



Divine Discourses of Sant Bhagwant Sahebji

Spiritual Essence

Shri Akshar Purushottam Murti Pratishtha Mandir Mahotsav &
Sant Bhagwant P. P. Sahebji's 80th Pragatyadin Maha-Sabha on
Friday, 10 January 2020, Brahmajyoti, Mogri

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Today in the new mandir, the *praan-pratishtha*¹ of the *murtis* took place. Truly, for all the devotees, all who have done *seva*, all those who have donated, for all of you totally surrendered *ekantik* devotees, I have no words to thank you. With all due respect, we have honoured a few such devotees, but it would be fitting to honour you all, from the smallest to the eldest, that is how great you all are! With God's grace, the wholehearted support that we received from you has made this all possible.

Truly, from something small we have gradually ended developing such a large project, and such a beautiful mandir has been created. All of you must be in a rush to get home, but it is my prayer that you go only after having *darshan* of the *murtis*. Because of the monsoon, the work got delayed by 2 to 3 months. The contractors asked for an extension of a few months so they could finish the work, but Ashvinbhai, Shantibhai and Santo wished for the *Pratishtha* to happen on Posh Poonam. And so today, with the mandir being only 50% complete, the *arti* of the deities took place at the hands of Hariprasad Swamiji, and through all the Santo, Guruji, Ashvinbhai, Shantibhai, Dinkarbhai, Bharatbhai, Nirmal Swami, Ratikaka, Dilip, Vasu... the *Praan-Pratishtha* of the *murtis* took place.

Shri Thakorji's *murtis* are so beautiful, that you would wish to keep looking at them. Our Kanubhai – Chartered Accountant, came into the satsang through association with our Rajubhai Dey, Ashvinbhai and Hetenbhai. He was not interested in devotion, but now this has changed. He and Jyotiba both came into the satsang. Jyotiba and Binaba were devoted from the start. But today Kanubhai came to me and said, 'For the first time in my life, I have had *darshan* of these *murtis* and something has happened to me.' Think about it! That is how exceptional these *murtis* are!

Also beautiful model villages of Chhapaiya-dham and Dhari-dham have been created. The birth-place of Yogiji Maharaj, the house in which he was born – that auspicious, providential house has also been built and replicated here and the *abhishek-murti* of Shri Harikrushna Maharaj has been placed within. Also the *Samadhi-sthaan* of Sonaba and Kakaji; with God's grace, with their grace and Pappaji's grace, we have had the great fortune of having their final resting place at Brahmajyoti. This *Samadhi-sthaan* has also been made anew, and beautiful *murtis* have been placed there.

¹ The ceremonial consecration of the deities, whereby life is instilled in the image.

All of these projects do not happen by themselves. All of us Santo have left our homes; we have God with us and we wander with nothing in our pockets. But to bring all of these huge projects to realization, I salute those devotees, I bow to those devotees who in the various stages of development have given *seva* from Rs1 to hundreds of millions of rupees. Some have given garlands of gold for Thakorji, whereas others have given priceless necklaces and today we have *darshan* of Thakorji in attire made of gold. Truly one must have *darshan* of this.

I am going to share with you all, something that is confidential, never mind even though it is getting late. When we started the mandir, Ashvinbhai was in the USA. The mandir project got finalized. The contractor put forward a huge budget, and so I went to see our Rajubhai. Even I felt the budget was too large. A 25 to 35 crore project is very large for Anoopam Mission. So I went to see Rajubhai and I said, 'these papers have come.' When Ashvinbhai is here, I have no need to look at money matters at all. Would you believe it? You may not even imagine, but I have never seen the accounts and have no idea how much money has come into Anoopam Mission, or how much has gone out. But because Ashvinbhai was not here, I went to see Raju to ask, 'how are we with this?' Raju told me, 'Yes a copy of those papers have come to me too.' I said, 'the contractors are coming today and we want to give the contract and finalise everything. The contractors are going to meet with the Executive Committee and the Construction Committee, so I came to see you about what we should do.' Without saying a word, Raju put his head in my lap and started to cry uncontrollably, saying, 'how will we ever be able to do this? We don't have anything.' I was astounded and seeing him, I too had tears in my eyes. He was telling the truth, so there was nothing to reply with, so I lovingly stroked his head and his chest and did dhun. Then I went downstairs to the Committee meeting. But while I was coming down the stairs, I was filled with so much faith, because if this beloved sadhu of Bapa's is so shaken from within, then God will be shaken, and He will not allow there to be any shortage of funds! So I went into the meeting and without asking the Contractor anything, I said, 'Start the work right away; we want to make this mandir.' The Contractor said, 'it will be done.' And would you believe it – all those sitting here, the devotees from here and abroad, especially those from America, England, Australia, Canada and India have really in terms of finance, not allowed Anoopam Mission - Raju to have any trouble whatsoever. And you will have all seen, that Raju too in the midst of such a big project is going about so lightly and carefree. Not only that, but the project cost increased to 55 to 60 crores! Truly hats off to these devotees!

Today I have to remember our Govind. It was his dream, and he had said to me, 'Saheb, make it an A-1 mandir.' He didn't just say that, but behind him, his brother Shankarbhai, and the sons, Ashish, Anoopam and Harsh have not only given so much financial *seva*, that one is not even able to count this but they have also joined in the physical *seva*; have gone to China and procured the necessary things. If you were to look at Varsha, Hetal and Bhagyeshree – the wives of the three sons – they have all gone out of their way; what can we not do for the mandir! They have carried out their devotion with this deep sentiment.

Vijaykumar and Darshanaben too, have truly stayed with us from the very foundations and in all the work, they have financially and physically done so much *seva*; and the two sons, Ronak and Rakesh too. A year ago, our car broke down – so it went to the garage and I had to travel at that time. It was after our Govindbhai had passed to Akshardham and our Shantibhai spoke to them, so they sent a brand new Audi and said, 'please use this.' It was Varsha's birthday and when they called to take blessings from Shantibhai, she said, 'We do not want to take this car back, please keep it there.' We already had a car, but it was in the garage. Vijaykumar too found out the car was in the garage and so he arranged for five to seven different Mercedes, five to seven different Range Rovers to be brought to the Mission for test-driving. I said, 'Until this mandir project is not over, please do not buy any new car or anything for me; so forgive me.' So today when the mandir is done, after the *Pratishtha*, he placed the keys of the brand new Volvo at the lotus feet of the *Murti*. Hats off to the devotion

of such bhakto, our heads are bowed to your devotion. In Thakorji's gold attire, 1.5 kg gold has been used; have a look – they had them made by Purva, and Satishbhai had a beautiful necklace made, which Thakorji is adorned with today.

Whether you take our Trambakbhai and the Padhiar brothers, or you take those individuals who have been honoured today. Dr. Jitubhai and Bimal Sheth – give so much *seva* to Allentown mandir, but there is not a single project in India that has been completed without their *seva*. Without making any calculations whatsoever and without expecting any praise or recognition, they so freely give their monetary *seva*. Instead all of these bhakto say, please do not mention our name; please do not honour us. But Bhagwan Swaminarayan and Yogiji Maharaj would not be pleased with us if we did not honour you. It is to offer our devotion to them, that we honour you! Jitubhai and Bimal Sheth both gave so much *seva* for the Vemar mandir, they did the same for the Amdavad mandir, gave so much *seva* for the Allentown mandir and even for this mandir, they have given so much *seva*. Each devotee is such that we want to bow to each one, and if we were to describe each devotee, we would be here till the evening; but we do not want to do this, and do not want you to perform even more austerity than you already have. Truly, every devotee from the very smallest to the biggest have given their *seva*.

For this mandir, every Sunday, up to 300 youths would come from different mandals and perform physical *seva*. The girls have gone out and gathered newspapers and other unwanted recyclable goods and raised money that way. Whoever gave such goods, the five to fifty rupees raised from that would count as their *seva*, or some would give cash directly from five to one hundred rupees. You will be astonished to know that the boys had gone from house to house and distributed more than 4000 donation boxes – from which they raised 70 lakh rupees! And the girls through the recyclable goods collection, raised 40 to 50 lakh rupees! Just think about it! Even the little ones were onto this! And so for this mandir, from the youngest right through to the eldest – everyone has joined and this mandir has therefore been created from all of their devotion. That is why everyone feels, 'this mandir is ours!' That is why the *murtis* are so joyously showering their blessings upon us.

Whoever has given their *seva* in whichever way, physically, financially, spiritually – through the mind, through the soul; today we pray to Shri Thakorji that, 'O Lord! May you bless their *seva* by returning it to them exponentially multiplied. But together with this, as Hariprasad Swami said, may you bless them with great *dassatva-bhav*² and devotion. In their lives and within their whole family may a harmony arise; through *samp – suhrad-bhav* and *ekta*³ may they all together come to enjoy the bliss of Akshardham – that is our prayer for them all!

Today the Murti Pratishtha event was truly special. Yesterday a wonderful rally took place. At the beginning of the procession, Hariprasad Swami was going to come, so preparations had been made in that way, and so the youths performed wonderful dances along the way on the road. After that, the girls gave a devotional programme bringing tears to everyone's eyes. Yesterday under the guidance of our Yagnesh – Pares – Shreyas, in the rally that took place – 10,000 devotees took part, and there were floats too.

In 1964, Yogiji Maharaj gave us the *aagna*⁴ to set up a mandir in Room number 14 of our hostel. Yogi Bapa was such a divine being that whatever we have, and whatever is happening now – if we were to look from our side, we have really done nothing at all. If I were to tell you the real truth, totally openly, then this sabha is of Akshardham! Remember, everyone says, that Saheb followed Yogiji Maharaj's ever single *aagna*. No, it wasn't like that; I am telling the truth. The *mahima*⁵ you all have right now, the devotion with which you carry out *aagna*, the *seva* you are doing with complete surrender – we have not done. And yet, He has given us so much, and for you who have done so much, God will completely bathe you – that is how much He will give!

² Complete surrender and servitude. One who lives for God and whose life is for God.

³ Unity, spiritual harmony and oneness.

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

⁵ Understanding of the greatness and glory of God, Santo and devotees.

We were drawn by Yogi Bapa's love, and were nurtured by Hariprasad Swamiji – as Prabhudas, by Kakaji and Pappaji, and with that we received the support of all of you devotees and as a result all of this work has happened, otherwise it would not have been possible! And if one were to ask truthfully, it was not in our capacity at all. It was with Bhagwan Swaminarayan's grace that we got such a Guru in our lives, and the support of such devotees as you, and that is the reason this has all happened and is happening.

Bapa had said, start a mandir in Room no. 14. And so I came and told Ashvinbhai, Shantibhai, Ratibhai, Sanandbhai, Poonambhai, Harshad, V.S. – told all these friends, that this is Bapa's wish. Just think about it; it was Yogiji Maharaj's *aagna* and all of these youths – did not stop to think, they immediately set to work and made Room no. 14 a mandir overnight. The next day we had our *murti pratishtha*. We did not have any invitation cards to print. We had decided on the time of 10.00am. And would you believe? We had not imagined in our wildest dreams, but at 9.45am, Pramukh Swami came and he performed the *pratishtha aarti*. He said, 'I came to meet you all.' It can be said that Bapa sent him! It is from that Room no. 14 that the rally started. Bapa had given us the *aagna* to perform daily morning and evening *aarti*, read the 'Vachanamrut' and 'Swamini Vaato' daily, and to sleep after *niyam-chesta*. Because of his love, we were able to eagerly follow his *aagna*; and so he gave us the association of Kakaji. Through that association we came to the resolution to live our lives for Bapa, and Bapa was pleased. Through Kakaji's *aagna*, we then came to live in the association of Pappaji and with Pappaji's *aagna*, we finally came to Brahmajyoti. And now with all of your support – this has been made possible. In this work, truly all the Santo, Sant behno, all the devotees have given their exceptional support and for us, that is truly our great fortune.

Today under Manojbhai's guidance, 27 Vratdhari Santo and 4 Vratdhari Santo from Delhi have joined the order. And within that Manojbhai himself has joined and so everyone must be so surprised. I have watched Manojbhai since he was a child; he was always a sadhu. He had exceptional love for Shantibhai. His mother had great love for Hansadidi, in Jyot; and that is how they came here. But when he was young, and was studying, Shantibhai took great care of him and nurtured him. His wedding was arranged by Shantibhai, and now it is Shantibhai that is making him a sadhu! What an amazing thing this is, just think about it! Prutha says, 'make him a sadhu, we do not live a worldly life. Even though we live together, he is a sadhu.' He is with the UPSC; it is such a huge position. But as Swamiji says, Manojbhai remains '*das na das*⁶'. He has taken the *Vrat* today- truly it is so humbling. With him, our other youths have also taken initiation today. While one is studying to be a doctor, the other is studying Engineering and another is becoming a Pharmacist. One is a 'Sangeet Visharad' – Tushar; we have started a Sangeet Academy and he is the Director of that. Each youth is so talented and today when they are taking initiation to join in God's work, there is great joy in their hearts and you are all here to share in this, so it is truly such a joyous occasion.

From the last four days, you have all gone through various austerities, regarding food and sleep and you have not even had any leisure time. Our beloved devotees from abroad are such that they do everything on time. They live their lives by the clock. Whereas here, no matter how many times the clock goes round, we do things in our own time! And it is a matter of joy that you have all adjusted so easily. The fruit of your austerities is that we have had Swamiji's *darshan*.

I will tell you an incident of how we used to be. We were worldly youths. We thought we would study, go abroad, earn money and enjoy our lives. We too were sailing in thoughts of worldly comforts and prosperity. That is how we set out on the journey of our lives; with the mind-set that we would live like this, study like this, go to America, and enjoy life in every way. It was like we sat in a train, dozed off, and when we opened our eyes – we were in Khambhat instead of Mumbai. The reason was that the passengers in the train would have no idea when the train takes a ninety-degree turn, because there is no jerk and so the passenger doesn't know where the train is going. The turn was so smooth that the passengers had no idea that their entire direction had changed. If all the passengers were to get off the train and try to push it to turn, they would not be

⁶ *Dās* crudely translated means servant. '*Das na das*' literally meaning to be the 'servant of the servant' refers to the spiritually elevated state of complete and natural submission, surrender, humility and servitude.

able to. It needs just one person in the driver's cabin to pull the lever and the train will change tracks, and hence it turns.

It was like this, that we had all sat, but who changed the direction? We were going along out of exceptional love for Yogi Bapa and from that we went straight to turning *malas*. We didn't even know when we ended up here! But where we have come, we have come in utmost fulfillment - that is for sure. That is what Bapa did for us. Truly it is our Guru, Yogiji Maharaj's grace.

The eternal principle of Akshar Purushottam Upasana that Shastriji Maharaj spread is what we must remember. So many people out there perform austerities, so many speak of religion and of religious conduct; I am not saying no to this, but if you forget the main principle, then it is all worth nothing. What Shastriji Maharaj gave to us, was that you will absolutely need to have the manifest Lord and the manifest Sadhu, no matter what. It is the eternal principle of the Akshar Purushottam Upasana that God is eternally with form, He is the all-doer in our lives, and that whatever has happened, is happening and will happen – is by His doership. But where is He? He can be found manifest through such Gunatit Sadhus and if you develop *atma-buddhi* and *preeti*⁷ for such a Sadhu, and follow His *aagna*, only then will you come to experience the joy, peace and bliss of Akshardham within your current physical state. No matter how great you are, no matter how rigidly you adhere to religious disciplines, but if you were to get diarrhea and vomiting, what would you do? If you fall ill, what happens? In whatever situation, it is only with God's grace that we can follow religious disciplines – it is not that we must not follow them, but if you sidestep God in that process, then the whole process becomes meaningless. If God is with us, then God will keep us straight, remember this! We need the Satpurush in our lives.

We all found Yogi Bapa in our lives. Because we had Yogi Bapa, he pulled us towards him; pulled us in with his love, and without us even knowing, our whole lives changed. That is the principle of Akshar Purushottam Upasana. You only have to recognise the Gunatit Satpurush, join with him through bhajan and prayer, through love, through good deeds, or by supporting His work – or by attaining his *prasannata*; join with him in whichever way, and after that if you put your hands together and follow his *aagna* while carrying our the *seva* of devotees with *nirdosh-bhav*⁸, then you will laughingly, joyfully, effortlessly come to attain and enjoy the joy, peace and bliss of Akshardham in your current physical state.

You have all carried out such physical *seva* through the medium of the mandir according to the word of Ashvinbhai, Shantibhai, Ratibhai, Dilipbhai and our Santo. Truly if you look within the campus, the whole kitchen department *seva* has been taken care of by our Surat mandal. The cleaning of the whole campus was looked after by Ankleshwar mandal. The food serving *seva* was done by our Charotar Pradesh mandals. Sabha seating arrangements were taken care of by Amdavad mandal. Sabarkaatha, Saurashtra – if you look at all the mandals – even the mandals that came from abroad, so many devotees came up to two months in advance, taking leave from work. I would say to them, 'you have come early, so would you like to go on *yatra*? Would you like to go to Chhapaiya? Or Delhi? Dhari, Sarangpur, Gadhada, Gondal, Manavadar, Junagadh, Bhuj – would you like to go to these places of pilgrimage?' They would say, 'No, the greatest place of pilgrimage for us is this mandir *seva*. We do not want to go outside Brahmajyoti.' We are so pleased with their understanding, their conviction and their devotion. They would do *seva* for hours and hours - in the kitchens, in decoration, in making the cards, if you were to look. I have seen that alongside our bhaiyo and behno here – our devotees from abroad – each one of them, each youth has done such exceptional *seva*! In the food serving *seva*, so many youths have joined in this. Yesterday, ten to fifteen thousand devotees took mahaprashad and today too a similar number will take mahaprashad. Up to seven or eight thousand people from Mogri village too come to take their meal here – as we have invited them to partake in the

⁷ *Atma-buddhi* and *preeti* means to love the Satpurush as one's own atma, and thereby refers to a bond of inseparable loving association.

⁸ To perceive God and all of God's devotees as being faultless.

mahaprashad over these two days. So imagine how many utensils are used! Some have never done this kind of *seva*, but are laughingly washing utensils. This cannot happen without *mahima*. God is pleased with this kind of *seva*; and when God is pleased, what does He give? He gives you *atma-buddhi* and *preeti* with such a Sadhu, and our behaviour starts to become such that the Sadhu is pleased; and so our lives automatically become better and more fulfilled. This whole Akshar Purushottam Upasana that was established by Shastriji Maharaj is not something ordinary. The Upasana is to enable us all to become *Akshar-roop* and give us the eligibility to perform the *seva* of Parabrahma, and that is the path of Upasana we are walking on. Our Manojbhai truly gives an exceptional *parayan* on Upasana.

Yesterday Vartan spoke. At the United Nations assembly in Geneva, he spoke of Anoopam Mission and the goal of establishing peace. And to bring the Swaminarayan *mantra* to everyone, he spoke of creating a Swaminarayan Symphony and broadcasting it to the 180 member states of the United Nations. Truly seeing such *aksharmukto* as him, our heads are bowed. We have the opportunity to stay and work alongside such devotees.

Truly, my special *pranam* to Guruji. Even though your health is not well, you have come with up to 100 Santo, bhakto and Sant *baheno*. If you were to look at the Sant *baheno*, yesterday in the rally, and then here too in the *garba* – without any barriers, they simply joined everyone and offered their devotion in such a way that everyone's love for them has intensified. In the rally too and in the *garba*, they increased the joy and enthusiasm of all the *baheno*.

All of our Santo came... Nirmal Swami, Dinkarbai, Bharatbai; even though Hariprasad Swamiji's health was not good, he came specially to give us blessings; that is his grace upon us! In so many of our projects, I always say, 'Whichever *murtis* we are going to instate, whatever we think of doing – you all can decide everything but we will finalise everything with Hariprasad Swami, and show him everything.' Hariprasad Swami sanctioned everything. We showed Aksharvihari Swami too, and all the *murtis* that are instated here have been placed having taken Hariprasad Swamiji's *aagna*.

So to everyone who has given their support, their help, used their skills and talents to give rise to this beautiful mandir for us all; to our whole team, hearty, hearty, hearty thanks and congratulations! All the volunteers, the bhaio, baheno who have given their *seva*, their support in making this whole event so successful, our thanks to you over and over again! And congratulations!

By taking the time out to come here, all of our devotees from here and abroad and made the occasion exceptional by their presence, our congratulations to you all! And alongside this, to bring to completion such a huge project in one and a half years, through your financial *seva*, your prayers and to the *baheno* through the gold that you donated! If you were to look, they have immersed Thakorji in gold! To all those *baheno* and to all those donors – *bhaiyo*, *baheno* and *ekantik mukto*, however much thanks, gratitude and congratulations we give to you, will not be enough! Today, our Kano, Kanu and Mahesh have performed such a huge *seva* by giving *prashad* for all these devotees who will eat today. Hearty congratulations to all three! Also our Yogendrabhai too, gave the whole 'Neejanand Resort' for the accommodation of our overseas guests and also prepared 10 to 15 bungalows opposite for this purpose; for this from the bottom of our hearts, congratulations! And thank you!

During the *samaiyo* and the festivities, if in any way we were not able to adequately take care of you, if your accommodation was not up to your standard, if there was any trouble with parking, as there were so many cars, and for any reason if there was a lag of communication between the office and the parking volunteers, and if someone may have spoken to you briskly, or been curt then please forgive them all laughingly, with a big heart. Take with you from here that which was good and share it with everybody. You came laughingly and joyfully, and may you return in the same way with so much *mahima*, and go home to share that *mahima* with everyone. So that we may all offer our devotion in this way, may God give us all great strength, intellect, inspiration and awareness; that is our prayer at our Lord and Guru's lotus feet! Stay happy! Jai Shri Swaminarayan to all!