

Chapter 21

In the Capital of India

On 28 November 1953, the train reached New Delhi Station. After everyone took a bath and did puja, Swamishri instructed everyone to sit in a spiritual assembly. In the early morning chill, Nandaji had also come for darshan. As the organizers talked amongst themselves, Swamishri gave darshan as if he were deep in meditation. When the talking ceased, Swamishri recited the Swamini Vato with the introductory phrase, “*Swaminarayan Hare, Swamie vat kari...*”

“There’s nothing difficult about the worldly path; it is something that everyone knows how to do. But to understand and walk on the path of spiritual knowledge is difficult. But that is worth doing. And he whose will prevails remains unknown by all as they continue to desire other things.”

After reciting several Swamini Vato, Swamishri said:

“If one develops the true knowledge of manifest God, then one would not be ensnared by *maya*. Who can escape the bonds of *maya*? If we do not transgress our fundamental religious vows, if we do not develop an aversion for God and God’s devotees, and if we maintain love for them, then one would certainly not be ensnared by *maya*. If one’s love for the devotees is similar to one’s love for one’s brother and parents, then it can be said to be true love. Swami used to say that in the future, such love will decline. But only if we have such love will the Satpurush take us under his wing.

“We should offer our service, but not believing, ‘You are a guru, and I am also a guru.’ A *parshad* by the name of Dhula Bhagat used to stay in Bochasan. He was mute, and a Koli by caste. He served by washing dishes all day. Shastriji Maharaj used to say that if you understand the greatness of this Dhula Bhagat, only then have you truly understood my

greatness. So, one should endure hardships for God and God's devotees, but one should not see flaws in them, because from dirt, grains grow.

“We did darshan of Hanumanji in Agra. He tore open his chest and showed that Ram was in every pore of his being. Similarly, when we can worship Swaminarayan in every pore of our being, only then have we fully understood God's greatness.

“We have come on this special train only to listen to spiritual discourses. Spiritual discourses are the sacred image of God. Only if we listen to spiritual discourses will we beget the fruit of the pilgrimage. Shastriji Maharaj told Kanjibhai in his dream that he is together with us. So you won't feel the cold or the heat. The culmination of the entire pilgrimage is in Chhapaiya, however, Dholka and Ahmedabad are coming soon, but there is nothing worth seeing there. That which is worth seeing is together with us. So, there is nothing else to see coming up.

“Sachchidanand Swami fasted for eleven consecutive days and endured the cold and the heat such that Ranchhodji was propitiated by him and left Dwarka to come to Vartal. Thus, God is pleased by our performance of austerities. We don’t have to make such a strenuous effort. We get sweets, chai, snacks, and other food every day. And yet if we remain unhappy, then where will we ever be happy? So, ‘*Balbhari vāto mukhe karavi, moli vāt kadi na uchcharavi; mukhomukh thai olakhan, koi vātani na rahi tān.*’ (One should speak positive words of spiritual power, one should never utter a negative word; We have recognized [God] face to face, so there is nothing left to attain).”

Nandaji had arranged for Swamishri and the senior sadhus to stay at his house in New Delhi. He had extended an invitation to the entire group to visit his bungalow the following day. Thus, the next day Manibhai Saladvala took the entire group to see the Secretariat Office, the Parliament House, and other sites before

walking in a procession singing the Swaminarayan *dhun* all the way to Nandaji's bungalow. An assembly had been organized in the bungalow's large courtyard. Jaysukhbhai Hathi and other government officials were also present. After the singing of kirtans, Harmanbhai, Nandaji, Tribhovandas, and others delivered speeches. In Swamishri's blessings, he recited Swamini Vatos and explained:

“We should not perceive human characteristics in the Satpurush; that is, one should not perceive him to be like oneself. One’s spiritual deficiencies that would take millions of births to eradicate can be eradicated in this very birth if one comes into contact with the Satpurush and does as he says.”

Then Swamishri sang the kirtan, “*Hāji bhalā sadhu...*” and said: “One should develop such saintliness. Maharaj has said that such a Sant and Purushottam Narayan are not the slightest bit distant. One should never see flaws even in devotees who are as lowly as dirt.

“Tulsi jāke mukhanse, bhule nikase Rām,

Tāke pagaki paheniyā, mere tanaki chām.

(Tulsidas says, to one whose mouth utters the name of Ram even by mistake, I would prepare shoes for him using my own skin.)

“When we naturally harbor such sentiments, then we can be said to truly understand the greatness of God. Do you understand! He is not talking about paying money to the cobbler to have shoes made for him, but about flaying one’s own skin and using that to make shoes for him. When we feel such sentiments, then we have understood God’s greatness.”

Then, Mota Swami spoke, followed by *thal* and *arti*. After taking prasad, everyone had darshan of Nandaji’s puja room before dispersing.

Here, Swami shri remembered Uchharangrai Dhebar and expressed a wish to meet him.

At the time, U.N. Dhebar was in New Delhi for a meeting of the leadership of the Congress

Party. When he received the telephone call that Swamishri was remembering him, U.N. Dhebar was sitting in a meeting with Jawaharlal Nehru. He requested Nehru to be excused from the meeting for 15 minutes. When Nehru asked why, he explained, “A great sadhu from Gujarat, Yogiji Maharaj, has come to New Delhi. He is an embodiment of love. You had met him in Gondal. He has helped me so much throughout my life. So, I should meet him.” Nehru smiled and permitted him to go. The fact that U.N. Dhebar had left such an important meeting to come for Swamishri’s darshan is a testament to his faith and devotion for Swamishri.

In the three days that Swamishri stayed in New Delhi, many ministers and dignitaries came for Swamishri’s darshan and talks, including Lalbahadur Shastri, Jagjivanram, Jaysukhlal Hathi, Sardar Patel’s Secretary Mulshankar Bhatt, and Kishorebhai Gadhia.

On 30 November 1953, an assembly was arranged on the New Delhi railway station

platform. As if he were on a singular mission to make everyone *brahmarup*, Swamishri showered the audience with talks of Brahman: “In becoming *brahmarup*, this body is an obstacle. And in attaching one’s self to Parabrahma, one’s bad company presents countless types of obstacles. What is bad company? Whatever causes one to perceive base human characteristics in this divine Satsang. Thus, one should in no way allow oneself to perceive such base human characteristics.”

At night, the train traveled from New Delhi Station to Old Delhi Station. Many princes, chieftains, officers, businessmen, railway officials, and other dignitaries had come to Old Delhi Station for Swamishri’s darshan. They jostled to have Swamishri’s darshan and offer him gifts and flower garlands. In the assembly at the railway station, Swamishri said, “One must learn to apply the principles of *sankhya* in one’s thinking. Without *sankhya*, one’s satsang is halved. What does it mean to have

only half-satsang? When things don't go according to one's wish, one perceives the Satpurush to be false." Swamishri thus delivered discourses on such critical topics.

Finally, it was time for the train to depart from the station. However, since Nandaji was coming to see Swamishri off, Swamishri was waiting on the platform for him. Swamishri said, "Nandaji is very punctual. He is surely on his way." Then he said, "Nandaji is a great dignitary, and one day he will become Prime Minister!"

At the time, Jayant Gadhia, the Delhi correspondent of the Marathi newspaper Loksatta, was standing next to Swamishri and heard this statement. He felt Swamishri's statement to be groundless because Nandaji was just an ordinary cabinet minister. Moreover, political luminaries such as Maulana Azad and Dr. Katju were still present, and many other ministers were more charismatic and powerfully positioned than Nandaji. Thus it seemed impossible that the responsibility of

the entire country would ever be in Nandaji's hands. He became lost in such thoughts.

Just then, Nandaji arrived. He touched Swamishri's feet and asked for his blessings. Then, the train departed from Delhi.

After Jawaharlal Nehru's death in 1964, when Nandaji assumed the role of Prime Minister, Jayant Gadhia was astonished and realized the truth of Swamishri's words.

Because Swamishri was not well, the organizers attempted to prevent crowds of devotees from congregating at Swamishri's compartment. However, Swamishri himself would leave his compartment, walk around the train, and inspect all the arrangements being made for the devotees. In this way, he would himself grant everyone darshan. Every morning, Swamishri would hold an assembly on the platform of the station where they had spent the night, giving everyone the extraordinary bliss of his darshan. He would also go to the compartments of the sadhus who had come with him and inquire about their

health and arrangements. He would sit with them, speak with them, and grant them bliss. Moreover, in the assemblies, Swamishri would drench everyone in his divine humor while advising everyone to take minor difficulties in stride, cultivate affection for each other, and contemplate upon the bliss of spiritual talks and darshan they were receiving.

Supremely compassionate Swamishri was constantly taking care that the devotees would not suffer the slightest hardship. His sermons would pacify and purify the minds of those with even the most intractable base natures. An instant antidote to the poison of even the most powerful base natures constantly cascaded through his divine speech.

Such was his supremely purifying darshan that, upon witnessing his spiritually transcendent state, free from all body-consciousness, anyone could gain the strength to successfully transcend their own body-consciousness! Drawing on the indomitable strength of his saintliness, divine love,

understanding of God's glory, and *brahmic* state, everyone was immersed in bliss. By the strength of his will, Swamishri made sure those who were prone to illness remained in good health. Those devotees whose diets were restricted by ill health were able to digest everything, no matter how much they ate. The infirm gained the strength to roam freely. Every adversity was transformed into a blessing. Everyone experienced the constant bliss of Akshardham!