

Chapter 21

Colonel Bhatia's Divine Vision

On 4 December 1953, the train reached Ayodhya. In the courtyard of the Swaminarayan mandir, an assembly was held on the platform opposite the memorial shrine, allowing everyone to bask in the morning sun as they listened to the discourses. Swamishri appeared to be slightly ill. He said, “The same eagerness we have for darshan, we should maintain for following God’s commands. One should not balk at following God’s commands.”

Then Swamishri and the devotees did darshan in the mandir and the surrounding sanctified spots. At 11 a.m., Swamishri performed the *rajbhog arti* of Ghanshyam Maharaj in the mandir.

Dhirubha Rana had come from Faizabad to invite Swamishri to sanctify the army base where he served. Swamishri agreed to visit him in the evening. When the organizers learned of

Swamishri's promise, they canceled Swamishri's visit due to his ill health. Dhirubha, the son of the great devotee Daji Bapu, deeply desired that Swamishri visit. Swamishri also truly wished to go. However, respecting the organizers' wishes, Swamishri sent Mota Swami, Pramukh Swami, other sadhus, and several senior devotees. Dhirubha welcomed the sadhus with full military honors. He brought the senior officers to receive the blessings of the sadhus.

The following day, Dhirubha Rana brought the senior military officers, Colonel P. Bhatia, Major Naidka, Major Beohar, and others for Swamishri's darshan. Despite his poor health, Swamishri welcomed them warmly. They garlanded Swamishri with flowers. When Swamishri, in his typical style, blessed Colonel Bhatia with a strong clap on the back, Dhirubha Rana was dismayed. He was afraid that Colonel Bhatia would take offense, considering this a breach of protocol. However, Colonel Bhatia

turned to Dhirubha and declared, “You told me that he is a true sadhu. He is not; he is God!”

Dhirubha was relieved that Colonel Bhatia had such a divine experience after just a brief darshan and interaction with Swamishri. Swamishri spoke briefly and distributed prasad to everyone. Everyone was very pleased to meet Swamishri.

That evening, appreciating Dhirubha Rana's unwavering faith and his steadfast observance of religious vows and practices despite his distance from an active Satsang community, Swamishri fulfilled his wish and traveled to Faizabad to sanctify his home. Dhirubha, his elder brother Bhagvatsinh, and his entire family were ecstatic. Such was Swamishri's pure love! Despite his delicate health and the total restriction imposed upon him by his health care providers, Swamishri still went to Dhirubha's house. Seeing this, how could anyone restrain the devotees' wishes to remain close to him! It is no surprise that devotees

were willing to sacrifice everything for the embodiment of love that was Swamishri!