

Chapter 21

Liberation of Ancestors in Gaya

On 11 December 1953, the morning assembly was organized on the platform of the Gaya train station. Swamishri received the message that Gadhada's Seth Mohanlal Motichand had passed to Akshardham, so he led everyone in the Swaminarayan *dhun* and instructed them, "Meditate on the *murti*." Then he said:

"The Sheth's support was instrumental in the construction of the Gadhada mandir. Moreover, in his last days, the Sheth had come to Gondal. He woke at 4 a.m., took a bath, got ready, and was present in the spiritual assembly immediately following *mangala arti*. He listened to the *prabhatiya*, '*Dhir dhurandharã...*' When we explained the meaning of the kirtan, he was very pleased and said, 'I truly enjoyed listening to the discourses in Akshar Deri. Nowhere else is this bliss

available.’ Thus, coming to Akshar Deri in his final days, he fulfilled the purpose of his life.

“If one is not saddened by the misery of God’s devotees, Maharaj has called them excommunicated and a lowly sinner in Vachanamrut Gadhada II 60. This body may perish today or at any time, but while alive, one should keep it engaged in the service of Shastriji Maharaj. When one’s satsang remains steadfast, and one’s spiritual understanding is not diminished even in extremely difficult circumstances, then it should be known that one has truly imbibed satsang. Champakbhai can be said to be like Parvatbhai of Agatrai. Despite the tragedy of Kiritbhai’s passing, Champakbhai was unwavering in his satsang. So, one should speak of and listen to the narratives of God and God’s devotees as that is satsang itself. It is through this practice of satsang that we can win over God.

“One can fold one’s hands before the Satpurush, but it is difficult to do as he says. Everyone can fold their hands, but one should

live according to the principles outlined in Vachanamrut Gadhada II 62. One should place one's body, wealth, home, family, and relations in the service of God. One should shun any object that may not be of use in serving God. This is what Rajabhai had done. To develop such an elevated spiritual state is the fruit of this pilgrimage. One should hone in on that fruit. One will not receive such an opportunity again. So, engaging with spiritual wisdom, one should endure hardships while maintaining unity and affection for the devotees.

“Those who chose not to come on this pilgrimage and did not hear these energizing discourses will regret their decision. Everyone has experienced happiness here, because it is our principle that no one should suffer misery. Swami and Maharaj blessed us so that the cold was kept at bay and all necessary arrangements could be made. Such a pilgrimage brings peace to one's heart. So, if anyone has experienced any hardship, they should leave it at sacred

Gaya and remain happy by understanding that they have experienced great joy.”

After the assembly, everyone bathed in the Falgu River. Many people participated in the ancestral memorial ceremony by sitting before Swamishri and holding water in their palm as Swamishri articulated four wishes: 1) may all the devotees experience mutual affection, 2) may all the devotees of the Gunatit *mandal* who have come to sacred Gaya, as well as all those who have not, experience happiness and prosperity in all their worldly affairs, and if any of their ancestors’ souls have gone to other abodes, may Maharaj take them to Akshardham, 3) may the number of sadhus increase, and may each sadhu inspire two others to become sadhus, 4) may Satsang grow in Africa.

In this way, Swamishri granted all the ancestors Akshardham simply due to their connection with his devotees. It leaves one marveling at the glory of contact with the Satpurush through whom God is manifest! No

matter the qualification of the *jiva*, no matter what life form he may be stumbling through in the cycle of births and deaths, due to the will of the Satpurush, he comes into Satsang and ultimately attains Akshardham. Such is the glory of devotion to the manifest form of God!