



Divine Discourses of Sant Bhagwant Sahebji



Spiritual Essence

Vratdhari Santo and Karyakarta Shibir

3 February 2017, Shri Yogi Pragatya Tirth, Dhari

Original Discourse in Gujarati Transcreated by : Bhavisha Tailor

The most sacred manifest *tirth* of Dhari, and equally exceptional Akshar-mukto ni Jai Jai Jai! Truly it is such a joy! Yogiji Maharaj is so, so pleased, and that is why there is so much joy!

In Bapa's heart, right up to the second that he took his last breath, there was nothing that he would not do for his *Ishta-dev* Bhagwan Swaminarayan and for Shastriji Maharaj, the Guru who was his life. He kept only them at the centre and with this single-pointedness, carried out all of his *vicharan*¹. There was no consideration for his own physical body, never did he look toward arrangements, nor did he ever take note of who was lending their support and who was not, nor did he ever consider insult or praise, nor whether facilities or amenities were available or not; he would carry out his *vicharan* with his gaze fixed constantly and solely on his *Ishta-dev* and his Guru. And whosoever wholeheartedly immersed themselves in this work, supported this work, he would be pleased with from the very depth of his being, and it was only towards this that he looked. And today when so many of you are ready to do this work, we are so elated, because you have truly understood Bapa's innermost wish.

We must imbibe the Akshar Purushottam Upasana and cultivate unity. For that I will again tell you an experience of Bapa from 1964. At that time the Akshar Purushottam Chhatralaya had not yet been named. P.P. Pramukh Swamiji, P.P. Mahant Swamiji, P.P. Dadu Kaka, P.P. Harshadbhai, P.P. Ishwarcharan Swami and all had decided on the name 'Gnanyagna Chhatralaya' and had given me the seva of seeking P.P. Yogi Bapa's approval. At that time, it happened to be the April 16th holidays, so Santo and youths had been assigned to different groups, and were digging the foundations of the hostel. In the evenings, in the prayer hall in Vidyanagar, there would be a sabha in the presence of Bapa,

¹ To travel from place to place with the sole aim of carrying out God's work

Pramukh Swami and Santo, for all the guests, devotees and youths. At the end of one of those sabhas as P.P. Bapa was leaving to get into the car, he had held my hand so I asked Bapa, 'Bapa, we have to name the Chhatralaya.' Bapa said, 'Ask Pramukh Swami and Dadubhai.' So I said, 'Bapa, this committee has suggested the name – 'Gnanyagna' Chhatralaya. If you approve, then we may name this, as it has both Shastriji Maharaj's and your name within it.' Bapa immediately replied, 'No we cannot keep that name.' Bapa was so great and we were so small, yet he would explain everything so lovingly! He pulled me closer, and putting one hand on my shoulder, rested the other hand on the car door and then spoke to me for about five minutes of all the hardships that Shastriji Maharaj had endured. Even if you look in the 'Yogi Gita', in Bapa's prayer in Mehalav, he covers his Guru's whole life in five to seven lines. Such a humble and down-to-earth sadhu! So loving, so generous, and so compassionate!

Bapa said, 'Shastriji Maharaj had everything in Vadtal, but he left all that behind and bore hardship instead. Why? To show that his *Ishta-dev* Bhagwan Swaminarayan is not *paroksh*²; that He is always manifest through a Gunatit sadhu and by giving everyone the recognition of who Gunatitanand Swami was, he propagated the *pragat*³ Upasana of Akshar Purushottam, so that we may enjoy the joy, peace and bliss of Akshardham in our very lifetimes! That is why he shaped this path; Shastriji Maharaj sacrificed his entire being for us. To proclaim this, to broadcast the work of our Guru, of Akshar Purushottam Upasana, is our bhakti, and so for that reason we must name the hostel, 'Akshar Purushottam Chhatralaya'. To completely immerse oneself in the work of one's Guru, in the will of one's Guru, is what Bapa really taught us through this. Since then, this became our only goal – for

² Not directly present or directly approachable

³ This refers to God being eternally present within a manifest physical body i.e. that of a Gunatit Sadhu who has attained the highest state of realisation.



all of us, Ashvinbhai, Shantibhai and all the bhaiyo – the goal became to ensure that Bapa’s work is nurtured, that it continues in full force, and for that, we wanted to surrender our lives.

The first step of that pure Upasana is: the Supreme, the cause of all incarnations, the cause of all causes, the inspiration and the agency behind our intellect, is my *Ishta-dev*, Bhagwan Swaminarayan. The first part of this is that He is supreme. Our Lord is supreme, but this is not said so that we enter into fights with others! Remember this! There are usually two to five people who hold a special place in our hearts’, but the supreme place must be held by our *Ishta-dev*. This means, everything else becomes secondary to my *Ishta-dev*’s word; that is what it means to believe your Lord to be supreme. In the hearts of all the *karyakartas*, Bhagwan Swaminarayan must hold supremacy. We must worship our *Ishta-dev* with supreme devotion, and so we must live our lives according to whatever He has said in the ‘Shikshapatri’ and the ‘Vachanamrut’, and this is what we must talk about in the wider community too.

The second place is that of your Guru and the third is that of your mother and father. Remember! If you have pictures of any old actors etc. hanging in your house, remove them – this is my prayer to you. Film actors, cricketers, politicians may be the best in their field, but you will gain absolutely nothing from their lives. We must appreciate their skills, but there is no need to frame their picture and put it up on your walls. Remember, in our lives, our *Ishta-dev*, Guru and our parents must hold the highest place.

If our parents are illiterate, does that mean they are lesser? No! No matter how highly educated or accomplished others may be, your love for your parents will always be greater and they will always hold a special place in your hearts. Yogiji Maharaj had only studied till the sixth standard. His speeches were not those of a great orator. But his love, and the way he worked in our lives as our Guru – was so unparalleled that even just thinking about it gives rise to an ocean of love within. What could we not do for him? Not just this one lifetime, but even if we were to surrender our hundreds of thousands of lifetimes to him, it would be too little, that is how exceptionally divine he was! We have to worship him knowing him to be supreme. Whoever other devotees may worship, whichever God; mine is supreme – we must not say this for the sake of it, but by placing our Lord at the supreme position in our own heart! In anything we do, to first think, what was it that He said? What is His will? What is His wish? Will He be pleased or not? We must check this before we do anything, then it can be said that you believe Him to be supreme.

Supreme, the cause of all incarnations, and the cause of all causes. ‘Cause’ here means the doer of whatever has happened, is happening and will happen is my Lord. When you believe this,

then that which makes you see fault in others will be automatically cured; you will not judge anyone’s actions and the internal fluctuations that happen as a result of this will go. *Karyakartas* must believe God to be like this; we want to offer our devotion to Him in this way. Even within your satsang mandals, if someone is doing something, you have to believe that it is God that is the Doer. If you have an affectionate bond with that person, then you may speak to them and say, ‘this is not really appropriate, but alternatively if we do it in this way then God’s fragrance will spread, and our Guru’s glory will be shown.’ If in such an event the person still does not accept, then simply chant.... Swaminarayan ... Swaminarayan... Swaminarayan. The reason is, the inspirer of everyone’s intellect, the agency behind everyone’s actions, is the Lord that I have attained, and therefore what one has to do is pray. That is why - the Supreme, the all-doer, the cause of all causes, the controller of all things, the inspirer of intellect – and the agency behind all action is the Lord whom I have attained – it is with this sentiment that we have to worship Him. That is why we have to do satsang, and that is the reason for sabha. That is why we have to read the ‘Vachanamrut’ and ‘Swami ni Vaato’ daily so that this type of *mahima*⁴ increases in our hearts. As our *mahima* for the one we have attained increases, everything else will automatically become like dust for us! Remember this!

Yogi Bapa used to give a simple example. There was once a farming family that lived in a village. The lady’s husband passed away and so her son started to take care of the farming. However, there was a drought for two years, and with no income from farming they started to struggle for food and drink. And so the mother gave her son four diamonds and sent him to sell them to her brother, who was a jeweler in the neighbouring village. The youth went to his uncle who examined the diamonds and said, ‘I am too small a jeweler for these diamonds, so why don’t you take them back to your mother, and when we get an appropriate client we can sell them for a good price. In the meantime, since you are in difficulty, come and work with me so that way your money problem is solved.’

The youth started working at his uncle’s, and in a year and a half, he too became a diamond connoisseur. One day when an eminent jeweler came from Mumbai, the uncle sent the youth home to fetch the diamonds to sell to him. The youth went home and picking up the stones, he instantly recognized that they were simply bits of glass and not diamonds! Disgusted, he threw them away. Returning to his uncle’s, he asked, ‘Uncle, why did you make fun of me in this way?’ The uncle said, ‘Son, the first day

⁴Understanding of greatness, glory.



you brought the stones in, I knew they were pieces of glass, but if I had told you that on the day, then you and your mother would have thought that I wanted to take possession of the diamonds for free! But now, you yourself are able to assess their worth, and so you have thrown them away.’

Similarly, we are told that the world is meaningless, full of suffering, so there is no point in doing this or that. Then we will say, ‘you are doing it and why are you saying no to us? You want to eat but you want to make us fast.’ This is how dumb we are, that we will take fault with God and the Satpurush. They will give us so much love and tell us to join in satsang, in devotion, to run the satsang mandal, do *katha-varta*, do dhun and prayer and gradually through this they will get us to see that the world is like a worthless piece of glass, and our worldliness will simply drop away. This is God’s supremacy!

Yogi Bapa used to say, ‘one must worship God with the sentiment that He is the ultimate Supreme.’ You must keep this feeling in your heart for God. And you must keep the absolute firm conviction – the solid understanding that He who is the cause of all incarnations, the cause of all causes, the inspirer and agency behind all intellect and action, that Supreme Lord, I have attained right here in manifest form through the sadhu. You must maintain *atma-buddhi* and *preeti*⁵ and develop your love for him.

I want to emphasize to you specially, that if there are any problems you are experiencing with your sons or daughters – do not scold them. Nothing will improve with you chastising them. For any difficulty, turn the rosary and chant. When you reprimand someone, no effort is required, whereas to get up in the night and turn the rosary requires great effort. If your child is not listening to you, is not studying, has gone onto the wrong track, or fallen in love with someone, then we will think, what will become of him or her...? At that time you need to pray and turn the rosary. This is what is required of us. If you have one or two children, you must not just pray for them, but if your satsang mandal has fifty children, then you are the parent of fifty children. All the children in the satsang are ours. If anything happens to them, or any incident takes place, then you should not be able to sleep! That is *suhrad-bhav*⁶ – and unity; that is true Upasana!

⁵ ***Atma-buddhi* and *preeti* means to love the Satpurush as one’s own soul, and thereby refers to a bond of inseparable loving association.**

⁶ ***Suhrad-bhav* is a complex concept. It originates from hrday – meaning heart. *Suhrad* or *Suhraday* therefore literally means ‘one heart’. *Suhradh-bhav* therefore means to feel such an unparalleled harmony with everyone, regardless of however they act towards you, and regardless of circumstance or situation.**

When you have exceptional love for the Satpurush, your innate nature changes. The one that we have attained is no ordinary sadhu. If you completely give yourself up in his *aagna*⁷ your inner worldliness will completely dissolve. Remember! If the Satpurush scolds you and you feel joy; if you like it, then that is love! This is the type of love one should have for the Satpurush.

One morning Gunatitanand Swami was going to Narayan Dharo for a bath. With him were Shivilal Sheth, five to ten sadhus and about twenty-five devotees, all going to Narayan Dharo to bathe. On the way, they came across a woodcutter who had a huge fight with his wife. These were rough people, and in anger the woodcutter dealt a blow to his wife’s head with the back of his axe and simply walked off. After bathing, on their return, Shivilal Sheth enquired within their hut to see if all was ok, and the lady had a bandage round her head and was making flat bread. When Shivilal Sheth asked her, she said, ‘He has gone off to cut wood and will need something to eat when he is back in the afternoon! So I am making this for him.’ That is when Gunatitanand Swami said to Santo and bhakto, ‘this is what you call love; this is *atma-buddhi* and *preeti*!’ Gunatitanand Swami has gone to the extent of saying, ‘even if this sadhu beats you with a shoe five times, you should return the shoe and say this will be useful for next time, but I am not going anywhere!’ This is what you call love. This is the kind of love you should have for the Satpurush. Whereas here if the Satpurush does not look at you, your love evaporates; if He does not call your name, the love disappears. If you call Him home and he is unable to come, the love goes; this kind of love is so fickle and shallow! In any circumstance whatsoever, in whatever situation – but love is love, no-one can separate us; that is love! When you have this kind of love for the Satpurush, then the eagerness and enthusiasm to please him will never decrease.

Ashvinbhai, Shantibhai, Ratibhai, Sanandbhai, V.S. – all of them, Yogi Bapa had kept close, and then told them to go. But did their love for their Guru ever decrease? Or did they ever feel that our Guru has kicked us out? That is their love for him! Keeping a completely positive attitude, they made it their life to offer devotion towards their Guru, and live according to his *aagna*. In doing so, they became immersed in their Guru, and ultimately at one with their Guru. If you have love for your Guru, then you will automatically and most certainly, certainly, certainly have love for anyone that is in His association! When there is love for each other, unity will arise naturally; you will not be able to see fault. Remember! Where there is *mahima*, you will see no fault in others; where there is love, you will find no fault. What an exceptional attainment we have of God and Guru, and if we

⁷ **Any instruction given by God or Guru, which is always for our spiritual benefit.**



understand this immense attainment, then we will see no fault in anyone. If you see fault in others, that means your focus has shifted away from your Lord and your Guru, and that your attention has been diverted. What should you do at that time? You must chant Swaminarayan.... Swaminarayan Swaminarayan.... and bring your focus back to your God, then that fault will disappear. This is our *sadhana*. In this way, our unity will increase. Unity means no matter what the situation, no matter what the circumstances, no matter where we go or where we sit, but not to judge or perceive anyone negatively, nor listen to any such talk.

Pappaji would many times give this example. Which part of our body wears the garland? The head wears it. When we do puja, it is to the forehead. But it is the feet that carry the whole body weighing 80 – 90 kilos, yet we do not do puja to the feet? We always offer puja on the forehead. What if the feet decided to quarrel with the head? What if the feet said, ‘The only reason you are mobile is because of me; if you didn’t have me, you could not go anywhere; what would you do? Go on then, I am not coming, go where you want’; what if the feet sulked in this way? However the feet know full well, that their work is to walk, whereas the function of the head is to wear the garland, the function of the mouth is to eat etc. All of these functions have been distributed, and it is because of this understanding, that there is harmony.

Just see, within Brahmajyoti, Ashvinbhai, Shantibhai, Ratikaka and these Santo work the whole day, but Saheb gets the credit. Has Ashvinbhai ever said, ‘why aren’t you mentioning my name?’ Just look at his *dassatva-bhav*⁸! Everything is encompassed in this one thing. ‘Bapa has made the choice, so whatever He is like, He is our leader.’ Ashvinbhai is so intelligent, so smart, and so busily proactive in work! You will not find the slightest atom of laziness or sluggishness in him. He is so disciplined, and spiritually diligent; but never has he said, ‘why is my name not being mentioned? Why am I not being brought to the forefront?’ There is none of this – he has completely dissolved his being in Yogiji Maharaj; that is *sadhuta*⁹! If we develop *atma-buddhi* and *preeti* for such a sadhu, then our being will also become completely dissolved in God. But remember! You have to nourish your personality and make it blossom! We have to make

our personality more and more radiant, but remove the sense of self, the ‘I’ and become egoless; then you can become an instrument of God.

Ashvinbhai, Shantibhai, Sanandbhai, V.S., Harshadbhai became like that, and following in their footsteps, these Santo too are like that. They have sacrificed their entire being in *karmayoga* – in *seva*. They knew nothing about the way of their spiritual path, but what they did know was that whatever was assigned to them, they were going to carry out with 100% loyalty and sincerity. And so today, with Ashvinbhai, Shantibhai, Ratikaka, Sanandbhai’s grace, these Santo have also become like that. If you look, they have all sacrificed themselves, but no-one’s name is coming to the fore, no-one is being praised, and people do not even know them – but there is the one spirit that, we are all encompassed in the names of Ashvinbhai and Shantibhai. This is what our *karyakartas* have to digest. In this way, we have to worship God in the ultimate way – no matter whether the Satpurush scolds us – reprimands us, calls us or not, looks at us or not, comes to our home or not or if you have done the work and someone else is given the credit, no matter what happens, we should not have *bhav-fer*¹⁰ for the Satpurush. *Karyakartas* should be like concrete; they should not be such that they need to be looked after or pampered.

These Santo may look like us, but when you look at their understanding, you realize they are not ordinary. That is why Bhagwan Swaminarayan has said, ‘the one whose understanding is elevated, is the one who is great.’ Those who have a head of white hair are elderly; they are not necessarily greater in their understanding. Rather the one who maintains *nirdosh-bhav*, *divya-bhav*¹¹, is propagating *divya-bhav*, is augmenting the *mahima* of the Satpurush, and firmly believes and propagates that whatever the Satpurush is doing is to carry countless souls across the ocean of worldly delusion to liberate them, is the one with the highest understanding of Upasana, and he is truly great! God wants to give us this greatness. That is why in the mandal when someone else is given credit for work that you have done, and you complain about this, then you have failed. So do not do this. Within the mandal, let us keep *suhrad-bhav* and unity and live in this way.

Also our *karyakartas* must do puja everyday and must, must apply the *tilak-chandlo* to their forehead. Say it : ‘After our

⁸ Complete surrender and servitude. One who lives for God and whose life is for God.

⁹ *Sadhuta* refers to the qualities of a true sadhu such as humility, complete selflessness and surrender, with the recognition of God as the Supreme All-Doer. Because of his *sadhuta*, the true sadhu will never act for his own benefit. He is natural, simple and joyfully immersed in God.

¹⁰ *Bhav-fer* means to negatively change one’s attitude towards someone

¹¹ To see no fault or blemish; the conviction and inner perception that God and all of God’s devotees are faultless and divine.



puja, we will apply the *tilak-chandlo*. We will not eat onion or garlic. We will not indulge in any vice. We will consistently and certainly, certainly, certainly do the weekly sabha.' In the sabha, remembering God, may you bring fresh new meaning to the 'Vachanamrut' and 'Swami ni Vaato'. May you start singing *mahima* afresh. Read the 'Bhaktchintamani'. It is to get you to start living in God. We do not want to live in anything except our Lord, our Guru and bhakto, so let us start doing this.

It is my prayer to all the *karyakartas* in all the centres, you must do the sabha consistently. In the new centres, where there are even one devotee or two devotees, we must start a sabha. It is my prayer to the Santo that they start travelling within the satsang with devotees; it is for this that God has taken us on this path. Especially, get the children's mandals and youth mandals started. Do not get stuck on the number attending; even if there are only two to five children, it does not matter. Get a senior lady devotee in the mandal to run the children's mandal – she will do it with love. The habit of prayer and bhajan is cultivated in childhood. Start the youth mandals, so that youth do not get caught up in vice or bad company while they are studying. This is our important seva. In all of our centres, the children's mandal and the youth mandal must be started up. And every three to six months, a *karyakarta shibir* must be held.

Truly, these Santo are so exceptional! Because they come down to our level and live amongst us, we are not able to understand them. But what an attainment we have, and what a gift God has given us in the form of these sadhus. If we understand their *mahima*, our hearts will overflow with joy. Remember! You will not even realize where all your shortcomings have disappeared! Do not perform any spiritual practice to overcome your flaws. Simply carry out the spiritual practice of doing all your work in unity, in a spirit of togetherness. Carry out the spiritual practice of offering your devotion with *nirdosh-bhav*. Whatever instruction you receive from the 'Satsang Samvardhan Kendra', the *aagna* you receive from Ashvinbhai- Shantibhai, you must follow strictly. If you do this with awareness, then you will see, within two to five years what a great spiritual height you will be raised to, which you cannot even imagine. Remember! God has given us this immense opportunity – He has selected us. But if we do not live with awareness – then those from abroad will recognise these sadhus and you will be left fumbling. So awake! And wake the others up too. What exceptional sadhus you have attained! Start singing this *mahima*. Even if you do not know how to do anything else, you can atleast sing *mahima*, can't you? In doing this, it will give everyone joy.

In sabhas, if we speak of very lofty philosophical concepts, everyone will fall asleep. Rather speak of the Santo we have

attained; the work that is being done – and the bhakti that everyone is offering. Start doing this, start speaking! Those that listen to this will certainly progress spiritually, but those that speak of *mahima* will progress immensely! Remember! When all of us *karyakartas*, go back to our mandals – we must speak of everything that we have attained here – the *mahima*, the pure Upasana, the firm conviction, the exceptional love for the Satpurush.

Anoopam Mission is the medium that we have been given. But it is only when we have an affectionate bond with it that we can put it to the best use. This physical body is perishable, temporary – but do you ever neglect it? No. The reason is this body is the medium through which you must travel, through which you must experience fulfillment, through which you must draw upon God's bliss. It is through this body that you will offer devotion, and so we look after the body. Similarly we should have an affectionate bond with the organizational medium through which we are going to make spiritual progress, – a feeling that this organisation is mine. If someone would say to Yogi Bapa, 'Bapa you are ill, please rest,' Bapa would say, 'To augment this organization of Shastriji Maharaj's is my rest!' He would not consider sleeping to be rest – all of this Bapa has taught us; he has not left anything out. So we should have an affectionate loyalty to Anoopam Mission but remember, this should not result in any fighting. My organization is greater, or bigger or better – is something you should never say. The other organizations' are also good, are so great, and are doing wonderful work – so never, ever fall into comparison. What you must do is focus on what is happening in our organization. We must do what it takes so that the *mahima* of these Santo increases in our hearts and in the hearts of others. Focus on nurturing the childrens' and youth mandals. Make sure you do the weekly sabha consistently. Make it a point to certainly attend *samaiya-utsav*. Whenever shibirs are going to take place, you will be informed well in advance, so arrange your timetables accordingly and make sure you definitely attend the shibir.

This is the first time that we have done a five day shibir such as this, in Dhari. So may everyone leave from this sacred soil of Bapa's birth, laughingly – joyfully, with renewed energy, enthusiasm and filled with divinity. May everyone in a spirit of harmony and togetherness, live in such a way that greatly pleases Ashvinbhai, Shantibhai and Santo. And to live like this, may you all become an inspiration to others in *katha-varta*, dhun and prayer and by singing *mahima* bring great joy to all, that is our prayer at our Lord and Guru's lotus feet!

Jai Swaminarayan!

