

Chapter 22

A Windfall of Akshar's Bliss in Mumbai

On Saturday, 24 July 1954, Swamishri traveled with a group of sadhus to Mumbai.

Due to Pratapsinh Inamdar's efforts, the accommodations for the entire group were arranged in the large Kapolvadi community plot near the Swaminarayan mandir in the center of the city. A small, decorated mandir with the *murtis* of Akshar Purushottam Maharaj and the lineage of gurus had been set up in the center of Kapolvadi's large hall. In the beginning, Pramukh Swami delivered discourses on the *Satsangijivan*. The *Satsangijivan parayan* concluded on Sunday, 8 August 1954. Senior and prominent devotees of the Sampradaya, including Chokshi Saheb, Sheth Kalyanjibhai, Sheth Manekchand Gandhi, and others, attended the discourses regularly. Then, Sant Swami, Mota Swami, and

other sadhus began a second *parayan* in which they delivered discourses on the Vachanamrut.

At night, Harshadbhai Dave would read Vachanamruts in the assembly upon which Yogiji Maharaj would offer his extraordinary insights.

“Who can be called a *jivan mukta*?” Answering this question himself, Swamishri said, “One who has fully realized God while still alive can be called a *jivan mukta*. Having conquered all five *indriyas*, such a person would forever keep his mind focused on God. But such a state can be attained only if one meets a guru of such caliber.

“The guru gives us feet so we may strive for our liberation and travel to religious festivals and observances. He gives us hands to turn the *mala* and perform *seva*. He grants us peace from all suffering, whether caused by circumstances, others, or our own base natures. Yet, ‘*Je vade ã jakta chhe tene koi na jāne re...*’ (He who is the cause and support of this cosmos is unknown to all...) This is our

ignorance. Before we know it, such a guru can transform us so that we are free from the six bodily dispositions (appetites and cravings, sorrow and delusion, decrepitude and death). He who we wanted to attain after death, we have attained while still alive. If we understand such glory, we can perceive constant divinity in the manifest form of God. According to Vachanamrut Gadhada III 9, such a devotee has attained God's abode while still alive. One can develop such an understanding of glory by associating with those who are godly.

“See, people flock to have darshan of this pillar, but no one comes for darshan of this Sadhu! Before you know it, this Sadhu will elevate you to a state of spiritual perfection, transcendent of *maya*. In answer to Balchandra Sheth's question in the *Satsangijivan*, the form of bhakti has been described. We should practice that type of bhakti. Listening to spiritual discourses has been described as the primary type of bhakti. At that time, one should forsake every other thought. While listening to

spiritual discourses, one must become *brahmarup*. Only then can one realize the manifest form of God. It is the immense great fortune of this Vadi that such unparalleled sadhus have graced it with their presence. A divine explanation of transcendent spiritual knowledge has occurred here. Henceforth, whoever makes their accommodations here will attain the highest spiritual state. Thus has this location become a matchless place of pilgrimage.

“Prahlad won God over in six months, but today one does not have to make such extreme efforts. If one tries their hardest, then God is such that he can be won over in just six hours. This is possible if one maintains a constant remembrance of God and a constant vigilance to sustain it. What is this vigilance? If one lapses in following God's commands or wavers in one's *upasana*, one can be said to have forfeited their vigilance.

“When can one be said to have entrusted one's life to God? When nothing of ours

remains. Just like Dada Khachar. For such a devotee, happiness exists only within God and God's Sant. Only one who constantly upholds God is the Sant. If we understand Maharaj and the Sant to be the singular source of happiness, then we would not be tempted by any object of this world. One who wishes for worldly happiness is not a devotee. The following verse illustrates this point:

“Sukhne māt̥he shilā pade, Rām hrudethi jāy,

Balihāri e dukhni, pale pale Rām bhajāy.”

(May boulders bury pleasures, as they prompt Ram's exit from one's heart,

Kudos instead to miseries, as they inspire Ram's worship at every beat of one's heart)

“The gateway in the form of awareness is itself Akshardham. Maharaj has explained this in an assembly of the 500 *paramhansas* and senior devotees. When all their deficiencies had dissolved and their base natures had been eradicated, what did Maharaj describe as

thieves and robbers? If one develops an aversion for God and God's Satpurush, or perceives a flaw in them, or perceives human traits in their actions, then defects have infiltrated the gateway to one's awareness. Thus, one should constantly perceive the Satpurush as flawless. How can one develop such a perception of flawlessness towards the Satpurush? For that, one should contemplate on Vachanamrut Vartal 11.

“Love for the Satpurush is the highest spiritual endeavor. When can this love develop a oneness with the *atma*? Only if that love has been developed after having eradicated every worldly desire. That love can be said to be similar to the *atma*. To further understand that, one should ponder over Vachanamrut Panchala 3. Perceiving God and the Satpurush as flawless is itself *seva*.”

During this period, Swamishri visited many devotees' homes. When Swamishri would return to his accommodations after visiting devotees' homes, he would grasp the wrists of

two youths and walk rapidly around the perimeter of Kapolvadi. While walking, Swamishri would speak with such heart-penetrating power that even the feeblest and most timorous youth would be imbued with an invincible enthusiasm.

Since it was the rainy season of Shravan, Swamishri would sit in his seat in the assembly hall rather than outside. Framed by his shawl, woolen cap, and white beard, his sturdy countenance appeared resplendent.

One afternoon, on a day of fast, after using the bathroom, Swamishri was returning to the assembly hall while holding onto the arms of Vinubhai and Harikrishnabhai Patel of Ahmedabad. As they approached the *murti* of Shastriji Maharaj, Swamishri said, “See, Shastriji Maharaj is our mother and father.” Then, looking around, he pointed to some devotees seated at a distance and said, “These are our relatives.” Then raising his hands toward the ceiling, he explained, “This is our house, Akshardham! Now there is no coming

and going left for us. Everything is here. Thus, become sadhus!”

Swamishri was casually advancing towards the fulfillment of his own mission. Swamishri's ability to inspire renunciation amongst the youth by providing the divine contact of his presence was truly extraordinary.

On 8 August 1954, at the conclusion of the *parayan*, Swamishri blessed the assembly, “One should not listen to talks highlighting another's flaws. According to Vachanamrut Gadhada I 71, the God who we wanted to attain following death, we have attained in this very life. If we can understand this truth, then we would be sure to perceive divinity in his manifest form. According to Vachanamrut Gadhada III 7, such a devotee has attained God's divine abode while still alive. One can understand these glorious truths by associating with God's devotee. The less we associate in such a fashion, the less we will understand this glory.

“To say that Akshar plays countless parts means that he takes countless forms. But, Maharaj completely resides within the distinct form of Akshar in order to fulfill his mission—and that can only be a single form of Akshar. So, one should become detached from everything else and cultivate a singular affection for that manifest form of God that is walking amongst us on this Earth. One should incorporate into one's life the principles of Vachanamrut Gadhada II 24. Only then will one be able to realize one's *atma*.

“To realize one's *atma* is not to see one's *atma* via introspection, but to see the *atma* manifest in this world before our very eyes. But to realize this *atma* requires one to have attained an elevated spiritual state through *jnan*. Only then can one believe this truth.”

On the morning of 15 August 1954, Swamishri visited the home of Raval Saheb. Every time Swamishri would visit anyone's home, he would invariably recite some Swamini Vato. If there was time, he would explain them.

In this way, he would casually serve such Gunatit *jnan*.

Today, at Raval Saheb's house, Swamishri spoke to the assembled devotees:

“What is it that has become very easy today? You don't have to perform austerities. Previously, extreme austerities had to be performed. Now, since that is no longer possible, mandirs have been constructed. In this way, the seclusion of the forest is attained in the midst of the bustling city. We accept full meals, but we should eat only after adding water and mixing our food; thus, we become *niswadi* (unattached to tasty foods). Today it has become easy to observe the five *vartmans*. Maharaj has thus graced us with great compassion.”

Even in the short span of a home visit, Swamishri would casually share such talks explaining the greatness of the Satsang fellowship. Moreover, he would say, as a matter of course, that today it had become very easy to observe the five *vartmans*. Despite the fact that

observing the five *vartmans*—*nishkam*, *nirlobh*, *niswad*, *nihsneh*, and *nirman*—was exceedingly difficult, for Swamishri it was simple and natural. From this, one could naturally draw conclusions about Swamishri's otherworldly spiritual state.

That evening Swamishri, the sadhus, and devotees attended a gathering of the Mochi community at the Vitthalnathji mandir in Walkeshwar. After giving his blessings, Swamishri returned to Kapolvadi.

The following day, Swamishri visited Inamdar Saheb's office, where he said, "When this world appears false to you like a mirage, then you can be said to have attained true *jnan*. Only after having attained that *jnan* can one enjoy the happiness of association with the Sant. Thus, even after coming into contact with Satsang, one will not become happy if one does not do *samagam*."

Thus, Swamishri's spiritual wisdom flowed unceasingly, explaining the essence of satsang and leading everyone towards the highest

spiritual ideals. Whether it was a child or an adult, the penniless or the prosperous, Swamishri's singular focus was on liberating everyone from *maya* to grant everyone the bliss of Brahman.

On 17 August 1954, Sekhsaria Sheth came for Swamishri's darshan. Swamishri recited the Swamini Vat, "When the entire universe worships Swaminarayan, then you should know that Satsang has spread... To convince others of Maharaj's supremacy is *seva*. It is the ultimate bhakti."

Even when a multimillionaire Marwadi businessman like Sekhsaria Sheth came to see him, Swamishri, in his own divine mood, spoke on such *sampradayik* topics. What focus he had on spreading Maharaj's true glory! Other than one who is Gunatit, who could speak like this! Others would be subdued by such a person's worldly greatness, but would be unable to tell it like it is. They would talk in a way that would please the worldly great. But as Gunatitanand Swami had said, one must speak

of Maharaj's glory without looking to the worthiness of the vessel. The Satpurush's seminal words could not fail to be effective. That is exactly what would happen. Such multimillionaire businessmen, intellectual giants, lawyers, doctors, and educated professionals were all enthralled by Swamishri's spiritual prowess. They would be lost in Swamishri's darshan. They would be drowned in the deluge of his selfless, divine love. They would quaff the immortalizing nectar of his words. Whether or not they understood his spiritual talks, their experience made them certain of one thing—that this sadhu was not of this world. He was a spiritually elevated sage! Anyone who met him would develop at least this firm conviction!

Swamishri stayed in Mumbai for twenty-eight days. Every day, many new spiritual aspirants would meet him, accept initiation into Satsang, and become his followers. Harmanbhai was overseeing the responsibility of Swamishri's correspondence. Bhagwandas

Sheth, Nanubhai, Mahipatbhai, Jesangbhai, and other devotees had assumed the responsibility for making all of Swamishri's arrangements.