

A yatra to holy city Dwarka

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Dwarka is one of the most holy places of India.

Gujarat Global News Network, Ahmedabad (This is first of a three part series of articles on Dwarka) Dwarka is one of the most holy places of India. Dwarka is the gateway to moksha (liberation). 'Dwar' means door and 'ka' means Brahma. This karmabhoomi (land of action) of Lord Shri Krishna is one of the seven holy cities of India which help liberation of souls of devotees. The other cities are Ayodhya, Kashi (Varanasi), Mathura, Haridwar, Kanchipuram and Avantika (Ujjain). Dwarka is considered a divine city. It is one of the four places of famous chardham yatra across the country for Vaishnavs. Other places are Jagannath Puri in Orissa, Rameswaram in Tamilnadu and Badarinath in Uttarakhand. It is said real Dwarka is under sea. It has been devoured six times. The present one is seventh one. Dwarka is also known by different names in the Hindu scriptures. The names are Dwarkapuri, Kushsthal, Gomti Dwarka, Chakratirtha, Anartak Kshetra and Okhamandal(Ushamandal). Dwarka-a city of Lord Krishna: Dwarka is so auspicious that Lord Krishna moved here for the well being of all Yadavas leaving Magadha. To make it a perfect capital, Lord Krishna even reclaimed 12 yojana of land from the Sea. The Vishnu Puran narrates that for constructing his divine, fortified capital of Dwarka, Lord Krishna had to acquire 12 yojans(16 miles) of earth from the sea. Lord Krishna instructed Vishvakarma, an architect to build the city. The city remained Lord Krishna's home or karmabhoomi as he eloped with Rukamini, married Satyabhama, vanquished Narkasura, protected Draupadi's honour and led the war of Kurukshetra(Mahabharat). It was golden era during Lord Krishna's regime in Dwarka. Yadavas became arrogant and allowed Dwarka's glory to wane. Lord Krishna ended his earthy journey in Prabhash Kshetra (Somnath) and samudra. It is said that the sea reclaimed the land it had given to Krishna, sparing only Lord Krishna's home. And thus we have lost Dwarka in the Sea. It is believed that Vajranabha, Lord Krishna's great grandson built the grand Dwarkadheesh temple in Lord Krishna's honour. The temple is also known as Jagad Mandir Dwarka or Dwarkadheesh temple. The presiding deity is Dwarkadheesh or Lord Krishna. Jagadmandir Dwarka: According to historians, the present temple was renovated between 1593 and 1606 during Mughal Emperor Akbar's regime. However some claim that it is 1200 years old. The Dwarkadheesh temple is central to Dwarka's topography. The present temple structure is 7 floored and 45 feet high above sea level. The huge temple premises has four parts. For a devotee the centre of attraction is 52 yard Dhwaja. The 52 yard long saptarangi dhwaja (seven primary colors flag) is hoisted four times daily. Dwarkadheesh temple is also known as Triloksundara temple. The Chalukya style temple has been constructed with locally procured stone that looks like hewn due to the effect of saline air. Devotees generally enter via main gate or Moksha Dwar. Traditionally, they are required to have a bath in the river Gomti, and enter via Swarga Dwar entrance. This is on Gomti river side which flows behind the temple. One has to climb 56 sidis(56 steps).The 56 sidis have religious significance. It is indicative of 52 Yadava administrative divisions and four gods-Krishna,Balaram,Pradyuman and Anirudhha. Idol of Dwarkadheesh: The main deity is Lord Dwarkadheesh or Lord Krishna. It's a black idol. It has an interesting story. In the year 1540, Shri Vallabhacharayajee established the idol of Dwarkadheesh at Ladva village, which was earlier worshipped by queen Rukamini. At that time the idol was supposed to be hidden in the step well called Savitri vav to protect it from the Muslim aggression. So when Shri Vallabhacharyajee saw the temple without idol, he kept it there. It was there up to 1551. During the same period when Turk Aziz attacked Dwarka the idol was taken to Bet Dwarka. After some years the idol was established in the temple. Some people also believe that in the year 1559,Shankaracharya Shri Anirudhacharya had made the idol at Dungarpur and established it at another place in the same campus and renovated the temple. Jagad Mandir - Dhwaja Aarohan: Dwarkadheesh temple is also known for its 52 yard long Dhwaja or flag. Devotees call it Dhwajaji or Shriji Dhwajaji. It is probably the longest flag in the world and it is hoisted four times a day. The Dhwaja is usually made of silk though there have been flags cast in gold as well. One can get a dhwaja from shops around the temple. The entire process from buying dhwaja to raising it on the temple cost around Rs 10,000. It includes dakshina to gugali brahmins. There is a heavy rush to offer dhwaja and it's all booked for the next two years. Why it is 52 yard long? In the Dwarka of Lord Krishna era, administration was run by 56 koti yadavs. Here koti do not mean crores but indicates fifty-six divisions of administration. Out of fifty six administrators' Balaram, Lord Krishna, Pradumana & Aniruddha are incarnation of god. Which is also known as chaturvyuha. This Chaturvyuh is considered as donor of purushartha, dharma, aarth, kama & moksha of human life. When these four are deducted from fifty six-koti balance fifty-two koti indicates residence of yadav administrators of fifty-two divisions. 52 yards Shriji Dhwaja is nothing but remembrance & combine symbol of fifty two Dhwaja of different yadav koti tailored together & named as Shriji Dhwaja. Dwarkadheesh Temple Timings: The Dwarkadheesh being a Vaishnavite temple closes quite often during the day. The daily schedule of the temple is as follow: Mangla arti at 7 in the morning, mangla darshan between 7 to 8, abhishek puja between 8 to 9 in which the darshan are closed, shringar darshan between 9 to 9:30 followed by snan bhog between 9:30 to 9:45 in which the darshan are closed,shringar darshan between 9:45 to 10:15 followed by shringarbhig between 10:15 to 10:30 in which the darshan are closed, shringar arti between 10:30 to 10:45 followed by gwal bhog between 11:05 to 11:20 in which the darshan are closed, darshan between 11:20 to 12 noon, rajbhog between 12 noon to 12:20 in which the darshan are closed, again darshan between 12:20 to 12:30 followed by anosar and darshan closed. The temple again opens with first darshan at 5 in the evening, uthappan bhog offered between 5:30 and 5:45 in which the darshan are closed,5:45 to 7:15 in the evening is again darshan time followed by sandhya bhog in which the darshan closed,sandhya arti between 7:30 to 7:45, followed by shayanbhog between 8 to 8:10 in which the darshan are closed, again darshan time between 8:10 to 8:30 followed by shayan arti between 8:30 to 8:35 and darshan between 8:35 to 9 in the evening, bantabhog and shayan between 9 to 9:20,darshan between 9:20 and 9:30 in the evening and finally at 9:30 in the evening the temple closes for the day. Dwarkadheesh Temple and Janmashtami: Janmashtami, the day of

the birth of Lord Krishna is the most special occasion here. Devotees from across India and abroad come here to celebrate Janmashtami. There are several special occasions on this special day when Shriji gives darshan to its devotees. Rituals are performed by Aboti Brahmins; they belong to special caste of Brahmins who are performing this auspicious task since centuries. The temple opens at 7 in the morning and daily rituals are performed like mangla arti, abhishek snan, shringar,shringarbhog, shringar arti,madhyahan bhog,rajbhog,anosar,utthapan at 5 in the evening,shayan bhog and shayan arti .The darshan is closed at 9:30 in the night. Around 11 in the night Lord Dwarkadheesh darshan is again open for the devotees. Lord is dressed up with profuse gold jewelry and ornaments made of diamonds topaz and other precious stones. Around 11:30 pm, the utsavbhog is offered to the Lord. The whole temple is crowded with devotees. The birthday is celebrated with great fun and devotees sing in chorus ‘Nand Gher Anand Bhayo- Jay Kanaiya Lal Ki’.The Mahabhog is offered to Lord Krishna at 2:00 am. It is normally a small annakut. After offering the mahabhog, darshan is closed at 3:00 am.