

Session 5 – Habit 3 & 4

18th January, 2015

Jai Swaminarayan! Sahajanand Swami Maharajni jai, Bapashreeni jai, Sadguruoshreeni jai, Swaminarayan Bhagwanani jai, tatha anant anadi muktoni jai!

A humble prayer in their lotus-feet and our Guru AMPP NarayanMama-LeelaMasi's lotus-feet to augment this assembly with their divinity and grace. I humbly bow to their feet and pray to them, to shower their blessings on us now and forever for the bliss of the divine Moorti of Lord Swaminarayan. I also request forgiveness from them, as well as from this divine Satsang to pardon my mistakes and shortcomings and ignorance.

A couple of weeks ago, we had talked about the first two habits of Highly Effective People, and how Supreme Lord Shree Swaminarayan not only displayed the habits Himself but also enabled His near and dear ones develop those habits. Today we will delve into the next two habits – Habits 3 & 4, of highly effective people

1. Put first things first
2. Think win-win

The first habit that we will discuss today, leads from dependence to independence and the second habit leads from independence to interdependence.

Put first things first

Habit 3 is based on the principle of Personal Management. So we have taken an example of programming. So Habit 1 is the awareness that we are the programmer. Habit 2 is the way we write the program. Habit 3 is how we execute it. It is a test of our integrity. Habit 2 decides what the first things are. Habit 3 decides whether we can walk the talk. It is a habit of discipline and commitment to live by those first things. Highly effective people and organizations do not manage time. Time is fixed. There are 24 hours in the day. So they do not manage time. They manage the self, within the time that is given to us. Instead of being caught up in urgent, in thick of thin, they execute on their deepest priorities. They put first things first.

Covey says, things which matter most should never be at the mercy of the things that matter least. Habit 3 is a management principle to put first things first. It focuses on relationships rather than schedule. People and relationships are the first things. Traditional Management has always dealt with time, with efficiency, with doing more things faster. It is focused on efficiency and control and is called time management. Have we tried to be efficient with a loved one? How did it go? Does efficiency work with a loved one? No it does not. We have to put the required time to manage that loving relationship with near and dear ones. In putting first things first – in valuing people and relationships over time and efficiency, an investment is required. It is a slow process. But in Effectiveness, fast is slow, and slow is fast and

effective. We want effectiveness with people and efficiency with things. People are not things. We want Relationship first then schedules; leadership first, then management; a compass first, then a clock.

To explain compass first, then a clock concept, Covey says write down what are the most important things in life. List just 5-6 of them. Then rank them in order of priority. To prioritize, try cutting out one at a time, to get to the most important one, then the next, then the next. Study that. Most people put family and loved ones first and this is true all over the world. People also note down the same activities that produce marvelous results. Most of the time it is about values, principles, relationships and planning.

Now in order to manage ourselves better in the time that is given to us, Covey says lets answer 2 questions. We don't need to answer them to anybody, just to ourselves.

- First question is – What is that one activity that we absolutely know that if we did superbly well and did it consistently, would produce marvelous results in our personal or family life?
- Second question is – What is that one activity that we absolutely know that if we did superbly well and do it consistently, would produce marvelous results in our professional life?

So one activity for personal life and one activity for professional life.

Now let's think of a Time management matrix, with 4 quadrants based on things that are important v/s Urgent. Think of 4 squares or quadrants connected to each other. The top left square Q1 – consists of things that are urgent and important; Q2, top right square – consists of things that are not urgent but important; Q3, the bottom left - consists of things that are urgent but not important; Q4 - consists of things that are not urgent and not important. In this matrix, Quadrant 2 – things that are not urgent but important, is leadership quadrant. The answer to the above 2 questions that we thought about is usually in Q2. We know it will help us to do those things, but we are not doing it. Why? Because it is not urgent. Communication, relationship, mission statement, all fall under Q2 – things that are not urgent but are very important. Most organizations call Q2, the second quadrant as “Other business” and focus on 1 & 3 – The urgent things, whether they are important or not. To be effective we should neglect Quadrant 3 & Quadrant 4. We should neglect things that are not important, and focus on Quadrant 2 over Quadrant 1. Focus on Quadrant 2 over Quadrant 1 will gradually diminish time in Quadrant 1, the things that are urgent. We won't be fighting so many fires if we are doing things that are really important and doing them well. Gradually the urgent things will go down, and the important things will always get done.

This is what Habit 3 – “Put first things first” means. Having talked about what the habit means, let's now look into how Lord Swaminarayan exhibited this habit. The first part of this habit is to walk the talk, to stay true to the principles, and prioritize everything else around those principles. Lord Swaminarayan left His home at the age of 11. As Neelkanthvarni, in the early part of His travel He had arrived at the city of Butol, sometime between November 1793 to April 1794. He was 12-13 years of age. He stayed there for 4 months and left in August 1794. The queen of Butol, Mayavati (sister of King of Butol), offered to marry her daughter to Him and give Him the kingdom. But Lord Swaminarayan who has always talked about giving up worldly pleasures for the love of God, did not stay back. Prior to that, a king had offered to marry his 2 daughters to Neelkanthvarni and give his kingdom. Which too Neelkanthvarni had declined. Also prior to arriving at Butol, a head of a religious Ashram had offered his Ashram and its leadership to

Neelkanth varni, but He declined that too. He stayed true to His principles. These are just a few incidents from His life that show that He stayed true to the principles. He practiced what He preached. In fact He practiced more than He preached. He has made the lives of Satsangi's much more easier than the life that He had led on Earth.

The second part of the habit is about dealing with relationships first, then schedules. Lord Swaminarayan considered relationships, values and principles much higher over everything else. He exhibited this not just with human beings but also with the animals. Once in Gadhada, near the stream of Sumabai's place (don't think the stream exists today), a lioness sought shelter with her 4 cubs. In order to feed her cubs, she started ravaging the homes and backyards of the people living there and took away some domesticated animals. The news of this reached Lord Swaminarayan. Lord Swaminarayan went there with a group of armed Kathis. Kathi clan was one of the ferocious ones known at that time, and they had become disciples of Lord Swaminarayan, so Lord Swaminarayan went there with a group of armed Kathis. The lioness was hiding in the bushes. The easy, efficient and schedule-based way to deal with this would have to simply shoot at the bushes and kill the lioness and the cubs. But Lord Swaminarayan respected every life and believed in the principles of compassion and non-violence. So He asked the kathis to fire rounds from their guns, in the air. Alarmed by the sound, the lioness left the bushes, and hid behind some fence. Lord Swaminarayan asked the kathis to repeat what they did. After hiding at 2-3 different places, the lioness finally arrived at the stream and started rolling the in the sand with her cubs, out there in the open. Some kathis wanted to shoot her, but Lord Swaminarayan stopped them. He guided the lioness to the forest and let her go away peacefully to the forest with the cubs. This took a few hours, as compared to the 10 minutes of efficiency that could have been derived by shooting the lioness and the cubs to death.

The third part of the habit is to manage ourselves better in the time that is given to us. 2-3 things come to mind. Once the king of Panchala, Jinabhai, visited Lord Swaminarayan in Gadhada. Lord Swaminarayan asked Jinabhai how he was doing, and were things going. After sometime, Lord Swaminarayan said, "Jinabhai, you should not keep too much wealth in Panchala." Jinabhai responded, "Lord, please send some devoted guards to bring the wealth here." So Lord Swaminarayan got a letter written by His scribe Ladha Thakker, and sent 8 guards with the letter to Panchala. Jinabhai's family members too were equally devoted to Lord Swaminarayan, and readily followed the instructions in the letter, and sent all their wealth to Gadhada. Jinabhai stayed in Gadhada to spend quality time with Lord Swaminarayan. In a few days, dacoits rioted the village of Panchala and took away wealth from most of the wealthy people. Jinabhai's wealth, since it was in Gadhada, was protected. The news eventually reached Gadhada, and Lord Swaminarayan read the letter to Jinabhai, and sent him to Panchala with 25 armed kathis led by Somalakhachar. Later, Muktanand Swami said, "Shreeji Maharaj, the two boons that You asked from Ramanand Swami, You keep staying true to them every step of the way, and keep protecting Your devotees. Other incarnations test the inner strength of their devotees, and these are rigorous tests. But You are unique in the sense that You protect Your devotees from all the hardships, including the most difficult moment of leaving the body." In this particular case, Lord Swaminarayan, could have focused on just that one urgent incident of dacoity, and send guards to protect Jinabhai's home during dacoity. However, the dacoits would have come back again later, to steal. And would have kept coming till they got Jinabhai's wealth. Just as Jarasangh kept invading Mathura in the story of Mahabharat, and

Muhammad Ghori kept invading Gujarat, till he had plundered it of its wealth completely. So the dacoits would have kept coming back. The approach of moving the wealth to Gadhada, though time consuming and onerous at that time, was the right thing to do. The dacoits went away thinking they got all there was to get, and never came back again.

The second incident that comes to mind is that of Maavji Dave of Dhoraji. He left his body, while Lord Swaminarayan was visiting his home. Maavji Dave's sister Gangabai was sad about her brother, but even more than that, she was worried about the livelihood of the family, since Maavjibhai's 4 sons were still young kids. She expressed her concerns to Lord Swaminarayan. Lord Swaminarayan said, "Gangaben, Do not worry! Your brother's sons are very capable and ethical. They have good values. They will take good care of the family. It is My responsibility to provide financial viability to your family." Lord Swaminarayan then asked Muktanand Swami (who also was with him at that time), if he had any scriptures in his bag. We have to remember, at that time, there were no printing press. So all that was available were the handwritten editions of the books. Sadguru Muktanand Swami had Ramakatha kand, in three volumes in his bag. Lord Swaminarayan, asked the three younger sons to read one volume each, and though they were not educated, they could read the volumes that Lord Swaminarayan gave them, due to grace of Lord Swaminarayan. Lord Swaminarayan, then said they could earn their livelihood by preaching people using Ramkatha-kand volumes. The elder son, Harjivan, was not asked to participate in this by Lord Swaminarayan. It would have been more efficient to teach the elder son, than teaching the younger kids. Sadguru Muktanand Swami even questioned what Lord Swaminarayan did. Lord Swaminarayan responded, "Swami, I am doing what's' most effective thing to do. You will know in future." Harjivanbhai was very devoted and wanted to get liberated. So Lord Swaminarayan had a different plan for him. That's the reason Lord Swaminarayan invested in the long-term future of the family, even if it took longer to do so. Six months later when Lord Swaminarayan & Muktanand Swami visited Dhoraji again, Gangabbai told them that Harjivanbhai left the body, and Lord Swaminarayan gave him Darshan in his last moments and liberated him. Once again, Lord Swaminarayan managed the time that He had with Maavjibhai's family and addressed the long-term good of the family, even though it took longer to do so. He also helped Harjivanbhai focus on the important thing for the few months that he had, rather than focusing on the urgent worldly thing of earning a livelihood.

The other thing that stands out from the life of Lord Swaminarayan is that there is a direct route from Ayodhya to Gujarat. There was awareness of that route at that time, since later in the life of Lord Swaminarayan, aspirants travelled from Eastern India to Gujarat. Also Lord Swaminarayan Himself had travelled more than half-way to Gujarat, to Burhanpur with his elder brother Rampratapbhai. However, when it came to His journey, he travelled across whole of India before arriving to Gujarat. The efficient way would have been to straightaway come to Gujarat. I used to wonder why He did not do that, when I was a kid. But now I understand why. One, He wanted to establish an example for His devotees – that to establish something long-term, a price needs to be paid. Second, He wanted to respect the relationship with every aspiring credible soul there was on the land of India, and grant them ultimate liberation – not just a few handful in the direct route from Ayodhya to Gujarat.

So this is about putting first things first and focusing more on relationships than schedule. Let's now move to the fourth Habit - Think win-win

This is a Habit that leads us from Independence to Interdependence. This habit is based on principle of mutual benefit & respect. Win-win lies at the very heart of every relationship. It is a habit of golden world. It is a habit of abundance. The underlying principle is abundance. There is enough for everyone and more to spare. We do not have to be threatened by other people. We can nurture competency around us higher than our own. We can share knowledge and recognition and gain and profit. And there will be enough for everybody.

The thing is, when we determine our worth and value based on comparison with others, how do we stack up, we always live in anxiety. We are worried about how we dress, how we look, what we drive, where we live. We are threatened by the competency around us. We feel that if we share knowledge, we lose our advantage & power. It is the paradigm of scarcity. There is not enough for everybody, so whatever one has, one has to hold on to it. It's not a paradigm of abundance. We are so used to thinking in dichotomies – we win or we lose, we are strong or we are weak. It is always a Either-or. This kind of belief makes us very vindictive and some people are so drenched in their egos that they do not care if they lose as far as the other person loses. This creates levels - above us are lose-win and people below us are win-lose.

But do we do that with our family members? We don't. If we do that, will our family survive? It will not. It will break apart. Covey says that there is a universal principle of equity and fairness. Anything other than win-win means going against that principle. Eventually a lose-win, win-lose will become lose-lose, since it is against the principle. What are the roots of developing this win-win mentality? Where does it come from? Roots of win-win come from private victory of habits 1,2 & 3. We are at peace with ourselves if the private victory is real and sincere. We are centered. We are anchored. We are rooted. We are established. Our ego is not involved. Down deep within us we are invulnerable. So on surface we can be vulnerable and go with win-win. When we think win-win, we create abundance, alternatives, and better solutions, since there is enough for all. This mentality increases knowledge, increases power, and earlier fears become unfounded.

Win-win does not mean being nice and soft. In win-win we consent together. If we cannot arrive at win-win we should go for no deal. This way, we can be absolutely open and honest. We would have no hidden negotiation agenda or techniques. We just basically say we want us both to win. We try to understand each other genuinely and sincerely, and we put a stewardship agreement, and we stick to that agreement. A magical thing happens when we go for win-win. It has a great effect on quality of human interaction and on the human spirit. It is very soothing to the human spirit. Covey says, in order to arrive at win-win, we need to setup an agreement with a mutual understanding and stick to it. Keep believing in people. Hold each other accountable to what was agreed. A stewardship agreement is an effective way to manage expectations. It also creates a standard against which we can measure our own success.

5 essential elements of win-win and stewardship agreement are:

1. Clear description of desired results.
2. Teach people the guidelines. Outline the no-nos. Do not hide the failure path.
3. Identify the resources. Human, financials, etc.
4. Identify and setup an accountability agreement to focus on the results.

5. Identify the consequences – good or bad, based on the accountability on how well the desired results were achieved.

Let's look at a couple of incidents from Lord Swaminarayan's life and also understand His win-win stewardship agreement with us.

Once young Ghanshyambhai was asked to protect the field of Dharmapita and VashramMama from the sparrows that would come and eat the grains away. Young Ghanshyambhai did not want to shy away from the responsibility. At the same time He did not want to take away sparrow's food. And He also wanted to play with His friends. So He came up with a very creative solution. There is enough for all. There is enough divine bliss for everybody. The divine bliss is not limited. It is abundant. So Lord Swaminarayan, put the sparrows in Samadhi. They enjoyed the bliss of His divine form while in Samadhi. So it was a win for the sparrows – at the cost one day's meal, they could enjoy to divine bliss of the Supreme Lord. It was a win for Dharmapita and VashramMama, as their fields were protected. It was a win for Ghanshyambhai, since He could now go and play with His friends. So it was a win-win solution. We have talked about a similar solution earlier where the saints had to collect cooking fuel, and women in the village also wanted to do the same thing. Lord Swaminarayan put the women in Samadhi so that the saints could collect the cooking fuel.

Before taking on the leadership of the Satsang, Ramanand Swami once sent Sahajanand Swami with 4 saints to Mangarol to open a Sadaavrat. Sadaavrat is a place where free food is offered to poor & destitute, and also to travelers, since there were no hotels in those days. Sahajanand Swami arrived at Mangarol and it was agreed that a mendicant named Atmanand, that he will let them cook in his Ashram, and provide them access to all the amenities he had, to support the sadaavrat. After running the sadaavrat for about 4 months, the mendicant Atmanand, on the day of Annakut, told one of the 4 saints, who accompanied Sahajanand Swami, to keep a sweet called Sukhadi for him, since he was going to be away at the time of the meal. Sahajanand Swami learnt about it and thought, "A Mendicant who has renounced the worldly pleasures, should not be attached to a specific dish or food. This will set a bad example on other saints and devotees in the Satsang." So that day, He Himself went to serve the diners and gave away all the sukhadi – the dish that the mendicant Atmanand had asked to save for him. When mendicant Atmanand returned, he got furious and said the agreement that they had was off, and he will not let Sahajanand Swami and His saints cook in his ashram, and will neither give them access to any of the amenities. Lord Swaminarayan realized that any compromise with the principles of the life of a renouncer (someone who has renounced the world in pursuit of spiritual progress, lives by certain principles) will not be a win for anyone in the long-term. So that very day, with the help of the devotees of the village, Sahajanand Swami setup a tent on the other side of the village, and cooked food and started running His sadaavrat from there. Since in this case, it was not possible to arrive at a win-win solution, Lord Swaminarayan went with No-deal.

Now let's look at the stewardship agreement that He has built with us and for us:

1. Clear description of desired results – Lord Swaminarayan spent His entire lifetime explaining the achievement of the formidable goal of Ultimate liberation. He also explained that the desired result of a life of a Satsangi is to continuously strive to achieve that goal

2. Teach people the guidelines. Outline the no-nos. – Lord Swaminarayan has very nicely articulated the guidelines in Shikshapatri
3. Identify the resources. Human, financials, etc. – He has given us 4 resources to achieve the desired outcomes – the idols in the temples, the sadgurus – be it renouncer or householder, the Satsang leadership seats, and the scriptures
4. Identify and setup an accountability agreement to focus on the results – He has established accountability in terms of how much do we really strive to achieve the goals in our life-time. If we do enough and stay true to Him and His Mukta, we get liberated in this lifetime. If not, we take another birth till we get there we keep pursuing the goals and then get ultimate liberation
5. Identify the consequences – good or bad, based on the accountability on how well the desired results were achieved.

This is an automatic cycle – as soon as you have done good enough, we get ultimate liberation. So that is our stewardship agreement with Lord Swaminarayan. If we abide by the guidelines and achieve the desired results, then we have a win-win solution – He wants to grant liberation to the souls and the souls would achieve liberation.

So today we talked about two habits and related incidents from life of Lord Swaminarayan. Next month, we will continue with the remaining 3 habits, and conclude with an establishment that Lord Swaminarayan was highly effective. In the following months, we will look at His leadership qualities based on some other books that we talked about, and eventually establish that Lord Swaminarayan was a Highly Effective Spiritual Leader.

My humble, charan-sparsh-sah Jai Swaminarayan to all the Muktos. Sahajanand Swami Maharajni Jai, Bapashreeni Jai, Sadguruo Shreeni Jai, Swaminarayan Bhagwanani Jai.