

# *Nirdosh Buddhi : Lessons from the International Youth Retreat*

Saurashtra Yatra : Sarangpur, Gadhada, Rajkot, Gondal, Faneni, Junagadh, Manavadar, Loj, Somnath, Dhari, Vadtal

Uttar Pradesh Yatra : Ayodhya, Chhapaiya, Delhi.

~ Saheli Sheth  
(Peoria, USA)

**You** may not realize it now. But when you return home after this *tirth yatra* [pilgrimage], each of you will notice subtle ways you've been transformed from who you were before." I listened to a speaker at the sacred site of Chhapaiya, Lord Swaminarayan's birthplace, while seated in a mandir hall that somehow managed to exude both coziness and grandeur. I eagerly jotted down the speaker's wise words, waiting for my transformation to unfold.

Days after the retreat, I felt a surge of anger rise in the pit of my stomach as a loved one spoke unnecessarily harshly to me. "How rude of them!" my mind immediately scolded. Seconds later, another smaller, wiser, more refreshing voice in my mind gently whispered, "Remember '*nirdosh buddhi*'? God inspired them to say that." The anger melted away as quickly as it had come, and a river of peace flowed through me instead. Instead of adding fuel to the fire by snapping back, I was able to calmly walk away.

This lesson of '*nirdosh buddhi*' is one of many that Sant Bhagwant Sahebji instilled in us youth during the 2023-2024 International Youth Retreat. While sitting in a divine sabha in Chhapaiya during the retreat, senior devotees explained: *Nirdosh* = faultless. *Nirdosh buddhi* is the commitment to seeing each action of another individual as flawless. Why? Because it is God who inspired them, it is He who acts and speaks through them. The individual remains flawless and innocent.

This principle allows us to maintain inner peace amid conflict. However, it's important to note that in situations of abuse or domestic violence, *nirdosh buddhi* does not mean accepting what's happening. In these situations, which are never okay, one is encouraged to take action or report, if desired, to promote safety. *Nirdosh buddhi* is a tool that can be used for healing, not a mandate to stay silent.

Back in the Chhapaiya sabha, the words spilled out onto my notebook as I absorbed them like a sponge. As the low hum of the mandir bells rang in the distance, a devotee explained a foolproof tool she used to return to *nirdosh*

*buddhi*: '*Mari marji vina re koi thi taranu nav todaay.*' [Without God's wish, not even a leaf can move.] Later, Sadguru Sant Pujya Manojdasji shared in Vadtal that the following bhajan line keeps *nirdosh buddhi* constantly on his mind: '*Sahu na jo prerak chhe, Shriji niyantrak, toh kathputali na aa khel chhe*' [Everything is inspired by & directed by God; we are all just puppets abiding by His script].

In many ways, Sahebji sprinkled the wisdom of *nirdosh buddhi* throughout this trip. In Sahebji's own handwriting, pens were distributed to each retreat participant on the first day with this written: '*Nirdosh buddhi kareli seva e sarvopari seva*' [*Nirdosh buddhi* is the supreme *seva*]. During our closing sabha in Delhi, *nirdosh buddhi* still held its place as a topic. In a conference hall in Delhi, Sahebji shared that if someone tells us we look good, we can say, "God made me this way." And if someone says we look ridiculous, we can also say, "God made me this way." When we practice the oh-so-challenging qualities of accepting God as the all-doer and keeping *nirdosh buddhi*, such statements no longer affect our peace.

Our senior youth leaders during the retreat were such divine souls that not only did they absorb these words, but they also put them into practice and taught us to seek the good - and the God - in one another. Long bus rides were filled with us taking turns to choose a person and share their positive qualities, leading to tears, laughter, and overflowing hearts. Interstate plane rides consisted of us trading our journals with one another, as we filled the back pages of each other's books with handwritten uplifting notes. Upon returning home, I could at any time reread these positive notes to be reminded of Sahebji's timeless legacy: a generation of youth who seek the beauty in one another.

And upon returning home, I started to notice the gentle voice that whispered, "It's okay, God is acting through them."

The ensuing peace.

And alas, the beginning of a transformation. ◆