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**Dr. AMIT R. PRAJAPATI**

Associate Professor, Department of English, Veer Narmad South Gujarat University, Surat.

Email: mramit1973@gmail.com

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**SURAT**

**- VirNarmad**

(A Poem translated from Gujarati into English)



**Dr. AMIT R. PRAJAPATI.**

Oh Surat! What a fall! "Once thou had golden surface".  
Oh Surat! What a predicament! Now thou have crying face.  
Oh! Reduced to weeping, from the state of glee and elation,  
Though scaled great heights, thou charming one fell;  
Thou appeared elegant laid in gold, grew worthless dim and dull.  
As the deity of gold, was in fragments sold,  
So delicate thou body, torn apart in blaze.  
Decor shine in colours, on twin minarets on thy heart,  
Thou lost the lustre, embarrassed in manners.  
The glazing eyes thy had, have dim vision today!  
The elegance of thy cheeks, have sunken shamefully these days!  
The red lips have turned pale and deep dark;  
I feel a sense of shame, the death's call is heard.  
The beautiful acuminate nose, appeared sunken by scars;  
Alas! Thou lost thy name and fame, with the face fallen.  
The bright face of Surat, once shone like the sun;  
Now terrifying pale it is, like a threatening owl.  
Extremely fair face, shone like beauty of the full moon;  
Turned bearing heat, like the night without the moon.  
During thy hey-days, thy body was pink and lovely;  
In thy sad decline, now thou are deserted lonely.  
In the centuries the sixteenth and the seventeenth, thou possessed shining beauty;  
Castles, mansions and forts, all wrapped in colours pretty.  
With dignity and pride, European merchants resided;  
At harbour itself, their clamours were decided.  
Many kinds of people, their heads clad in varied colours;  
Dressed in different ways, the followers led by leaders.  
Goods loaded and unloaded, of this and foreign countries;  
Exchange of affluence ample, graced by Lakshmi's temple.  
A harbour with a fleet of ships, a pleasant sight to see;  
A source of treasured-trove, the real *Pārasmanī*.  
More men of business, more the craftsmen besides;  
All, of the upper or the lower layers, became well-to-do.



Governors, grandees, officers, and all other leaders;  
 With pilgrims thousands, all merchants and dealers.  
 Repositories and shops, palaces, mansions and homes;  
 Orchards, estates and gardens, prosperous are one and all.  
 Elephants, horses, camels, palanquin, chariot, vehicles;  
 Everyone running about, shines with body, mind and wealth.  
 Oh! Surat! Like Lankā, thou glowed in gold all over;  
 The king and the common men, all lived in fraternity.  
 Different people celebrate, festivals in varied ways;  
 The stacks of articles, offer endless elegance.  
 All armies are different, in different states;  
 Variety of weapons, who should I praise?  
 Prides are decked with the golden and silver flowers;  
 When they are strewn among the people, the rulers are praised.  
 The grandeur of ports, ah! the Tāpī, thy lovely banks;  
 What a beautiful sight! with much dignified ships.  
 They all shone in sunlight, and also in the moon's light;  
 Even trees on the banks, a feast to eyes' delight.  
 Sailing on the boat, in the company of cronies;  
 One can see stars reflected in the water. Great! what a spell-bound picture.  
 Forts and docks look beautiful, besides lovely quays;  
 Even at noon, the banks are really uncommon.  
 What a glory Surat thou had! that lured people of the world;  
 There came the Portuguese, the British, the French and the Dutch.  
 One who turns jealous, thinks ill of one and all;  
 Initially reaped great benefits, thy people all.  
 As the British intruded, the Dutch became much unruly;  
 The work deteriorated then, the unity was lost truly.  
 Shivājī the great fighter, reaping benefits of squabbles;  
 Invaded Surat, in sixteen sixty four and sixteen seventy.  
 Surat thou again regained, thy lost great glory;  
 But further followed a fall, only after a century.  
 Various kings attacked, differently and successively;  
 Many scars of wounds, have been received severely.  
 Careless governors, all oppressive administrators;  
 Avidity for authority, among the subjects and soldiers.  
 The years twenty seven and seventy six, of the century eighteen;  
 Witnessed the greater floods, one after another.  
 Further struck by storm, thy plight was very poor;  
 A signal of Nature's curse, oh! Surat was disappointed once more.  
 Seventeen ninety one, was the season of drought;  
 Floods in seventeen ninety seven, ah! fie my song of praise.  
 Another span of famine, in eighteen hundred and four;  
 Furious fire in 1812, in 1821 even furious more.  
 In 1822 more inundation, in 1837 further more flames;



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The same year more floods, caused great damages.  
Certain more occasions of fire, even though negligible;  
Formed fatal ruins, a loss unbelievable.  
Eighteen sixty five, developed love for tigers enormously;  
The moon of money shone brightly in cities very greatly.  
Alas! Oh *Surat*! impoverished by shares and tigers;  
How can thou recover now? The deeds destroyed thee.  
Even great empires declined, never rose again;  
Syria and Egypt, even Greece and Rome fell.  
Where is Hastināpur, and I ask, even Delhi?  
Where did vanish SiddhpurPātan and Pune?  
The Portuguese, the French and the Dutch were here;  
Like falling stars, where did they perish forever?  
Siddi the greedy of power, further Peshwā another;  
And ambitious Gayekwād, whose urge gained success?  
Many people presume, that none has real power;  
It is the time that raises all, and makes to fall again.  
Oh *Surat*! Can thou obtain, thy former pomp and pride?  
It seems impossible! Now thou are bound to die.  
(But) The hope is eternal, hope begets courage;  
Courage invites industry, all these lead to benefits.  
The fallen have arisen, even if less in number;  
The nectar of industry and patience will give new life.  
Thy frail woman's body has a poor heart;  
With arrogance of affluence and a smile.  
*Surat*, thou sustained great wounds like a woman;  
Being merry-go-lucky, thou set aside thy pains.  
Oh! Salute to *Surat*, for thy patience and content yet;  
Sweetness amidst grief, like the wise innocent.  
Thou are not to be blamed, but plights are to be condemned;  
Heavenly calamities, have created such ruins.  
Lured by Mumbai, people have settled there;  
Thy sun has set, night has descended here.  
*Surat* is my wounded land, to the south of the Tāpi;  
I have kissed thy land with pride.  
Your progeny has displayed, never any valour in a battle;  
But shown its complete character, in commerce and crafts.  
The times of Gopi and the trade during the Mughals;  
Gone now those days, which were once free and happy.  
Though eight lacs of populace, people were happy then;  
Now even with three-fourths of a lac, all suffer a lot.  
Oh *Surat*! I am thy a real disciple;  
I am an able soldier of battle, though known as a clerk.  
Gujarāt is so large, with several famous cities;  
*Surat* thy children, are blessed with wits.



Wits dwell in virtues—is wise to know;  
 How can one reveal valour, without time?  
 Heartless Ahmedābād, thou should never boast;  
 Arrogant of wealth, thou know not to be wounded.  
 Neither thou were like Surat, nor are thou like it today,  
 These are not arrogant words, thus I tell the truth.  
 This glow of Surat, is bereft of wealth;  
 But shines brightly, blessed by Nature.  
 Thou have never worn out mentally, though with body;  
 Though lying low, thou shine with mind and body.  
 With thy weakening body, thou can't appear elegant;  
 However, well done Surat, have proved superior significantly.  
 People of Ahmedābād, know not honour and oath;  
 They are respected only, due to wealth.  
 Hard-working ever, they serve, their self-interest first;  
 Sweet and polite outwardly, they are malicious and cunning.  
 The elites over there are uncultured like the rustics;  
 The rustics are good-hearted, the elites are heartless.  
 Unaware of aesthetic pleasure, they are the uncultured ones;  
 Even if they amass wealth, they cannot enjoy it.  
 Surat thy foppery, pleases amidst sorrows;  
 But the world comments, the poor can hardly afford it.  
 Leave aside thy foppery, though deserve it not now;  
 It befits with wealth, which thou run short of anyhow.  
 Be alert to all flaws, which thou as glutton invite;  
 This eulogy of Surat, grieves my heart.  
 Slapping on thy face, thou keep thy cheeks reddish;  
 What is worth in it, even industry will earn this.  
 Exhibiting on marriage and social occasions by incurring debts;  
 Is never prestigious for thee, because it worsens the wounds.  
 (So) Ponder over, break the old bonds;  
 Replenish thy homes, which are impoverished.  
 Oh! Children of Surat, especially the *Nāgars*;  
*Anāvils* thou are, in all ways obstinate.  
 Be obstinate in good matters in a good way;  
 You will be happy in worldly and spiritual matters.  
 Thou have been skilled, in public affairs;  
 Acquire the required liberty, and touch the top of happiness.  
 The practical Vedānt, can be achieved by one and all;  
 Castism can be removed, by the unity of all.  
 Study hard daily, and shun superstitions;  
 Prove bravery at battlefield, and act out reforms.  
 Narmad sings a heroic song, to encourage thou earnestly;  
 Come, arise all the brave, such hour will never come again.

Glossary




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Ahmedābād	:	the largest city of Gujarāt situated on the banks of the Sābarmati
Anāvils	:	a type of Brāhmin sub-caste
Gāyekwād	:	also Gāekwād / Gāikwād. A king of that dynasty
Hastināpur	:	a capital of Pāndavās, the characters of an ancient epic the <i>Mahābharata</i>
Lakshmi	:	Hindu goddess of wealth, prosperity, fortune and the embodiment of beauty
Lankā	:	an island country now known as Sri Lanka
Mumbai	:	the largest city of Mahārashtra where Narmad studied
Nāgar	:	a type of Brāhmin sub-caste
Pārasmani	:	a philosopher's stone which has a power to turn the metal into gold
Peshwā	:	a king of that dynasty, usually Marāthi
Pune	:	the second largest metropolis of Mahārashtra
Shivāji	:	the founder of Marāthāempire (1627-1680)
SiddhpurPātan	:	a historical place located in north Gujarāt named after SiddhrājJaisingh (1093-1143), the ruler of Solanki dynasty.
Siddi	:	from Rājpor (Gujarāt) who was in charge of the caste of Surat for some years
Surat	:	a city of South Gujarāt / Narmad's birth place
Vedānta	:	the name of a particular system of philosophy

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