

Chapter 19

Decree

On 5 August 1953 (Ashadh *vad* 11, V.S. 2009), Swamishri wrote a letter from Gondal to be published in the *Swaminarayan Prakash* for all the devotees. He began the letter:

Decree number 1

Every Sunday, the entire *satsang mandal* should gather together. Let us know what time you decide to hold the assembly. So, moving forward, everyone should gather together on Sunday. When you get together, sing the *dhun* for 15 minutes, read two Vachanamruts and 10 Swamini Vato, and sing two kirtans before concluding. The *mandal* should further celebrate the festivals of Punam, the new moon day, and both Ekadashis. This is a command. Follow it at any cost. We will be establishing Satsang centers in every village. Harmanbhai of Gana will be coming to each center, so please do as he instructs. Be strong. Everyone should

do at least a *falahari* fast on Ekadashi. Everyone should visit the mandir, and an attendance sheet should be kept.

Swamishri's expectations are evident in his use of the word "decree." Devotees are clearly duty-bound to follow his command. Importantly, this decree was made out of love by a true Sant. Moreover, Swamishri's command went to such an extent as to request details of the assembly and to instruct the assemblies to keep an attendance sheet. He sent Harmanbhai to every village to guide everyone in this endeavor. What a wonderful plan! By writing letters and delivering discourses, Swamishri encouraged devotees to observe the Satsang practices like going to the mandir and fasting on Ekadashi. In this way, Swamishri worked to establish and preserve these Satsang traditions.