

Divine Discourses of Sant Bhagwant Sahebji

# Spiritual Essence

Discourse on Vachanamrut Gadhadha Pratham 35 : “Kalyan na Jatan nu”  
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**You** have all come here, but you would have checked whether you have locked your homes before you came! Many will have pulled the lock three or four times to check whether it is locked properly! If we have with us our jewelry, purse or mobile, we take so much care! We do not let these out of our sight for even a second; we look after them. The reason is that they are valuable. We take care or look after that which we consider valuable. But no-one is taking care of liberating the soul, because no-one knows anything about it. In this Vachanamrut, Bhagwan Swaminarayan explains how one can take care of liberating the soul.

It is God's immense grace and compassion to give us the association of Santo, who in every way whatsoever are illuminating us! We have received this most invaluable human body. Bhagwan Swaminarayan has said in one Vachanamrut that, 'As much water as there is in the ocean, is the amount of milk that we fed off from countless mothers.' How many lifetimes must this be! A human body is attained after 8,400,000 lifetimes! But we do not value it, because we have no idea of its immense worth. That is why Bhagwan Swaminarayan explained firstly, that the human body we have is the most priceless of all things. It is with the medium of the body, that we have the use of our

intellect, talents and efforts through which by God's grace and the blessings of Santo and parents, we are able to attain fulfillment, prosperity and give rise to all the comforts. But in all of this, do not miss out on liberation.

When we cook, we use all sorts of spices, but if we forget to add salt – then what? The food would have no taste. Similarly, many at the age of 80 or 90 will say there is no taste to life; there is no pleasure. Why is there no pleasure? It is because something is missing. For the liberation of the soul, God, the sadhu and satsang are being sidestepped and that is why there is no taste to life. There may be a lot of food but if you were to add just a little bit of salt, the food would become tasteful. In this way, God is not saying to us to sit with a rosary for twenty-four hours and chant Swaminarayan... Swaminarayan. Bhagwan Swaminarayan has said in the Shikshapatri that, 'Of the life you have been given, you must give 10% of your time to the spiritual cause.' Ten percent of twenty-four hours means one has to give two hours and twenty-four minutes to satsang daily. And Maharaj also said, one must donate 10% of one's income to charity. 'O Lord! You have given us this human body and we want to use that too for devotion. You have given us favourable circumstances so we want to give our time too, and with your grace, we have attained wealth

– which we also want to use for your work – and so will give 10% to charity.’ If you think in this way, then it can be said that you have taken care of your liberation.

To use whatever you have for God, one should have the constant motive to please Him. God says, ‘I do not ask you to sit in front of me the whole day, but rather to live as mine, to live for me, and to live in a way that is pleasing to me; then I will look after you and take care of you.’ God has given us the blessing – the boon that ‘When whosoever that has taken my shelter, takes their last breath, I will come personally to redeem them.’ ‘Having taken shelter’ means the understanding that ‘I am yours and you are mine’. When one takes the *vartmaan* and puts on the *kanthi*; it means you have taken God’s shelter, and therefore God becomes bound to you. But one has to then take His shelter no matter what. Whether your work is done, not done, whether you are well or you fall ill – to understand that whatever has happened in my life, is happening and will happen is all being done by my Lord. If you want to ask for something, ask your Lord. For that, you do not need to shout. If you pray and chant.. Swaminarayan...Swaminarayan, then God will certainly hear you. So if you have God’s shelter, then believe God is the all-doer and you have that Lord manifestly present with you in the form of the Satpurush.

Tomorrow is Bhagatji Maharaj’s birthday. Bhagatji Maharaj carried out exceptional work in his lifetime. Bhagatji Maharaj laid the foundation of the pure Upasana that Bhagwan Swaminarayan wanted to carry out. Bhagwan Swaminarayan has said in the Vachanamrut that all of God’s devotees want ultimate fulfillment, but there is a variation in the fulfillment they experience. Why? The reason is that there is a difference in their understanding and therefore a difference in their experience of fulfillment. What understanding? The understanding of pure Upasana. People certainly understood Bhagwan Swaminarayan to be God, but could not understand that He is the All-Doer and that He is manifest through the Gunatit Sadhu. Shastriji Maharaj was the one who instated Gunatitanand Swami’s murti in mandirs, and the meaning behind it was that God will remain manifest on earth through such a Gunatit sadhu.

Maharaj’s first boon was that He would come to personally redeem the devotee in the final moments of his life. The second boon was, ‘We have come into this world, so now we will certainly, certainly, certainly stay here through the Gunatit Sadhu for always, for the next five to twenty-five generations. God was manifest first through Gunatitanand Swami, then Bhagatji Maharaj, Shastriji Maharaj and fourthly through Yogiji Maharaj. So somebody asked Bapa, ‘So Bapa, you are the fourth generation, right?’ Then Bapa replied, ‘No. This is the first generation.’ Because [the lineage of Gunatit] is continuous, it has not broken – it means it is still the first generation.

Bhagatji Maharaj laid the foundation of this pure Akshar Purushottam Upasana. That is why every year, on Fagun Sud Poonam, the auspicious day of Holi, we celebrate His *pragatyadin*. The village of Mahuva is near Bhavnagar. It is a port, and that is where Bhagatji Maharaj was born into a tailor’s family. Those who are married will be pleased to hear, that Bhagatji Maharaj was a householder. Bhagatji Maharaj’s life demonstrates that even a householder can attain the state of oneness with God. He served Gunatitanand Swami in such a way that he earned Gunatitanand Swami’s innermost pleasure. During Bhagwan Swaminarayan’s time there were thousands of sadhus, and out of those, five hundred were of the caliber of *Paramhansas*<sup>1</sup>. There were three hundred sadhus with Gunatitanand Swami in Junagadh and there were five hundred sadhus with Gopalanand Swami in Vadtal.

The third deity we see is that of Gopalanand Swami. Bhagatji Maharaj had exceptional love for Gopalanand Swami! He stayed with Gopalanand Swami for twelve years. Gopalanand Swami had mastered Ashtang Yoga. When Gopalanand Swami knew he would be renouncing his physical existence, he called for Bhagatji Maharaj, Jaga Swami and his close devotees and said, ‘All that I have

<sup>1</sup> Literally means ‘great soul’ and refers to a spiritually elevated being. *Paramhansa* refers to the highest calibre of sadhu.

promised you, and all that I had resolved to do for you – will be completed by the Jogi of Junagadh – so go to him.’ The Jogi of Junagadh, meaning Gunatitanand Swami. ‘He is the manifestation of Akshardham; he is Maharaj’s abode. Right now, God is manifest through him, so earn his innermost *prasannata*<sup>2</sup> and all of your work will be done.’ Gopalanand Swami explained Gunatitanand Swami’s greatness to Bhagatji and sent him and the others to Junagadh.

Bhagatji Maharaj had trust alongside the exceptional love for his Guru Gopalanand Swami. That itself is a characteristic of love. To immediately accept what is said and to present no argument – is characteristic of love. And so everyone followed Gopalanand Swami’s words and went to Gunatitanand Swami in Junagadh. Gunatitanand Swami gave realization to Bhagatji Maharaj, and because of this, Bhagatji Maharaj became firm in his conviction that Gunatitanand Swami himself is the abode of God. For that reason, he began to boldly spread Gunatitanand Swami’s glory. There was violent opposition to Bhagatji Maharaj and he was excommunicated. He was thrown out of the mandir, but he was so courageous and even this did not stop him. He did not waver in the slightest and continued to speak of Gunatitanand Swami’s glory. Remember, those who do not know the ‘Gita’, the ‘Shrimad Bhagavat’ or Sanskrit or the Upanishads – but if they are singing the glory of God, His sadhus and His devotees – even this will bring joy to the listener!

All talk of *mahima*<sup>3</sup> is such that it touches the soul, whereas all talk of knowledge touches the intellect. That which touches the soul gives joy, and so people would be drawn to Bhagatji Maharaj because of the *mahima* that he would sing of Gunatitanand Swami. He even explained this to Shastriji Maharaj – that Gunatitanand Swami is the

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

<sup>3</sup> *Mahima* refers to the greatness and glory of God, His Santo or devotees.

incarnation of *Mul Aksharbrahma*<sup>4</sup>. Sahajanand Swami – Bhagwan Swaminarayan is the supreme essence of *Mul Parabrahma* but through Gunatitanand Swami that supreme essence of *Mul Parabrahma* is manifest, and that is why Gunatitanand Swami is the *swaroop*<sup>5</sup> of Akshar Purushottam. Swaminarayan means ‘Swami’ and ‘Narayan’. ‘Swami’ refers to the *Akshar-roop* sadhu, within whom God resides eternally – the *swaroop* of Akshar Purushottam! And so ‘Swaminarayan’ became one word. The reason is, the sadhu who has attained *Gunatit-bhav*<sup>6</sup> has the essence of *Parabrahma* within him – and therefore they are one – Akshar-Purushottam. If you develop *atma-buddhi* and *preeti*<sup>7</sup> for such a *swaroop* of Akshar Purushottam, then the gateway of liberation is opened for you. In Vachanamrut Gadhada Pratham 54 – Shreeji Maharaj talks about this. And that same talk of pure Upasana, Bhagatji Maharaj so forcefully explained to Shastriji Maharaj that Shastriji Maharaj made the goal of spreading pure Upasana, his life’s singular mission. For that, Shastriji Maharaj did exceptional work and established the B.A.P.S. And over and above that, he gave us the exceptional gift of as divine a being as Yogiji Maharaj. If we have walked this path of God, become in anyway good human beings, it is because we attained

<sup>4</sup> **Mul Aksharbrahma refers to the highest entity after Purushottam (the Supreme Lord). It is eternal, and independent. In its impersonal form it is the abode of God, and in its personal form, is exactly like God, but forever subservient to God.**

<sup>5</sup> **‘Swa’ means self. Swaroop is when one’s self-identity is completely merged in God. It refers to a state of oneness.**

<sup>6</sup> **Gunatit is an ultimate state of oneness with God, above and beyond all matter. It is when one has risen above the three bodies : physical, subtle and causal; above the three gunas : *rajas*, *tamas* and *sattva* and above the three states of being: waking, dream and deep sleep. One who has risen above his body in all of these ways, is one who has *Gunatit-bhav*, and God resides eternally within him.**

<sup>7</sup> ***Atma-buddhi* and *preeti* means to love the Satpurush as one’s own atma, and thereby refers to a bond of inseparable loving association**

Yogiji Maharaj, because we had love for him and more than that, because he loved us. He gave us so much love, that he made us pure simply by bathing us in his love.

No matter how many times you douse yourself in the Ganges, no matter how many austerities, penances, rituals, or how much charity you perform, but the inner cleansing, the inner purification cannot happen without God's *prasannata*. And if you douse yourself in the affection of such a sadhu and develop such love for him, then God is pleased! Yogiji Maharaj bathed hundreds of thousands of youth in his love and affection, purified them and in doing so put the Swaminarayan *sampradaya* on the world map. For his Guru, Shastriji Maharaj and for his Lord, Bhagwan Swaminarayan - Yogiji Maharaj carried out exceptional work! And he showered us with such immense grace by giving us the gift of Pramukh Swami, Mahant Swami, Hariprasad Swami, Guruji, Ashvinbhai, Shantibhai, Ratibhai and all these Santo.

When Bhagatji Maharaj was present in human form, no one was able to recognise him. Bhagatji Maharaj was insulted so much, that no one must have gone through as much insult as him. And that could only happen because people did not recognise him for what he was! There was a devotee from Saurashtra who had heard so much about Bhagatji Maharaj's *mahima* that he wanted to do his *darshan*. He asked one of the Santo, 'I am going to Vadtal and there will be so many people there, so how would I be able to find Bhagatji Maharaj?' The Sant said, 'If someone is being insulted and yet he is still laughing then that is Bhagatji Maharaj.' And true to this, by the Gomti lake in Vadtal, five – ten people were verbally attacking Bhagatji Maharaj. Bhagatji Maharaj was standing, laughing. The devotee went and prostrated before him; this has to be Bhagatji Maharaj! People were not able to recognise him but he had earned Gunatitanand Swami's innermost *prasannata*. That is why when he was excommunicated, Bhagatji Maharaj said, 'No one has the strength to excommunicate me! Even if Bhagwan Swaminarayan himself were to descent, I am not one who could be

excommunicated. The reason is that I have my Guru's utmost *prasannata*, and it is only if I have fallen into those things that my Guru is displeased with, like negativity, fault-finding, gossip, criticism, bickering etc. that I could be excommunicated, otherwise I cannot be.' What courage! What confidence in the devotion of his Lord and the Sadhu! That is why he was always laughing. Bhagatji Maharaj's greatness was that, out of so many sadhus – he recognized Gunatit, joined with him, followed his *aagna*<sup>8</sup> and sang his glory.

Bhagatji attained Gunatit's *prasannata*. Bhagatji had said, 'This is not any old knowledge. This is what has been gained after earning Gunatit's *prasannata*. Gunatit has given it to me out of his innermost pleasure; it is not ordinary.' Similarly, Ashvinbhai, Shantibhai, Ratibhai, Mahant Swami, Hariprasad Swami, Guruji are not ordinary sadhus. They are ones who have earned Yogiji Maharaj's utmost *prasannata* and thereby attained *sadhuta*<sup>9</sup>. If they were to become pleased with us, we too would not remain ordinary. To please them, one needs to have complete *nirdosh-bhav*<sup>10</sup>. God resides within them eternally. We like everything about them, the way they walk, talk, eat! If we develop this kind of love for them, that we love to listen to them, feel joy in following their *aagna*, like to sit near them, feel joy in serving them, then they will be pleased. That is why it is said that people find devotion to the manifest Lord difficult. When you look at Bhagwan Swaminarayan in the *murti*, that is *paroksh*<sup>11</sup> but He is eternally manifest through it, and the Lord that resides within the *murti* is manifest also through the Sadhu. To

<sup>8</sup> **Any instruction given by God or Guru, which is always for our spiritual benefit.**

<sup>9</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.**

<sup>10</sup> **The inner conviction that God and all of God's devotees are faultless. To see no fault or blemish.**

<sup>11</sup> **Not directly present or directly approachable.**

believe this – to accept it is so difficult. Generally people believe in God, but it becomes very difficult for them to believe that God resides within the Satpurush.

Our present Prime Minister Shri Narendrabhai Modi – is a human being, just like us isn't he? He has two legs; he walks, talks, eats just like us. But if he were to come here? Ohoho – the Prime Minister is coming! He is different from us. The reason is that he is holding the powers of the office of the Prime Minister. He is greater than us because he is the Prime Minister, and that carries its own weight, and we have love for him. When he comes, hundreds of thousands of people are drawn to his influence, because he is the Prime Minister. Similarly, these Santo hold the powers of the office of God. They hold God within them. The one who holds worldly titles, shows the powers he holds through his office, but the Sadhu does not show this. The Sadhu stays at a level even lower than the most ordinary person; he lives with the sentiment that he is nothing, that he knows nothing. The reason is that it is because he has reached a level of zeroness, and that is why he can hold God within him! That is also why it is so difficult to recognise him. To consider him to be divine is extremely difficult. And it was such a sadhu as Gunatit – that Bhagatji Maharaj accepted to be divine. That was not all! He followed his *aagna* no matter what came his way.

Shastriji Maharaj believed Bhagatji Maharaj to be divine. Just think about it, a saffron-clad sadhu believed one who was a householder, who was not in saffron, who was a tailor by caste – Bhagatji Maharaj, to be his Guru and performed his *seva*. And that too, a hundred years ago, when society was not as broad-minded as it is today. Sadhus would not bow to anyone. At such a time, Shastriji Maharaj believed Bhagatji Maharaj to be God's *swaroop* and would prostrate before him. Shastriji Maharaj himself would cook and feed him; would perform his *seva*. All credit to Shastriji Maharaj! It would have been so difficult in that period; and so Shastriji Maharaj became worthy of Bhagatji Maharaj's *prasannata*!

Yogiji Maharaj sacrificed himself so completely in following Shastriji Maharaj's *aagna*, that he became the

*swaroop* of Shastriji Maharaj. Similarly, Ashvinbhai, Shantibhai, Mahant Swami, Hariprasad Swami, Guruji and these Santo gave themselves completely to Yogiji Maharaj – they dissolved their beings in him, becoming *Yogi-roop* and this is who we have attained. Now remember! We have to dissolve ourselves in them. Where would we go looking for Bhagatji Maharaj right now? These Santo themselves are the *swaroops*' of Bhagatji Maharaj. The life that Bhagatji Maharaj lived with Gunatitanand Swami, is not what we have to go through now. We do not have to keep a lime furnace going, nor do we have to clean up a dead dog, or jump into a pool of food waste. Times have changed, but to keep *nirdosh-bhav*, to follow *aagna*, to accept his devotees as *nirdosh* and perform their *seva*; this is all eternal. This we have to do; and this is what Bhagatji Maharaj's life taught us.

Yogi Bapa's life itself was like this. Yogiji Maharaj was the embodiment of devotion! 'What can we not do for God? What can we not do for God's devotees?! Yogi Bapa would never tire. For Yogiji Maharaj, to serve God's devotees, nothing could come in the way – not even fatigue, sleep, hunger, thirst – he simply did not even consider these. Even when Bapa would do a *nirjala*<sup>12</sup> fast, he would still cook for fifty people and feed them. Even though Bapa would be fasting, he would himself cook and feed devotees and then even wash all the utensils. Just think about it – how much devotion must he have! One may do this for a day or two, but for forty years! And such a Guru's *prasannata* has been attained by Mahant Swami, Hariprasad Swami, Guruji, Ashvinbhai, Shantibhai, Ratibhai! What immense grace Bapa has showered upon us by gifting us such Sadhus. If we understand the glory of these Sadhus while they are physically manifest, we would truly make our lives worthwhile. If we offer devotion, understanding the glory of Sadhus and devotees, then it can be said that we have taken care [of liberating our soul].

....To be continued. ◆

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<sup>12</sup> **Complete fast, with no intake of any food or drink, not even water.**