

Chapter 23

Travels in Dandhavya

During Swamishri's stay in Ahmedabad, at the request of Somchand Sheth, the enthusiastic senior devotee Ambalalbhai, who possessed deep spiritual knowledge and profound love, and other devotees, Swamishri's program was arranged for Rajpur in the northern Gujarat region of Dandhavya sanctified by Shriji Maharaj. On Monday, 30 August 1954 (Bhadarva sud 2), Swamishri, Mota Swami, Sant Swami, and other sadhus, as well as Kanjibhai Soni, Arjunbhai, Mohanbhai Bagad, and other devotees left from Ahmedabad on the 5:15 a.m. train and reached Jhulasan Station later that morning. From here, Swamishri, the sadhus, and devotees traveled to Rajpur in decorated bullock carts and covered wagons.

The local *satsangis* welcomed Swamishri at the water pump on the outskirts of Rajpur.

There, they led Swamishri's decorated covered wagon in a grand procession that included camel-mounted kettle drums, horse riders, a marching band, a festive bhajan *mandal* accompanied by cymbals, *pakhaj*, and *bhungals* (traditional horns), and a long line of devotees. The atmosphere resounded with the cracks and flashes of fireworks and celebratory gunfire. The town crier, Ambalal Pahelvan, loudly hailed Akshar Purushottam Maharaj and Yogiji Maharaj. The entire village had gone wild with devotion. Sitting in his covered wagon, Swamishri was smiling, swaying from side to side and casting his affectionate glance upon everyone.

After going through the entire village, the procession arrived at the mandir, which had been beautifully decorated. An attractive gateway had been erected at the mandir entrance. Chimanlal Shastri offered Harikrishna Maharaj a ritual bath and puja as soon as they entered the mandir. The sanctified

water of the *abhishek* was taken to the outskirts of the village.

The devotees requested Swamishri and Mota Swami to sit on the speaker's seats and begin the discourses. Kuberbhai, Somchandbhai, Becharbhai, Kachradas, Shankarlal, Purushottamdas Marfatiya, and other devotees performed Swamishri's puja and *arti*. Ambalalbhai delivered an emotional welcome speech. Chimanbhai Shastri pleased Swamishri and Mota Swami by delivering discourses on the *Satsangijivan* in his melodious voice and scholarly style.

After the morning discourses, the devotees would have Swamishri sit in a single horse carriage, which they proceeded to pull around the village to take Swamishri to sanctify various devotees' homes. The route and schedule of the home visits was very well-planned. During the home visits, the festive bhajan *mandal* walked in front of Swamishri, singing kirtans accompanied by musical instruments. Swamishri visited about ninety-six devotees'

homes. In the evening Sant Swami delivered discourses on the Swamini Vato. Thereafter, Swamishri, Mota Swami, Mohan Bagad, Kanjibhai Soni, or Ambalalbhai would also speak, delighting the devotees. Three accomplished singers from Ahmedabad, Chhaganbhai, Ambalalbhai, and Pratapbhai also came to Rajpur and sang kirtans in the assembly.

Large groups of devotees from Jhulasan, Mokhasan, Dangarva, Paliyad, Vadu, Karjisan, Chalasan, Unjha, Nagasar, and other villages were arriving in Rajpur for Swamishri's darshan and *samagam*. Singing kirtans such as, "Hāji bhalā sādhu...", "Shānti pamāde tene sant kahiye...", "Bhajyo nahi Bhagwān murakh, jivatā maryo...", in his heartfelt style, providing numerous examples to explain each line, swaying with abandon and clapping enthusiastically, this matchless Jogi was showering everyone with the immortalizing nectar of his spiritual discourses. Drawn by his talks and darshan, more and more groups of

devotees were coming from the surrounding villages to avail of his divine company.

The evening before the concluding session, Swamishri was seated in a beautiful *sinhasan* in the mandir courtyard. Candles had been lit and placed all around the mandir grounds. Adding to the divine atmosphere, all the devotees performed a joint *arti* of Swamishri and the sadhus.

The *parayan* concluded on Friday, 3 September 1954. As all the devotees performed puja of Thakorji and Swamishri, Mota Swami became emotional seeing their love, enthusiasm, and mutual regard.

In the afternoon, Swamishri sanctified the village school. Almost 3,000 people had gathered here. The children here also performed a joint *arti* of Swamishri. The teachers and students were all gratified by Swamishri's darshan. The principal expressed his gratitude to Swamishri for offering his blessings to all the children. Joitadas, Rana Shivaji, Rana Galabji, Kalyandas, Keshavlal,

Prahladbhai, Purushottamdas, Ghanshyambhai, Maneklalbhai, and other youths had served admirably in making all the necessary arrangements.

When it was time for Swamishri to depart, the entire village came with heavy hearts to see Swamishri off. Young children scampered after Swamishri asking, “When will Yogi Bapa come again?” In the five days he had spent in their village, Swamishri had captivated young and old, male and female to such an extent that they felt the pain of separation to be intolerable. With tears in their eyes, everyone silently bid Swamishri farewell. Today’s occasion was uniquely touching, and everyone would surely remember it even on their death bed.

There was a magical charm in Swamishri’s *murti* such that wherever he went devotees and spiritual aspirants would be enthralled by him. Everyone was drawn to him like he was a mountainous magnet. They were unable to forget Swamishri. In this way, wishing for

everyone's benefit, leading everyone towards God, Swamishri continued his ceaseless travels.