



Divine Discourses of Sant Bhagwan Sahebji

Spiritual Essence

on Vachanamrut Gadhada III,17 – ‘Bharatji na Akhyaan nu’

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‘Thereupon Shreeji Maharaj said, ‘There is no story as incredible in the Shrimad Bhagwat as that of Bharatji.’

Maharaj described ‘Bharatji’s story’ as being incredible. There is no story as incredible as this. So what is so incredible about it?

‘The reason is Bharatji was the son of Rushabhdev Bhagwan, and he relinquished his sovereignty over the whole world, renounced everything and went into the forest for the sole purpose of realizing God. There, while engaged in the worship of God, he developed affection for a baby deer.’

Rushabhdev, was one of the Jain *tirthankars*¹ and Bharatji was his son. He was a *chakravati* king, meaning he ruled over the whole world, yet he renounced everything and retreated into the forest to worship God, attain God’s *prasannata*² and attain God himself, through austerities. In previous times Santo would always reside on the river-banks. The largest number of ashrams are on the banks of the Ganga and Narmada rivers. Because of Sadhu – Santo and renunciants need for abundant water they would all reside on the banks of the river. The land by the rivers is very fertile, and so there are ample trees, and therefore ample fruit – providing sustenance for the Santo. Also those residing in the vicinity are of comfortable means, and so Bharatji renounced his kingdom, and must have built a little hut on the banks of the river. A deer must have come to drink water, when it was shot down by a hunter’s arrow, leaving behind its baby. When Bharatji came to the

¹ In Jainism, tirthankar refers to one who has achieved the highest spiritual state and is the manifestation of God in human form, who shows the righteous path and guides souls across the ocean of life and death.

² When God or Guru is so pleased with you that it culminates in an outpouring of grace, this is called *prasannata*.

river for his morning bath, he saw this baby deer and was filled with pity. He thought, ‘who is there for this baby?’ and brought the fawn back with him to the ashram. Many people are moved by pity.

‘As a result, Bharatji’s mind and senses unknowingly became focused wholly on the baby deer.’

Bharatji raised the fawn with great love and attention. He would play with it, feed it, bathe it and so even though his whole days used to be spent in meditation and prayer, he developed deep affection for the deer over this period of time. When you care for someone so much, it is natural that love develops for them. If that love were to be directed at Sadguru Santo, your life would be made! Bharatji relinquished his entire kingdom, his wife, his children, his servants, and renounced every luxury and comfort, but developed intense affection for a baby deer. So when his dying moments approached, he thought, ‘when I am gone, who will look after this deer?’

‘...[and so] despite his greatness, Bharatji was re-born as a deer due to the sin of that attachment.’

See? This happened in spite of him being so great, being a renunciant – who had left behind his kingdom. According to worldly opinion, this is such great abdication; but even then, due to his sin, he took on the form of a deer. Maharaj has used the word ‘sin’.

During Shastriji Maharaj’s time, there was one bhakt, who was a great devotee and a disciple of Shastriji Maharaj. There happened to be a fire and his farm and his home were engulfed in flames, and so many devotees came running to tell Swami that this devotee’s home, warehouse and everything had caught on fire. Shastriji Maharaj replied, ‘His sin has been burned.’ Hearing this, the other devotees were stunned. Why did Swami say this?



There is no-one who is more spiritually meritorious than one who has the refuge of God, and *atma-buddhi* and *preeti*³ for God's Satpurush. In the scriptures; in the Vachanamrut, Maharaj says, for the one who has this attainment, this satsang, these sadhus, this Lord – there is no limit to their spiritual merit! If that is the case, then where does the question of sin even arise? But Shastriji Maharaj used the words, 'His sin has been burned.' 'Sin' here means, where your inner focus latches onto something else other than God or God's sadhu, and like Bharatji makes you take another birth. It is fine to be immersed in activity, you could set up an ashram, factories, schools, colleges and organize grand functions, but behind it all, the focus of our mind and senses, even within the activity, should be to carry out our Guru's *aagna*⁴ and please our Lord. To focus anywhere other than this, is sin.

As divine a being as Shastriji Maharaj said, 'The 'sin' of giving anything or anyone a higher place than Bhagwan Swaminarayan in your heart, has been burnt. Now that all this worldly distraction is gone, he can worship God in peace! He will be free, and so now he will turn the rosary.' The world thinks of Bharatji's renunciation as being so great. We are all renunciants. When we go out to different places, why are we offered all this respect and honour? It is for our renunciation! Ohoho, they have left everything behind, and surrendered their lives to live for God! We don't feel like we have done anything great, and the reason is that because of our Guru's love, everything has dropped away by itself. But now, what we have to renounce is internal. When all the inclinations besides that of pleasing God and his Sadhus, which are buried deep within drop away, then that is *vairagya*⁵. And when Shastriji Maharaj had said the sin has been burnt, everyone was stunned. At that time, Shastriji Maharaj had this Vachanamrut read: Gadhada Antya 17.

In this Vachanamrut, Maharaj has used the words, 'King Bharat was great.' He was the greatest of renunciants. Who would leave behind their kingdom? Who would give up all the comforts and luxuries? Did something so bad happen that he left everything behind? Have we faced any such situations that have made us renounce everything? Even then, Maharaj is waving a red flag here for us to understand that without God's wish, without the wish of Guru – God's

³ Atma-buddhi and preeti means to love the Satpurush as one's own soul, and thereby refers to a bond of inseparable loving association.

⁴ Any instruction given by God or Guru, which is always for our spiritual benefit.

⁵ To have no desire other than God.

sadhu – the inclination or desire to go somewhere else, do something else, is the sin which will keep us in the cycle of birth and death.

When Bharatji brought the baby deer into the ashram, he had no preconceived plans or agenda. Was the deer related to him in any way? There was no relation at all. But the feeling of pity, for such a small animal made him take it to the ashram, and so he played with it, fed it and performed its seva; and in the process became bound. Instead of contemplating and reflecting on God, or how best to follow his Guru's *aagna*, or how to stay away from those things that do not please God, his thoughts and reflections became centered on the deer.

Just by renouncing everything does not mean that is the end. Besides God, every little thing that is buried within has to be renounced; then that is true renunciation. To physically renounce things is called renunciation, but when everything from within drops away, then that is *vairagya*. That is why Nishkulanand Swami sang the following : '*Tyaag na take vairagya vina, kariye koti upay ji,*' meaning, renunciation cannot last without *vairagya*, no matter how many countless methods you try. If you do not have that kind of *vairagya* then you will become bound in the way that Bharatji was bound by a baby deer. As such, we have so many 'baby deer', and we will become bound by them, if we use our time, our skills and our talents for them and draw pleasure in doing this. The pleasure you need to draw upon is that of God's *murti*; the fulfillment to attain is from God's *prasannata*, the contentment to be attained is from living your life in a way that pleases God. And anything besides that has been labeled 'sin'. That is why when Shastriji Maharaj said, 'the sin has been burnt,' it is this he was referring to.

'As a result, Bharatji's mind and senses unknowingly became focused wholly on the baby deer.'

Bharatji had nothing to do with this deer, had no relation whatsoever with it and yet his mind and senses became focused totally on the deer. Instead of this one should have stayed in the world! He would have got hot *rotis* 'atleast! But one can renounce the world, live on fruits, give up all the comforts of the world and then gather 'deer' such as these! And then because of them, if you fall into *bhav-fer*⁶, clash with bhakto, take *abhav*⁷ because they are not helping etc., then you are giving rise to *prarabd*⁸. And the sin by

⁶ Bhav-fer means to negatively change one's attitude towards someone

⁷ Abhav means to feel contempt for others such that one changes the way one interacts with them.

⁸ The karmic consequences one has to endure as a result of one's previous actions.



which you give rise to that *prarabdhi* is what takes you into the cycle of birth and death over and over again, so we have to leave this. That is why this was referred to as an ‘incredible’ story. Even though King Bharat had renounced so much, left the kingdom, the world, his queens, his children, comforts, luxuries – he did not get bound by that, and by getting bound to a deer, he had to take birth as a deer! That is astonishing!

We have to maintain awareness and have to learn from the story of Bharatji; that we cannot not get tied down by anything except our Lord and our Guru. In the world, however much someone is suffering, help them and pray for them. Bharatji invested so much time behind the baby deer! Even if you were to take out this much time, it does not matter, but when you become bound by that attachment, then your focus on God shifts and so in the end, Bharatji was reborn as a deer. When you have renounced everything, it should become your last birth! This story is astonishing, because he left everything behind in order to liberate the soul, and yet was reborn as a deer.

‘And despite his greatness, Bharatji was reborn as a deer due to the sin of that attachment.’

When one’s *vrutti*⁹ goes elsewhere, other than God and the Satpurush, that is sin, and as a result that gives rise to *prarabdhi*. To wash away that *prarabdhi*, you have to come into the world again and again. And until that *prarabdhi* is not cleansed, you have to come into the world repeatedly. If it were not for this, it is already the last birth for all of you! We know this, we understand this and yet we are not ready to come out of our own ideas, our own beliefs, our own self-centeredness. If you have diabetes, you cannot eat sweets – and still if you do, then it will harm only you. Similarly, you have renounced the world and its attractions, and then if you keep going with every other activity other than that of pleasing God, then you are only binding yourself with *prarabdhi*. Bharatji suffered so much hardship upon becoming a renunciant! But by taking pity on a deer, he became bound and had to take birth as one.

‘There are countless types of sin, but for a devotee of God – to have affection for anything other than God is an extremely grave sin.’

There are so many types of sins, but even out of all of those, if a devotee of God develops affection elsewhere and puts God aside, then that is an extremely grave sin. We are all devotees of God; on top of this we are renunciants - even our householders are like renunciants. But to have affection

⁹ Vrutti means the mind and senses focus of attention.

elsewhere – this just happens, you do not consciously do this – but it is a very grave sin. It is because of affection that we are pulled in whichever direction, it is out of affection that we begin to carry out our activities for others, but it is a very grave sin. It is because of this, that one forgets God, or is diverted from the path of pleasing God and that is a sin. What other sin is there?

Oh my! You have taken this path to please God, you have done this to live your life for God. So then perform the seva of those are associated with God, speak of the virtues and *mahima*¹⁰ of devotees, and remain joined to activities as per your Guru’s *aagna*! Instead of this, you have been diverted by acting out of your own wishes and that is a very grave sin, and that becomes *prarabdhi*.

‘Therefore one who is wise would reflect upon Bharatji’s story and would become extremely fearful with the thought, ‘what if I develop affection for anything other than God?’

Maharaj is saying this for the one who is wise, who is alert, who lives with awareness and has the understanding to please God. If one who is wise reflects upon this story of Bharatji, then one would feel extremely fearful in developing affection for another, or joining with them in some activity, or in helping them, just in case their Lord is forgotten, or sidelined in the process! Do everything; remember! God is not saying no! Help other bhakto, no one is saying no. But it has to be subject to whether your Lord and your Guru would be pleased with that. If it is your Guru’s *aagna*, then rule the whole world! If one who has understanding reads this story of Bharatji, then he or she would feel, ‘Forgetting my Lord, I do not want to do anything, except live my life for God.’

We have not come into the world to please everyone, or to help everyone in all their troubles, or to relieve them from their troubles. If that is what we are meant to do, then God will say, ‘Go, and do this.’ And at that time, you should do it to your absolute best capacity. But, otherwise you should live your life as God’s child, join 100% in the work of pure Akshar Purushottam Upasana, and perform the seva and devotion of God’s bhakto, and that is it!

After taking birth as a deer, Bharatji was filled with such fear because regardless of having renounced everything, leaving behind all the pleasures and comforts of the world, he had to be reborn as a deer! But his wisdom stayed with him. Whatever austerities we perform, whatever penance, whatever we do, having surrendered to our Lord, never ever

¹⁰ The understanding of glory and greatness





goes to waste, remember this! So whatever austerities Bharatji had performed did not go to waste. He took birth as a deer, and once that lifetime was over, he then took human birth in a Brahmin family. He became known as Jadbharat – and this is how he lived; he would not speak to anyone, showed no affection towards anyone and did not involve himself in anyone’s work. He did this consciously and deliberately. He did not want to involve himself with anyone, and did not want to engage in any worldly activity where God was missing, and so he attained the state of *Tirthankar*. Rushabhdev Bhagwan was also a *Tirthankar* and Jadbharat also became a *Tirthankar*; but he had to take one extra birth in between and that was astonishing. Whereas we would have to do so much!

Somebody asked Yogi Bapa – ‘Bharatji only had one deer, and we have so many! If we close our eyes and just think about this, we are involved with so many people and so many things and so how many births would we have to take?!’ Yogi Bapa replied, ‘Bharatji did not have who you have attained.’ God will get rid of our ‘deer’. But when He does that, let us not tie God’s hands through negative perception of bhakto, or by having *manushya-bhav*¹¹ for Santo – if we take care in this, then all of our ‘deer’ will be destroyed! However, if we do not have inner strength, are not doing bhajan and do not have the strength that arises from seva, then when God does decide to remove your ‘deer’, you will have *bhav-fer* for God, *bhav-fer* for the sadhus and *bhav-fer* for bhakto who do not help you and as a result, you again give rise to *prarabdha*. For this reason, God is not moving those ‘deer’ out of the lives of such bhakto.

In Vachanamrut Gadhadha 1.37, Maharaj says, ‘[in my mind]... I am afraid of harming my bhakt.’ Could God ever be scared?? But if we become upset, fall into *bhav-fer* and negativity towards others, then God will not touch us. For example, there are many boys, who we will not get involved with and we will say, ‘Let it go. Don’t even bother – let him do as he wishes, otherwise he will just get upset for no reason.’ That is why Maharaj does not prod such a bhakt, because he will fall into *bhav-fer* and for no reason at all his one year’s spiritual practice would be lengthened to five years. For this reason, Maharaj simply follows and agrees with what we say. The bhakt has to be so aware. It is only when God is pleased, the Satpurush is pleased, that all of our inner ‘deer’ are shaken off and removed.

Bharatji’s story is related to *paroksh*, but the one who has understanding would really think about this and feel extremely fearful. Remember! To the one who does not

¹¹ **Doubt in the divinity of God or the Satpurush and to think of Him or His actions as human and not divine.**

have understanding, it does not matter how much you say to him, because it will not make any difference. But one who has understanding, would be extremely fearful and would think, ‘Just because of one deer, Bharatji had to take one extra birth; how many will we have to take?’

God has said if we develop affection or attachment anywhere else other than God, it is a sin. There is no other definition of sin for us. What other sin is there for a devotee or a sadhu of God? Other than God, if you develop affection for someone else, keep remembering them, involve yourself in their work or activities, then God says that is a sin. The one with understanding would feel extremely fearful of inadvertently placing someone else above their Lord!

‘Thereafter, when Bharatji’s life ended as a deer, he was born into a Brahmin family. Then, out of fear of developing affection for anything other than God, he paid no attention at all to worldly affairs and deliberately behaved like a madman. He therefore lived in a manner whereby he could keep his *vrutti* constantly fixed in God.’

Bharatji was born into a Brahmin family and did not enter into worldly affairs at all. He deliberately and knowingly acted like a madman – not wanting to be involved in anything whatsoever, except God. This incredible story of Bharatji in the Vachanamrut is one that we should all understand. Remember, you do have to carry on with your activities, go everywhere, help everyone in their work; but you must do this without sidestepping God and God’s Santo at any point in time. Also whatever you do, must not give rise to *bhav-fer* for bhakto.

What is actually meant by ‘affection’? There is divine affection and there is ordinary affection. If affection is ordinary or worldly, then it is related to the physical body – and when there is this, you will have *bhav-fer* for whoever obstructs you or does not help you. Remember! You will then have clashes. Where the affection is divine, there will be no *bhav-fer*; it will give strength to the soul, and if there is anything other than God in your soul, it will all be brushed away. The affection for Sadhu – Santo, and the affection for bhakto which makes you want to help them – is all divine, and takes you closer and closer to God. Other than this, all other affections take you further away from God, and such affections are a ‘sin’. God has said no to this. And so, you must carry out all your activities but you must maintain the awareness that God and God’s sadhus are never ever sidelined. Their place has to be central.

Sahajanand Swami Maharaj ni Jai! ◆