

Chapter 2

A Deluge of Divine Love

An unbroken lineage of ideal Gunatit gurus has continued to manifest on Earth to forever further the missions for which Bhagwan Swaminarayan incarnated. Through his life, Aksharbrahma Gunatitanand Swami demonstrated a comprehensive saintliness and revealed his *ishtadev* Bhagwan Swaminarayan as the supreme God. Brahmaswarup Bhagatji Maharaj declared, “Gunatitanand Swami is the incarnation of Aksharbrahma and the divine abode of Parabrahma Purushottam Narayan Sahajanand Swami.” For this, he had to endure constant insult and ignominy, as the power-brokers in the Sampradaya of his time had him excommunicated and poisoned. Still, Bhagatji Maharaj did not waver from his life’s work.

Shastriji Maharaj established mandirs with the *murtis* of Akshar and Purushottam to forever foster spiritual aspirants’ practice of

Akshar Purushottam *upasana*. Embodying a rare confluence of profound scholarship and pristine saintliness, together with humility, fearlessness, and an overwhelming commitment to truth, he endured intolerable insults, indignities, and hardships to construct magnificent mandirs with the help of only a handful of sadhus and devotees, subsisting on whatever was received in alms, and keeping only Bhagwan Swaminarayan as his support. He made the eternal principle of becoming Aksharrup and worshiping Purushottam accessible to all, thus opening the gateway of liberation for countless spiritual aspirants.

Shastriji Maharaj initiated the wide dissemination of the principle of becoming *brahmarup* and worshiping Purushottam, which is the essence of Vedanta. Moreover, he explained that the ideal guru—the Gunatit Sant through whom God manifests—was necessary to attain the *brahmic* state. He helped countless souls attain that *brahmic* state and then entrusted the guidance of the following

generation to the next ideal Gunatit guru, Yogiji Maharaj, who was revered throughout the Sampradaya.

It would be no exaggeration to say that no description of a divine soul like Yogiji Maharaj could possibly do him justice, as the countless liberating virtues of God constantly shone through his divine personality. How to recognize these virtues? And how to describe them? The answers to these questions cannot even be conceived of by any worldly intellect. But then, a kirtan that Yogiji Maharaj used to often sing and explain comes to mind.

Hāji bhalā sādhu, Hariki sādhu,

Tanki upādhi taje so hi sādhu...

Mān apmānme ektā, sukh-dukhme sambhāv;

Ahi ke sukh alp hai, nahi svarg luchāv...
tanki 1

Lālach lobh harām hai, grahe na gānthe dām;

Nāri nāgni sam taje, rate nirantar Rām...
tanki 2

Math na bāndhe mamtā kari, shathtā kini
tyāg;

Kabahu krodh na upaje, so sāchā vairāgya...
tanki 3

Tyāge tikhā tamtamā, rasnā bhogavilās;
Muktānand so santke, sadā rahat Hari pās...
tanki 4

(A good sadhu is he who renounces bodily
concerns and strives to please God.

Equanimity in honor and insult, equipoise in
happiness and misery,

Perceiving as paltry the happiness here,
untempted by the pleasures of *svarg*...

Temptation and greed are taboo, money he
won't touch,

Avoiding women like cobras, forever
absorbed in chanting God's name...

He won't build a monastery and get attached
to it, he renounces intrigues,

Never does anger awaken in him, that is true
vairagya...

He avoids spicy and tasty foods and sensual indulgences,

He is a Sant, says Muktanand, who remains forever close to God.)

When Yogiji Maharaj sang these verses by Muktanand Swami in his distinctive cadence and style, fully immersed in every word, listeners could not help but be convinced that he was a living, breathing embodiment of the principles of saintliness expressed in this kirtan. Once, he even revealed that, “I ‘own’ this kirtan.”

In short, the *vairagya* and eightfold *brahmacharya*, the austerities and service, the renunciation and forbearance, the devotion and *mahima* that made up his unique personality remain well beyond the reach of any words of this world.

While Yogiji Maharaj was a repository of countless such virtues, he always kept them

concealed, effortlessly epitomizing the words of Muktanand Swami's kirtan, "*Sab guna puran param viveki, guna ko măn na āve...* (Replete with all virtues, he possesses the highest spiritual discernment and has no pride despite his virtues.)" His constant concealment of his virtues is one of the reasons it is difficult to fully describe him. He often repeated the following verse adapted from Guru Nanak:

"Nāne se ho nāne rahie, jaisi nāni dub; Ghās fis sab ud gayā, dub khubki khub.

(It is best to remain low and humble, like grass. Because during a flood, bigger, inflexible shrubs and bushes will be swept away, while grass will remain since it bends and allows water to flow past.)"¹

Such humility was his natural state of being, together with an understanding of the glory of God's devotees to the extent mentioned in the following verse by Tulsidas:

"Tulsi jā ke mukhanse, bhule nikse Rāma; Tāke pagki paheniyā, mere tanki chām."

(Tulsi says: For one who, even by mistake, utters the name “Rama” from his lips, I would make shoes for his feet from my own skin.)

Although Yogiji Maharaj would always scrupulously attempt to conceal his sentiment of devotional servanthood, his attitude of seeing others’ greatness, and his many other godly virtues, they would spontaneously reveal themselves in his loving splendor, his affectionate eyes, and his innocent laugh.

His was not the innocence of a child. Children merely appear innocent due to their ignorance and helplessness. In contrast, Yogiji Maharaj spontaneously exuded an unflagging innocence born of his absolute apathy towards the world and his profound love for God. This distinctive aspect of his personality prompted him to shower his pure love and affection upon all, irrespective of their worthiness. One taste of this pure love and no one could stop themselves from wishing to experience it again and again. His attraction was such that even after physical separation from him, the warmth of his

presence sustained people for years. His was a personality of pristine love from head to toe! It was an otherworldly personality that enveloped everyone in its warm embrace, did not feel foreign anywhere, and led countless people to become attached to him. With his eyes exuding love and his laughter overflowing with affection, it appeared that he was constantly doling out the divine bliss of Paramatma.

Every moment's interaction with him demonstrated an innate inclination to constantly tolerate and endure hardships that was grounded in his generosity of spirit, sweetness, and affection. Such an inclination to constantly endure suffering for the sake of others can only arise from a profound wellspring of affection and compassion. His life was saturated with the affection and joy of God. Due to his constant focus on God, he always remained ever-fresh. The light of Brahman shone forever bright on his face! His saintliness had not been painstakingly cultivated; it was an

effortless element of his innate nature! He was a Gunatit Sant!

He who had embodied a serene renunciation solely for the sake of pleasing God, who found boundless joy in service, who constantly found ways to perform the most menial of services understanding it to be his great fortune, who felt a sweet affection for one and all arising from the very depths of his heart—he had given his life for the service of God’s devotees, and he selflessly wrung every last drop of himself into serving them.

For a simple, concise description of his unique personality, one could say that the more misery and hardship he suffered in his life, the happier he was, and the more insults and ignominy he had to endure, the happier he was!

His speech was unadorned, succinct, and holy, like a stream of pure egolessness springing from a heart free of worldly pollution and desires. Since he always practiced what he preached, his soul-penetrating talks built a spiritual bridge between him and his listeners.

When he had spent every second of his life for the good of others, constantly planting the seeds of faith, devotion, and trust in God within all humanity, was it surprising that his spiritual influence pervaded every corner of society?

While everyone found themselves transformed by his company, he focused his special attention on the youth, amongst whom faith and religious practice had been declining. When the innocent, guileless, and seemingly uneducated Yogiji Maharaj attracted so many well-educated, intelligent youth to him, people began to realize the purposefulness and foresight of his work. These modern youth took delight in worldly pleasures, whereas Yogiji Maharaj was absolutely detached from the world. The youth were self-indulgent, whereas Yogiji Maharaj remained apathetic to worldly pleasures. However, like the philosopher's stone, Yogiji Maharaj transformed the debased minds of the directionless youth whom he touched into pure gold. He had an unfailing power to inspire spiritual confidence within

youth. He would awaken an unwavering confidence in even those youth who had experienced terrible setbacks and discouragements in their life. Not only did Yogiji Maharaj instill faith in youths who had become atheists, but he made their lives holy and pure by engaging them in service and devotion. This was his great miracle!

He used to say, “Virtues, courtesy, and service pave the path to progress. *Shraddha*, *khap*, and association with the spiritually great are also necessary for progress in life. One should ever associate with a true Sant. However, if we keep obstinacy, ego, and jealousy, we will fall from Satsang.”

Yogiji Maharaj strongly insisted that together with the restraint of the senses, youth should observe *brahmacharya*. He kept the youth constantly vigilant in observing these vows to conserve the limitless power of the *atma* through their steadfast practice of *brahmacharya*.

Yogiji Maharaj did not attract youths through the temptations of worldly gain or fame. He taught youths to stand on their own feet and attain the knowledge of *atma* and Paramatma to elevate their lives to the highest extent possible.

Yogiji Maharaj gave youth the motivation and energy to uplift their lives by helping them set a goal to live an ethical, moral, and spiritual life. The mantras of *brahmavidya* that were chanted in the ancient ashrams of Vyas, Valmiki, and Vashishtha were revived amongst the modern-day youth through the mobile center of spiritual education established by Yogiji Maharaj known as Brahmavidya College.

Yogiji Maharaj gave just as much importance to small children. Despite the vast age difference, Yogiji Maharaj would become like a child amongst children in order to nurture them with loving inspiration. In addition to children's and youth activities, Yogiji Maharaj established various satsang traditions for adults, including attendance at

weekly satsang assemblies and daily reading of the Vachanamrut, Swamini Vato, and other scriptures. Moreover, he consolidated the devotees' faith in Bhagwan Swaminarayan as supreme God and Gunatitanand Swami as his divine abode, Akshardham. He taught everyone to shift their allegiance from lesser devas and devis and consolidate a singular fidelity in their devotion towards their choicest deity and guru. Bhagwan Swaminarayan had promised to remain ever-present on Earth through the Gunatit Sant, and Yogiji Maharaj established that the Gunatit Sant is one and unparalleled. He granted countless followers a living conviction of ultimate liberation and complete fulfillment.

He emphasized the ideals of unity, affection, and oneness, and by establishing that the guru will only be pleased by those who live these ideals, he knit together this vast Satsang community through threads of mutual affection. Through his love and affection, he brought together many small, independent

groups that professed the knowledge of Gunatit. He naturally attracted countless people of other *sampradayas* and other religions. In this way, Yogiji Maharaj's loving, divine form spread throughout society. The adult and the elderly, the poor and the rich, the scholarly and the powerful, no one remained bereft of his loving refuge. Thus, as a culmination of the *upasana*-mandirs that Shastriji Maharaj had built, through his divine powers, Yogiji Maharaj created countless young and old devotees who were "living mandirs." This mass transformation will one day go down as an unparalleled achievement in human history.

His mission was not bound by the borders of India, as he created Akshar Purushottam mandirs in Africa and England to forever nurture spiritual values and keep devotion and faith alive in those who had migrated. He also initiated countless activities in the fields of education, literature, health care, social service,

and tribal upliftment to foster society's overall development.

Yogiji Maharaj's remarkable, unflagging enthusiasm for putting Swaminarayan Hinduism onto the world map was indescribable. Yet, through it all, Yogiji Maharaj remained forever conscious that all these activities were possible only through Bhagwan Swaminarayan and guru Shastriji Maharaj's inspiration and strength. This saintliness of Yogiji Maharaj was the true cause of the universal spread of his fame.

“Jyā juve tyā Rāmaji, biju na bhāse re...”

(Wherever he looks, he sees God; He sees nothing else...)

Yogiji Maharaj did not just see everyone as equal, but he saw all devotees as divine in light of their association with God. Through this divine perspective, he captivated countless minds, like an expert psychologist. Yet, in truth, even that statement is slightly off the mark because for he who resides within all,

what is impossible? So it was that when he showered the same care and love upon countless souls at once, everyone realized his all-pervading form. Without touching every soul, without absolute intimacy, was it possible that he could so effectively nurture so many people of such disparate natures and inclinations simultaneously?

He was a great communicator and could communicate the subtlest messages in his conversations with the general public. He let no one, young or old, great or small, feel even the slightest distance in their relationship with him. He was so adept at this that he could satisfy and please everyone. Keeping in mind the vast Satsang community, he would always think of programs whereby everyone in Satsang could progress together. His leadership style was collaborative, as he involved many in the decision-making process. He had a remarkable power of coordination! He also had a natural and unique talent for planning and implementing balanced programs for both

individual and collective spiritual development. While he shouldered most of the workload, he would distribute all the credit to others. His management was so successful that not even the smallest person would be unhappy with it, and yet he possessed not an iota of showmanship or pretentiousness. This was a reflection of his pure intent to do things that were true, beneficial to all, and liked by all. It was also an introduction to the grace and strength of God that he enjoyed.

In the *Vachanamrut*, Bhagwan Swaminarayan describes such a Sant as equal to his own heart with the words, “He also possesses countless noble virtues such as *jnān*, *bhakti*, *vairāgya*, etc. God eternally resides in the heart of such a devotee. Consequently, by the grace of God, that devotee attains countless types of powers and liberates countless beings. Despite these powers, though, he tolerates the praises and insults of other people. This itself is also a great feat, because to tolerate despite being so powerful is not easy for others to

achieve. Therefore, one who tolerates in this manner should be considered to be extremely great.”

In this way, constantly tolerating, forever concealing his prowess, Yogiji Maharaj was beyond the comprehension of the mind and speech.

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¹ The original verse from Guru Nanak is as follows:

“Nānak nānā ho raho, jaisi nāni dub; Ghās pāt sab suk gaye, dub rahe khub khub.”