

Chapter 10

Kamalshibhai's Epiphany

Whenever Shastriji Maharaj and Yogi Maharaj were present in Gondal for the Sharad Punam celebrations, the devotees of Saurashtra enjoyed the bliss of their company.

Once, Yogi Maharaj's former brother, Kamalshibhai, decided to attend the Sharad Punam festival. He had understood the truth of Akshar Purushottam *upasana*. Moreover, he also wanted to have darshan of Yogi Maharaj. Thus, he traveled from Visavadar to Junagadh mandir. Here, this pure-hearted devotee mentioned to the sadhus of Junagadh that he was going to Gondal for darshan. Several sadhus gathered before him and began to rebuke him, "You want to go for darshan of the rebels? You want to stay in their company and oppose Junagadh mandir? No, we won't let you go from here." After creating a commotion, they declared, "Gunatitanand Swami has stayed

in this mandir for forty years. He has celebrated this festival here. So, celebrate the festival in this temple sanctified by Gunatitanand Swami, and if you want to go, you can leave tomorrow morning.”

Due to his past relations with the sadhus, Kamalshibhai could not counter their opposition, and he acquiesced, “If it pleases the sadhus, then I will celebrate the festival here and go to Gondal later.”

Thus Kamalshibhai celebrated Sharad Punam in Junagadh and arrived in Gondal the following day. Kamalshibhai did darshan of all the holy places in Gondal and met with Shastriji Maharaj in the evening. Shastriji Maharaj asked, “Why didn't you come for the Sharad Punam festival? Why are you late?”

Kamalshibhai explained the situation and said, “Because they forced me to stay Junagadh, I could not come.”

Shastriji Maharaj replied, “It was *maya* that entered into them and prevented you from

coming. Similarly, in the past, the local sadhus of their respective areas had insisted that Bhagatji Maharaj, Jaga Swami, Shivilal Sheth, and others stay with them to prevent them from visiting Junagadh to stay in Gunatitanand Swami's company. Similarly, today, the sadhus of Junagadh are attempting to forbid you from coming here. But you should tell those sadhus that, 'Just as Swami used to reside in Junagadh, today such a powerful sadhu who is "*Kāmil-kābil murshid sab hunnar tere hāthme1*" is residing in Gondal. So even if you try to stop me, I will still go there.'"

Today, Shastriji Maharaj was in a joyous mood. Moreover, he had some free time as the festival had concluded, and only a few devotees remained in the mandir. Thus, he continued his conversation with Kamalshibhai saying, "In the beginning, many sadhus and *satsangis* had stayed together with Aksharbrahma Gunatitanand Swami to spiritually benefit from his close association. However, those who were able to stay with him and do his *samagam* in

the last two or three years of his life were inconceivably fortunate because during that period, Swami was showering his grace indiscriminately on everyone, and his talks were all transcendent. Whoever listened to his talks became *brahmarup*. They achieved the *ekantik* state and developed the spiritual inclination of courage. Those who were not able to listen to his talks and do his *samagam* during the last years of his life also developed spiritual virtues, but to a much lesser extent.

“Gunatitanand Swami performed divine actions such as saying, ‘No one should call me Akshar. Everyone should touch our feet and vow to follow this command.’ So, understanding it to be Swami’s wish for them to do this in order to please Pavitranand Swami and others, Swami’s disciples touched his feet, took the vow, and stopped calling him Akshar. But then, when they traveled to Sankhadavadar, Swami told Bhagatji, ‘Hey, Pragji! Why have you stopped calling me Akshar?’ Pragji Bhagat replied, ‘Because you

made me vow not to!' Swami laughed and said, 'That was just to give you the chance to touch the Satpurush's feet and thus earn some spiritual merit. However, who has made you take such an oath that you have ceased your talks of Akshar even in this secluded place?' Then, everyone touched Swami's feet and again began to speak about how 'Swami is Mul Akshar himself.' Kamalshibhai! In the same way, the prohibition you have received from Junagadh should be left there in Junagadh, and if you come directly here, then Maharaj and Swami will free you of all bondage.

"You and I have a relationship from our past. You have affection for Balmukunddas Swami. He has given you blessings that your brother, Jogi Maharaj, will spread Satsang throughout the entire universe and attain immense fame. The boon that Balmukunddas Swami had granted you is exactly aligned with the work that Jogi Maharaj and I are currently doing, having forsaken our ties of bondage with Vartal and Junagadh. The victory knell of

Akshar Purushottam will reverberate through the heavens. So, you should remain strong and in high spirits. If anyone comes to threaten you, then you should suppress them with a polite, affectionate answer—that is your job. You are a businessman, so you should explain with the tact of a businessman and ensure that you are able to accomplish the work of your own liberation.”

Today, Shastriji Maharaj was determined to shower his grace on this true devotee. Thus, he continued, “In the past, even Maharaj had to go collect cow dung patties and beg in the streets for alms. He had to maintain affection for everyone. Similarly, this Jogi Maharaj is younger than you. He doesn't even look you in the eye. He is replete with all the virtues of saintliness. Thus, Shriji Maharaj is manifest within him. He is the manifest form of Gunatit. So, you must come here especially to do his *samagam*. You come here often to do our darshan, but now take a vow to come regularly

for his darshan so that you may also cultivate virtues similar to Jogi Maharaj's."

Kamalshibhai folded his hands and told Shastriji Maharaj, "Swami, I will follow your command and regularly take out time to visit Gondal."

Then, Shastriji Maharaj introduced to Kamalshibhai the devotees from Ahmedabad, Bhavnagar, Kanthariya, Adval, Rajkot, Dangara, Jamnagar, Jetpur, Bhadra, and other villages and spoke to them of his greatness.

Kamalshibhai took the night train to Junagadh, and from there, he went to Visavadar. He began to ponder over and experience joy from Shastriji Maharaj's words about the immense glory of his younger brother, Yogi Maharaj. He had fulfilled the purpose for which they had entrusted him to Krishnacharandas Swami—to cultivate saintly virtues—and brought great pride to his family.

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After the Annakut celebrations, Shastriji Maharaj and Yogi Maharaj traveled through the surrounding villages and then went to central Gujarat. After celebrating the Kartik Punam festival in Bochasan, and traveling through the villages of Kanam, Yogi Maharaj reached Rajkot on Makar Sankranti, as per his annual routine. The affectionate devotees of Rajkot were overjoyed by Yogi Maharaj's company, and everyone wished that he would grace their home on this auspicious day.

Every year, Mengani's Darbar, Arjunsinh Saheb, invited Yogi Maharaj to his bungalow on that auspicious day to offer a donation. Yogi Maharaj would visit his home, recite Swamini Vato, and sing kirtans, pleasing Arjunsinh.

In this way, Yogi Maharaj's matchless saintliness earned the respect and reverence of senior devotees of the Vartal and Ahmedabad Gadis. They remained forever eager to have Yogi Maharaj's darshan and blessings.

¹ In this quote from Swamini Vato 6.172, Gunatitanand Swami refers to the Aksharbrahma Satpurush as “The perfect, expert guru, who possesses all abilities.” Gunatitanand Swami has taken this phrase from a line in Premanand Swami’s kirtan, “Jāntā kyo nahi ve hamāri pir...”