



Divine Discourses of Sant Bhagwant Sahebji

Spiritual Essence

Discourse on Vachanamrut Gadhada Madhya 22 :
“ Be Sena nu, Narayan padharavya nu”
29 September 2018, Brahmajyoti Mogri

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In 1947 India gained independence. When Shastriji Maharaj left Vadtal, the father of Sardar Saheb immediately sent a messenger to bring Shastriji Maharaj to Karamsad, and at that time Shastriji Maharaj showered his blessings on young Sardar Saheb (Vallabhbbhai) and said, ‘He will become the king of Delhi.’ With those blessings, that Sardar Saheb carried out the work of Shastriji Maharaj. When Sardar Saheb started the work of unifying the princely states, the king of Bhavnagar was the first to surrender its rule to the government. In independent India, all the princely states were merged and then divided into districts. In that way the town of Gadhada fell within the district of Bhavnagar and a very young Chudasama Saheb was elected as the District Collector of Bhavnagar. He was an extremely devout disciple of Shastriji Maharaj. He knew that Shastriji Maharaj was after a piece of land in Gadhada and so he took all the maps and went to Shastriji Maharaj and said, ‘Swami, decide how much land you want; we want to give you whatever you decide.’ The Collector holds all of these powers. Today where the mandir stands in Gadhada, is the land which Shastriji Maharaj circled on the map, and which Chudasama Saheb

had gifted to the ‘Bochasanwasi Akshar Purushottam Sanstha’ in a matter of two to four months. It was there, in Gadhada, that Shastriji Maharaj built the final mandir.

Just see, we all say that the Satpurush is the *swaroop* of God. Gunatitanand Swami gave us living *darshan* of such a sadhu who has attained Gunatit-bhav¹. Junagadh was very dear to Gunatitanand Swami. He stayed in Junagadh for forty years. He would take everyone to Junagadh, and call everyone to Junagadh. However, he renounced his physical existence in Gondal. Even an ordinary sadhu would choose to renounce his physical body in his favoured location; but Gunatitanand Swami was no ordinary sadhu. He was not bound to anything except Maharaj. He would make it seem like he wants this work done, and that he very much likes that, and because we

¹ 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.

have love for him we would give ourselves to do that work. The devotees who gave themselves for the work of developing the Junagadh mandir, were showered with Gunatit's grace and so they all became fulfilled. Otherwise, Gunatit was not bound to any place; he was only bound to God. He made that place a medium for us to join with God. Gunatitanand Swami renounced his physical body in Gondal, and there is now an Akshar-Mandir at that *samadhi-sthaan*².

Gadhada was very dear to Shastriji Maharaj. His whole life, Shastriji Maharaj kept saying, 'We would like to build a marble mandir in Gadhada.' At that time there were no mandirs made of marble in the BAPS sanstha. To make a mandir out of marble is extremely expensive. Today there are so many devotees but at that time BAPS did not even have that many devotees. Manikaka told me this, which I have told you. There was such a shortage of funds, and while the Bochasan mandir was still unfinished, the construction of the Sarangpur mandir was begun. The consecration of the deities took place in Sarangpur while the work of the mandir was still unfinished, and the construction of Gondal mandir was begun! The Gondal mandir was unfinished, but the deities were installed and consecrated and the work of the Atladara mandir was begun. The Ataladara mandir was incomplete and construction of the Gadhada mandir was begun! And the Gadhada mandir was to be made out of marble. The responsibility of seva for the Gadhada mandir, was given to the devotees in Africa. They were to provide the funds. Shastriji Maharaj toiled and worked so exceedingly hard to create the Gadhada mandir. He would personally travel to Makrana to select the marble, and would stay there. There, he hired a mine and called G.K. Swami from Africa to oversee the mine. Shastriji Maharaj would show so much concern for this mandir and would seem so immersed in it, that everyone thought that Swami's partiality was for this mandir and that he wanted nothing else except this mandir complete.

² The name given to the memorial of where the Sant or enlightened soul is cremated.

At that time, Shastriji Maharaj was residing at Sarangpur. It was decided that the *murti pratishtha*³ for the Gadhada mandir would take place in 1950 on Vaishakh Sud Dasham. Devotees came from Africa, England and from all directions and gathered in Gadhada to celebrate the *murti pratishtha*. Many devotees stayed in Sarangpur. For the *praan-pratishtha* of Shastriji Maharaj's beloved Gadhada mandir, mostly all the devotees from Africa came with their families; thousands of people came.

Just a few days before Vaishakh Sud Choth, Shastriji Maharaj sent Yogiji Maharaj to Mumbai to personally extend invitations to Nandaji and others for the *murti pratishtha*. Nandaji was a minister at the time. India had gained independence, but had not yet become a republic. Yogiji Maharaj was in Mumbai, all the devotees had gathered in Gadhada and Pramukh Swami was in Gadhada busy with preparations for the *murti pratishtha*. When Shastriji Maharaj's health improved a little, he called for Pramukh Swami to learn of the arrangements etc. That was when Pramukh Swami said, 'Swami! Everything is going well, and the *murtis* have arrived.' So Shastriji Maharaj said, 'My health is good, so I will come to Gadhada and perform the *pooja* of the *murtis* tomorrow. So go and make the necessary arrangements.' Pramukh Swami returned to Gadhada and opened up the *murtis* and placed them on the pedestal. Shastriji Maharaj went to Gadhada the day before Vaishakh Sud Choth. He performed *abhishek* of the *murti*, followed by *poojan* and then performed the *arti*. No one could have imagined what Shastriji Maharaj was doing. Then Shastriji Maharaj said, 'Now I am going to Sarangpur. I have done the *praan-pratishtha arti* for the *murtis*, and Yogiji Maharaj will complete all the other rituals.' Saying that, Shastriji Maharaj left for Sarangpur. Two or three days after reaching Sarangpur, Shastriji Maharaj called a few devotees namely, Maganbapa, Vallabhbai Sakaria, Tyagvallabh Swami's father and such ten to fifteen devotees and told them to stay behind with

³The consecration ceremony of the deities.

him. To all of the other devotees, Shastriji Maharaj said, 'Go to Gadhada, and help Pramukh Swami with the *murti pratishtha* seva. In this way, he sent everyone off, and then he took on an illness and on Vaishakh Sud Choth, Shastriji Maharaj renounced his physical existence. The *murti pratishtha* was six days later on Vaishakh Sud Dasham.

Just think about it! Even an ordinary sadhu would stall his earthly departure for such an important event, and say, 'we do not want to go just yet.' Just look at our Kamlaba. She was at Brahmajyoti. That year, Dhuleti was on 15 March. She had made an inner resolution that whenever it was her time to go, Jashu, Hasu, Shantibhai and Ashvinbhai should all be present, and that she did not want to go before Dhuleti. She would tell Maharaj that she did not want to spoil the Dhuleti samaiyo, by departing from her earthly frame during such a time. Shantibhai was leaving for England on 17th March, and so that left just one day in between, namely the 16th of March. Kamlaba was unwell at the time and made a decision to be admitted into hospital on 14th March. She told Jyotiben, Binduba and the other ladies, 'take me to hospital. Because I am unwell, people will keep having to run to me while the Dhuleti samaiyo is on.' So she went into hospital. We celebrated the Dhuleti samaiyo on 15 March. On 16 March, Pappaji was having a brain tumour surgery in Amdavad, and so Ashvinbhai and I left early in the morning to get to Saal Hospital in Amdavad. We met Pappaji, did dhun and then we left to come back. Kamlaba was in Anand and her health deteriorated further. We were on the way back, and were close to Nadiad, when we received a call from Kamlaba and she said to me, 'Bhai, where are you?' I said, 'We are on the highway and are going back to Brahmajyoti.' Then Ba said, 'No, don't go anywhere else, come straight to the hospital.' Hasu was there, and Ba had got Hasu to make the call. Because of this conversation with Ba, Ramesh Lothar understood straight away. He knew about Ba's health and so he put his foot down on the accelerator, and drove us at 100 – 125 k.m. per hour, and got us to Pankajbhai's hospital in Anand, in a matter of minutes. Ashvinbhai was with me, Hasu was already at the hospital and Shantibhai had also arrived at

the hospital. The four of us stood by Ba's bedside, and Ba renounced her physical existence. If she had passed to Akshardham one day later, Shantibhai would not have been there, as she had wished.

In this way, if devotees with firm conviction are able to ascertain their time of death, then this is Shastriji Maharaj we are talking about! By the grace of such a Guru we are able to stall our death, so would he not be able to stall his own passing to Akshardham? He was an extremely powerful being. But he showed that the Gadhada Mandir was a medium to raise his devotees and disciples above their *deh-bhav*⁴, and their worldiness. He showed that he was in no way attached to the Gadhada mandir; he was only attached to God. He made it seem like Gadhada was his favourite, and thereby purposefully made it a medium to connect everyone physically and mentally to Maharaj. So it was on Vaishakh Sud Choth that Shastriji Maharaj renounced his physical existence. Yogiji Maharaj was in Mumbai and was informed of this, and so Yogiji Maharaj and Nandaji took a chartered flight to Bhavnagar and then travelled to Sarangpur. The cremation rites took place the very next day. Today a memorial *smruti-mandir* has been erected there. But with Shastriji Maharaj's passing, a blanket of despondency weighed down on everyone, because the *murti pratishtha* celebrations were after only six days. Everyone thought the *murti pratishtha* would be cancelled. Many devotees packed their bags, in preparation to go back home. Those from the old mandir said, 'See! God is not pleased with you all! Even though they faced so much hardship, these *bundyas*⁵ don't understand!'

⁴ *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.

⁵ This was an abusive term, meaning traitors or defectors, as many did not understand Shastriji Maharaj's departure from Vadatal for the sake of Akshar Purushottam Upasana.

A meeting was held with Yogiji Maharaj. Everyone wondered what decision would be taken. Yogi Bapa said, 'It is God's work; it is work that was begun by our Guru, and so it is unstoppable. The *murti pratishtha* will certainly, certainly, certainly take place on Dasham. And so Yogiji Maharaj carried out the *murti pratishtha* on Dasham and broke the despondency. No one is capable of doing this. When one's beloved Guru – 'Shastriji Maharaj says 'Yogi,' then even if I am eating, I will put it all down; if I am writing, I will put the pen down, if I am sitting, I will stand immediately.' When Yogi Maharaj's most beloved of all, his Gurushri renounces his physical existence, any disciple would go into shock! Any disciple would feel great pain! But Yogiji Maharaj was not attached to Shastriji Maharaj's physical form; he was attached to the supreme Lord. It was to please the supreme essence of God that was within Shastriji Maharaj, that he was joined to him. That is why our life goal is to keep our Guru's work, our Guru's resolve continually flowing! That is why Yogiji Maharaj said, 'The date that Shastriji Maharaj has given, is the day that the *murti pratishtha* will certainly, certainly, certainly take place.' And Yogiji Maharaj made it happen.

It is in a similar way that the Amdavad Gadi's NarNarayan Dev mandir happened. Maharaj is showing us that, while we may build mandirs, create ashrams, schools or colleges, or make hundreds of thousands of people satsangee – it is not done out of *sattvic-bhav*⁶, it is not done out of some attachment, desire or because we like the cause – it is done because it is God's work. Having surrendered oneself to God, whoever joins in whatever activity is taking place for the sake of God's *prasannata*⁷, whoever gives their support to this, helps with this, takes virtue from it, sees the good in it – will not be bound to the activity, they will be bound to God – and the activity will drop aside. How that drops aside, is what Bhagwan Swaminarayan explains in this Vachanamrut. It is a lovely Vachanamrut.

⁶ *Sattvic-bhav* very generally speaking refers to the qualities of goodness, charity and purity. In this context would refer to the sentiments of do-gooder.

⁷ When God or Guru is so pleased with you that it culminates in an outpouring of grace, this is called *prasannata*.

The NarNarayan Dev Gadi *murti pratishtha* took place in Amdavad. Hundreds of thousands of people gathered. Maharaj revealed his immense glory, power and Godliness. The Muslim rule had been overthrown by the incoming British rule. The English offered land to Maharaj and the first NarNarayan Dev Gadi Swaminarayan mandir was built. There were hundreds of thousands of devotees, there were thousands of sadhus and a huge *samaiyo* took place. Everyone was so impressed and its praises were sung far and wide. At that time, Maharaj became sad and left from there. He went to Jetalpur, stayed one night and then went to Dholka and stayed there. There he thought, all of this is by God's grace, by God's wish, and by God's doing. When he brushed all of it aside in this way, with the thought that we have done nothing here, everything is being done only by the Supreme. He told it to us in this way, in order to make us understand. All of this - which is happening - all the satsang, the mandirs and all of these activities are all happening by God's wish, and by God's will. We have simply gained the opportunity to be a part of it, to offer seva! Some offer seva in the form of money, some in the form of their physical time, some in the form of gold, but it is God that is making us do this otherwise what were we going to do? Maharaj tells us, if you do it with this sentiment, then you will not be bound by anything. You will be released from all your attachments. All the mandir activities, satsang activities, satsang development activities, seva activities – were not done so that he would earn praise. Otherwise, when the NarNarayan Dev *pratishtha* took place, the whole of India felt it! What an amazing work! Maharaj says this does not hold any importance for us. What was important to him was to have sadhus who lived for God and devotees who had surrendered to God, other than that, nothing else was important. It was towards them that he held his constant gaze.

It was to raise you – me – all of us; to remove our inner demons of ego, jealousy, anger, lust and get us to attain Gunatit-bhav, that he did everything. He had no other

motive besides that. That is his work and it is solely to achieve that goal that our talents or whatever we have procured through our talents are used. It is to change that part of our mind, intellect and consciousness which does not allow us to work harmoniously with devotees and transform it so that we become one, offer devotion as one and become beloved to God. That is all he wanted to do. It is for this that Bhagwan Swaminarayan gave rise to mandirs, Santo and seva activities. And it is in those activities, through Shastriji Maharaj and Yogiji Maharaj's divine resolutions and Kakaji, Pappaji's grace that we are in the presence of Ashvinbhai – Shantibhai and doing this with their guidance. So we want to be bound only to God, to live only in God, and only for God. That is why the bhajan was sung, 'Shid ne rahiye kangal re Santo,....shid ne rahiye kangal..' One must not become dejected. The biggest shortcoming that faces the sadhu is that he becomes despondent. One must never become despondent or disheartened. Not when it comes to your work, to devotees or whatever issues you may have. Many become so depressed – how can there be so many issues? But who is it that puts those issues there? It is God. So then pray forcefully! Turn that *mala* intensely! Sit in front of God's *murti* and do dhun! If he has put it there, then it is he that will take it away, so use Him. For sadhus, no matter how many outstanding works you have, no matter how many questions and difficulties arise but you must do dhun, bhajan and prayer and never become dejected. That is why I say to you; take a look at the lives of Ashvinbhai, Shantibhai, Ratibhai! Have they ever become depressed? Have they ever put their work aside? Have they ever left everything behind and just stayed in bed sleeping? When so many situations and questions have arisen, have their faces ever fallen? Have they ever said, 'I can't do this!' These sadhus live only by the strength of God! The sadhu that lives by the strength of his intellect, talents, understanding, will one day certainly fall short, whereas the sadhu that lives by the strength of God, would cross over no matter even if countless questions were to arise.

Such sadhus will not become despondent. That is why sadhus must live by the strength of God, live for God and live as God's own. The only thing we need to hold on to is that, 'I do not want to live for myself. I want to live to please God. I do not want to eat for myself, but I want to eat only so that this God-given body stays well, and can perform the best seva.' To keep the physical body well therefore, also becomes our great devotion! It should not be that we do whatever we want with the body, throw it around, damage it and then have five people attending to us. We want to keep this body well – for God, and we want to experience the bliss of God through this body. So we want to eat, but we want to do this only to please God. Whatever activity we engage in, we want to do it for the sole reason of pleasing him. If and when our words, thoughts or actions are such that are not pleasing to God, then our consciousness should bite! We should feel inside that, 'I have thought in a way that God would not be pleased with, I have spoken in a way that God would not be pleased with, I have acted in a way that is displeasing to God.' Do not become dejected but with a heart full of repentance, look within; look towards the Lord that is within you and pray, chant.... Swaminarayan, Swaminarayan, Swaminarayan...'. That is the life of the sadhu. That is the *sadhana* of the sadhu. This is the spiritual practice that the sadhu must carry out.

When will the questions come? Even if you are sitting in your room, questions will come – issues will arise. Some might say, that it is because we are engaged in so many projects or because we go to such and such place that so many questions arise, so let us leave all of that behind and go and meditate in the pyramid. If there are just four or five mosquitos there, they will not allow you to meditate. So there is no such place where questions will not arise. But once God's gaze is upon you, and you have *atma-buddhi* and *preeti*⁸ for Santo like Ashvinbhai-Shantibhai, and if you

⁸ ***Atma-buddhi* and *preeti* means to love the Satpuruṣh as one's own soul, and thereby refers to a bond of inseparable loving association.**

have understanding then you would want to become like them at the earliest opportunity, and cross over every question or obstacle.

If you take admission into college and then you think, there are exams every three months? And then the annual exams are still outstanding. How can there be so many exams? If you think like this, you will waste your time and because of that you will lose two years and have to write even more exams! But friend! Write those exams in three years, pass them – and that's it, all of them are crossed! Then will you have to write any more exams? For as long as there is *deh-bhav*, there will be obstacles. Once you have risen above *deh-bhav*, there is no problem. It is only for 200 miles that you have weight, and once you cross 200 miles out of the atmosphere, then you are weightless! But to get 200 miles out, you have to endure such a great push. You have to withstand it.

Our activities are all on-going; whether they relate to the mandir, to satsang, to the kitchen, to *katha-varta*, to listening to discourse, doing discourse, washing dishes or transportation, going to office or college – and behind all of this activity, our Lord and the Satpurush have only one goal – which is to raise us above *deh-bhav*. And so no matter what happens, or whatever questions or obstacles arise in whatever you are doing, but do not slip into perceiving others negatively, or criticising them, or looking at their mistakes or faults – simply keep your gaze fixed on God, and keep going, keep walking forward with dhun and prayer, then you will certainly cross over. Do not look towards anything else.

This is what Maharaj is saying in this Vachanamrut, that we have taken this path to do our *sadhana*, so countless questions or difficulties may arise, but all the while you have to keep your gaze fixed on God. I want to attain God, I want to live as God's own, I want to live immersed in God – if you do this, then you will pass over whatever comes your way. Then even if your *deh-bhav* is blown to pieces, you will be able to cross over it, and the final test is when everyone is praising you, you are showered with respect and appreciation, and everyone follows you, worships you,

sings your virtues and in that supernatural stage, you eat, drink and enjoy. But God is forgotten in this; and you start to think of yourself as God. That stage is the most dangerous of all. You must not even give it a single glance!

'*Aksharam aham pragat Purushottam swaroopasya dassosmi*' – everything that is happening is not because of me, it is because of God and through God that it is all happening. It is because of God that I have got to this stage. It is because of him that all of this exists. It is because he is king, that I am queen. If I had not married the king, I would have simply remained a beggar. In this way, it is God that has accepted me, who has given me seva, who has given me the strength to do seva, who has given me the opportunity to live my life as his – and so everything that exists is because of him. Hold onto these sentiments tightly and keep walking forward, and you can become Akshardham-roop.

Maharaj wants to take us to this stage, and for that he will engage you in activity. You will have to do something or the other. Even the doctor will say to you, 'I am giving you some medicine, but make sure you eat a little food with it, otherwise it will affect you adversely.' Similarly God says that he wants to give us *prasannata*, but engage your physical being in some form of seva; use your skills and talents for seva. Whatever wealth or gold you attain through the use of your intelligence and skills, use it for God's work. [God says] If you do this, then as a result the medicine I have got to make you *Akshar-roop* will take effect, and will work in your lives.

Bhagwan Swaminarayan is telling us in this Vachanamrut Gadhada Madhya 22, that we did not create the NarNarayan Dev mandir. The *murti-pratishtha* samaiyo did not happen. Hundreds of thousands of people did not gather. 'I am the *das* of God, I am the servant – besides this I am nothing.' Maharaj says it is when he thought in this way, that he felt at peace. What he is trying to tell us is that, this is how we must live. People may shout and scream. They may attack you with verbal abuse, swear at you; there will be people who will try to scare you and finally there will be those that will praise you. But you must not look towards

any of this. Besides God, besides the wish to live for God, besides the wish to keep God, besides the wish to carry out the devotion of his devotees, there is no joy in life.

At the age of 79 – 80 years, what exceptional devotion Ashvinbhai and Shantibhai have! Everyone calls them ‘Guru,’ but they do not pay even the slightest attention towards that. These sadhus have transcended even the supernatural stage, but they live amongst us and so to understand their glory as it actually is, becomes a bit difficult. But if we understand that glory, then God says, there is nothing left for you to do. It is due to our shortcoming that we do not understand that *mahima*⁹, and it is for that reason that God joins us to an activity. Now we certainly want to get rid of that shortcoming. We have to think of his glory – ohoho what a sadhu we have attained! The Lord we have attained! Bhagwan Swaminarayan manifested so far away in Chhapaiya, and came onto earth simply for us. Not only did he manifest, but he stayed manifest through the Gunatit sadhu, and joined us to such a sadhu. What immense grace God has showered upon us. Now if because of our foolishness, we do not understand this *mahima*, do not act to please him, do not live our lives to please him, do not put aside our likes and wants, then there is no one as foolish as us. If a plate is placed in front of you, filled with wonderful dishes, and the aroma is exquisite, but you do not eat – then people would call you a fool! So you must eat, meaning – you must remain immersed in his *mahima* and keep carrying out your devotion. The absolute best instrument that we have to carry this out, is our own physical body. Without any inconsistencies whatsoever, these Santo are using their physical body 100% in seva. For them, the sole aim of pleasing God, is their *murti*! The constant reflection and contemplation on this is their devotion! They do not want good food, nor do they crave any form of praise or respect, or any object or possession. But whatever objects or possessions they have, they make the absolute best use of in and for God’s work.

⁹ *Mahima* refers to an inner understanding of glory, virtues, qualities and greatness.

The king of Bhavnagar told Bhagatji Maharaj, ‘If you stitch garments for me, like the one’s you have stitched for your Bhagwan, then I will give you as much money as you want.’ Bhagatji Maharaj replied, ‘Raja Saheb! The stitches I take for my Thakorji are stitches of love. No matter how much money you give me, I will not be able to bring that love into what I stitch for you.’ When we look at the work of this mandir, we can see the love of the Santo and bhakto, and it is because of this that the work will be completed. So many devotees are offering their devotional surrender with such great love and affection, for the purpose of pleasing God – and the fragrance of this will spread. And from our side, without becoming in the slightest bit dejected, whatever work has fallen into our laps, whatever seva has come our way – no matter whether the seva is big or small – it does not matter in the slightest – simply do it with love and devotion. That is what Bhagwan Swaminarayan looks at. If you do that seva with the sentiment that you are so fortunate to have the seva, then even if you donate one rupee, you will receive the *prasannata* that is showered upon one who donates crores of rupees. It will be showered upon one who may place a single brick and equally upon one who carries hundreds of thousands of bricks for the mandir. Whoever performs seva with utmost love, is upon whom God’s *prasannata* will descend.

We want to become bound to God. But to become bound to God, you have to make God’s work your own. You have to carry it out believing it to be yours, and in doing so you will become more and more bound to God. Maharaj has explained in this Vachanamrut that you must carry out your work, your duty and never become dejected. God does not like us becoming despondent, and therefore we must not become despondent. With the constant inclination to please God, we must keep doing what we have to do. To brush aside whatever obstacles come in our way is our *sadhana* – our spiritual practice!

Sahajanand Swami Maharaj ni Jai! ◆