



Divine Discourses of Sant Bhagwant Sahebji

Spiritual Essence

Discourse on Vachanamrut Gadhada Madhya 9 :

“Swaroop-nishtha nu; Avatar jeva jaane to Droh thaya nu”

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Today is Shravan-vadi Ekadashi, and the Vachanamrut being referred to today was spoken by Maharaj on Shravan Sud-chaudash. At that time in the sabha, Anandanand Swami performed the pooja. Anandanand Swami built many mandirs, as with Bhagwan Swaminarayan’s grace, he was a born architect. Anandanand Swami built the Jetalpur, Dabhan and Dholera mandirs.

‘...Then Shreeji Maharaj said, “one should understand the path of *gnan* such that one must never ever malign the form of God in any way. If one inadvertently transgresses God’s command at one time or another, one should not worry – but one should never malign the *swaroop* of God. Where one transgresses God’s command, one may still be absolved from this by praying to God, but there is no means of release for one who has maligned the *swaroop* of God”’

Maharaj says, on the path of *Gnan*¹, many of the wise will discourse, explain concepts etc., but we must always take extra caution, never to commit the grave error of maligning God’s *swaroop*. One should never sidestep the word of God, but Maharaj says, even if it happens do not worry, but over and above that one must never malign God’s *swaroop*. If you have not been able to follow God’s *aagna*², you can still atone for this by praying and asking for God’s forgiveness – and you will be absolved from this. The reason is that God is compassionate, and he raises even the most wretched. And so in this way, even if you sidestep his word, you can be absolved of this.

...therefore one who is wise should certainly abide by God’s commands to the best of one’s

¹ The path of *Gnan* refers to the path of knowledge, whereby realisation is gained through insight, practice and knowledge.

² Any instruction or command given by God or Guru, which is always to one’s spiritual benefit.



ability. However, one should also intensely maintain the strength of conviction in God's form such that one believes, 'I have attained the very form of God who reigns supreme, who forever possesses a divine form and who is the *avatari* – the cause of all incarnations.

This is Upasana; that God is supreme, that God is the cause of all incarnations, and our Lord who resides in Akshardham, is whom I am attained in the form of the Sant. It is He whom I have attained in the manifest form of the Sant.

...If a person realises this, then even if he may have left the Satsang fellowship, his love for God's form will not diminish...

If someone leaves the Satsang due to situations or circumstances, but if he or she has firm faith in God, a firm understanding of God's glory, then his or her love for God will not lessen.

....and even though he may be out of the Satsang at present, when he leaves his physical form behind, he will still go to Akshardham and be near God. On the other hand, a person may be in the Satsang fellowship, and may even be abiding by the word of the scriptures, but if his conviction in the manifest form of God is not firm, then when he leaves his body, he will either go to the realm of Brahma or to the realm of some other deity, but he will not go to the abode of Purushottam Bhagwan. Therefore one should realise the manifest *swaroop* of God that one has attained and understand that *swaroop* to forever possess a divine form and to be the *avatari* – the cause of all incarnations. If however, one does not realise this, and instead realises God to be formless or like the other incarnations, then that is regarded as committing blasphemy against God...

Maharaj is saying something very important here. God is never formless – he always has a form. If one says that God is formless, then that amounts to maligning God; and even if you consider God to be like the other incarnations; that also amounts to maligning God.

There is a well-known example, which took place in Khambhaat. Mayatitanand Swami was a sadhu that was initiated by Bhagwan Swaminarayan. It was he who had spread satsang in Metpur, Khambhaat and the surrounding villages. At that time a devotee passed to Akshardham. The devotee had two sons and they fought acrimoniously over the land and property inheritance, and so they went to their family lawyer. The lawyer said, 'your father had decided what to give to each of you, and had the Will written by me before his passing to Akshardham. Everything is written clearly in the Will. So look for the Will, and then everything will be settled, and your fight will be over.' Hearing this, the two brothers turned the house upside down looking for the will; they searched every corner and asked relatives but the Will could not be found.

Then everyone thought, many people hand their Will over to their Guru and this devotee used to go to the mandir to Mayatitanand Swami, so maybe he gave the Will to him. The brothers therefore went to Mayatitanand Swami, and asked, 'Swami! Did our father give his Will to you?' Mayatitanand Swami said, 'no, he has not given it to me.' Then they explained, 'The lawyer says our father made a Will, but we are not able to find it, and so we are having fights over the property. Please give us blessings, so that we may find the Will.'



During that time, amongst the Santo, there was one who could enter *Samadhi*³ at will. Mayatitanand Swami called for the *samadhi-nishth* Sadhu and said, 'Go into *samadhi* and then go into Akshardham and ask these boys' father where he has put the Will.' And so that Sadhu went into *samadhi*. After a few hours he awoke from *samadhi* and said, 'Swamiji! Their father is not in Akshardham.' Mayatitanand Swami said, 'that cannot be; he was so devoted, and it is God's promise that He takes his devotee into Akshardham.' Mayatitanand Swami asked the brothers, 'which sadhu was your father close to?' The brothers said, 'he was very close to the 'Ramayani' sadhu.' That sadhu would read the Ramayan all day, and he would describe Maharaj to be like the *swaroop* of Ram, to whoever came to him - and that is why people would address him as the 'Ramayani' sadhu. At the mandir, devotees naturally gravitate towards the sadhu or sadhus for whom they have affection, and so this devotee must have been going to the 'Ramayani' sadhu.

Mayatitanand Swami called for the *samadhi-nisht* Sadhu and said, 'Go into *samadhi* again, but this time go to the abode of Shri Ram. Go into Vaikunth, because those who think of Maharaj as being like Ram, attain the abode of Ram. Even though the 'Ramayani' sadhu was a Swaminarayan sadhu, his *upasana* was that of Ram. He believed Bhagwan Swaminarayan to be like Ram, and so that devotee must have reached Vaikunth.' The sadhu then went into Vaikunth and found the boys' father there. The father said, 'The Will is hidden inside the beam structure of the house. There is a hole in one of the

³ Here *samadhi* refers to a state whereby one's soul can leave the body at will and re-enter it. As the soul is not confined to the body, it can travel freely between the realms.

beams, and the Will is inside there.' So the boys found the Will and then their disagreement was settled.

But what is the point behind this story? It is that, even for one who is a so-called 'Swaminarayan' – Bhagwan Swaminarayan is supreme, the cause of all incarnations and the cause of all things and always has a form! And Shastriji added to this and said that He is also eternally manifest! One should not waver in the slightest in this understanding.

You will not sidestep your moral codes of conduct. But remember! If at some point, due to some circumstance or situation, you are not able to follow *aagna*, then God tells us that we are able to atone for this through *dhun* and prayer, and whatever our faults, they would be forgiven. Whereas this devotee, would sing Swaminarayan dhun all day in the mandir but believed Bhagwan Swaminarayan to be like Shri Ram, and so ended up in Vaikunth! See? If your vehicle is slightly off direction, you will end up in a completely different abode!

What does it mean that you will end up in a different abode? There isn't anything like that in the sky? If you have supreme faith, believing the Lord to be the cause of all incarnations, then God has promised Akshardham! What does Akshardham mean? It means you will be connected to a sadhu that has become Akshardham-*roop*, and he will place you on the path which can liberate you from the shortcomings of attachment, ego, anger, lust etc. Whereas souls like that of the boys' father will be put in a place where people are living with *sattvic-bhav*⁴.

⁴ *Sattvic-bhav* very generally speaking refers to the qualities of goodness, charity and purity. However, it is a state which is still rooted in worldliness because a person with *sattvic-bhav* lives within the limitations of the dualities of good-bad, right-wrong, pure and impure etc.



And so what a huge difference that is! So remember! That is why Bhagwan Swaminarayan said, 'do not allow this transgression in your understanding of God's *swaroop*.'

This does not mean that Bhagwan Shri Ram, Bhagwan Shri Krishna, Shri Mahavir are lesser or inferior; it means that you must understand that whosoever you have attained – your *Ishtadev* is supreme for you! Just as one's husband holds the highest and only place in a woman's heart! Then it does not matter even if others are just as good etc. but they cannot take that place. Similarly, we have attained our *Ishtadev*, Swaminarayan Bhagwan, who for us is supreme, the cause of all incarnations, the cause and controller of all things! And Bhagwan Swaminarayan has said do not ever fall into who is bigger and who is smaller and all of that nonsense; if it is me that you believe in, then worship me with supreme devotion.' So let us not keep the slightest imperfection in doing this, and let us never fall into comparison, He is like this [God] or like that [God]. This is my Lord, and he is supreme for me and that's it! Whether the other God's are or not, that is known by their devotees. Those who follow Shri Ram, may follow him believing him to be supreme and those who believe in Shri Krishna, follow him believing him to be supreme; we do not have any problem with that! Shri Krishna, Shri Ram, Shri Mahavir, Shri Buddha, are all worthy of worship. They are certainly not ordinary; they are the very incarnations of God. However, the Lord that I have attained is supreme for me! If there remains the slightest shortfall in this, then God says your vehicle will end up thousands of miles away from Akshardham. To ensure that this does not happen, we must not listen to or keep the company of simply anyone. To have love and affection

for others – by love and affection I mean, those whose words you accept and listen to; otherwise out in the world, one naturally meets and interacts with everybody, but you should keep the company of such sadhus and such devotees who worship God with supreme devotion; and it is their words that you should trust and accept.

....Arjun's spiritual strength was based on his conviction of God, whereas his brother, Yudhishtir's source of strength was his faith in the words of the scriptures. Then when the war of the Mahabharat was fought, Shri Krishna Bhagwan said to Arjun,

'Sarva-dharman parityajya maam ekam sharanam vraja I

Aham tvam sarva-papebhyo mokshayishyami ma shuchaha II'

The meaning of this verse is, 'O Arjun! Abandon all of the various types of dharma and surrender only unto me. I shall deliver you from all sins, so do not lament.' By keeping faith in these words, Arjun never became disheartened, despite committing countless misdeeds during the war. He maintained firm faith in God. Whereas, even though Yudhishtir had not committed any sins, because his faith was anchored in the scriptures he felt he would never attain liberation...

Yudhishtir believed in truth but it was rooted in his *sattvic-bhav*. Whereas Arjun on the battlefield fought and finished off so many is so many different ways! We all know the story of the Mahabharat, but Arjun was free from doubt and fear. It did not leave a mark on him because whatever he did, he did by God's command, and by drawing on God's strength. Shri Krishna Bhagwan said, '*Sarva dharman*



parityajya maam ekam sharanam vraja.' Shri Krushna is saying put all other *dharma* aside. So was Shri Krushna asking him to stay without any faith? No! But once you have God and the Satpurush, to follow their word – is true *dharma*! Shri Krushna wanted to take Arjun into this *dharma*.

According to the *dharma* of the *Kshatriya*, a warrior is prohibited from attacking anyone who does not have a weapon. If the opposing warrior does not have a bow and an arrow, then you cannot fight him nor can you attack him. During the war, the wheel of Karna's chariot broke and so he stopped fighting and descended from his chariot. At that time, Shri Krushna Bhagwan told Arjun to attack Karna! Shri Krushna told Arjun to finish him off. Karna said, 'You are transgressing the *kshatriya dharma*. I do not have a weapon; I have descended from my chariot to change this wheel.' And so Shri Krushna Bhagwan then told Karna and opened his eyes to all the *adharma* he had committed. At that time, if Arjun had held onto his *Kshatriya dharma*, he would not have attacked Karna, but Arjun held onto Shri Krushna Bhagwan's word.

The second moral code of war is that if there is any lady in front of you, then you cannot fight. The *Kshatriya* has to stop fighting in this circumstance. To defeat Bhishmapitamah, Shri Krushna Paramatma told Arjun to move aside and let Shikhandi come forward to face Bhishmapitamah. Shikhandi was Dronacharya's disciple and was a prince. However when he was born, he was a female. Bhishmaitamah knew this. By the powers of the *rushis* and sages Shikhandi's gender was changed to that of a male, but Bhishmapitamah did not know this. Shri Krushna knew that Bhishmapitamah would certainly drop his weapons if Shikhandi were to be placed in front of

him. Once he dropped his weapons, Krishna told Arjun to destroy Bhishmapitamah. In this way, Shri Krushna Bhagwan got Arjun to put all *dharma* aside and made him fight! Just look at this! If Arjun had not let go of his *Kshatriya dharma*, he would have ended up not fighting. That is why Shri Krushna Bhagwan had said to him, '*sarva dharman parityajya*' – all the *dharma* that you have decided with your own mind – the truths – untruths, all your notions of sin and merit – put it all aside, surrender to me and do as I say.

In reality, to follow the *aagna* of God and the Satpurush is true *dharma*. It is a higher *dharma*, and because Arjun accepted this higher *dharma*, he was secure! Whereas Yudhishtir's *dharma* was rooted in *sattvic-bhav*, and that is why he was ultimately pervaded by doubt, 'will I gain liberation or not?' It was then that Shri Krushna Paramatma gave him blessings, and so Yudhishtir put his questions aside. That is why God says we must worship Him with supreme devotion, and to carry out that devotion by living according to the *aagna* of the Satpurush through whom God is manifest.

...Even when all the *rushis*, Vyasji and even Shri Krushna Bhagwan himself attempted to explain to him, still Yudhishtira did not forsake his remorse. Only when Shri Krishna Bhagwan took him to Bhishma and had him listen to Bhishma's discourse on the true meaning of the words of the scriptures did he develop some faith. Nevertheless, he did not become totally free of doubt like Arjun....

When Shri Krushna spoke, Yudhishtira thought of him as being deceitful. Yudhishtira had such *manushya-bhav*⁵ for Shri Krushna, so how could he

⁵To perceive the words and actions of God or the Satpurush as being human or worldly, rather than being divine.



possibly accept his word? He could accept what Bhishmapitamah said, because Bhishmapitamah was a *naishthik brahmachari*⁶ – and because Yudhishtira was rooted in worldly *sattvic-bhav*, he was able to accept his words. Even then, Yudhishtira did not attain complete freedom from doubt in the way that Arjun did. They were blood brothers, Yudhishtira was elder and Arjun was younger, but how much difference there was between them. Arjun had God's grace, and so he was able to recognise God! He lived with complete faith and trust in Shri Krishna's word and so he became completely free from all doubt and misgivings.

...Thus, one who is intelligent should intensely maintain spiritual strength based on the conviction of God. Even the slightest strength based on this conviction will protect one from great dangers.

In whatever work you do, you must draw on the strength of God. If you go about bragging that you will do this and you will do that; nothing has ever come out of this for anyone. If you have even the slightest strength in your conviction for God, then He will protect you from great dangers.

... For example, when Arjun fought in the war of the Mahabharat, he encountered many, many types of grave dangers in the form of *adharma*. Yet, he was spared from those dangers because of his conviction of God...

It is only he who lives by drawing on the strength of God that can be called an *ekantik bhakt*. The one who draws on one's own strength is still a *sadhak*. To draw on God's strength means – to believe at all times, 'God is with me, isn't he! I belong to Him and He is eternally

⁶ Refers to the highest form of celibacy – in word, thought and deed.

in my protection.' If any situations or circumstances arise, it is He you must remember.... Swaminarayan.... Swaminarayan ! What does it mean to believe Him to be supreme? It means to keep your focus directed towards Him. Ordinarily, when anything happens, the focus of our Gujarati's and especially Hindus is towards the community – 'what will people say? What will our neighbours say? What will society say? What will people say about us in the community?' But why are you looking towards them? Look towards God! What is God saying? If God says its fine, then the rest of the world can simply clear off! And when you do this, even people fall into line. We have to keep our sights fixed on God.

Gunatitanand Swami has said, 'the only one worth seeing is God.' So does that mean you sit in front of him and stare at him all day? No, it does not mean this. But whenever anything happens, one must only look towards God. If something good happens, look towards God, and even if someone does ill to you, or if an unfavourable situation arises in your life – whether that is illness, death, loss in business, loss of your job or whatever it may be - rather than crying over it and questioning why it has happened, look towards God. 'Lord, you are the all-doer, and whatever you do will only be in my best interests;' if you feel this immediately, then you will have inner peace – you will be able to remain joyful, otherwise you will become disturbed.

If you fail your exams after putting in so much effort, you will become disturbed, but what if you think that even in this, God is certainly doing something that is in my best interest. Look towards God; God redeems the sinful, raises the downtrodden, and has come only to put us all on the path of liberation. He wishes only good for us, and



therefore even if we have failed, there can only be some hidden good in it. But our intellect tells us, if we pass that is good and if we fail that is very bad. If we recover, then that is good and if we remain ill, then that is bad. If one lives, then that is good and if one dies, then that is very bad. These are all dualities. If you want to rise above these dualities, then draw on the strength of God, look towards God; then you will see that everything is all good! Even if you fail, that is good – even if you make a loss; that is fine, because there is something in it, which is for our good, and to our benefit! There is only one who is worth seeing, and that is God. No matter whatever happens, whether it is good or bad – look towards God.

.... Therefore, only he whose strength is based on the conviction of God more than anything else, can be called an *ekantik bhakt*, and only he can be called a staunch *satsangee*...

Only he can be called a staunch *satsangee*. Draw on the strength of God's *swaroop*. Whatever God is doing, He will be doing only for the good. If your intellect cannot accept it, your physical being cannot accept it, then.... Swaminarayan... Swaminarayan... Swaminarayan..; do *bhajan*, then you will gain strength and will be able to see clearly that whatever happened, happened for the best. When things don't go the way we want them to and things don't happen as we would wish, our intellect starts churning negative thoughts, and the best way to come out of this is through dhun!

....The Shrimad Bhagvat also emphasizes this, i.e. 'If one strays from the *dharma* proclaimed in the Shrutis and Smrutis, one should not worry. However, one should never abandon the refuge of God.' Then some may feel that 'if we propound such talks then *dharma* will become irrelevant.' But this principle is not intended to make *dharma* irrelevant...

One must never leave the refuge, or forsake the shelter of God. Maharaj is talking about *ekantik dharma*. There is day-to-day *dharma* and then there is *ekantik dharma*. There are the day-to-day *niyams* and the elevated *niyams*. If by maintaining *ekantik dharma* and the elevated *niyams*, everything else were to be nullified, there is still nothing to worry about. This is because their purpose is to please God, and if God is pleased then *dharma* will automatically be brought into one's life. But it is also possible that God may not necessarily be pleased with one whose life is rooted in *dharma*. Just look at Yudhishtira! His life was rooted in *dharma*! Bhishmapitamah's life too was rooted in *dharma*! And even then, Shri Krushna Parmatma was not pleased with them. Whereas Arjun was rooted in God and therefore *dharma* came into his life automatically.

....Rather its purpose is as follows: Places, times, actions, company, mantras, scriptures, preachings and deities can be of two types – pure and impure. Of these, if one were to encounter the impure, and if as a result some difficulties were to arise, then if one has the firm conviction of God, one would never fall from the path of liberation. Conversely, if there is a deficiency in one's conviction of God, then whenever one falters from *dharma*, one would feel, 'I am destined to fall into hell.' Therefore one whose strength is based on the conviction of God is a staunch *satsangee*. Whereas, without this, one is merely appreciative of Satsang...

Satsangee means one who has *atma-buddhi* and *preeti*⁷. The one who has *atma-buddhi* and *preeti* for

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



the Satpurush and who has supreme conviction in God and follows the *aagna* of the Satpurush, is one who can be called a genuine *satsangee*; whereas the others are those who are appreciative of Satsang; if something doesn't go their way, they may equally leave the Satsang.

...and the scriptures say that it is only one who has firm conviction in God that can be called an *ekantik bhakt*. And if Narad, Sanakadik and deities such as Brahma and others were to hear the discourses being presently delivered, they would say, 'We have never heard such talks before, and we shall never hear them again.' These talks are incomparable to anything one has heard or will hear. Although these talks are extremely subtle, even a person with limited intelligence can understand them. It is as if these talks are personified....

What Maharaj is talking about is so subtle, but he has said it in such a natural and easy-to-understand way, that even one who is not a genius and has average intelligence can understand this.

...Therefore, there is no limit to the spiritual merits of one who has firm conviction in the Satsang right now. Realising this, those who are *satsangee* should consider themselves to be totally fulfilled. Moreover, the one who has profound love for God, regardless of whether he understands this discourse or not, has nothing left to do...

The one who has such profound love, will understand everything from within.

...Whereas, if one does not have profound love for God, then such a person must then certainly understand the greatness of God. Thus, one who is wise should reflect upon this discourse, understand

it, and then take extremely firm refuge in God. This principle alone is the essence of all essences...

To have firm conviction in God means to firmly believe that, 'I am God's and God is mine.' What is He like? God is supreme, He is the cause of everything; the inspirer of everyone's intellect and the agency behind their actions. He is manifest in all of us through His all-pervading strength and we have attained him and He is right in front of us through the form of the Gunatit Sant. If one believes this in totality, and has such *atma-buddhi* and *preeti* for the Satpurush, and is following his *aagna*, then the essence of all the scriptures is in his grasp. That understanding will blossom from within.

Through the 'Vachanamrut,' 'Swamini Vaato' and these discourses – we start to understand the glory of the Lord that we have attained! What amazing Santo we have! What amazing bhakto! And it is when we have this understanding that the enthusiasm in our devotion, in following *aagna*, in carrying out *seva* and in living our daily lives will increase greatly.

Therefore the highest understanding out of all understanding, and the highest essence of all the essences, God says is to worship him with supreme devotion and if anything happens, to draw only on His refuge and His strength. To be able to draw on His strength, do *smruti*⁸ and chant, Swaminarayan... Swaminarayan... Swaminarayan – or think of the greatness of the Lord that you have attained! My Lord is my protector! So perform *smruti* with this understanding of glory, then God will truly grant you so many experiences such that you will become free from all worry and all fear!

Sahajanand Swami Maharaj ni Jai !



⁸ Divine remembrance of God and the Satpurush.

