

Chapter 21

Sanctified Har Ki Pedi in Haridwar

On 1 December 1953, the special train reached Haridwar. The surrounding scenery was lovely, as if nature had specially adorned herself to please her beloved Hari. Listening to spiritual discourses in such a beautiful setting brought even more delight. As always, Swamishri organized a spiritual assembly. He began the assembly with the *mangalacharan shloka*, “*Mahādhyānābhyaśam...*”, And then recited Vachanamrut Gadhada I 76 from memory. Explaining this Vachanamrut, Swamishri said, “An angry person, a jealous person, a deceitful person, and an egotistical person—these are four types of people I do not get along with, even if they happen to be devotees of God. The message here is that although we have all become devotees, and we turn the *mala* chanting the name of Swaminarayan, without eradicating our base

natures, we cannot legitimately be called *satsangis*. If you are tempted to get angry, then indulge in this anger only when someone tries to persuade you to forsake your religious vows. That anger becomes *nirgun*. The jealous cannot bear another's progress. The deceitful engage in hypocritical devotion. Instead, one should be absolutely honest. Contemplate upon Vachanamrut Loya 5. With regard to jealousy, think about what Maharaj says in Vachanamrut Sarangpur 8. Regarding anger, ponder on Maharaj's words in Vachanamrut Loya 1. As for ego, consider Maharaj's words in Vachanamrut Loya 16.

“Moreover, Maharaj says: ‘I can never believe a lustful person to be a *satsangi*.’ One who flouts the five religious vows cannot be said to be a *satsangi*. To follow these five religious vows physically is a type of hardship. But one should endure this hardship and properly observe these religious vows. There are the hardships of abiding by God’s commands, the hardships involved in offering

service, and even the hardship of being forced to sit and listen to spiritual discourses for two extra hours, contrary to one's nature. But whoever accepted these hardships experienced joy. So, one should endure all types of hardships. Serve the devotees. If you offer service, such as bringing devotees water for bathing, providing them *datans* for brushing, etc, then Shastriji Maharaj will be pleased."

At 10 a.m., everyone set off for the banks of the Ganga River for a holy dip at Har ki Pedi. Swamishri and the sadhus sat in horse-drawn carriages while the devotees walked in a procession while chanting the Swaminarayan *dhun*. As the procession passed through the town, countless people folded their hands and bowed their heads as they had darshan of Swamishri. The Ganga was rushing along, eager to purify its waters further and revitalize itself by bathing Swamishri. Swamishri first bathed Harikrishna Maharaj and then himself bathed in the river. He sprinkled water upon the heads of all the devotees and commanded them to

bathe as well. Thus, everyone received the rare opportunity to offer their guru puja in such a holy place of pilgrimage.