



Divine Discourses of Sant Bhagwant Sahebji

## Spiritual Essence

*Dhuleti Mahaparva, Sahebji Pragatyotsav*

*Yogiji Maharaj Mahavidyalaya, Dhari Mahatirth, Thursday 21 March 2019*

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**On** the joyous occasion of Dhuleti, my Jai Shri Swaminarayan to all beloved bhakto! We are so very fortunate and so blessed! To be on the very sacred soils of Dhari, where Yogiji Maharaj was born – the soils on which he lived and walked for sixteen years, and on top of that, to be in the presence of Ashvinbhai and Shantibhai who have truly attained the immense *prasannata*<sup>1</sup> of Yogiji Maharaj, Pramukh Swamiji, Mahant Swamiji, Hariprasad Swamiji, Kakaji, Pappaji, on these divine soils, is truly our exceptional fortune! We are so pleased and so happy that today on the auspicious day of Dhuleti, we have the opportunity to be here in Dhari – and for that, we thank you!

Yogiji Maharaj was truly an unimaginable being! It is impossible to describe him in words, and yet to offer our devotion, we have to use the support of words. Yogiji Maharaj's life overflowed with *dasatva-bhakti*<sup>2</sup>. When Bapa was the head of the Gondal mandir, he single-handedly did the work of ten men, in a way that we would not even be able to imagine. He would perform Thakorji's *pooja*, make Thakorji's *thaal*, perform the *aarti*, do the mahapuja, feed everyone, discourse to everyone in the sabha and make all the arrangements for bhakto's accommodation while they were there. And if you were to look at the seva he did! Devotees that came from England,

<sup>1</sup> When God or Guru is so pleased with you that it culminates in an outpouring of grace, this is called *prasannata*.

<sup>2</sup> Devotion that comes from complete surrender and servitude, from the depth of one whose life is entirely for God.

America, Mumbai would need tea as soon as they got up in the morning. It is after having tea that their eyes open! Yogi Bapa would have tea made and sent to each of their rooms first thing in the morning.

Ordinarily, if you go to any temple they would have some sort of sign stating rules and regulations, such as what time one has to awake, what time one has to be present in arti etc. Years ago our whole team of Vratdhari Santo went to Vrajreshwari with Kakaji and Ba, to Muktanand Baba's ashram. He was such a great sadhu! A genuine sadhu! We had a meeting with him and then a sabha was held. Muktanand Baba himself showed us around the ashram. Then he took us for *darshan* to his Guru, Nityanand Baba's precinct which was further inside the village. At that time, the secretary came to tell us, 'Look, you are going out, but these gates will close at exactly 12 o'clock. Here the meal time is before 12 noon. Whoever enters these gates prior to 12.00pm will get a meal but if you come after this time, the gates will be closed, and you have to stay outside.' Whereas with Yogiji Maharaj, the doors were open 12 months of the year and 24 hours of the day! There were no boundaries of time or discipline! Otherwise in many ashrams, you have to wake up at 4.00am, bathe and perform your pooja; never mind if you are used to having bed-tea at home. Really would anyone ask for bed-tea in a mandir? In an ashram one's whole timetable changes to fit in with the ashram's timetable.

What was Yogi Bapa like? Until the age of sixty, he had never eaten milk or ghee, but would have tea made for

devotees first thing in the morning. Because there would be ladies in the accommodation quarters for devotees, he would find a small boy to take the tea kettle and cups to each of the rooms. Devotees would be so pleased to receive tea at 5.00am while staying at the mandir! This is the kind of seva Bapa did. Just think about it! In his heart there was so much love for devotees! Yogiji Maharaj through his own life and actions showed us a key, that by performing the seva of devotees, God's *prasannata* is attained.

When us youths would travel with Bapa, we were like an army of monkeys. We would say to the elderly that would be travelling with Bapa too, 'you old people, move to the side.' Bapa would immediately say, 'You cannot address them in that way, you must say 'Aksharmukto'!' Bapa would make us massage the legs of the elderly, feed them, give them water. If you think about it, what he did was to get all of us youths immersed in the seva of bhakto. But the core principle of pure Akshar Purushottam Upasana is to have love from the core of your being, for such a Satpurush. If you have love from the core of your being, then you will act to please him and consequently all of your self-absorbed inclinations will disappear – all of your self-centeredness will go. Youngsters do not like to bow to anybody, to tolerate anybody or serve anybody and on top of that Patidar youngsters do not even do any work at home, so how would they do it at the mandir? Bapa got such princes to sweep the floors, clean the bathrooms, empty the sewage tanks and clear the rubbish pits. Who would be able to do this?! Yogiji Maharaj was the manifest *swaroop* of God. Whoever Bapa assigned any seva to, one simply would not be able to say no. In our hearts this one sentiment was constant – that we would do anything to please Bapa! It was Yogiji Maharaj's exceptional, unconditional love that ignited this sentiment in the hearts of all the youths and as a result the gift of such Santo as Mahant Swamiji, Hariprasad Swamiji, Dr Swamiji, Guruji, Ashvinbhai, Shantibhai, Ratibhai, Sanandbhai and V.S.. These are not ordinary sadhus!

The *dasatva-bhav* with which Bapa lived, is the expectation that everyone keeps. People think 'My Guru used to sit in this way,' so does that mean all the Guru's should sit in that way? Yogi Bapa would always be

subservient, always bow before all, he would bear everything, whereas this sadhu glares at us if he needs to. Our forefathers used to wear *chorna's* and tie a *faaliyu*<sup>3</sup> round their head. So for you to be recognized as their heirs do you have to wear a *chorno* and tie a *faaliyu* round your head? If you are carrying out their work, looking after the family, looking after their farming, performing their trade, looking after all the relatives – then you are the heir!

Just look at Ashvinbhai! There is such *dasatva-bhav* within him. *Dasatva-bhav* means one does not live as a boss, but as the complete servant of God. If we live our lives as God's own, perform our devotion for God, perform seva with the aim of pleasing God, and remain humble by perceiving the God within our own hearts; then that is *dasatva-bhav*! Yogiji Maharaj was the manifest form of *dasatva-bhav*. If you were to look, when a mango tree bears fruit, the tree's branches all bow with the weight of the fruit. Similarly when the fruits come, when one attains something (spiritually), then *dasatva-bhav* is sparked, humility comes, one's inner being bows before others, there is politeness and modesty in one's words, and no matter what situations arise, one's equanimity is not disturbed, and such a person is always laughing! That is *sadhuta*. It is this type of *sadhuta* that Yogiji Maharaj gave to these youths out of pure grace, by keeping them with him and immersing them in his love.

Yogi Bapa was a walking university. Right now we are able to sit in front of these Santo and take full benefit by conversing with them, but back then, there was no such chance – there was no such place, and so we would simply travel with Bapa while he was on *vicharan*<sup>4</sup>. When Ashvinbhai, Shantibhai and the youths would travel with Bapa, there would be so many programmes going on, that nobody would even take a second look at them, or look after them. People would say - you youngsters are an army of monkeys, so you come last. They would not get

<sup>3</sup> A *chorno* is a traditional cotton trouser-like garment that was worn by farmers, which is very baggy at the top and tight round the calves and ankles. A *faaliyu* is a 5 metre long cotton cloth tied in a special way to form a protective head-dress.

<sup>4</sup> To travel from place to place with the sole aim of carrying out God's work

transport, they wouldn't get accommodation, and in all the commotion – their slippers would go missing, their clothes would get lost, even their towel would go missing and yet they would run after Bapa and without a single complaint, keep doing their seva. Just think about it! In spite of this, these youths would not even mention going home, they would not complain and nor would their enthusiasm for seva diminish in the slightest! How deep must their desire to please Bapa be! And how much longing must Bapa have ignited in their hearts for them to want to live their lives for God! Even in the extreme heat, they would walk from place to place and go where Bapa went, and no matter what circumstances, or situations they faced – their gaze would only be on Bapa and they would joyfully and harmoniously, all carry out the seva Bapa had assigned to them. If you look at those youths right now, they have attained the utmost *prasannata* of God, as well as Bapa's utmost *prasannata* and through their life and actions they grant us *darshan* of genuine *sadhuta*.

On these sacred soils, let us make a resolution : 'Bapa! You manifested on these soils, and have truly showered so much grace upon us by presenting us with the gift of such sadhus! How do we ever repay our indebtedness to you? May we never place obligations upon them, may we follow their *aagna*<sup>5</sup>, and carry out *seva* and devotion in the way that they like.' Then this will be an offering of true devotion towards Bapa.

Bapa had so much *mahima*<sup>6</sup> for his Guru, that when he went to the sacred soils of his Guru's birthplace, he got up at 5.00 in the morning and uttered this exceptional, devotionally laden prayer. Credit goes to the Santo and Yogeshwar's who were with him, for recording the prayer and then publishing it in the monthly newsletter. Credit to Dadukaka and Pappaji too, for bringing it into focus for us by making us read and study it everyday. Through the 'Sunrut', Mahant Swamiji gifted us this prayer to read everyday. If we were to try to describe it, hours and hours

would not be enough – such is the exceptional work that Shastriji Maharaj did, and such is the exceptional life that he lived. To describe this would take volumes and volumes, but Yogiji Maharaj captured the exceptional glory of his Guru in twenty-five lines. Just think about it. Bapa was not that educated, he was not a Sanskrit scholar, he did not have such command over language – but he was the manifest *swaroop* of God, and so in the sacred birthplace of his Guru, he spoke so exceptionally of his Guru's glory, and let it flow so naturally through this prayer – through which he gave us true *darshan* of Guru-bhakti.

For us, Yogi Maharaj's birthplace holds exactly the same significance – it is so sacred; it is a place of pilgrimage. And these Santo are what we call 'moving' places of pilgrimage; and for us, both have converged here. In our hearts, the glory of these 'moving places of pilgrimage' is as immense as our renowned places of pilgrimage – and that is why we have it made! In the same way that you hold the immense glory of this sacred place of Dhari, the birthplace of Yogiji Maharaj and the Dhari Mandir in your hearts, you perceive the glory of each of these moving places of pilgrimage – Ashvinbhai, Shantibhai and these Santo to be exactly the same and that is why we have it made! This is an astonishing development. You have no idea how huge this attainment is! And what great spiritual work is taking place in all of your lives! What people out in the world have no idea about, you have attained in your hearts just like that! That is why there is no one as fortunate as you.

But the one thing you must take care of – is to continue your *seva*, your *katha-varta* and your dhun, bhajan and prarthana. Bapa loved dhun. If anything were to happen, Bapa would say, 'Lets do dhun!' If some youngster would come to him and say, 'Bapa, I am not able to find a job.' Bapa would reply, 'Lets do dhun!' Another would come and say, 'Bapa, I want to get married but can't find a bride.' Bapa would say, 'Lets do dhun!' Someone else would say, 'Bapa, I have a job but I am not enjoying it,' and Bapa would say, 'Do dhun!' Another would come along and say, 'Bapa, I am married but we have so many difficulties and we want to get divorced,' Bapa would say, 'Do dhun!' There was only one medicine that Bapa would give out to everyone and that was, 'do dhun!' And truly it is the best and the most

<sup>5</sup> Any instruction given by God or Guru, which is always for our spiritual benefit

<sup>6</sup> Mahima refers to an inner understanding of glory, virtues, qualities and greatness.



effective : Swaminarayan... Swaminarayan... Swaminarayan...! Just think about it – it is so easy! It is not that you have to spread a beautiful sheet, put a murti, sit in the lotus posture and do dhun and it is only if these conditions are met that God listens. This is not wi-fi, that the network comes and goes. God's network is always on – his network is never off, no matter where you go! Bhagwan Swaminarayan has gone to the extent of saying, 'No matter what activity you are engaged in, even whether it is pure or impure – simply remember me, and I will listen.' Who would say this? Just think about it! That is why you must cultivate the habit of doing dhun. Bapa would always make everyone do dhun, whatever the situation. He would make everyone do so much dhun, that for people like us who would be with him, it simply became a habit! Swaminarayan... Swaminarayan... Swaminarayan! Let us do this.

This is why Gunatitanand Swami has said in his *Vaato*, 'Do your dhun, and carry out all your activities, then your inner being will be at peace.' How will it be at peace? If you are doing dhun as you carry out any activity – then you will not get attached to the activity. Man is pained not because of his actions, or because of his business, nor is he suffering because of the problems that arise because he lives in society, is married, has children etc.; man suffers because of his attachments to them. In the same way that a doctor might put a small plaster on you, and then if someone pulls that plaster off....? We would scream 'ouch!' The reason is that the plaster is attached to your skin, and when you try to pull it off, it hurts. Similarly whatever you are stuck to, will make you suffer – this is absolutely certain! So is there any such solution, that would stop us from getting attached everywhere - Where one may live in the world and yet be above it? Where one may go about one's daily life, do business, have a family etc. and yet not be emotionally stuck to it all? Where one may earn millions of rupees and still not be attached to them? Where one may wear gold ornaments and yet not be attached to them? Think about it, for those who live in the world, they do not feel it is worldly. That is why someone has said, the worldliness is not out there; it is inside us. Everything is inside us, and yet everyone is fumbling outside. If you want to cross a river, you need a boat. The boat is on the water

and yet it takes us across the water. But what if that water was inside the boat? The boat would sink. Similarly, it is fine to be out there in the world but don't bring the worldliness inside; if you do this, then you will not suffer. But man suffers because that worldliness is inside. Then even if you were to live in the solitude of a jungle, you will still suffer – because you have those attachments within you. It is these internal worldly attachments that we need to get rid of.

When the sun shines, does anyone have to tell the darkness to leave? When the sun rises, the darkness goes automatically. It is because of the absence of light that we have darkness; similarly it is because of the absence of God that we have worldliness. If you bring God into your lives, then there will be light. By light, we mean – *nirdosh-bhav*, *divya-bhav*<sup>7</sup>, living in harmony and living joyfully. If you were to look, there are many types of insects that automatically go away when there is light – you do not have to make any special effort to get rid of them. Similarly, we do not need to make a special effort to get rid of the internal junk we carry, but if we simply kindle the light of God in our lives, that internal junk will leave, just like the insects. But how do we kindle the light of God? You do this by joining with such a Sadhu, and cultivating inseparable loving association with him such that you feel, 'I am yours and you are mine'. You do this by following his *aagna* and doing that which pleases him – by joining full force in seva. You will not lose out in this, simply take the plunge – He will catch you! Follow his *aagna* with supreme faith and trust – and keep *nirdosh-bhav* and *divya-bhav* for all bhakto. The only reason you are not able to maintain this at all times is because our bodily inclinations get in the way. The mind, intellect and ego which form the subtle body, get in the way. To cleanse the subtle body, you have to do dhun. You have to pray and do *swadhyaya*<sup>8</sup>.

There are three things that we must absolutely abide by. According to Yogi Bapa's *aagna*, you must do a weekly sabha and you must do it sincerely. You must get everyone

<sup>7</sup> The inner feeling and conviction that God and all of God's devotees are divine and faultless.

<sup>8</sup> The spiritual practice of reading, studying and reflecting upon scripture and discourse.

together, joyfully and enthusiastically. It is Yogiji Maharaj's *aagna*. If there was any one activity that we could say was Yogiji Maharaj's favourite, it would be the weekly satsang sabha! Secondly, you must perform the seva of God's devotees. Immerse yourself in God's work and work with oneness, unity and spiritual harmony. And thirdly, you must regularly do dhun and prayer. This was what Bapa liked. If we live a life like this, then God's light will be sparked within. Our internal inclinations that make us suffer will not remain, there will be no hurdles; they will automatically dissolve. If you look – Yogi Bapa made it a habit for us to do dhun, seva and *katha-varta* – and there are so many situations that arose in our lives, and so many hurdles – but the one who protected us throughout them was this divine being. He kept us still, gave us strength and so we laughingly and joyfully crossed all the hurdles. That is why you must keep the habit of *katha-varta*. Do *sabha* – do *katha-varta* – do dhun and prayer and do seva. Absolutely go flat out and do seva. Do the seva of God's devotees with *mahima*. Yogi Bapa himself did this, and taught us this.

Yogiji Maharaj would say, 'If I was writing and my Guru Shastriji Maharaj were to call out 'Yogi' then I would immediately put my pen down and get up. If I were to be eating, I would put down my morsel and get up.' This Guru followed his Guru's *aagna* so eagerly and completely. Similarly, we also have to keep the constant inner drive to follow *aagna*. If we do this, then even if we live in the world, we will be above it. Go out there and do everything you need to do in the world – get married – get your children married – wear good clothes to the weddings, wear jewelry; none of this is going to bind you down, remember! I have seen that for all of you, gold is not an attachment at all. For the murti's in the new mandir, all of you immediately gave your gold. And for bhaiyo, wealth is not an attachment – whenever you come to the mandir you bring money with you for the new mandir seva. You are always doing some form of seva. So this is not binding; it is not a weakness, and you do have to earn money. Bhagwan Swaminarayan himself has said, that householders should work or carry out business and earn money. But you have to make sure that you don't develop a weakness for it, and

thereby don't have to go into this whole cycle again – and for that reason, plunge into seva and use your wealth for seva. Even if you were to help a common man – he will never forget you, and so if you plunge yourself in God's work, would He ever forget that? He will return it to you exponentially multiplied. Yogiji Maharaj used to say that the entire world's *Laxmiji*<sup>9</sup> also wants to be cleansed, so how can this happen? It is when *Laxmiji* is used in God's work that she can be cleansed. That is why Bhagwan Swaminarayan then sends *Shri Laxmiji* to us. Let us live as God's children; while doing dhun, let us carry out all our other activities, then we will not become attached to any activity. Remember – you can then rule the whole world, but still remain above and aloof from it.

Janak Raja was the king of Mithila. On one side of the river, was the kingdom, and on the other bank was his Guru's ashram. Every evening, he would attend the sabha. Once in a while, if King Janak was occupied with work, he would be 5 to 15 minutes late for the sabha. The Guru would say, 'we will wait for King Janak and then start the discourse.' Many sadhus would think, it is because Janak is a king and because of his status that our Guru attends to him so much, and waits for him. The Guru thought, 'I will have to help my Santo get rid of this negative inner sentiment, otherwise they will suffer.' Remember! It is not your shortcomings that make you suffer, it is *manushya-bhav*<sup>10</sup>! So the Guru gave rise to an incident. One day, everyone was seated, and the sabha began only after King Janak arrived. Just then, there came shouts from the back, 'the kingdom of Mithila is on fire!' With such shouting and commotion, all those from Mithila got up and ran. On this side were the sadhu's residences, so they too got up and ran towards the ashram. Now there was only the Guru and King Janak left in the sabha, while everyone else had got up and fled. The Guru asked King Janak, 'Janak, your whole kingdom is burning, why are you still sitting here?' The king replied, 'Gurudev! The whole kingdom may burn, but none of it is mine. You are everything to me, and you are here,

<sup>9</sup> *Laxmiji* refers to the Goddess of wealth and this word is also synonymously used to refer to wealth.

<sup>10</sup> **Doubt in the divinity of God or the Satpurush – to think of Him or His actions as human and not divine**

that is why I am still sitting here.’ The sadhus and others all returned a little while later because there was no real fire. The Guru had given rise to an illusory fire - so it seemed like Mithila was burning but actually it was not. The Guru asked his sadhus, ‘Your only possessions are a saffron robe and a *dhoti*; even the ashram you live in was built from the charity we receive— so then why did you run? Whereas the person that needed to run – stayed and sat here.’ That is when the sadhus understood that the Guru rightly sings the praises of King Janak! They accepted their mistake. Janak was a king; he administered the whole kingdom, and where necessary even gave out punishment. He had a wife and children, and his administrative duties were vast – even then he became known as ‘*videhi*<sup>11</sup>’. The reason was that he was not attached to anything. He was attached only to his Guru.

Bhagwan Swaminarayan has shown that if you remain attached to God and to the Satpurush, and even if you are fully engaged in worldly life, you will not suffer; you will remain aloof from it. Yogiji Maharaj lived like this. He lifted the entire Bochasan sanstha. Remember! Within the Bochasan sanstha, there was a time when there were no people, there was no food and there was no money! There was a shortage of all three, and on top of that there was a shortage of stone (for construction). Shortage of food – meaning there was a shortage of grains and Bapa would say, ‘when we were building the mandir in Sarangpur, we had to walk ten kilometers to the village of Khambhda to ask for alms.’ Bapa would go at 8.00am and by the time he would finish, he would have received about 10 kilos of grains! He would then return, clean the grains, grind them and then cook! The stoves of Sarangpur could only be lit by begging for alms in Khambhda – just think about it! They could only eat after asking for alms – on a daily basis! The sanstha did not have people – meaning they did not have any manpower. They had no stone – so they could not build mandirs, and they had no money, so they could not even buy the stone. This was the situation the BAPS sanstha

<sup>11</sup> *Videhi*, refers to one who is completely aloof from the pleasures of the world and who has no weakness for those pleasures. In spite of having a body, such a person lives in a state that is beyond the body.

faced at that time. It is through Yogiji Maharaj’s austerities, his *sadhuta*<sup>12</sup>, his *Gunatit* state of being that he lifted the whole Sanstha! Today it is the best organization in the world – and everyone has accepted this. There is absolutely no shortage of food, manpower, money or stone – and if you look at how well everything is organised – anyone would be impressed. This kind of devotion cannot be sparked without God’s *prasannata* and the Guru’s grace.

If you look at the Dhari mandir here, you would be so pleased. It is Bapa’s birthplace and the whole mandir campus is so beautiful! It is not only in this one place, but it is like this in so many places! What a huge Sanstha, and how many Santo Bapa initiated – and yet Yogiji Maharaj was completely aloof from it all! This complete detachment – he wanted to give to us too, and that in itself is the greatest spiritual achievement – it is *Gunatit-bhav*. That *bhav* can be ignited in householders and sadhus – it can be ignited in everyone. Alongside such sadhus, Bapa also prepared such householders.

Truly, all of us that have come - let us make the resolution to leave everything behind here. What must we leave behind? Not your wallet or your jewelry – but all of your internal baggage! Whatever our innate nature, characteristics that God would not be pleased with, whatever does not allow us to keep oneness, unity or spiritual harmony, whatever stops us from doing seva harmoniously – whatever our pre-conceived ideas, opinions, biases, internal knots – let us leave all of this behind. We want to keep you Lord, and only you! We want to genuinely live our lives as your children. Wherever we go, we want to live in surrender to you and live in devotion to you. Whatever our nature or characteristics that get in the way of this, whatever bodily, physical inclinations that present themselves as obstacles in this, we want to leave behind in Dhari, at your lotus feet. Make this resolution and do dhun.

Jai Shri Swaminarayan! ◆

<sup>12</sup> *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.