

## ***Vaishnav Jan***

*The devotional hymn, "Vaishnav Jan to Taynay Kahyeeye" composed by venerated Gujarati saint Narshimha Mehta has become well known all over the country. It was one of the favourite hymns of the Father of the Nation. It has become a practice to sing this bhajan on any occasion related to Mahatma Gandhi. This bhajan is the description of an ideal man or if we put it differently it is the description of a true devotee of Lord Vishnu. A follower or a devotee of Vishnu Bhagawan is generally described as the Vaishnava. Narsimha Mehta himself was a Vaishnava. However, whether Vaishnava or not, the qualities described in the hymn are the qualities worth cultivating for any individual who aims to lead a good life.*

*This issue of Ishani is being published in the month of the martyrdom of the Mahatma. We are, therefore, reproducing this hymn here in original Gujarati and its translation in Sanskrit and English.*

*We are giving two translations in English. One is by Mahatma Gandhi himself; the second translation is by the veteran journalist Shri Khushwant Singh. While publishing his translation Shri Khushwant Singh had pleaded that a common English version be accepted all over the country. To help such a process, he gave his own version. The Sanskrit translation is also by two different translators. One was published many years back in Bhavan's Journal from Bombay, another translation was published in a Gujarati magazine. If any of our readers has more information about these translations we will be happy to carry it in the forthcoming issue of Ishani.*

*Needless to say that Gandhiji himself ceaselessly pursued the goal of turning himself into an ideal person of the kind visualized by Narasimha Mehta or "Narsaiyo" as he preferred to call himself.*

### ***Original hymn in Gujarati***

Vaishnov jan to taynay  
Kahyeeye  
Jay peerh paraaye janneyray  
Par dukkhey upkar karey  
Teeyey,  
Manabhiman na anney ray  
Sakal lokma Sahuney bandhey,  
Ninda Na karye kaineeray  
Baach kaachh, Man nischal  
Raakhey,  
Dhan-dhan jananee taineeray  
Samdrishi nay trishna tyagee,  
Par-stree jaynay mat ray  
Vivihva thaki asatya na bolay,  
Par-dhan nav jhaley haath ray  
Moh maaya vyaayey nahin  
Jeynay,  
Dridh vairagya jana manma ray  
Ram-nam-shoom taalee laagee,  
Sakal teerth seyna tanma ray  
Vanloohee nay kapat rahit  
Chhay,  
Kaam, Krodh nivarya ray  
Bhane Narsinhyo tainoo Darshan  
Karta  
Kul ekotair taarya re.

.....

**As translated into English by Gandhiji himself**

**The true Vaishnava**

He is a real Vaishnav  
Who feels  
The suffering of others as his own suffering.  
He is ever ready to serve,  
And is never guilty  
Of overweening pride.  
He bows before everyone,  
Despises none,  
Preserves purity in thought,  
Word and deed.  
Blessed is the mother of such a son,  
In every woman he reveres his mother.  
He preserves equanimity and,  
Never stains his mouth with falsehood,  
Nor touches the riches of another.  
The bonds of desire cannot hold him.  
Ever in harmony with Ramanama,  
His body in itself possesses  
All the places of pilgrimage.  
He knows neither desire  
Nor disappointment,  
Neither passion nor wrath.

*(Source: Prayer by M.K. Gandhi, compiled and edited by Chandrakant Kaji, First Edition, April 1977)*

**As translated into English by Shri Khushwant Singh**

A godlike man is one,  
Who feels another's pain  
Who shares another's sorrow,  
And pride does disdain.  
Who regards himself as the lowliest of the low,  
Speaks not a word of evil against anyone  
One who keeps himself steadfast in words, body and mind,  
Blessed is the mother who gives birth to such a son.  
Who looks upon everyone as his equal and has renounced  
Lust,  
And who honours women like he honours his mother

Whose tongue knows not the taste of falsehood till his last  
Breath,  
Nor covets another's worldly goods.  
He does not desire worldly things,  
For he treads the path of renunciation.  
Ever on his lips is Rama's holy name,  
All places of pilgrimage are within him.  
One who is not greedy and deceitful,  
And has conquered lust and anger  
Through such a man Saint Narsaiyon has a godly vision,  
Generations to come, of such a man, will attain salvation.

**Sanskrit translation 1\***

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*\*Courtesy: Gujarati Magazine, "Akhand Anand"*

**Sanskrit translation 2\***

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\*Courtesy: Bhavan's Journal