

Chapter 16

Blessed While Chopping Vegetables

Many devotees had come to Atladara for the Janmashtami festival so they could stay with Swamishri and offer their service in the mandir. One morning, Jambusar's Purushottambhai, Maganlal, and their friends were chopping vegetables. Swamishri would often come to that area in the morning and join them in chopping vegetables. He would speak with them and shower his affection upon them, making their actions *nirgun*.

When Swamishri asked Purushottambhai about his education, he replied, “Bapa, I have studied up to matric,⁴ and I am currently working.”

Swamishri replied, “You will become a doctor.” In this short conversation, Swamishri blessed Purushottambhai three times that he would become a doctor. After five or six years, Purushottambhai earned a registered medical

practitioner certificate from the government and began practicing as a doctor. With Swamishri's grace, he earned acclaim for his services as a physician, his patients experienced positive health outcomes, and he gained significant social standing in his life. Never forgetting that his success was grounded in Swamishri's blessings, his awestruck heart drew him ever closer to Swamishri.

The Janmashtami festival was celebrated with great enthusiasm. Yagnapriyadas Swami and other sadhus delivered discourses all day. At night, the kirtan team organized a *raas*. Swamishri gave his blessings to everyone and encouraged them to celebrate these religious festivals every year with enthusiasm.

Swamishri was a strong proponent of celebrating religious festivals, continuing this tradition from Shriji Maharaj's time. A lover of festivals, Swamishri would find any occasion to organize a festival or an assembly. Swamishri derived great joy from seeing all the sadhus and devotees come together, sing the glory of God

and the Sant, and eat and play together. Swamishri would not allow anyone to remain idle during such festivals. Spiritual discourses would be continuously ongoing. Swamishri would engage the youth in the variety of service activities required to execute the festival. Swamishri himself would regularly go around the campus to ensure that everyone's arrangements for food and accommodations had been made. He would assume responsibility for a variety of services, large and small. He remained very enthusiastic to personally serve food to everyone. Swamishri would sit down to eat only after every devotee who had come for the festival had already eaten.

Kothari Aksharswarupdas and the local devotees of Atladara remained vigilant in fulfilling their service responsibilities. Manibhai Bhatt of Salad had extraordinary enthusiasm for such service. Overall, countless devotees from the surrounding towns and villages, including Vadodara, Vaghodiya, Salad,

Thikariya, Jambusar, Saring, Bhayali, Bharuch, Anand, Nadiad, Petlad, Nar, Ahmedabad, Koyali, Bajva, Mandala, and other villages had come to take part in this festival.

4 Matric is short for “matriculation exams” for university. Someone who has studied up to “matric” has completed their high school education, and are qualified to matriculate into university.