

Chapter 11

Clarity about Upasana

The glory of Akshar Deri, Akshar Mandir, and the great *sant* Jogi Maharaj, who embodied the *brahmic* state and understood the limitless glory of Akshar, continued to spread far and wide. To allow all the devotees to benefit from Yogi Maharaj's company, Shastriji Maharaj invited Yogi Maharaj to all important festivals and special occasions.

In the month of Bhadharva, Yogi Maharaj and a group of sadhus visited Sarangpur for the Jal-Jhilani Ekadashi celebration. Ravishankar Joshi, a scholarly spiritual aspirant who had a deep reverence for Shastriji Maharaj and Yogi Maharaj, had also arrived for the festival. During their spiritual discussions, Ravishankar asked Yogi Maharaj, "You have separated from the Vartal Gadi. They worship Swaminarayan as Paramatma, whereas in your denomination, the Guru is believed to be most important. You

have adopted the principle, ‘*Guru sākshāt Param Brahma*’ (The guru is God himself). This is what all the *satsangis* of the Vartal and Ahmedabad Gadis tell me. What do you have to say about this? It is also said that your denomination is in competition with the Vartal and Ahmedabad Gadis. If this is true, I would consider such an approach fractious and deplorable! When there is already one mandir of the Sampradaya in a particular town, what is the point of building another mandir there?”

In answering his questions, Yogi Maharaj replied:

“In the entire Sampradaya, Sahajanand Swami is the only God. Anyone who forsakes Shriji Maharaj for something else is considered worthless. Gunatitanand Swami is an incarnation of the eternal Aksharbrahma. Thus, Swami is Akshar and Narayan is Purushottam Sahajanand Swami. Shastriji Maharaj has installed the *murti* of Shriji Maharaj together with Gunatitanand Swami. God resides with his

devotee. All other *sampradayas* worship God together with his ideal devotee.

“But the guru is the gateway to liberation. The guru brings one to God himself. The guru possessing dharma, *jnan*, *vairagya*, and bhakti coupled with knowledge of God’s greatness is *ekantik*, and Shriji Maharaj is manifest in this Satsang through him. Shriji Maharaj has clearly stated this in the Vachanamrut. Shastriji Maharaj is such an *ekantik Sant*.

“Wherever Shriji Maharaj had wanted to build a mandir, he had wanted to reside there together with his eternal devotee; that eternal devotee was Gunatitanand Swami, and he was God himself; however, due to the adverse circumstances of those times, this did not transpire. Thus, Bhagwan Swaminarayan fulfilled his wishes through Shastriji Maharaj. So where is the competition in that? Maharaj had wanted to reside there, and so he did. Although he faced many obstacles, Swami did not give up on the construction of these mandirs. These mandirs have been created at

the wish of Shriji Maharaj. So, Professor Saheb! We must avail of this opportunity to offer devotion.”

With these words, Yogi Maharaj raised his right hand, showed the *mala* he was turning, and said, “Take this opportunity to chant God’s name and join one’s *jiva* with such an *ekantik Sant*. This is all we must do.” Yogi Maharaj looked into the professor’s eyes with his spiritually profound gaze.

Listening to Yogi Maharaj’s divine words, all of Prof. Ravishankar Joshi’s doubts dissolved, and he was convinced that Shriji Maharaj is manifest in Satsang through the *param ekantik satpurush*, Shastriji Maharaj. He realized that Shriji Maharaj was working through Shastriji Maharaj to increase Satsang, and he understood that all the accusations he had heard against Shastriji Maharaj were utterly baseless and intended to mislead spiritual aspirants.

Due to Yogi Maharaj's clarifications, he began to experience tranquility as all of his doubts were uprooted.

He experienced great joy in the Jal-Jhilani Ekadashi festival that was celebrated in Sarangpur.