

Chapter 10

The Gunatit Mandir’s Gunatit Mahant

On the day following the *pratishtha*, Shastriji Maharaj described the unparalleled glory of this place to the assembled devotees: “Just as a *thal* worth ‘700 is offered every day at Shrinathji, the same will happen here. Moreover, this place will become the supreme locus of liberation in the entire universe and a place that will fulfill all the auspicious desires of the faithful.”

Then, Shastriji Maharaj continued, “The Mahant of such a supreme site of Mul Akshar Gunatitanand Swami should also be the supreme and manifest form of Gunatit. Thus, today, we are placing the garland of mahantship of Akshar Mandir around the neck of Yogi Maharaj.”

In the presence of all the sadhus and thousands of devotees from far and wide,

Shastriji Maharaj applied a *chandlo* to Yogi Maharaj's forehead and placed a garland around his neck. Everyone accepted their beloved Yogi Maharaj as the new mahant with great joy.

In addition to the responsibility for Akshar Mandir, Yogi Maharaj's travels continued. His companion sadhu was Hariswarupdas Swami. As Yogi Maharaj was strongly inclined to perform austerities, he would regularly fast. Consequently, his companion sadhu would also have to fast. However, due to his young age and strenuous travels, Hariswarupdas Swami found it challenging to remain hungry. So, when Yogi Maharaj would answer the call of nature and take a bath at 4 p.m., Hariswarupdas Swami would stealthily eat the *magaj* laddus that Yogi Maharaj kept to distribute as prasad.

Yogi Maharaj appeared naïve, but he was extremely sharp at understanding situations and assessing people's natures. Although he would pick up on everything, he wouldn't say anything straightaway. When they broke their

fast the following day, Yogi Maharaj remarked, “Guru! You should not transgress God’s commands. One can conquer the senses through austerities. Maharaj is very pleased by our sincere practice of austerities. But he isn’t pleased if we pamper our body with excessive food and sleep.”

Yogi Maharaj recited for him one of his favorite verses from the Bhaktachintamani, “*Tap jevu vahālu chhe Vālamne, tevu nathi biju kāi...*” (Austerities are beloved of Beloved (God), like nothing else...). Then, Yogi Maharaj encouraged his young companion sadhu, saying, “Austerities are extremely necessary for sadhus. Without austerities, renunciation is conquered by desire, and one cannot cultivate the qualities of saintliness, spiritual strength, and other virtues. Shriji Maharaj loved the practice of austerities. He traveled as an ascetic for seven long years.”

In this way, Yogi Maharaj inspired him and countless others to perform fasts and other austerities.