

## **HISTORY OF FOUNDATION**

Foundation Minhembeti was started in remembrance of Mr. Ashwin Chotalal Nathooram Pandya's late parents. His father's name was Mr. Chotalal Nathooram Pandya and mother's name was Mrs. Bhanumati Pandya. Mr. Chotalal was born at Lourenzo Marques. He had one brother and 2 sisters in his family who stayed in the state of Gujarat, at Jhunagad district. He stayed and completed his studies at Lourenzo Marques. At the age of 20 he went to India and got married with Bhanumati. She was very dedicated wife. Later, she gave birth to 9 children from whom four were boys and five girls.

In early 60's Chotalal family was able to rent a grocery shop with a house in Salamanga() After lots of hardships and struggle his shop was giving a good business. Mr. Chotalal was very generous and kind-hearted, therefore within little time he won the hearts of the people around him. As Mr. Chotalal greeted all public with love and lots of care, general public was attracted towards him. As he had Teary eyes, local people of Salamanga named him as Mr. Minhembeti which means TEARS.

Mr. Chotalal got great success in grocery shop, but one Diwali (Indian festival of lights) night the owner suddenly asked him to leave the shop & house with his whole family. This shocked him a lot, and then they went to Ramchandra Temple of Salamanga for shelter. After staying there for few days, they shifted to Mugasin a small place nearby to Salamanga. Further in 1970 they moved to Maputo. They started a business of Clothes (Kapulana) in Maputo. It gave lots of success and today also it is running very successfully at Av. Filipe Samuel Magaia by the name of CASA PANDIA.

Ashwin Pandya was born in Salamanga, Mozambique in 1965. He spent all his childhood in Salamanga enjoying each and every movement. He used to play with local children nearby, running in farms and bushes. Today also he is attracted towards the soil of Salamanga and gets totally attached to the people of Salamanga. He visits Salamanga almost once a week. He stays there one or two nights with his family.

After completing his studies in Maputo, Ashwin joined the family business. Seeking better opportunities, Ashwin then proceeded to Lisbon, Portugal in 1987 and joined the field of electronics. In 1992, he went to Luanda, Angola, a good market for electronics and opened an electronics warehouse. Realizing the great potential in properties, Ashwin started construction work in 1998 in Maputo.

His greatest success has been the construction of JAT buildings. In fact, Ashwin has built several office and residential properties which he has resold and some are leased.

Ashwin married Sandhya in 1991 in Lisbon; they have four daughters. As a philanthropist, Ashwin contributes liberally to all worthy causes. Under his support, the foundation known as TEARS (Minhembeti) is actively involved in charity works. He has a lot of compassion for Salamanga so he wants to leave a Legacy for humanity. He has committed himself to construct an Anand Ashram which is in progress at Salamanga; it is his native place and very much close to his heart.

## **ANAND ASHRAM (A PARADISE ON EARTH)**

### **What is an Ashram?**

Ashrams are many thousand-year-old traditions in India and nowadays spread all over the world. Mostly Ashrams are situated in a very quiet place far from city, where a sadhak (A meditator who treads the part of spirituality) can get peace and silent atmosphere.

An ashram is a place where a true guru is living and teaching God-seekers who are looking for spiritual advice and help. A place where devotees live a simple life, meditate and offer their seva (Means selfless service; work offered to God). An ashram is free of any religion and open to absolutely ALL.

Most ashrams accommodate Gurus only; however, some ashrams offer accommodations for visitors and devotees.

### **About Anand Ashram:**

Over hundred years of its existence, the Anand Ashram has provided sanctuary to devotees and disciples, generation after generation. It is a centre of spiritual energy. The entire Ashram is full of positive energy, creating an atmosphere of Mahatma Gurudev Nathuram Sharma's bliss. The echo of the chanting of hymns and mantras make the atmosphere electrically charged.

Anand Ashram is located at Bilkha, Gujarat right under the foothills of Girnar hills. Three hours drive from Rajkot via Jhunagad and Dhoraji brings you to the pleasant surroundings of the ashram. At present, there are many more branches of Anand Ashram in India: Ambdhavad, Moghidar, Dhrofah and Limbudha.

Thousands of devotees come to Anand Ashram to experience and contribute to this ashram environment. Among these devotees, one of the names is Ashwin Pandya. Ashwin Pandya is a devotee of Mahatma Gurudev. The entire Pandya family are loyal devotees of Mahatma Gurudev Nathuram Sharma, making regular pilgrimages to Anand Ashram Bilkha to seek his blessings. In fact, Ashwin's grandfather, Shree Nathooram Lakshmidas became associated with Gurudev long ago and the association transformed his life into a seeker of truth- gyan marga (Path of Knowledge).

The ashram has a small puja room (A room where deity is being worshipped and decorated with flowers) with Gurudev's statue. Beginning early in the morning and continuing throughout the day, devotees visit and perform aarti (A kind of short religious ceremony in which a prayer is sung & lighted lamps are used to worship a God or Guru), chant and offer seva. A devotee is blessed after performing Gurudev's grace.