



Divine Discourses of Sant Bhagwant Sahebji

Spiritual Essence

Discourse on Vachanamrut Gadhadha Antya 22 : “*Sakhi Sakha na bhav nu*”

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Original Discourse in Gujarati Transcreated by : Bhavisha Tailor

In this Vachanamrut, Maharaj speaks firstly of Jinabhai Darbar and those bhakto whose devotion is steeped in love. Narsinh Mehta worshipped God as a friend, whereas Naradji worshipped God as servant to a master. Maharaj said, ‘All forms of worship or devotion are the best, because all of them are done with the goal of pleasing God.’ However, they should be performed within the moral and ethical boundaries given by God.

Remember! It is only when we have love for the Satpurush that our soul can dissociate from the body! It is an eternal principle of Akshar Purushottam that God is forever with us in human form through the Sadhu. If one develops inseparable loving association with such a sadhu then your root *vasana* – meaning that which keeps you bound in the cycle of birth and death, will drop away. After this, whatever the physical body hankers after – food – drink - whatever you crave to see, do or enjoy, has to be made divine. That does not mean you have to stop eating, drinking or doing these things. It does not mean you stop going out and go and sit in a cave, but it means you have to use your physical body in a way that pleases God.

When you develop inseparable loving association with the Satpurush, and then use your physical body in the way that pleases God, then all of the body’s hankerings and inclinations will drop away. That is why Maharaj said that those devotees who worship God out of *sakhi-bhav*¹ or out of love or out of *dasatva-bhakti*² – for them there is no sentiment of being male or female. The soul that lives within the body is separate from that body. When the body dissociates, the soul becomes free! The soul has entered this particular body, which means it is attached with all the inclinations of the body. When those inclinations drop away – the female loses all inclinations based in her femininity and the male loses all inclinations steeped in his masculinity. Rather – one feels, ‘I am God’s light. I am the servant of God, the *das* of God, and this body is surrendered to God.’ When you believe this and use your physical self 100% to please the Satpurush, then that becomes our devotion, and as a result whatever is meant to be done, happens automatically.

¹ *Sakhi-bhav* refers to worship of God as the ultimate friend.

² *Dasatva-bhakti* refers to worship of God with complete surrender and servitude.



If you do that which displeases him, then that is sin, and if you do what pleases him, then that is spiritual merit. As a result of the spiritual merit you accrue, your *deh-bhav*³ starts to dissolve, and one becomes more and more of an Aksharmukt, and one begins to rise above their male or female-centric inclinations. For as long as you have female-centric inclinations, you will have jealousy, expectation and be prone to taking offence; and for as long as you have male-centric inclinations, you will go about with a mountain of ego and expectation. You will expect that people recognize you and give you respect. But what we need to do is engage our mind, intellect and consciousness 100% in those activities that God is pleased with. That is why Maharaj said, 'We have propagated the *dhudhubaaj* path.' If we gathered you all and made you meditate from morning to evening, or made you turn the rosary all day – your self-centered inclinations would not have dissolved too quickly. That is why we threw you into the path of action. That is why Bhagwan Swaminarayan said, 'We have propagated the path of *bhakti*.' '*Bhakti*' means any action performed with the intention of pleasing god. If that means speaking – then speak of the glory and virtues of God and his devotees. All of our Santo speak so beautifully of this! They immerse so many devotees in this glory!

Everyone should use their God-given talents full-fledge to please God. That means, not with the expectation to pamper your ego; not with the expectation that people do as you say, or the expectation that people keep you at the forefront. Rather one should feel how fortunate one is to have this seva! And that it is God's immense grace, to have it and so you should feel you don't want to miss the chance to do it. Whether one recognizes you or not, helps you or not, appreciates the seva or not, but I have got this opportunity to please my Lord, and I do not want to miss

³ *Deh-bhav* in a literal sense refers to the attachment we have with our bodies, forgetting 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.

it! If one performs seva with this sentiment, then God will be pleased and if God is pleased then you can become free of *deh-bhav*. All male or female-centric inclinations will go.

Maharaj has previously said, there are many things that we consider to be shortcomings, such as inappropriate action, inappropriate speech or such. There are only two people who would know that this or that was wrong – and that is the person himself and God. Maharaj says, no matter how many sins you have committed, even if you have murdered, or been adulterous – it is written in the scriptures how you can absolve yourself of all of this. But if you commit the *droh*⁴ of a devotee of God, there is no way to absolve yourself of this. That sin, whereby one hurts the devotee of God – we should never commit. That is why Maharaj focused on this, 'Listen Bhakto! I have accepted you as you are,' meaning I have not selected you based on your virtues, I have simply accepted all of you however you may be.

You developed affection for Sadhu-Santo, and you helped them as they travelled from place to place for satsang. You have helped my devotees, and stood by them in their time of need. You have come and done seva during *samaiya-utsav*. It is some meritorious deed like this that has brought you to me, and I in turn have accepted you. I have not accepted you because of your virtues, because you are beautiful, because your actions are pure – I have not looked at any of this; it is by some meritorious deed that you have come to me and I have accepted you. This is how I have accepted all of you. Then you in turn have absolutely no right to look at 'what is so and so like? What are they doing? What are they saying?' And if you slip into this pitfall then that will be considered *droh*, and remember! There is no way of absolving yourself from this sin! You will fall into devolved consciousness.

⁴ *Droh* means to spite, malign, criticize, condemn, become fixed in negative perceptions or attitudes towards God or God's devotees. *Droh* means to speak ill of a devotee for no reason whatsoever, to find joy in doing ill towards them or in undermining them.



We have talked about this many times. At our Brahmajyoti campus in England, there was a very old tree. We had called the botanist in to assess its age and he said it was 350 years old. That tree had been standing from before the time that Bhagwan Swaminarayan manifested. In the snow, through the storms, in the rain or the heat – would anyone go to shelter it? Did anyone stand with an umbrella over it? Our scientist, Jagdishchandra Bose proved that even trees have life within them. Such a being must have committed *droh* and as a result the soul attains a dense state, and falls into a devolved state of consciousness, and therefore become a tree. After we came to stay there, there would be *samaiya-utsav* etc. and at that time Kakaji, Pappaji, Hariprasad Swamiji, Ashvinbhai, Shantibhai and so many Santo and bhakto would sit under the tree, eat under the tree or stand under its shade, and so it accrued spiritual merit! Just some time back, without anyone doing anything to the tree, it simply fell over! When it fell, there were hardly any roots. For such a huge tree, one would expect such long and deep roots – but it did not have these! Whatever *droh* it had committed, was absolved after centuries because of the immense spiritual merit it accrued – and so it simply toppled over.

Similarly when Yogi Bapa went to Tanzania, the bhakto there had organized a picnic and sabha on a mountain. So Bapa went there, did a sabha and all the bhakto stayed and enjoyed the whole day there. At the end, after the sabha – Bapa did dhun and sprinkled some sanctified water on the mountain and said, 'Go! May this mountain be redeemed.' People like us would think – Bapa is giving blessings but how can a mountain which is basically stones and soil, be redeemed? But having previously committed the *droh* of bhakto, that being attained a devolved state of consciousness in the form of a mountain. Bapa himself graced the mountain with his presence and so all of the sin was absolved. Because that mountain gave pleasure to so many bhakto that day, Bapa redeemed it. When the Satpurush is pleased, he can release you from *droh*. So when Tanzania became independent, they had to build roads

and consequently they blasted this whole mountain away. It received another birth.

We must never commit the *droh* of God, his sadhus or his bhakto. Never take interest in maligning them or gossiping about them. These sadhus have been given to us as a gift from Yogi Bapa. Sing their virtues as much as you can, and perform as much of their seva as you can. But never take the side of one who is committing *droh*, do not support them, and take no interest in them. Never give place to that kind of talk in your life. As it is, we want to release ourselves from our *deh-bhav*, then why should we increase it by listening to talks like this? If we have understanding, and are really out to please God with awareness, then we can never slip into talks like this, and if someone wants to talk then glare at them in such a way that they will think twice. That is the courage you have to keep. What other courage is there? Are we going to go out and fight anywhere? Or do we need to overpower someone? Or instill fear in someone? No! But if someone is maligning God or his devotees, is slandering them and is trying to drag you into it, then you should show such strength that such a person will never come back to you with such rubbish! Remember! If you do this, then no matter what you yourself are like, but God says he will release you from all flaws.

One must not fall into committing the *droh* of God's devotee, and never speak ill of the devotee. You have to give encouragement and hope to the bhakt, 'You belong to God, don't worry, mistakes happen.' If he may have done something wrong, or acted inappropriately – we must not say to him that he is right, but we are able to give encouragement aren't we! We are able to say, if someone insults you, tells you off or swears at you, do not oppose them – just do dhun, *bhajan* and prayer and you will become free from it all. In this way, we must give support and strength, and tell them that we must maintain awareness so that the mistake is not made again.

After leaving the Vadtal Sanstha, so many people harassed Shastriji Maharaj. They did not let him sit still for a minute; they made him run from place to place. In so many places they brought court cases against him. Yogi Bapa would say that when Shastriji Maharaj had

Sarangpur mandir built, they would go begging for alms i.e. grains, in the village of Khambhda which was 5km away. But two old ladies would walk ahead of them with the sole purpose of discouraging people from giving to Bapa. They would say, 'they are frauds, don't give them anything!' Bapa would say, 'the old ladies would announce our presence and we would ask for alms.' But Bapa would never perceive them negatively, nor would he say – 'why are they doing this?' Rather Bapa would collect 10 kg of grains and come back to Sarangpur. 'The old ladies would scream and shout, but we did not think ill of them and so God did the work for us.' Bapa was teaching us that even if someone is opposing you, or is speaking against you, it's ok, let them. Maharaj must have given them that seva, so they are doing it. Our seva is to only see their virtues. We have to think, 'Excellent! Because you said this, we came to know how much people can get hurt and how much offence they take!' And if you can keep remain laughing through all of this, then you should know that you are free from *deh-bhav*. That is why God's bhakto, no matter what the situation or circumstance, must never fall into negative perception. If some 'dumbells' want to fall into that, we must take care never to fall into that trap. That is how much courage you must have. God says, 'When these shortcomings which are related to one's physical self fall away, then you will be free of *deh-bhav*. You will rise above all the male/female-centric inclinations and everything you hunger after will subside.'

One worships out of love, *dassatva-bhav* or understanding. According to the body's constitution, there are three *bhav's* : *rajas*, *tamas* and *sattva*, and it is because of these that we fall into negative perception. It is because of them that we come into negative company. But Maharaj has refused this. If you cannot do two extra rosary's, then don't do them – it's fine, but absolutely do not jump onto the bandwagon of those who are speaking such untruths, and do not keep their company. If someone keeps the company of cigarette-smokers, we would immediately think, he must be smoking too. If you hang around with those who are negative, gossiping, maligning others then it would

seem that you are enjoying that too. We must not do this, we must keep the company of only those bhakto who sing the virtues and glory of God and his bhakto, who are eager to take us to do dhun and prayer, and who help us in doing the seva of God's bhakto. If they distance you from prayer, lessen your eagerness to follow the *aagna*⁵ of the Satpurush, do not allow you to keep harmony or unity with God's devotees, weaken your inclination for seva – then you should recognise this sort of company. You must not think ill of them or speak negatively of them, but you should certainly not keep their company. You should not stand with them or sit with them.

Now in the airports and other places, they have designated zones for smokers. There you have to go into the specified corner if you want to smoke. Now scientists have proven that the smoker only inhales 30% of the smoke and lets out 70% into the environment. This means the other 70% is inhaled by those standing around him, and so those that do not smoke but are passively inhaling this smoke are at greater risks of cancer! The person who smokes is obviously at risk of cancer because he has this detrimental habit, but even the one who stands next to him is at risk of cancer!

Maharaj told us this so many years ago, that the one who speaks ill of others, maligns, criticizes and slanders is already half an outcast from the satsang, but the one who listens to such talk is a complete outcast. Someone else is smoking the cigarette, but it is you that is drawing all that smoke in. Although that person has fallen into negative perception, he is dragging you into it and you are sitting with him and listening to that. The person that commits this kind of foolishness suffers even more. Even Gunatitanand Swami has said that he who speaks ill of others, maligns, criticizes and slanders is half an outcast from the satsang, but the one who sits with him is a complete outcast. It is because he is sitting there, that the person got an opportunity to speak! Otherwise who would he speak to? He would not have spoken to a tree, would he?

⁵ Any instruction given by God or Guru which is always to our spiritual benefit.

Maharaj has said clearly, do not fall into *droh*, do not commit *droh*. Do not fall into slandering, maligning or undermining God's bhakto. He gave an example from the scriptures: Jay and Vijay were God's gatekeepers. They were in God's presence 24 hours. They were the blessed of God and that is why God kept them as his gatekeepers. Sanat Kumaro were saints but they were like children, and they too were the blessed of God. They came for God's *darshan*. Many times we too tend to tell children, 'Oye kids, go away from here, go outside!' Isn't this what we do? Remember, do not speak this way with any bhakt. No matter what the bhakt is like, never hurt the bhakt. God will forgive your shortcomings but if you want to rise above those shortcomings then never hurt the bhakt of God. If the gatekeepers had said, 'the Lord is resting, so please be seated and wait,' or if they had entertained the children that would have been fine. But instead they lashed out at the children. When we have sabhas or *samaiya-utsav*, many people come here. We are sadhus. There should never be an oversight in our *vivek*⁶. We should welcome them lovingly.

Jay and Vijay were the Lord's doorkeepers. They did not maintain awareness of who they were in the service of. Sanat kumaro were such great Sadhus. They came in the form of children and the doorkeepers lashed out at them, saying things they should not have said. So the Sanat kumaro were deeply hurt and in anger, they cursed Jay-Vijay – 'Go to earth. You are not fit to be in the Lord's service.' At that point God came out. God did not pat Jay – Vijay on the back, but rather He told the Sanat Kumaro that they had done the right thing. Jay – Vijay should have had the *vivek* to understand who they were in the service of and where they were seated. It does not matter how you act, but you should have *vivek*. So God said, Jay – Vijay were beloved to me, were staying with me, were my doorkeepers, but they committed the *droh* of the Sanat Kumaro, and so they had to go to earth and be born as humans. Maharaj says, 'In such

⁶ *Vivek* refers to the understanding and ability to distinguish between what is right and wrong, proper and improper, correct and incorrect – be it in word, thought or action.

circumstances, my acquaintance will not get you any favours. Even if I want to do good for you I cannot.' So one must never speak negatively of God or His bhakto; must never malign, criticize or slander. One must not lash out at such a person, or fight with him. If you need to tell the person something, then tell him, but it must be with *vivek*. Once the words have shot out like arrows, you cannot pull them back. That is why one must do dhun, *bhajan* and prayer.

Pappaji has said that, 'Believe the person in front of you to be a *jivan-mukt*.' Oh Lord, show me from within how I should interact with him. You will lose nothing from this. Us sadhus have renounced the world and come here, what is going to go wrong? And if it does seemingly go wrong, we will walk out of the door empty-handed and even then, God will continue to give. So then what else do we need? We want to do *seva*, but we want to do it keeping God and his bhakto with us. 'We want to please you Lord'; that is the sentiment with which we want to do *seva*. If it does not please God, then no matter what greatness you can attain, no matter how much benefit you can reap – we do not want it. And if it pleases God, then even if it means sitting in a little hut and singing bhajans, then that is what we want to do. This is the dignity that all our bhakto and our sadhus must uphold. But never lash out at God or His bhakto. There must never be an oversight in maintaining *vivek* for God and His bhakto, and you should never weaken in this resolve. If there is negative talk, slander or gossip going on, then you must not support this. You should not listen to it, and you should not allow it to pass. You should absolutely refuse it or walk away from it.

Someone said to Yogi Bapa, 'But what should we do if someone who is a respected elder is speaking in this way?' Bapa replied, 'put your fingers in your ears!' The bhakt asked, 'But what if they still continue?' Bapa said, 'Then get up and leave from there.' One should never commit the *droh* of a bhakt. What Bhagwan Swaminarayan is saying in this Vachanamrut is that to gossip, malign or slander a bhakt is the worst and most dangerous flaw one can possess. If you steer clear of this; if you do not do this, then no matter whatever your

other flaws or faults may be – because you have got me – I will raise you above all of them and make you free from them. Bhagwan Swaminarayan even spoke of raising us above our male and female-centric natures, then what more is left?!

But there is just one thing you must take care of. Take firm refuge in God and the Satpurush. Join with the Satpurush out of exceptional loving association and thereby stay firmly in His *aagna*. Always keep spiritual harmony with bhakto. Keep speaking of and listening to talk of their virtues and glory. And if you are young and you have the opportunity to do seva, then do not miss it by any means. Just keep doing it; keep at it.

Whatever happens to the physical body – whether the body becomes ill and falls away or whether the body is healthy and falls away, Maharaj says it does not matter. It is insignificant. The soul, without a doubt is going to go to God's abode; the soul will certainly take its seat in God's abode. Right now too, we are seated in the presence of God, but so that we may gain strength, let us pray for two minutes; let us do dhun. Maharaj has given us something exceptional in this Vachanamrut, let us keep reflecting on this.

No matter what we are like, God has accepted us exactly as we are, so we are not worrying about this. Yogi Bapa sprinkled water over a mountain in Tanzania and liberated it. The tree in Denham received liberation after over 350 years. Unlike these, we are joined in God's seva, we are offering our devotion and we have begun the process of rising above our *deh-bhav*. So God has said to us, 'No matter what you are like, I am not looking towards that – but do not ever fall into maligning a bhakt. Always uphold *vivek* when interacting with another bhakt. Do not speak or act in a way that may hurt a bhakt. Never act in a way that makes our Sanstha look bad, that creates a mess for the Sanstha, or that puts the Satpurush under obligation; this much awareness we must keep as a part of our seva. And we must always engage in seeing, speaking and listening to the virtues of all. Never fall into the trap of slander, gossip or malice – no matter how great the person who is speaking; this much care we have to take.

Ravana, Kansa, Shishupal and Surpankha, were all such good people, but they committed the *droh* of God and His bhakto, and so they devolved into a state of evil-mindedness. They were human beings too, but they committed the *droh* of Shri Ram Bhagwan, of Shri Krushna Bhagwan, of the Gopis, of the sages, of those who were worshipping God – and so such a person as Shishupal in spite of being intelligent, in spite of his austerities fell out of favour with God. God made him fall into a devolved state. So we have to remain specially alert and aware that we never, ever do this.

We must always speak of the virtues and sing the glory of God and His bhakto, perform their seva and no matter what, always maintain respect and *vivek* in our interaction. That is what Maharaj has said in this Vachanamrut. Let us not do what Jay-Vijay did. Let us practice our devotion and let us practice it with utmost love. Let us never let go of seva. Jay-Vijay do not need to run away from their seva as doorkeepers, but if they had interacted in a respectful way with the Sanat kumaro, then God was going to emerge from within, sooner or later. But instead they tried to show their might before the Sanat kumaro – and that was their ego. We must not do this.

Sadhus must never lose sight of their *vivek* and never lose sight of upholding spiritual harmony with bhakto. If you have the inclination to work in unity, with togetherness, then upon attaining God's *prasannata* – all of one's base inclinations and bodily nature will evaporate, and so you will rise above all male and female-centric characteristics. Then what hunger will the body be left with? Everything will go. Through the Akshar Purushottam Upasana we have the exceptional opportunity to live such a life. And through the grace of Santo such as Mahant Swami, Hariprasad Swami, Kakaji, Pappaji – we have attained Ashvinbhai – Shantibhai – Ratibhai and such Santo bhaiyo – so let us live in their association and practice devotion. May God eternally shower us with the grace and grant us the strength, intellect, inspiration and awareness to do this! That is our prayer.

Jai Shri Swaminarayan!

