

Chapter 22

Actions Speak Volumes

When Swamishri spent the night in the village of Nondhana, Punambhai had laid out a newly made set of cotton mattresses and quilts as a bed for Swamishri.

When the assembly finished that night, and Swamishri arrived at Punambhai's house, he saw the arrangements that Punambhai had made for him. He immediately instructed the devotees to remove all the extra mattresses and quilts and keep only one for him to sleep on. However, the affectionate devotees insisted that Swamishri sleep on the bed they had specially prepared for him.

When all the devotees had gone for the night, Swamishri had the youths traveling with him remove all the extra mattresses, leaving only a single thin mattress for him to sleep on. Then he said, "This body will ultimately be burned to ashes—one cannot pamper it. We

must toughen up the body to be as hardy as a boot. We must remain focused on worshipping God.”

These words possessed the quintessence of all the shastras on *sankhya*. They resounded with his constant consciousness of his self as the atman.

The youths who were traveling with Swamishri thought to themselves, “When Swamishri insists on using only a single thin mattress, how can we sleep on even that?” Thus, the youths discarded their own mattresses and slept on the floor.

Disciples will naturally mirror the behavior of their guru. More than the guru’s teachings, the guru’s actions serve as effective examples for the disciples.

In the morning, all the sadhus and youths bathed with cold water. The local devotees were very impressed, thinking that if even these youths embodied such an austere and renunciant lifestyle, then by comparison how

full of saintliness must be the life of the sadhus and Swamishri?

From Bharuch, Swamishri went for darshan of Gumandev Hanuman before traveling to Avidha, Jambusar, and Nahar. Here, Swamishri and the sadhus accompanying him bathed in the holy Mahisagar River and did *dhun* that the Gadhpur mandir may be quickly completed. Then, they visited Thakorbhai's house in Kelod before arriving in Thikariya, where Manibhai had prepared a grand welcome.

On the evening of Chaitra *sud* 8, Manibhai had prepared a feast for the sadhus and devotees. He insisted that Swamishri also eat. However, Swamishri ate only once a day at lunch. The following day was Chaitra *sud* 9, and therefore a waterless fast. Consequently, at Manibhai's vehement urging, Swamishri sat down to eat. All the sadhus also sat to eat as well. After serving food into Swamishri's bowl, Manibhai went outside to arrange the devotees' dinner. Instantly, Swamishri emptied the

contents of his bowl into his companion sadhu's bowl, washed his bowl, and went to his room.

Swamishri never allowed the slightest laxity in any of his vows, no matter how minor. Yet, despite his firmness in observing these vows, he never displayed the slightest rigidity in his renunciation. He lived a life of such crystal purity that countless were inspired to strive for the highest ideals that he embodied.

The following day, on 11 April 1954 (Chaitra *sud* 9, V.S. 2010), a 24-hour-long *dhun* was organized in celebration of Swaminarayan Jayanti. Swamishri instructed everyone to pray to Maharaj that he may help them transcend *maya* and constantly perceive divinity in all of God's devotees. Swamishri recited from memory the 64th chapter of the Bhaktachintamani, popularly known as the *fagwa*, in the assembly.

Then, after bathing in the Narmada River near the village of Matroj, Swamishri traveled

to Saring and then to Bochasan for the Chaitra
Punam festival.