper one's growth or abilities. They act as a fence, a protection to further catalyze one's growth, like a gardener's fence around his small plants. It brings Discipline in our lives.

Q: When you look back, which particular *Ajna* given by Pujya Gurudev left a deep impact on you?

A: There have been innumerable Agnas which have played a pivotal role in shaping us. Infact, what we are today can be attributed to one single word - 'Gurudev's AGNA'. But there's one Agna which I'll never be able to forget, it has left such a deep impression on me. We were once in Parasdham, Mumbai and Pujya Gurudev had given me a particular AGNA which I did not follow. That day, he asked me to go and clean all the used plates in the Bhojanshala. That day, I spent the whole day washing around 600 plates with leftover food in them.

Pujya Gurudev's Agna is not just a directive. It is that one medicine which rips out the thorns from within you, it brings about a radical change in you. As I kept following Pujya Gurudev's Agna, with every plate that I cleaned, I felt a sense of *Shunyata*, a sense of being nothing. It crushed my ego and made me realize the NOTHINGNESS of my existence.

Q: How can Spirituality help the youth of today?

A: Our education system teaches us how to achieve Success. But when we fail, there's no one to guide us on how to deal with Failure. An understanding of how to balance the Mind when confronted with both, is the Art of Spirituality. Spirituality teaches you how to gain control of your mind, and that, I believe is the most important learning for the youth of today.

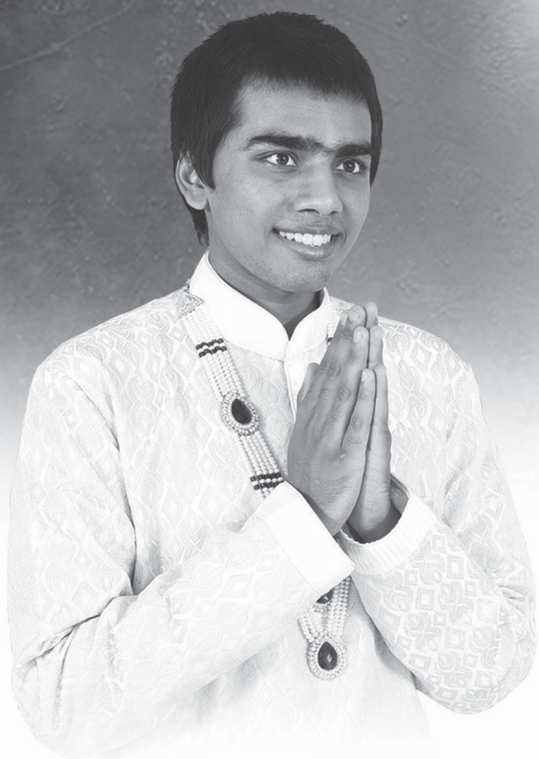
Q: Your message for fellow *Sadhaks* who wish to pursue a similar path like yours?

A: One thing which has always inspired me immensely is Pujya Gurudev's *Vinay*, his Inner *Samarpanta* towards Tapsamrat Gurudev. His devotion is unmatched, and that I believe is his innermost strength. That's my message to all who wish to pursue this path – *VINAY* and *SAMARPANTA* are the key to your progress. You may not have any knowledge or ability, but if you have *Vinay* and *Samarpanta* in your heart, nothing will be difficult for you. It will act like a steering wheel which shall keep you focused on your spiritual path and not deviate you from your goal.

Q: What makes you Ordinarily Extraordinary?

A: The ability to look at temporary existence of things. Throughout my life, that is one thought which has always stayed with me. I would often look at things in terms of how long it will last, what will happen next. And now when I look back, I think that it has been very influential in my present state of *Bhaav*, it has been the starting point of my journey. Pujya Gurudev's words of inspiration have been like an affirmation of my Inner voice, giving me the courage to pursue my inner calling, and here I am.





**“CONSTRUCTING Mall
to DECONSTRUCTING Life”**

Mumukshu Akhil Doshi

HSC | 22 Years

Guru Sanidhya: 5 years

If you have read the book "The Monk Who Sold His Ferrari" by Robin Sharma, you would easily relate it to the journey of Akhil Bhai.

Born with a silver spoon amidst all possible luxuries that one can dream of, Akhil Bhai's journey has been very inspiring. He was raised in the upscale Juhu area of Mumbai, which is a home to many Bollywood celebrities. In a neighborhood populated with who's who from 'Page 3', one feels surprised at how he wasn't lured by the glamour around him. His family owns a reputed construction firm, and he was initially inclined towards joining the family business. Starting off as a junior employee in the company, he assisted his father in a project for the construction of a shopping mall in Mumbai. The project progressed well, but before the project concluded, his inclination had already started progressing in a completely different direction. And this unexpected, unprecedented transformation of Bhaav was happening in the *Sadguru's Sharan*.

EARLY LIFE

Born to Rupalben and Hemalbhai Doshi, Akhil Bhai was raised in the city of Mumbai. Being the first child of the Doshi family made him an eye-candy amongst all family members. And with excess love pouring in from all sides and every wish being met, Akhil bhai was indeed a very pampered child. But at the same time, he was brilliant at extracurriculars in school.

For someone who was a state-level swimmer, skater and squash player, a big fan of Italian cuisine and had the opportunity of ideating and conceptualizing the construction of a shopping mall in a global city like Mumbai, taking to spirituality was a vast but natural transformation. It is thus said that you can never judge an individual by his outer pursuits. Only the *Sadguru* can identify one's true calling. Because He envisions not just his present, but his past and future as well. And He thus connects the dots to identify his journey across time.

SPIRITUAL GROWTH

In the year 2006, Akhil Bhai first got a glimpse of *Pujya Gurudev*. He was just 12 years old then and had gone for *Darshan* with his grandfather. The first eye-to-eye connection ignited a spark in him, he felt different and was inspired to come over again and again. But he never imagined that his life would be transformed in such a big way. After completing school, he became a part of Arham Yuva Seva Group and also participated in different *Shibirs* organized for youngsters. His connection with Pujya Gurudev was becoming stronger by the day, Akhil bhai was unable to comprehend what was it that touched his thoughts and feelings so strongly.

After completing his Std. 12 Board exams, he decided to observe the *Sadhak Lifestyle* a little more closely by offering *Seva* to Pujya Gurudev for a couple of months during the summer vacation. Every moment that he spent there, became a lesson he treasures for life. And the thought that '*if 4 months can bring about such a huge transformation in me, the refuge of the Sadguru for a lifetime can be such a blessing for my Human Birth!*' left an indelible impression on him. Chinchana was the place where he accumulated his thoughts and developed strong conviction to pursue a spiritual path. He was keen to surrender Himself completely, but Pujya Gurudev put his determination through various tests, testing him at each and every point to bring out his Inner *Samarpana* and make this diamond shine! Finally, when Akhil Bhai refused to relent and expressed his determination for *Saiyam*, Pujya Gurudev finally granted him the *Agna* to embrace the *Sadhak* lifestyle in 2011.

Today, you will find Akhil Bhai constantly devoted in *Pujya Gurudev's Seva, Bhakti, Sadhna and Swadhyay*, the pillars which mould a *Sadhak's* life and enhance his *Saiyam* Bhaav. His *Seva* towards Pujya Gurudev is truly inspiring.

IN CONVERSATION WITH AKHIL BHAI

Q: It is possible to pursue spirituality and religion without renouncing the world. Then why *Diksha*?

A: All of us are *Nimitt-dependent* individuals. Depending on the positive or negative *Nimitts* (situations) that we are in, our emotions, thoughts and feelings change. And *Sansar* is a place where the influence of negative *Nimitts* is much higher than the positive ones. Bhagwan Mahavir too renounced the world to withdraw himself from the influences of this world and discover Himself. And that is my greatest inspiration to take *Diksha*. No matter what, the worldly life can never be devoid of any relations. And unless you disconnect from relationships, you cannot connect with your Self. *Diksha* disconnects you from all the worldly distractions and helps you stay focused in your spiritual quest.

Q: Why did you choose *Diksha* over a fledging career?

A: We are attuned to thinking and planning for one life. Very rarely do you find someone who has a plan for 'After Death'. The career which most of us plan today is so temporary. It can fulfill your materialistic aspirations, but what after that? It is this thought which compelled me to plan for my life after life. For me, *Diksha* is also a career, but it's a career for the soul. It's a plan for nurturing the qualities of your soul and rising further up in the inner world. It is a career path for achieving something that is to stay forever,

Q: The path of *Diksha* is filled with difficulties. And you have always seen a life of luxury. Do you think you will be able to cope up?

A: Difficulties don't come to break us, they are here to bring out our Inner Potential. Yes, *Diksha* is definitely not easy, but joining the Army is also not easy. It requires immense courage and bravery. And if I want to fight against the negative qualities which have reigned over me since time immemorial, I have to do what it takes to achieve that. And moreover, where there is Passion, nothing seems difficult. Have you ever seen an athlete complain about the hours of arduous training that he has to

invest? He endures the pain because he knows what lies beyond it. It's the same for me!

Q. Do you think everyone should take Diksha?

A: Not everyone can join the Army, but everyone can become a good citizen. Similarly, not everyone can take Diksha, but everyone can definitely become a good Human Being. So I believe that while Diksha is not for everyone, developing their Inner Qualities while staying in Sansar is surely for each and everyone.

Q: When you look back, which particular *Agna* given by *Pujya Gurudev* left a deep impact on you?

A: Few years back we were in Pawandham. Next to Pawandham, there is a huge open drain with decorated walls, but the stench inside is unbearable. Pujya Gurudev gave me the *Agna* to go and sit near the drain for half an hour. He asked me to keep looking at the dirt around and introspect on the difference between my body and the drain. That day I realized something very important. We love pampering ourselves with comforts and luxury. But this body too if filled with filth and dirt on the inside. It will die and decay someday. Before the body dies, my attachment for this body needs to die...! It made me look at myself in a very different way.

Q: Your message for fellow *Sadhaks* who wish to pursue a similar path like yours?

A: Sometimes, people perceive *Saiyam* as a very difficult path, a path which is full of challenges and self restraint. But that's not true. The one who embraces *Saiyam*, does so with immense passion and enthusiasm. He does not fear the physical difficulties that *Saiyam* invites. Bhagwan Mahavir has said - "*Emayya may dukhe na cheerkaalo vathhai bhavissai*", which means that no pain and suffering is going to stay forever. So let go of your fear that *Saiyam* is difficult, the difficulties are only momentary. But the innate joy and gratification which one experiences through this selfless lifestyle is unparalleled, because you discover your Self – you experience the ultimate fulfillment of purpose!

Q: What makes you Ordinarily Extraordinary?

A: In a class full of students, everyone has access to same resources. Same teachers, same text book, same notes. And yet, there is only one student who stands first, why? The answer is Hard Work. When you set a goal, it is imperative that you pursue it with full dedication. You have to keep persevering and not stop till you have achieved what you want. This act of *Perseverance* emanating constantly from within is what makes ordinary person extraordinary.





“**MBBS: Mere Bhaav,**
Bhav Shuddhi”

Mumukshu Pooja Vegda

M.B.B.S. | 35 Years

Guru Sanidhya: 4 years

A successful cosmetologist, a shopaholic, a modern-day career-oriented youngster, Pooja Didi was one who lived life on her own terms. Back in her *Sansar* days, if any girl could access Pooja Didi's wardrobe, it would be a dream come true for her. Be it designer clothes, shoes, accessories, handbags – you name it and she had it all. Little did she know that one day, her attraction for Versace & Louis Vuitton would vanish in her devotion and love for the brand of *Parmatma Mahavir*.

Pooja Didi's life story is something which we can easily connect with. She has led a life which most of us are already living or aspire to live. Her experience in *Sansar* life was so diverse, that many of us would feel that a part of her past is our present. And after having lived both sides of the world, Pooja Didi brings forth a new perspective amongst us.

EARLY LIFE

Born to Prafullaben and Harshadbhai Vegda, Pooja Didi was brought up in the city of Mumbai. Right from her young age, she was ambitious and determined. An academically brilliant student, very fond of playing basketball and *Garba*, she lived life to enjoy and have fun. Be it scuba diving, paragliding or weekend parties, she is an example of a modern age independent girl whose eyes were set on her career and at the same time chose to live every moment to the fullest. After finishing her M.B.B.S, she worked for a while and later took up Cosmetology. Her clientele included several celebrities and corporate honchos who would visit her for cosmetic treatment. And after having reached the pinnacle of success and living the life of her dreams, Pooja Didi's transformation has astonished her friends and family in ways more than one.

SPIRITUAL GROWTH

In today's time, technology plays a very important role in engaging people. Though there are negative influences of technology, the positive ones are a plenty. One could never have thought that one audio CD can bring about such a radical transformation in someone's life.

4 years back, Pooja Didi was given a audio CD by her mother which had *Pujya Gurudev's Pravachan* on the importance of Human Birth. The CD brought about that one moment in Pooja Didi's life, when her Inner Calling echoed out to her. Before the CD could even finish, she was completely immersed in the thought that *what is the purpose of my life?*. Pujya Gurudev's lucid yet profound *Bhaav* on the topic touched her deeply and Pooja Didi felt as though her Inner Voice was talking to her, urging her to make the most of the human birth.

"This human birth is so precious, wasting this time in achieving small successes, connecting with friends and family... it's all only temporary. My purpose of life is different. I am not made for all this."

And finally, after reflecting deeply on what she really wanted to do, she decided to follow her Inner Voice. She expressed her Bhaav to Pujya Gurudev, who put her through intense tests for 2 years, before finally giving her Agna to begin the Sadhak Lifestyle.

Pooja Didi's focus has always been on making the productive use of every single moment in life. As a Sadhak, her devotion for *Shasan Seva* reflects in her tireless efforts for translating the *Aagam* scriptures into English. Very compassionate at heart, Pooja Didi is one such individual whose care extends to each and every individual, be it a driver or a cleaner, a *Sevak* or a fellow Sadhak; she is always present in *Seva*. An avid lover of *Dhyan* with intense focus on her goal of meeting the Self, her expression of Bhaav on the *Aatma Tatva* captivates one and all. The conviction in her words and the earnestness in her heart is what inspires you to *rethink* on the very purpose of your life too.

IN CONVERSATION WITH POOJA DIDI

Q: What does the word “Diksha” mean to you?

A: Diksha is a transformation from living in the wrong identity of the Outer World to enlivening the Right Identity of the Inner World. It's not just a change of dress from multi-coloured clothes to white clothes. It's a change of your thought process and a steady purification of your *Bhaav*. It is the road to overcome your innermost desires effortlessly with complete surrender towards Guru Agna.

Q: So is it your choice to take *Diksha* or *Pujya Gurudev's Agna* to do so?

A: The *Bhaav* of taking Diksha is mine. I feel highly motivated to make this human birth fruitful, right from the moment I first experienced the reality of this world and my own Self. I expressed my *Bhaav* to *Pujya Gurudev* and I feel extremely blessed that he has not just given me *Agna* to embrace *Saiyam*, but has also trained and moulded me to become worthy of this path. A *Shishya* (Disciple) always expresses his *Bhaav* and the *Guru* decides if it is appropriate for him or no.

Q: In this world full of distractions, how do you keep yourself motivated and focused?

A: One of the biggest inspiration I gain from Bhagwan Mahavir is His determination and focus. Yes, distractions will always be there in the world, be it in *Sansar* or *Saiyam*. However, once your heart gets connected with what you want to achieve, once your mind is set on your goal, you will not be able to see anything else, come what may. Just like *Arjun*; there were so many distractions around him, but they didn't affect him at all. Because he was absolutely focused on his target. *Saiyam* life in itself reduces most of the distractions. For the rest of it, my inner drive for self-realization is so strong that nothing else matters to me.

Q: A life of Renunciation is quite boring, there's no entertainment. Then why are you choosing such a life?

A: For a *Sansari*, staying 'active' is entertainment. You watch TV for a while, get bored and pick up a magazine, again lose interest and shift your attention to your phone. You always need 'something' or 'someone' to keep you happy, some activity to keep you entertained. But for us, not doing anything and staying within our real Nature gives us immense Joy and Satisfaction. In all that we do, our focus remains on how will it transform and purify my nature? How will it take us towards ultimate happiness?

There is a search for 'happiness' in both. You try to find it outside, while we have learnt to find it within; because that's the only joy which is eternal.

Q: Death is inevitable, we all have to die someday. Then why live in anticipation of death every moment? Instead, why not experience the joys of life today?

A: It's like hitting the gold when it's hot. Gold can't be moulded when it becomes cold. We always think that I will practice *Dharma - Dhyana* in old age when I finish everything. But, in reality, do we have any guarantee on when will death knock on our doors? Are you sure that you will see tomorrow? The only difference is that we have fast forwarded the thought that death can come at any moment; not because we fear it, but because it awakens us to put every moment of our life to optimum utilisation. A *Sansari* on the other hand procrastinates this thought, but in reality, his procrastination is not wisdom, it's ignorance.

Q: You have spent more than 30 years in *Sansar*, what learnings did you take from there?

A: Undoubtedly the moment of Inner Awakening in my life came when I heard Pujya Gurudev for the first time. However, with due respect to Pujya Gurudev, had I not *experienced* all that I heard from Him first hand back in *Sansar*, it would not have had such a deep impact on me and I would have never been convinced. My life in *Sansar* has been like a mirror, showing me a reflection of the reality and strengthening my resolve that True Happiness lies only within.

Q: When you look back, which particular *Agna* given by *Pujya Gurudev* left a deep impact on you?

A: Recently, Pujya Gurudev gave *Agna* to recite *Namotthunnam* every day for 108 times. *Namotthunnam* is a compilation in which we express intense admiration for the qualities of God. It is a beautiful verse which brings out a very positive *Bhaav*, it arouses deep longing in your heart to become *like* Parmatma. The verse is recited in a particular posture.

Pujya Gurudev asked us to start by reciting 9 *Namotthunnams* and gradually go up to 108. When I started, every single word of the *Stotra* was creating a different energy within me. I was experiencing the essence of every word. I didn't realize when I completely lost count and melted in deep respect for *Bhagwan*. There was something so unique about it that I felt I was in Parmatma's *Samvasharan*. I asked myself, why is there so much difference between God and me? And my heart longed for just one thing, I too wanted to become like Him, I too wanted to develop qualities like him. I am so grateful to *Pujya Gurudev* as this one *Agna* has been a strong *Nimitt* in purifying my *Bhaav* and making my intent of embracing *Saiyam* more profound.

Q: What makes you Ordinarily Extraordinary?

A: There are 2 voices that constantly echo within me. One belongs to Pooja which is my outer identity, and one is the voice of my Soul. Whenever I am confronted with any situation or circumstance, whenever I feel confused or I see myself at crossroads of what is right and wrong, there is a battle between these 2 voices which give me 2 different perspectives. The voice of my Soul is the one which guides me on the right path; and following my Inner Voice is what makes my ordinary way of life, extraordinary.





“

CA:

CHARITRA ANGIKAAR

”

Mumukshu Tannvi Desai

C.A. | 24 Years

Guru Sanidhya: 5 years

There is a popular English proverb – 'Jack of ALL trades is a master of NONE'. Well, in case of Tannvi Didi, it's quite contradictory. She has indeed been a 'Master of ALL.'

Right from childhood, Tannvi Didi has been exceptional in whatever she has taken up – be it academics or extracurricular activities. School Captain, Rank Holder, Outstanding Bharatanatyam Dancer, Powerful Debater, Consistent Winner at various Inter-School and Inter-Collegiate events and much more. The list doesn't seem to end. She has been a go-getter and has always strived for excellence. Her friends recall her as an intelligent, hard-working and popular student who has been a natural leader.

EARLY LIFE

Born to Nanditaben and Dipakbhai Desai, Tannvi Didi was born and brought up in the city of Mumbai. An achiever since the very beginning, her life revolved around academics and extracurriculars. She was an extremely disciplined child and matured faster than her age. Her passion and love for classical dance was very strong and she had dedicated 12 years of her life in mastering it. Her parents, especially her father, were her pillar of support in all that she did. And it was their support which always inspired her to excel in all walks of life. As she entered college, her focus on academics increased and she decided to pursue Chartered Accountancy. With a group of close friends to hang out with, a cool chilled out life and a strong passion for classical dancing; little did Tannvi Didi know that one day someone would take her on an uncharted territory and transform her course of life.

SPIRITUAL GROWTH

We all see Pujya Gurudev working tirelessly to reach out to today's generation. On many occasions, it affects his health, but that doesn't seem to deter him. He is worried by the state and lifestyle of today's youth and strives hard to bring a positive change, not as a saint, but as a friend. One way He does this is through various *Yuva Shibir*s where youngsters can freely interact with Him.

It was at one such Shibir where Tannvi Didi first met Pujya Gurudev in 2007. The five day Shibir which Tannvi Didi casually attended with her friends, became a turning point in her life. And Pujya Gurudev suddenly asked her, "*When is your Diksha?*" She was completely shocked to hear this. It was the first time that she had ever attended a Shibir, and she had no Bhaav or intent for Diksha. She took this very casually and didn't think much about it. But every session that Pujya Gurudev undertook in the Shibir, seemed to stir her conscience and she had a ton of questions running through her mind. The singular thought, that '*What is the achievement of all my achievements...?*' left an indelible impression on her and she started evaluating her life. In all that she did, her thoughts were always coloured with one bhaav, '*What is it that is truly mine in all of this?*'

As time passed by, she frequently started coming to Pujya Gurudev for Darshan. In his *Sanidhya*, the questions and thoughts running through her mind found simple, yet profound answers. Pujya Gurudev's words were like an affirmation on her own inner voice. And she thus had a deep sense of reverence for Pujya Gurudev for opening her mind to a whole new perspective, the perspective of *Reality*. And gradually, she strived to not just be with Him, but to become Like Him! She started offering *Seva* in the Youth Wing - Arham Yuva Seva Group, a mission which became her medium of staying connected with Pujya Gurudev's vision.

She expressed her Bhaav to her parents. Initially, it was difficult for her parents to accept her feelings. Having raised her with immense care, they found it difficult to give her the consent to embrace the path of *Saiyam*. They felt protective about her and didn't want her to completely disconnect from her worldly life and dedicate to spirituality. But the

determination in her heart, her deep understanding of the truth, and an increasing transformation in her thoughts and life, convinced them that she no longer belongs here.

As a Sadhak, Tannvi Didi's exceptional leadership qualities have enabled her to look after an enormous amount of organization and management activities. She has taken up varying roles and has outperformed each of them. And even while juggling between numerous *Seva* activities, her connection with her Soul and her focus on the goal of attaining the Self has only enhanced with every passing day. Her strong conviction for *Saiyam*, her eagerness to walk on Parmatma's footsteps and become like Parmatma reflects in her thoughts, words and actions. Once inspired in a Shibir herself, she now aims to inspire thousands more on the path of righteousness! Let's know more about her journey from *Raag* to *Tyaag* and *Tyaag* to *Vairaag*.

IN CONVERSATION WITH TANNVI DIDI

Q: What does the word “Diksha” mean to you?

A: Diksha for me is SELF-CONTROL on my Mind, Words, Actions and Emotions. Everything that we do in contradiction to our true nature, be it anger, ego, jealousy, greed, attachment... be it anything; the root cause to everything is our lack of control over ourselves. Diksha a process which helps me master myself, enhance my Bhaav and advance on the path to be like Parmatma.

Q: In the world full of distractions, how do you keep yourself motivated and focused?

A: There is a difference in my past and present life. My past life was lived by Tannvi. She had different goals and ambitions. However, my present life is all about my Soul. My true-self. When I decided to come on this path, I voluntarily chose to be DISCONNECTED from the world. So there is nothing about your temporary world which makes me feel tempted or distracted. Life here is one of peace and I feel motivated to explore myself more and more.

Q: When you look back, which particular *Agna* given by Pujya Gurudev left a deep impact on you?

A: There was one restaurant in my locality and I was very fond of Pav Bhaji there. Rather, I was addicted to it. During the Chaturmas period at Parasdham, Pujya Gurudev gave me the Agna to go and stand outside this restaurant and take in the smell of *Pav Bhaji* being made right in front of me. When I went there, my past reflected in front of me. However, I couldn't feel any temptation. I was pleasantly surprised to see this change in me.

When Pujya Gurudev gives any Agna, he also gives the strength to fulfill it. Addictions, habits or weaknesses that one cannot fight by himself, can easily be overpowered in Guru Agna. This is the influence of Guru

Sanidhya, it brings an inner change in you even without you realizing it.

Q: Aren't you worried about the difficulty you would face in the *Saiyam* life?

A: Not at all. The difficulty you are talking about is an OUTSIDE one. But my inner Bhaav is unaffected by it. Yes, *Saiyam* life demands certain *kriyas* (action) and there would be some speed-breakers. But you see, we have spent last 5 years in Pujya Gurudev's *Sanidhya*. He has trained us and made us ready for the life ahead. We are aware of what's lined up for us and with Pujya Gurudev's blessing, we are quite confident of our journey ahead and look forward to it.

Q: For last 5 years, you have continuously been in Pujya Gurudev's *Sanidhya*. So your Bhaav and inspiration has been on the rise. But after Diksha, you may not get much time in His *Sanidhya*? For most times, you will be on your own. Won't this affect you?

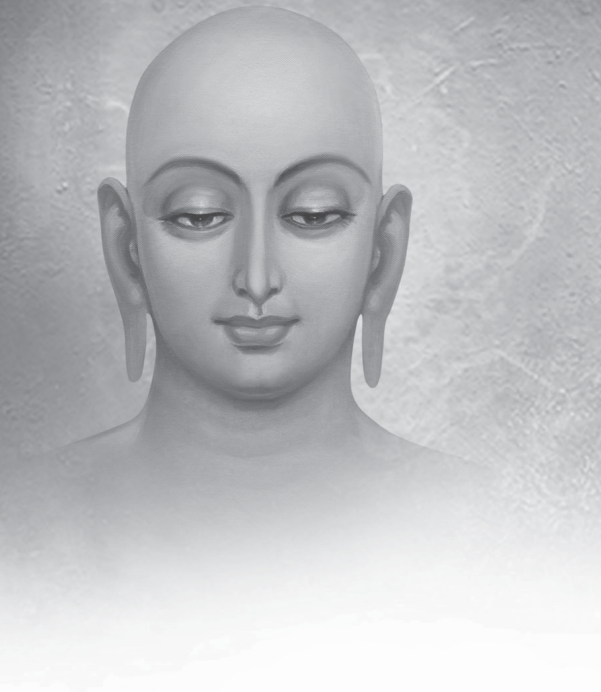
A: Pujya Gurudev says- "If after meeting me you don't meet yourself, your true self, then you haven't really met me."

Yes, initially we all want to be around Him. We long for His attention, his inspiration and that divine smile. However, over the years, he has made us realize that his presence around us is not what's important, what really matters is our inner connection with him. The whole purpose of *Saiyam* life is to meet yourself and develop those Inner Qualities, the qualities which Pujya Gurudev experiences. I want to start a journey to be like Him and experience my true being!

Q: Your message for fellow Sadhaks who wish to pursue a similar path like yours?

A: After meeting Pujya Gurudev, if you just love to be in His *Sanidhya*, then you still haven't met him. Because the physical dimension is always temporary. When Pujya Gurudev's *Sanidhya* becomes a silent force to bring about a change in your life, you would have truly met Him. Strive for this change and see how your life transforms.





*“Advocating
Right Identity”*

Mumukshu Mona Fofaria

Advocate | 30 Years
Guru Sanidhya: 2 years

Fiercely independent in her thoughts with an immensely caring and loving heart, Mona Didi's story is strikingly different. The glamour and colour of this world easily lures most of us, but, there are some individuals who remain untouched even in the midst of everything. The memory of their past *Sadhna* retains a vivid and indelible impression on their soul.

The first twenty years in Mona Didi's life were imbued with simplicity, dispassion towards the world and a deep interest in religion, even though her family had no significant inclination towards this path. Her passion for music led her to learn *Shree Bhaktamar Stotra* at a very early age. But having no strong *Nimitt* to give strength to her inner calling, the thought slowly faded away as she moved into adulthood.

Having a dream to study Law, she soon became an advocate fighting for Truth and Justice. And after taking up a career to argue and debate in the court of Law, life saw a U - Turn for Mona Didi and she decided to surrender her life in the Court of Divine!

EARLY LIFE

Born to Lataben and Prabhulalbai Fofaria, Mona Didi has been brought up in the city of Mumbai. Quite naughty and lovable as a child, she shared a very strong bonding with her siblings. From being the worst of enemies as children, they grew up to become the best of friends who couldn't do without one another. Even though she was the younger one amongst her siblings, her maturity and understanding was very deep. And she thus played an integral role in taking every single decision in the family.

Having grown up in such a close knit family, Mona Didi was very connected with her parents and siblings. But even with love being showered upon her from all sides, her dispassion for the material world was very strong, and in some sense unexplainable. Religion

does not interest many youngsters today, but Mona Didi was different. She had a profound connection with Dharma. She wasn't really involved in religious rites and rituals. Instead, she was always intrigued by the underlying essence of Dharma and was curious to dive in deeper and deeper. But not finding a strong *Nimitt*, a guide or mentor to support her quest, her goal started fading away. Though she still pinned for a medium which could connect her to underlying secrets of Jainism, the world of ambitions, aspirations and responsibilities slowly started diverting her attention. Until there came an unexpected and uncalled for moment in 2013, which changed her life forever.

SPIRITUAL LIFE

After having completed 3 and a half years of her practice as an Advocate, she once saw a video of Pujya Gurudev on television. His deep and profound exposition on the reality of this *Sansar* and the nature of relationships directly correlated with her experience in the real world. Having seen several real life stories as a lawyer, she thought to herself that the seemingly beautiful quest of happiness was only a bubble. She was yearning to find a source of happiness which was truly eternal. And Pujya Gurudev helped her find that answer in *Her Self*.

She started connecting with this truth through Pujya Gurudev's daily *Pravachans* on television, and resolved that *Saiyam* was the only true way for her soul. She would often ask herself, 'When my passion is Truth itself, then shouldn't my journey be towards the Eternal Truth...?'

But she did not find the courage to express her *Bhaav* to him. Weeks passed by till she finally summed up the courage to go and meet him for the first time, and then, there was no looking back. The more she heard him, the stronger her conviction became; and the stronger her conviction, the more she yearned for living in her Right Identity. The 9 Dikshas in 2014 saw the pinnacle of her yearning, and she just couldn't stop herself anymore. She expressed her *Bhaav* to her parents, who graciously welcomed her decision.

However, Pujya Gurudev is no ordinary Master, he never accepts a person without testing his mettle. And the same was the case with Mona Didi. After putting the gold through innumerable tests and seeing it shine, Pujya Gurudev finally accepted her in the *Sadhak Jeevan* and started training her meticulously for the *Saiyam Jeevan* that she yearned for.

IN CONVERSATION WITH MONA DIDI

Q. What is Diksha for you?

A. When I was in *Sansar* and was practicing Law, I was fighting for the Truth. Truth has been my innate passion. And that was my focus even when I came on this path. Diksha for me is the quest for that Eternal Truth. I now await the day when my soul will see the light of Enlightenment and beam with a glow of the Ultimate Truth.

Q. You studied Law, so your thought process was always aligned with Logical Thinking. Then how did you turn towards Dharma, where Faith is given more importance than Logical Reasoning?

A. For me, *Dharma* has always been a first subject of Logic and then of Faith. Even as a child when I was inclined towards Dharma, it was towards the practicality that it offers. Look at the life story of innumerable *Acharyas* in our past. *Gautam Swami*, we all know the level of Ego that he was possessed with. He met Bhagwan Mahavir for the first time, and his inner transformation was unmatched! Even today, his *Param Vinay* (Inner Reverence) is an inspiration for all of us. Similarly, *Chandkaushik* - the serpent whose mere eyes spit such venom that would turn everything around him into ashes. And when he met Bhagwan Mahavir for the first time, his innermost Anger melted and he became calm for his whole life. And if I have been blessed with such a Dharma, then there's no reason for me to doubt or question it. Because *Sharan* is the first step to remove any bad quality that breeds within us, and Dharma starts with the word '*Namo*' which means *Sharanagati*.

Q: What if there comes a time when you lose interest in your spiritual life and want to enjoy your worldly things, what will you do in that case?

A: Imagine that you have earned the Prime Minister's seat. After that, can any post in your local party hold of any importance to you? Not at all. So

also, till the time I had not tasted the fruit of Eternal Truth, Peace and Satisfaction; Success was important to me. But when realization dawned upon me, when I realized the utmost importance of this Human Birth, the material world lost all its luster and shine. What I was missing in *Sansar*, and what I have achieved as a *Sadhak* can never be expressed in words, it can only be experienced! And after achieving this, how can I ever return to this mediocrity?

Q: Being a Lawyer, have you ever faced a situation where your argumentative side came in the way of *Guru Agna*? What did you do then?

A: I was a Lawyer before I came in *Guru Sanidhya*. But the moment you enter *Guru Sanidhya*, your outer identity completely vanishes, you become *Shunya*. It is only after you are able to achieve that *Shunyata*, that faith and that acceptance for *Sharangati*, that *Pujya Gurudev* accepts you in the *Sadhak* Lifestyle. He always says, '*gyare buddhi mrutyu paame chhe, tyare j Sharan ni shuruat thaay chhe.*' So once you surrender, there's no scope for arguments. Moreover, when the *Guru* gives you *Agna* for something, he simultaneously gives you the strength to follow that *Agna*. And that is not just a *Sadhak's* experience, it is for anybody who is in *Guru Agna*. Because *Pujya Gurudev* not just observes with the Outer Eye, he guides you with his Inner Eye. And that's the essence of having a *Guru* in one's life!

Q: When you look back, which particular *Agna* given by *Pujya Gurudev* left a deep impact on you?

A: As a *Sadhak*, we maintain a Schedule Book; wherein we take account of how we have spent every moment of the whole day. And it is *Pujya Gurudev's* *Agna* that we have to fill this daily. Recently, 3-4 of us forgot to update the book for various reasons, one of them being laxity on our part. And that very day, *Pujya Gurudev* asked for our books. As a punishment, we all were given *Agna* to go outside in the Sun and stand there for the whole day without any food or water. We started at 8.00 AM in the morning without any breakfast, and it was almost noon. A few people had come for *Darshan*, and on seeing the sweat on their shirts, *Pujya Gurudev* got to know that it was burning hot outside, and immediately called us inside. Later, we realized that every half an hour,

he had been sending someone to check whether we were ok.

When we came back, he told us that, "I care for you, but I am more concerned about your Spiritual Growth. Understand the importance of every moment that you have today, it's priceless. Don't waste a single second in your laxity."

It had a very deep impression on me. I saw two very different facets of Pujya Gurudev at the same time, and it strengthened my focus on why I was here, what was my purpose and what I had to achieve. Pujya Gurudev is a very strict disciplinarian. But I feel blessed for who he is, because it is this very military discipline which upgrades our inner quality and brings out the best in us.

Q: What makes you Ordinarily Extraordinary?

A: I believe that Humanity comes before Spirituality. Since childhood, I feel blessed to have that seed of Love and Care for each and everyone instilled deep within me. Be it for my parents, my brother or my sister, I was always the Caring One. And it is this very quality which nurtured in me the quality of Compassion for every living being. It is this *Selflessness* which I think has helped me come this forward in my Journey.





*“Know MORE,
No LESS”*

Mumukshu Jigisha Doshi

HSC | 22 Years

Guru Sanidhya: 2 years

Amongst the 8 *Diksharthis*, Jigisha Didi is probably the only one who developed a deep connection with God at a young age. Like *Meerabai* connected with *Shree Krishna* at a very tender age, her life revolved around Parmatma Parshwanath since childhood. And like a child who shares every moment, every event and every emotion with his mother, she shared a bond of dearness with Parmatma

As she grew up, she yearned to meet her Parmatma in person. She travelled everywhere in search for Him, from Temples and Mosques to Churches and Gurudwaras. But destiny brought her to Pujya Gurudev. His words, his vibrations, and his profound exposition on the essence of *Aatma* and *Param* - *Aatma* struck a chord in her heart. And his road became her chosen destiny.

What could be the reason for her Inner Calling? What made a strong believer of the *Derawasi* Sect embrace the refuge of a *Sthanakwasi* Saint?

EARLY LIFE

Born to Chetnaben and Dilipbhai Doshi, Jigisha Didi was brought up in the city of Kolkata. She lived a fairly simple life with very few friends. Her best friend was her Parmatma, whom she fondly called *Dada*.

As a child, we are all taught to worship Parmatma for our own happiness and well-being. But since the time Jigisha Didi was in her mother's womb, her mother felt a surge in her *Dharmik Bhaav*. Her interest and enthusiasm had grown phenomenally during that time, such that even if it was noon, she wouldn't feel like having food without visiting the Derasar once. She couldn't understand this sudden change in her, and felt that it was her unborn child whose connection aroused these

feelings within her. And thus, since the time Jigisha Didi had barely started walking, her mother always told her, ***“You are Parmatma's child. He is your Dada. And you have to become like Him one day!”***

Jigisha Didi's outlook and perception towards life was very uncommon. We all come across small incidents and experiences in life, but the learning that she extracted from them were very different. An old lady in her neighbourhood had died. Within a few days, the lady's son came and met her father, and casually exclaimed, *“Baa has gone, but she even took the Gold ring with her!”* Jigisha Didi was taken aback. The sentence was imprinted in her mind and she thought to herself, 'The old lady gave her whole life to her family. But when her eyes were closing, no object or no person remained hers in the true sense. What a selfish world this is!' Several such seemingly casual incidences left an indelible impression on her, and intensified her understanding of the reality. Though she was pursuing her studies, her connection with God was becoming stronger and stronger by the day.

SPIRITUAL GROWTH

As Jigisha Didi's connect with Prabhu Parshwanath became stronger, she once told him, “Dada, why do you always meet me through this idol? I want to meet you in person. You have to come to meet me.” And she adamantly stuck to her words. As if receiving an answer to her prayer, she saw a dream of a very tall person clad in white robes, holding her hand and taking her towards the sky. She kept seeing the same dream for almost 5 years, and simultaneously kept searching for this individual. She visited the religious places of all religions, but her quest seemed unending

We often have some prejudices and preset notions. Being from a *Derawasi* family, Jigisha Didi too had a strong prejudice against the *Sthanakwasi* sect. And thus, even though she went to Gurudwaras, Churches, etc. in search for her Parmatma, she wasn't inclined to visit the *Sthanakwasi Upashray*. But destiny wanted something different. She was once forced to visit a Look N Learn exhibition with her mother, which was held at the Upashray. Reluctantly, she went inside. While she

was amazed by the exhibits created by young children like her, her eyes fell on Pujya Gurudev. He was climbing up the stairs, she just saw him from the back. And her dream flashed like a vivid memory in front of her eyes. Her heart whispered, 'This is my Parmatma!'

Her search ended, but her journey had just begun. She slowly started coming to Gurudev more often, and as she ingrained every word that he said, her vision became clearer and clearer. The depth of Pujya Gurudev's understanding awakened her Inner Voice and helped her experience the *essence* of Dharma. And then, there was no looking back. Leaving behind her formal education, she immersed herself in deep study and research of *Aatma Gnan*. She now awaits the day when she will become *Like* the one she reveres - her Parmatma!

IN CONVERSATION WITH JIGISHA DIDI

Q. You come from a *Derawasi* background, and you are about to take Diksha in a *Sthanakwasi Sampraday*. You could find a Guru from your own sect. Then why such a decision?

A. Was Bhagwan Mahavir *Derawasi* or *Sthanakwasi*? Have you ever heard someone say that Bhagwan's Mother - *Mata Trishla* was a *Derawasi*, or she was a *Sthanakwasi*? No, we never hear that. Yes, I have been brought up in a family which has its roots in the *Derawasi* tradition, but these sects are just different paths to achieve the same goal.

About taking Diksha in Pujya Gurudev's *Sanidhya*, it's simple. Not everyone has the potential to elevate you from within. Only the One with whom you share an *Aatmik* Connection, a connection beyond time and space; can be your Guru. I found my Guru in Pujya Gurudev, not because of his outer persona; but because of his ability to overpower my vices and bring about the transformation towards purity within me! So it does not matter which sect he belongs to. What matters is can he purify me from within? Can he help me transform my nature? And can he take me closer to my goal of becoming like Parmatma?

Q. Are you taking Diksha under pressure from somebody?

A. I would say Yes, there is Pressure. But it's not an external force. It is the pressure of *Karma*, which constantly makes me think that if I do not make an opportune use of this birth, where will I be after Death? Will I remain entwined in this cycle of Birth and Death, without any goal or purpose? And that's the pressure which inspires me on this path.

Moreover, Dharma or Diksha is no lollipop by which you can tempt somebody or force someone. It requires an Inner Awakening, an inner

voice which drives you towards this path. Pujya Gurudev never tells us what to do, or what not to do; even in regular life decisions. He just explains to us what is right and what is wrong; leaving the final decision solely on us. Infact, it is we who have expressed our Bhaav for *Saiyam* time and again; and only after testing our Bhaav, has he granted us the Agna for Diksha.

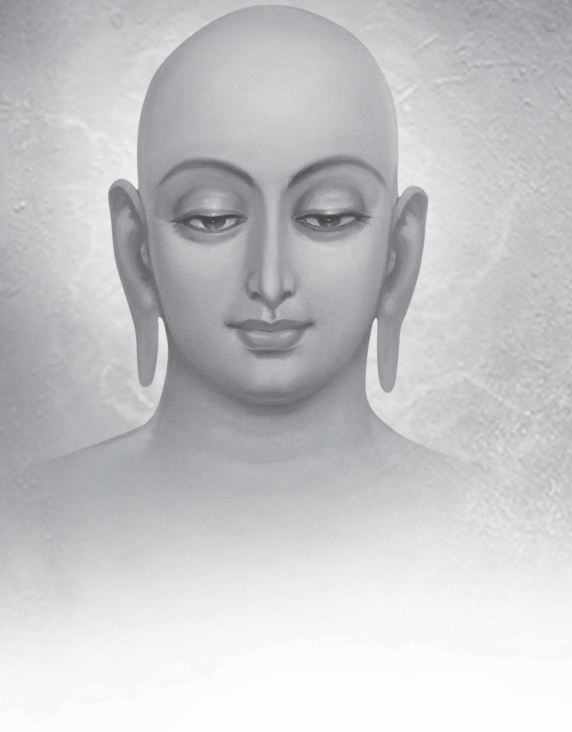
Q. Your training as a Sadhak has been in Pujya Gurudev's *Sanidhya*. But after Diksha, he won't be around you constantly. Won't that affect your *Saiyam* Bhaav?

A. Being in Pujya Gurudev's *Sanidhya* is definitely a blessed feeling, because it is a process of constant learning and evolving. But that does not mean that in the absence of his *Sanidhya*, our *Vairagya Bhaav* will deteriorate. More than his presence, we are so connected with his teachings, his vibrations, his thought process, and more importantly his AGNA, that it's a constant driving force for us. Wherever we will be, we will always be in His Agna. He has trained us in such a way, that being with him or away from him is not what matters, being constantly connected with his Agna is *Saiyam* for us; is *Dharma* for us!

Q. What makes you Ordinarily Extraordinary?

A. My faith in the strength of Prayer has charted my whole destiny. If I have met Pujya Gurudev, and through him, if I have been able to meet myself; it all boils down to one thing, Prayer. When you pray not for getting something, but for Parmatma *Himself*, your Ordinary life will become Extraordinary!





**“AGE is
just a Number”**

Mumukshu Kinjal Doshi

HSC | 21 Years

Guru Sanidhya: 2 years

Most of us have a tendency to judge a person based on age. But there are many who defy their age and what people expect from them. Sachin Tendulkar started his international cricket career when he was 16. Michael Sayman got hired by Facebook as the youngest Software Engineer when he was just 18. Their determination and sheer passion makes them go against the tide, making us realize that,

Yes, Age is just a number!

Kinjal Didi is so far the youngest *Diksharathi* to be initiated in Pujya Gurudev's *Sanidhya*. She is often confronted with questions about her choice of *Saiyam Jeevan*, considering her young age and the lack of worldly experience. But when one interacts with her, her depth and understanding of the spiritual science leaves even the most experienced and knowledgeable individuals stumped.

Where has all this come from? How has she evolved into a person who is much beyond her age? What makes her *Bhaav* so strong that she can't wait for 14th February, 2016 to behold the *Rajoharan* and embrace the vows of renunciation?

EARLY LIFE

Born to Nishaben and Manishbhai Doshi, Kinjal Didi was brought up in the city of Akola.

Akola is a city which is regularly frequented by Jain monks. Their blessed *Sanidhya* has helped nurture the values and traditions of Jainism in every individual of the community there. Offering food (*Gochari*) to monks, *Seva* (*Vaiyavach*), learning scriptures, etc. is a part of their culture.

Kinjal Didi too was involved in following various aspects of Jain tradition since a very young age. Her mother, who was a very devout lady, would often tell her; "Kinjal, *Saiyam* is the only true way. Don't waste your time in *Sansar* like I have..." But Kinjal Didi was more inclined towards her worldly aspirations. She was practicing Dharma, but the essence of Dharma had never really touched her heart. Academically a brilliant student, she has been a rank holder in her board exams and planned to pursue further studies in Engineering. No different than any other teenager of today; she was an out-going, demanding and ambitious individual.

SPIRITUAL GROWTH

In 2011 during Pujya Gurudev's Chaturmas at Chinchani, a youngsters - special Shibir was organized during the Diwali vacation. Kinjal Didi came to know about it and enrolled for the 5 days spiritual experience, a moment which became the turning point in her life.

Unlike seminars and workshops, where one gains knowledge on the outside; Shibir in Gurudev's *Sanidhya* are more of a self - reflective retreat, where one has to dive within to find their own answers. As a starting point, Pujya Gurudev shared a very contemplative *Bhaav* with the Shibirarthi. Since time eternal, we have been transmigrating in different life forms. Most of us are wandering in *Sansar* due to lack of knowledge and attachment to Temporary Happiness. But our Human Birth is extremely rare and special. It is the only life-form in which you get an opportunity to experience the truth and elevate your spiritual state. And in the infinite cycle of time, one gets only 8 opportunities to understand this truth. Once you miss on that, you are again lost in the vicious cycle of illusion, ignorance, birth & death, sufferings, etc.

Pujya Gurudev's words struck a chord with Kinjal Didi. It put her in deep thought. "What if this is my 8th birth, what if this is my last chance? Am I going to miss this, even after understanding the Truth...?" For 5 days, just one *bhaav* resonated in her mind. The overwhelming moment of realization had arrived.

IN CONVERSATION WITH KINJAL DIDI

Q: One can't stop asking you again - You are too young to decide such a big transition in your life.

A: I feel I am blessed. Most people shift towards Dharma, Spirituality at a later stage in their life. Many do it because they realize the futility of their life-time achievements. Luckily, I don't have to reach the flag-end of my life to realize this and I can pursue my spiritual growth today.

Age is just a number. We live in the world's largest democracy where you can select the leader of this nation at the age of 18. If the Constitution of India deems 18 as an age eligible to decide who's the right person to lead the nation, why can't I take a decision as to which is the right path for my soul?

Just like you choose your career stream when you are 18 and then study for 3 years to attain a degree, I too chose my path at the age of 18 and underwent 3 years of rigorous training to become eligible for the degree of *Saiyam* today.

Q. But then, in a world where one is surrounded by innumerable mediums of attractions and temptations, how can you give up on worldly pleasures and seek a life of complete renunciation?

A. You can be tempted by something that you don't have. But when you realize that what you have is more valuable than anything else in the world, there's no temptation or dissatisfaction. Like a child, he can be tempted to make his own sand castle, and he cries when it breaks. But have you ever seen a mother cry because the sand castle is broken? No right, because she knows it's worth. In the same way, *Saiyam* has given me the vision and ability to see through the transiency of the world. This vision, this wisdom, is the most priceless thing in the world for me. So how can momentary pleasures attract me?

Most people see Diksha Jeevan as '**what you give-up**'. But once you see the magnanimity of '**what you achieve**', your will and determination becomes stronger and deeper.

Q. Being a Science Student, how did you turn towards Religion?

A. Science helps us understand the '**How**' behind everything - How are we born? How does the human brain work? How does age affect the body? But Religion gives you an answer for the '**Why**' behind everything... Why are we born? Why do people have different levels of intelligence? So I think Religion is a deeper Science. And therefore, being a science student, I have been able to understand the importance of Religion better.

Today, Science is a religion for most of us; but Religion is a Science which only a few understand...!

Q: When you look back, which particular Agna given by Pujya Gurudev left a deep impact on you?

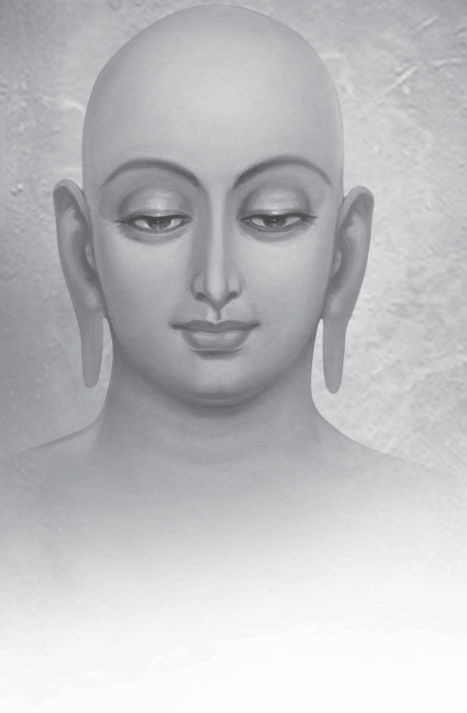
A: Pujya Gurudev recently gave us the Agna to eat one meal directly from the hands for one day, without using any plates. It was a very different experience, because the hands cannot contain much food. And secondly, you cannot bifurcate one food item from another, everything is a cocktail in your hands.

As we started following this Agna, it brought about a very different realization in us. We felt like animals, we were forced to lick and eat as our hands were filled with food. Moreover, we could eat only when somebody served us. And as Sadhaks, we always help one another intensify the Agna and better our inner growth. So that day, we were served what we did not like by fellow Sadhaks. Eg. I was given a mix of Dal and Roti, something which I would always avoid having together. This further put a break on my attachment with Taste, resulting in *Ras Parityaag* (dispassion towards the desire for Taste). And the feeling of eating like an animal made me realize the value of my Birth. Just like I don't want to eat like an animal, I don't want to live like an animal. I don't want to make my Human life as futile as an animal, I want to achieve that which only this one birth can give me - Myself!

Q: What makes you Ordinarily Extraordinary?

A: As a teenager, I was very clear on what I wanted to do in life. What career, which stream, which college and which course, everything was pre-planned in my head since Class 9. Most people don't think about the future because they either fear the future or can't foresee it. But it was this very far - sightedness which helped me; which made me contemplate on Pujya Gurudev's words during the Chinchin Shibir. The effort to understand the 'Why' behind everything and have a Vision for your life, is what is Extraordinary for me. Once you have that, you can never get entwined in the Temporary!





*“Designing
the Destiny”*

Mumukshu Shreya Shah

Textile Designer | 26 Years

Guru Sanidhya: 8 years

Innocent at heart and the youngest member of her family, Shreya Didi has been a fondly loved and pampered child. Having a flair for creativity since childhood, she has studied Textile Designing at the Sophia College of Arts (Mumbai) and aspired to become a commercial artist. Until she was confronted with the vision of a Divine Artist, whose every word inspired her to paint the canvas of her life with Divinity and explore the beauty of Spirituality.

Having met Pujya Gurudev in the year of 2006 Shreya Didi has long awaited the blessed moment of Diksha. Her undying patience, her unwavering faith, and her deep determination alone is what has made the impossible possible; and here she is today, eagerly looking forward to 14th February when she will adorn the dress of Divine Love and be ordained as a *Sadhvi* in *Jin Shasan!*

EARLY LIFE

Born to Arunaben and Navinbhai Shah, Shreya Didi hails from the city of Mumbai. Most connected with her brother in childhood, Shreya Didi shared a very deep bond with him.

She always aspired to be like him, doing whatever he did, going wherever he went. And it was his deep interest in art which inspired Shreya Didi too to pursue art. Back in her childhood days, Shreya Didi would spend 12 hours at a stretch in her drawing classes, and would still not get tired. Such was her fascination for art, which was further encouraged by her brother too. Once following her brother's footsteps wherever he went, she now prepares to carve out her own footsteps which will become a trail for many others to follow

SPIRITUAL GROWTH

During Pujya Gurudev's Chaturmas at Borivali (2006), Shreya Didi met Pujya Gurudev on the day of *Guru Purnima*. The function had just concluded, and Pujya Gurudev was heading back to the *Upashray*. As she stood at the exit gate, he happened to pass by. His eyes fell on her for a split second, he smiled and walked away.

Shreya Didi too went away, but that experience stayed with her. While most people create an impression on our life, there are a few individuals who leave an indelible mark. As days passed by, Shreya Didi started coming to Pujya Gurudev for Darshan, and on hearing him, she always felt that it was her own Inner Voice which was speaking to her. His deep yet simple explanation on the essence of Dharma, the difference between Temporary and Permanent kept ringing in her ears. As and when she imbibed this knowledge, she became more and more connected with the thought that I want to do something purposeful in this birth, which will be useful to me in my Life after Life. I don't want to waste this birth. On the other side, her studies also continued; but her interest in the material world had already started diminishing.

The year of 2011 witnessed Pujya Gurudev's historic Chaturmas at Chinchani. Shreya Didi was very eager to initiate her spiritual journey from *Seva* to *Samarpan* and *Sadhana*, but circumstances did not allow her to. She thus attended the *Apurva Yog Shibir*. An out of the world experience, this *Shibir* had a very strong impact on her inner state. While practicing *Dhyan Sadhna* under the trees, Pujya Gurudev's words rang in her ears, "*Hey Jeev, tu have to samaj...*" And she thought to herself, if not now, when? That day, was the moment she made up her mind, that come what may, Diksha is the only true path, my only goal, and one day I will achieve it!

But not everyone is blessed to attain this path the moment self realization dawns. Not everyone's Karmas support their Spiritual Journey. A priceless journey like this demands a heavy price! Shreya Didi learnt this the hard way. Her parents, who had always been very attached to her, found it immensely difficult to let her go on the path of Diksha and embrace a life of hardships. They tried to convince her to

give up this thought. But the one whose Inner Voice has awakened, can never be attracted to the lure of momentary happiness. Enduring with great patience and determination, Shreya Didi waited for the moment when her own *Antaray Karmas* would die down and her path would open up.

She did immense *Anumodna* of every individual who aspired to come on this path, including the 9 *Mahasatijis* who took Diksha in 2014. And the 9 Diksha Mahotsav became a blessing for her. Her parents too saw through the resolution and determination of their child, and finally accepted her decision to take Diksha. Today, they too feel blessed of having a child who has shown them the road towards that which is Eternal, and they hope to walk in her footsteps someday.

IN CONVERSATION WITH SHREYA DIDI

Q: Why have you chosen the path of 'Diksha'?

A: Diksha for me is a process which helps me make my Ego zero and attain a state where my Desires dissolve completely. My choice of taking Diksha is not for my own happiness or satisfaction, it is a choice of granting *Abhaydaan* (Fearlessness) to all living beings. I don't want to be the cause of pain or anguish for anybody. And *Saiyam* is the road of Selfless Compassion.

Q. You had spent 8 years in Sansar, waiting for your parents' Agna. And finally, after receiving their Agna, you have spent the last 2 years as a Sadhak. What have you attained during this whole phase?

A: During my 8 years of *Antaray* in Sansar, my Journey was very different. It was a very unique and uncharted road for me. I understood the real essence of *Vairagya*; that it is not just a change of your dress, but the very transformation of *You* from within. I constantly experienced Gurudev's Third eye overlooking me, and elevating my Inner State. I was a *Sansari* from outside, but my Journey of *Vairagya* had already begun from within.

Having said that, the learning, strength and the gushing force of positivity that one experiences in Puja Gurudev's *pratyaksh Sanidhya* as a Sadhak, has been another very blissful phase of my journey. When I was away from Him, my *Aatmik* connection with Him and my Devotion increased. And when I got the opportunity to be in his *Sanidhya*, my connection with *Myself* became stronger, my *Gnan* developed from within! Irrespective of where you are, *Sansar* or *Saiyam*, if you are connected with Gurudev from within, there will always be an evolution in your Inner Journey!

Q: When you look back, which particular Agna given by Puja Gurudev left a deep impact on you?

A: The year of 2012 marked Tapsamrat Puja Gurudev's 100th birth anniversary. During that Chaturmas, Puja Gurudev had taken a series

of *Pravachans* on his own Guru's life story throughout one whole month. At the end, we were going to release a Video CD with the name '*Ananya Avdhoot*'. And I was given the Agna to create short intro animations for every video.

As and when I heard the *Pravachans*, I felt as though every word was just for me. Tapsamrat Gurudev's life, his thirst for *Saiyam*, his determination to achieve his goal, his faith on his Guru, his life after Diksha... and most importantly; Pujya Gurudev's devotion towards Tapsamrat Gurudev, his *Vinay*, his connection... It sowed in me the seed and dream of becoming LIKE my Guru. It inspired me to strengthen my Inner Connection to the extent that no outer difficulty could ever demotivate me. And it renewed in me the positivity to **Hold On**, no matter what!

Q: There are many people who have the Bhaav to come on this path. But due to certain circumstances, they are unable to do so. What is your message for them?

A: Don't lose hope, come what may. If there is Truth in your heart and determination in your *Bhaav*, then one day, your doors will open. Because *Saiyam* is not an easy path; it is a priceless achievement. And to attain it, you have to endure, you have to be strong and firm in your resolve, you have to keep trying to open the lock till you reach the very last key. Till the time you are unable to come here, strive to evolve your Inner qualities and become worthy of this path. And most importantly, have FAITH. Faith can move mountains. Your faith alone will make Pujya Gurudev's undying *Krupa* work; and one day, He WILL make things happen. Just hold on.

Q: What makes you Ordinarily Extraordinary?

A: I think that while our efforts make most things happen, our Faith alone can make the Impossible Possible. Everybody has difficulties in life, but only those who have the self-confidence that no matter what, I *can* do it and I *will* do it, can sail through the difficulties and emerge victorious. And it is this very Self-Confidence, this Faith; which makes the Ordinary, Extraordinary.



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Ordinarily *Extraordinary*

A Peek into the Life of 8 Diksharthis...