

Chapter 10

Gandhiji Supported by Yogi Maharaj's Mala

After celebrating Jal-Jhilani Ekadashi and Annakut, Shastriji Maharaj spent some time in Ahmedabad and then went to Radu accompanied by Yogi Maharaj and the *sant mandal*.

During this time, calls for Indian independence were ringing out from every town and village. Mahatma Gandhi, the leader of the nationalist movement, had just begun a historic protest march against the salt tax from Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad, which he called the Dandi March. Shastriji Maharaj left the village of Radhu and arrived in Navagam on 13 March 1930, just as Gandhiji and his Dandi March protesters arrived there. Gandhiji knew Shastriji Maharaj as a fearless sadhu whose blessings always bore fruit. So, when he learned that Shastriji Maharaj was in Navagam,

Gandhiji expressed a desire to meet with him. Shastriji Maharaj, Yogi Maharaj, and Nirgundas Swami went to where Gandhiji was staying, and Gandhiji welcomed the sadhus. Then, Gandhiji said, “Swamiji, please bless us so that we are successful in this work.”

Shastriji Maharaj pointed to Yogi Maharaj and said, “From this day forward, our Jogi Maharaj will turn the *mala* so that India may gain independence through your efforts. But make sure you keep dharma at the forefront, and God will be with you.” Gandhiji was pleased and bowed to Shastriji Maharaj, Yogi Maharaj, Nirgundas Swami.

At Shastriji Maharaj's behest, Yogi Maharaj turned 25 *malas* while chanting the name of Swaminarayan every single day for eighteen years until India gained independence. Compared to the freedom fighter's patriotism, his *malas*' gravity and influence were at an entirely different level.

In October 1930 (Kartik, V.S. 1987), Purushottamdas Swami became critically ill while traveling in Khandesh. Realizing that his death was near, he returned to Bochasan. Here, Yogi Maharaj served him with great reverence in his last days. Purushottamdas Swami was extremely pleased with Yogi Maharaj's service.

This great sadhu, who had received the acclamation of Brahmarshi from Bhagatji Maharaj, left his corporeal body on 9 December 1930 (Magshar *vad* 4, V.S. 1987). Yogi Maharaj would often speak about Purushottamdas Swami's saintliness.