



Divine Discourses of Sant Bhagwant Sahebji

Spiritual Essence

Discourse on Vachanamrut Gadhada Antya 30 : “ Panch Varta na Anusandhan nu”
31 March 2017, Evening Sabha, Parmita Mandir, Brahmajyoti Mogri

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Bhagwan Swaminarayan himself has said that, ‘We like the *upasana* of *sakar*. God is eternally *sakar*, *divya* and *pragat*¹ and he who offers devotion and worships God with this constant understanding and inclination, is whom we feel fondness for.’ Whatever action we perform with the goal of pleasing God is called devotion; whether that is *pooja*, attending *samaiya-utsav*, performing *seva* – this is all devotion. Maharaj has said that for such *bhakto*, there are five things that we keep at the forefront for them to have and understand; one of these is that this body is going to perish at any time. Then to have the association of *pragat* while in this human body, and offer devotion knowing that God is eternally *sakar* and *pragat*, is what pleases us.

Maharaj says, we can see clearly what flaws great *haribhakto* and great *sadhus* like *Muktanand Swami* have, and we dissolve them. This is where we truly have it made! We are so fortunate. We have not said this to God, nor have we placed this request, but God’s continuous gaze is upon us and it is only to remove these [flaws] that He has engaged us in continuous activity! Remember this!

For those of us who have occupations – particularly householders, who are engaged in trade, business or industry – we would be interacting with so many different types of people, may live here or abroad, and so how much time would one get for chanting or prayer? *Paramhanso* have sung in a *bhajan*, ‘*Sant samagam keejiye, nishdin Sant samagam keejiye..*’ meaning, ‘associate with the Sant; seek his association daily.’ *Bhagwan Swaminarayan* has written in one place, ‘it is when Santo such as *Muktanand Swami*, *Nishkulanand Swami*, *Gunatitanand Swami*, *Brahmanand*

¹ *Sākār* means to have a physical bodily form just like us and *Pragat* refers to God being manifest through that physical body. *Divya* means divine.

Swami come together and engage in spiritual discourse for thousands of years, that one can have complete *darshan* of God’s *swaroop*. And it is when one has such *darshan* of God’s *swaroop*, that all of one’s shortcomings and flaws are destroyed in entirety. However, we do not have this kind of time, and yet our inner purification needs to happen; we need to rise above our *deh-bhav*² and while we engage in all action, we do not want to become bound by that action. So *Maharaj* says, for such *bhakto*, we are constantly inclined to engaging them in devotion.

From the age of eleven years, *Bhagwan Swaminarayan* has constantly performed *vicharan*³. At the age of nineteen He arrived on the soils of Gujarat, where *Ramanand Swami* gave Him *diksha*⁴ and named Him ‘*Sahajanand Swami*’. At the tender age of twenty-one, *Ramanand Swami* got *Sahajanand Swami* to take his position as the spiritual head, and *Sahajanand Swami* then gave the mantra, ‘*Swaminarayan*’. That is why He became known as *Bhagwan Swaminarayan*. At forty-nine years, He renounced His physical body. It was in the space of 28 years that He did all His work, while the other 20 years He had spent in *vicharan*. Until the age of 40 years, He continued His *vicharan*; He did not sit still in one place.

It was after this, that *Muktanand Swami* made a resolution. ‘Even ordinary *sadhus* leave behind some shrine; ordinary renunciants make provisions and accommodation for their

² In a literal sense refers to the attachment we have with our bodies (when we have forgotten that the ‘soul’ is our true self-which is separate from the body) i.e. all our desires, ego, emotions etc. Because we have *deh-bhav* we are prone to anger, infatuation, grief etc.

³ Travel or move about with the singular aim of redeeming souls.

⁴ Initiation into the order of monks



disciples; they build a mandir of the deity they worship, but Maharaj you have not done any of this.’ Of the two thousand sadhus that Maharaj initiated, five hundred were *paramhansas*⁵ and there was a community of hundreds of thousands of devotees, and yet there was no such single place of worship. Maharaj used to stay in Dada Khachar’s darbar, and Sura Khachar’s darbar and would be in *vicharan* a lot of the time, where many times the night would be spent under a tree. Everyone else accompanying Maharaj would set up tents around Him and enjoy spiritual discourse and bhajan. Everyone would accompany Maharaj at their own expense.

Maharaj became so pleased with Muktanand Swami. He said to Muktanand Swami, ‘You are a real sadhu, you are like a mother.’ A mother constantly thinks of how to settle her sons and daughters and how they may become happy and fulfilled, and Maharaj said, in the same way, you are worrying about all of these sadhu – Santo and bhakto. There is so much going on inside of you, so today we are making a resolution – ‘We will build mandirs and will install extraordinary murtis within them. To fill those murtis with divine energy, we will create such Sadhu- Santo, and will keep them here amongst you, and will create scriptures that reveal the glory of the mandirs, *murtis* and sadhus. In keeping with this, we will also give rise to a community of devotees who live life accordingly.’ In this way Maharaj made this divine resolution and began the work of building mandirs, and joined everyone to this work.

There is no such thing as a person sitting idle all day long. Man absolutely, certainly needs some form of activity. Man has talents, skills, intellect and from that he acquires wealth and possessions, but he uses them to nurture his body; he uses them to augment his status in society, he uses them to show ‘I am something’ – and so he becomes bound by those very things. God says that we see all of this, and note that he has taken human birth here because of certain attachments or desires. None of us know why we are still journeying through this cycle of birth and death; but Maharaj sees all of this and He wants to free us from this and take us out of it. That is why he began all of these devotional activities to engage us in.

Some engage in mandir activities by donating wealth, some engage by performing physical seva, some by speaking of *mahima*⁶ and joining others to the mandir, and some by performing seva during *samaiya-utsav*. By bringing everyone together during *samaiya-utsav* again and again, Maharaj is

actually engaging us in activity that pushes us to rise above our *deh-bhav*. Even if you were to look back on two hundred years of history – you will see what kind of community existed in the Swaminarayan Sampradaya at that time, and what Bhagwan Swaminarayan has accomplished in 200 years! And remember, we are not *satsangee* from this lifetime; we are those who have been graced by Bhagwan Swaminarayan and Santo; we are those who have somehow already been in their previous association. ‘*Kalyan*’ means whenever we have to leave this human body, to then come back in human form and continue our journey and progress from where we have left off. And that is why you will see, the Swaminarayan Sampradaya is a live *sampradaya* – and keeps growing.

How is it that such youngsters become sadhus? Just look at these sadhus here! Who has preached to them? Who has spoken to them about detachment and renunciation? Or what suffering did they experience in the world? None! They are here on account of their previous lifetimes! By coming into the association of Santo such as - Ashvinbhai, Shantibhai, Pramukh Swami, Mahant Swami, Hariprasad Swami – their previous bond is rekindled and unfolds, and if they hold onto that association, then they become free of the world’s bondage. It is to free souls – such as you and me – and raise us above worldliness, that Maharaj began all of these activities : *Samaiya-utsav*, satsang, weekly satsang sabha, building of mandirs, mandir seva etc. Whosoever then engages in these activities joyfully with *mahima* becomes free from their desires, attachments and shortcomings. All of these people become free from the activities of the subtle body. See! What an immense thing that is!

What immense grace of Bhagwan Swaminarayan upon us! Not only did He manifest, but he also remained manifest through the Gunatit sadhu. And such a Gunatit Sadhu’s grace is upon us. Such a divine being as Yogi Bapa graced us even more by gifting us such Santo as Pramukh Swami, Mahant Swami, Hariprasad Swami, Guruji, Ashvinbhai, Shantibhai and all these Santo. They look just like us, and they stay amongst us as if they are one of us. They speak like us, walk like us, eat – drink, travel to different places – but they are Yogiji Maharaj’s chosen and blessed ones’. Whenever and whatever Yogi Bapa asked them to do, they used their whole being to execute the task, without the slightest doubt or hesitation. In the end, when Bapa asked them to take the plunge and surrender their entire lives, they did not stop to ask a Brahmin – they simply left everything behind and surrendered. They surrendered their lives. What a huge thing

⁵ **Paramhansa refers to the sadhu of the highest calibre and spiritual level and literally means ‘great soul’**

⁶ **Glory and greatness [of God, Santo, mandir etc].**

this is! And so God's *prasannata*⁷ cannot help but be showered upon them, and now God is bound to them. Whether they scold you, compliment you, correct you, shower you with love or not – take note – it is only if they are pleased, that God will be pleased. What they should do and how they should do it, is something you absolutely cannot fall into. You must only do what they say, and you must keep *nirdosh-bhav*⁸.

Pujya Mota of Hari Om Ashram, has written in his biography, that his Guru used to sit on a rubbish dump, and if anyone tried to see him, he would fling dung at them. Just think about it, would anyone sit on a rubbish dump? First of all, we would not even go near a rubbish dump! No matter how hungry we are for liberation, we would say, 'no we do not want to go there.' To top it off, anyone that would go would be attacked with dung, and sworn at! Just think about it! Pujya Mota of Hari Om Ashram, was working as a peon in a school in Panchmahal, but he was a great soul! So the thought came to him, that I want to get hold of an enlightened person. In his seeking, he saw this Guru. He felt - this is a true Guru. No matter whether he flings dung, or swears at those who approach him – but I want to please him. P. Mota managed to please him, and as a result he himself attained realization and became a great sadhu. His ashrams are based in Surat and Nadiad. If we met such a Guru, would we even sit next to him? We would think, this Guru is swearing – he is not even like a human, so how can he possibly be in the category of a Guru? But it was from him that P. Mota was going to attain – and if one wants spiritual gain, then remember, it is from a sadhu like this that you will get it.

When all of you went to Africa, into the jungles – did you have all the facilities there? You stayed with the natives, in small houses with tin roofs and even though you did not understand the language, you stayed there, because that was where the money was. You were earning money! If you want to earn money, you have to forget all the other things. Similarly, if you want to liberate the soul, rise above your *deh-bhav*, attain the highest joy and the highest peace, then you have to accept such a sadhu's every action as divine and flawless and surrender full-fledge to whatever work he is undertaking, then God will be pleased. If God is pleased, no matter how much your *deh-bhav*, it will dissolve. Ashvinbhai, Shantibhai, Ratikaka, Pramukh Swami, Mahant Swami, Hariprasad

⁷ When God or Guru is so pleased with you that it culminates in an outpouring of grace, this is called *prasannata*.

⁸ The inner perception and conviction that God and all of God's devotees are faultless.

Swami and all these Santo, have done just that. They have attained the innermost *prasannata* of God and Guru.

Ratikaka was married and Bapa said to him, 'Will you become a sadhu?' If this was said to any ordinary person, they would think – 'Don't you know that I am married and I have one daughter?' But Ratikaka saw that Yogi Bapa was truly the *swaroop* of God – and one can only say 'yes' to whatever he says. So he said 'yes' and his life was made! He became a true sadhu! All the links separated naturally, and he became free. What *sadhana* did he have to do for this? Did he stand on one leg and perform austerities? Go and ask him! I still remember the first time he fasted on Ram Navmi in 1964. We had made a mandir in our University hostel and were celebrating Ram Navmi. The *aarti* would take place at 10.10pm. Bapa had given us the *aagna* to perform a *nirjala*⁹ fast on Ram Navmi. Bapa would get us to do *nirjala* fasts on Ekadashi too. It must have been Ratikaka's first *nirjala* fast in his life, and during the *aarti* he experienced dizziness and fell down with a thud. In just one fast he had dizzy spells, so what austerities would he be able to do? And yet all the inner worldliness left him; to be free from the attachment of a wife, and of a daughter was an impossible thing, but with the grace of God and of Guru, nothing is impossible. And no matter how accomplished or elevated a person is; even if one is like Bhismapitamah who was a *naishtik Brahmachari*¹⁰ or like Yudhisthira, who was the epitome of truthfulness, but if they did not recognise Shri Krishna, they had nothing! Whereas Arjuna had it made because he recognized Shri Krishna and followed his *aagna*. In this way, Ratikaka recognized the *swaroop* of God that was in human form. Yogi Bapa was the embodiment of God in human form and so when he said, 'will you become a sadhu?' Ratikaka said, 'yes I will!' That was all he said, and Bapa was so pleased. Ratikaka was intelligent. A youth who had just finished his M.Sc. and Ph.D cannot be without a brain. Yet, he thought who is it that is asking me? It is Bapa, so I have only to say 'yes'. And in saying this, he attained God's *prasannata*. Such are Poonambhai, Ashvinbhai and Shantibhai – who putting Bapa aside did not want anything. They did not want the offers of scholarships, girls or jobs. All they wanted was their Guru's *prasannata*! And by living their lives in this way, their Guru became so pleased.

God sent so many temptations, attractions and opportunities their way but they did not get drawn into

⁹ To fast without any intake whatsoever, not even water.

¹⁰ Refers to the highest form of celibacy – in word, thought and deed.



anything, and nothing had the power to suck them in. While in college, they stayed in a hostel and lived the life of a sadhu. All the social, moral and ethical boundaries and codes of conduct that Bapa gave, they lived up to strictly and followed Bapa's every *aagna*. When Bapa said, 'build a hostel,' they built a hostel. When Bapa said, 'Go on *vicharan*,' they went on *vicharan*. When he said, 'set up a mandir in your hostel,' they set up a mandir. If you look closely, Bapa only gave *aagna* which could be carried out, and because there was not the slightest hesitation or doubt in carrying these out; they simply went for it, and they became Bapa-roop. When such sadhu-Santo begin any kind of work and you surrender fully to it, then God becomes pleased.

If we were to look, this Parmita mandir is nice, but come tomorrow and there will be the *khaat-muhrat*¹¹ for the new mandir. Previously in 1990, a *khaat-muhrat* had taken place here with great fanfare. The very first *khaat-muhrat* for an Anoopam Mission mandir had happened here, but then mandirs were built elsewhere. Everyone knows the history that funds had come from England for this mandir in Mogri, but were diverted to Dhari for the construction of an Arts & Commerce College for girls. So we then built this existing Parmita mandir. The engineers were told that we need to build a mandir, so before we built the Dhari college, this mandir was constructed. And this was sufficient – it was enough for us, and so we were happily sitting here.

However, Vijaykumar, Barindrabhai, Jagatbhai, Mukeshbhai Kadhiwala, Dr. Jitubhai and others had come for the Vemar mandir *murti pratishtha* and prior to that we had gone to Chhapaiya. On the sacred soils of Chhapaiya, Sunita – Raja, Vishnumama – Mami had an *abhishek pooja* done of Shri Thakorji's murti. After the *abhishek*, this whole delegation came to me and said, 'today we want to make a resolution.' So I asked, 'what resolution do you want to make?' They said, 'Mandirs have been created everywhere, in America, England, Mumbai, Vemar and now it will happen in Amdavad, but it is our wish that a *shikharbaddh*¹² mandir is also created at our main headquarters. We will all give funds towards this, but please make a resolution here, for a mandir.' And so in the month of March, we made the resolution in Chhapaiya, to create a *shikharbaddh* mandir. We did dhun, and we prayed. When we returned to Mogri, we spoke to Ashvinbhai, Shantibhai, Ratikaka and everyone about it, and then assigned the work to Dwijenbhai. After the *murti praan-*

pratishtha in Amdavad, everyone was pushing to have the *khaat-muhrat* for the new mandir on 23 March. But the Vemar Mandir patotsav is on 23 March and so we thought let us do the *khaat-muhrat* on Vitthalbhai's (V.S.) birthday – on 1 April.

I had not imagined what it would be like. I thought we had previously done a large *khaat-muhrat* here so we would just do a small one now, and have the works started. But Shantibhai, Manojbhai, Rameshbhai Jha, Raju and this whole team of ours is so immersed in devotion. All the teams got working. In just three days, they did all the planning and arranged for the execution of this work so that it was just as perfect and up-to-date. Manojbhai and Shantibhai prepared the entire ceremony. The *mandap* was small but the ceremony was going to be grand, and whosoever could participate in the ceremony would truly be the most fortunate, with great spiritual merit! Truly that is how exceptional this ceremony would be! It was everyone's wish that if we did the *khaat-muhrat* then we can plan for the *murti pratishtha* to take place in the December of 2018 or 2019. So all of you be ready for devotional surrender; to become a support in God's work.

God did not expressly want to build mandirs, but still a platform – a place for us to offer devotion is certainly, certainly, certainly needed. Just look, after Allentown mandir was built – how greatly the satsang has influenced the area! Everyone is pulled towards the mandir. After Vemar mandir was built, just see how many bhakto from the surrounding villages come for *darshan*! On Poonam, many perform pilgrimage by coming on foot, for *darshan*. Just a little while back, in February, the Amdavad mandir *murti praan-pratishtha* took place, and how much joy there is now!

The mandir is a place of faith, a place of worship and a place of devotion, through which one can please God. Some may come to give *thaal*, some may come for *aarti*, for *dhun-bhajan-prarthana* or for mahapuja. If it is someone's birthday, marriage anniversary, or any type of occasion, they will go to Shri Thakorji – and the mandir is the place where they can do *bhajan-prarthana* and *seva*. In addition to that, if the place is scenic and naturally beautiful like this, then everyone would naturally feel joy in their devotion.

Just look, Bhagwan Swaminarayan created mandirs in Vadtal, Amdavad, Gadhada over 200 years ago – isn't it so astonishing! At that time there were no such facilities; there were no such architects who could make drawings, yet at that time – how these Santo must have built the mandirs! These mandirs were born out of devotion; they were created out of the deep desire to please God. Similarly, it is to put our devotion into motion, and to get all of our love and sentiments

¹¹ Foundation stone laying ceremony.

¹² Traditional and elaborate style of Indian temple built with domes and spires.

to reach God, for which the building of the mandir and all satsang activities become a medium. The more you surrender to this and immerse yourself, the more you give your support to this work, God's direct *prasannata* will rain down on you, remember this! The reason is by joining in the work begun by a Sant, one gains the direct pleasure of God.

Tomorrow is Vitthalbhai's birthday. V.S. was such a courageous being. He was so intelligent; such a genius! He was such that people could make a mistake in knowing him truly for what he was. Vitthalbhai was rough and would not hesitate in giving a beating, but he was just as loving, and he was just as bold and courageous. If Vitthalbhai would decide on an election strategy, the election would be won hands down. If he had not met Bapa, he would have become a political minister – he was that powerful. He had exceptional love for Bapa. But in what sense was he courageous? Bapa had said to him, 'The mouth which utters God's name cannot have fumes coming out of it. And we cannot waste our energies, our energy needs to be channelized.' That was all Bapa said; that was his *aagna* and V.S. came out of the Anand mandir, and at that very second took out the packet of cigarettes and box of matches from his pocket and flung them into the lake opposite the mandir. He also immediately put aside his rough, havoc creating toughness and instead put his energies into studying, and emerged first class, top of the class! On top of that he channeled his energy into devotion.

Vitthalbhai would then plunge into any *aagna* that came from Bapa. Bapa said, 'get fifty-one youths to gather in the weekly sabha.' At that time we had about twenty to twenty-five youths attending sabha. On some days, if we put out invitations then we would get about thirty youths to attend. Once the sabha would start, Vitthalbhai would see that there are only twenty to twenty-five youths, and we need to have fifty-one, so whichever youths he saw outside just wandering about, he would simply order them to come into the sabha and they would come straight in and sit down. Everyone knew that if this Vitthalbhai tells us and we do not go into sabha for one hour, then he will spoil our entire week. That is how much he was feared!

Vitthalbhai followed Bapa's *aagna* in totality. Bapa told us to do the *tilak-chandlo*, and he started doing it straight away. R.D. Kaka could not believe it, he thought, 'has he become a bhagat? He is doing the *tilak-chandlo*?' R.D. Kaka thought - could he be faking it? Applying the *tilak-chandlo* and living his original lifestyle? So R.D. Kaka made him a lecturer and gave him living quarters behind his own accommodation. In this way, R.D. Kaka could keep a watch on him during the day and keep a watch on him at night as well! R.D. Kaka watched V.S.'s life for two years and he completely conceded that this

boy has truly, totally changed. That is when R.D. Kaka became drawn to Yogi Bapa, and he said to Yogi Bapa, that you have made this V.S. truly human, and out of that you have made him a *bhakt*. In this way, V.S. through his life's actions, spread the *mahima* of Yogiji Maharaj truly being God's *swaroop*, in the whole of Vallabh Vidyanagar.

If you were to see Vitthalbhai with Bapa, or even with Ashvinbhai, Shantibhai or even any *bhakt*, he would be the epitome of humble servitude! When he would be here, you would not even think this is V.S., such was his *dassatva-bhav*¹³. No matter what anyone said to him, he would not say anything back to them. He just bore everything and lived in continuous joy. Even though he held such a high position as Vice Chancellor, but every evening at 5.00pm, his car would be inside Brahmajyoti. He would come and bow down to Ashvinbhai, Shantibhai, Dr Sanandbhai and then sit outside in the lawn with Ratikaka. He would welcome guests coming in and then go home after *aarti*. As Vice-Chancellor he had so many duties and was so busy, but even then he would be at the mandir every single day.

Truly to have the *khaat-muhrat* tomorrow on 1 April - on the birthday of such a great *Sadhu-purush* is to offer true homage to him, as we proceed to build this big mandir. Two years ago on 1 April, he passed on to Akshardham on his birthday. So tomorrow, is both his birth and Akshardham-passing anniversary. We will remember Vitthalbhai, and on his birthday the very beautiful start of the mandir will take place. Through this we will offer our sincere tribute to him.

This is God's work, and God is going to do it. You and I are not able to do anything; we do not even have the strength to break a roasted *papad*, but if we plunge into God's work with total surrender, then it will give rise to such momentous strength! Remember this! If you understand that, 'This is God's work and I want to surrender unto it; I want to support it, I want to immerse myself in it,' then God will give you great strength. Every single work of God, is carried out by God Himself, but anyone who gives their support to such work immediately become a receptacle of God's *prasannata*! And it is such wonderful work that will be commencing tomorrow. All of us, collectively, must come together and join in this work believing it to be our devotion. In this, together in harmony, we must each according to our capacity give our support, and offer our devotion. May God give us the strength, intellect and inspiration to do this, that is our prayer!

Jai Swaminarayan! ◆

¹³ **Complete surrender and servitude. One who lives for God and whose life is for God.**