

Chapter 7

A Memorable Blessing in the Abode of Nar-Narayan

After the *parayan*'s completion, Shastriji Maharaj and the sadhus traveled through the region until they reached Ahmedabad. Manchharambhai arranged for the sadhus' accommodation at his house, and that evening, they went for darshan at the Nar-Narayan Dev mandir. While the sadhus were doing darshan, Manchharambhai's younger brother, Chhotabhai bellowed, "Akshar Purushottam Maharaj ni Jay!" The sadhus and *parshads* of the Nar-Narayan mandir quickly surrounded the group and began to beat the sadhus with whatever they could get their hands on. Shastriji Maharaj skirted the commotion and quickly made his way out of the mandir. However, several devotees and some of the sadhus, including Yogi Maharaj, were swarmed by the angry horde. The sadhus and *parshads*

of the Nar-Narayan mandir began to punch and kick the devotees and sadhus of Shastriji Maharaj's *mandal*. Everyone darted for the exit, but along with the others, Yogi Maharaj was blessed with a savage blow on his back. Thinned by severe austerities, his body was bent double by the impact, and yet not a trace of enmity crossed his face. As he continued chanting the sacred mantra of Swaminarayan, the luster of saintliness that shone forever on his face remained uneclipsed. Finally, they escaped the mandir and regrouped at Manchharambhai's house.

From Ahmedabad, the sadhus from Junagadh traveled towards the region of Jhalavad.

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Due to Sarangpur mandir's ongoing construction work, Shastriji Maharaj would often travel in the region of Jhalavad. Consequently, the seeds of Akshar Purushottam *upasana* were planted in many of the region's villages. The *mandal* from

Junagadh would nurture those seeds in their travels through the region, sometimes accompanying Shastriji Maharaj and sometimes independently.

During their travels, in addition to meeting new spiritual aspirants, they would encounter many senior *satsangis*. Madhabha of Mojidad was one such senior devotee. He had immense affection for Sadguru Nirmaldas Swami of Muli. Moreover, he craved the company of sadhus, and he had cultivated a deep satsang knowledge. He would often meet Shastriji Maharaj and Yogi Maharaj during their travels in this region. Soon, he developed a deep reverence for Shastriji Maharaj and Yogi Maharaj and a conviction in the truth of Akshar Purushottam *upasana*.

Once, Sadguru Nirmaldasji of Muli privately told him, “Your reverence for Shastriji Maharaj is commendable because the Akshar Purushottam *upasana* is the truth. Shastriji Maharaj has constructed mandirs to propagate the truth of Akshar and Purushottam, and

ultimately, the truth will prevail, and the glory of Akshar Purushottam will spread to every home in the land. Shriji Maharaj resides within Shastriji Maharaj and fulfills his every wish. I remain trapped by institutional encumbrances and thus cannot openly sing the glory of Akshar and Purushottam. Moreover, I am unable to leave Muli to join him, but you should definitely remain in his company and serve him.”

Madhabha was stunned to hear a great *sadguru* of Muli utter such unexpected praise for Shastriji Maharaj. He told Narayan Pitamber of this experience, and news of this encounter gradually spread throughout Satsang.¹ After this, Madhabha became a staunch devotee of Shastriji Maharaj.

¹ When Yogi Maharaj visited Mojidad, he would often ask Narayanbhai Pitambarbhai to relay this incident in the spiritual assembly.