

Chapter 15

A Historic Parayan in Mahelav

For several days following the Annakut festival in Atladara, Shastriji Maharaj gave the bliss of his company to the assembled devotees, including Manibhai Salad, Ramchandrabhai, Vinayakrav Trivedi, Champaklal Sheth, Ranchhodhbhai of Anand, Motibhai Bhagwandas, Narayanbhai of Mahelav, and others. On the day that Yogi Maharaj arrived in Atladara, Ramchandrabhai put a proposal before Shastriji Maharaj: “In your presence, please organize a program in your birthplace, Mahelav. An unprecedented and unparalleled celebration in your divine presence should be held there so that everyone experiences the bliss of Brahman.”

Shastriji Maharaj laughed and said, “That is in Narayanbhai’s hands. Narayanbhai will take all of you there. You should all go. My health is

not good enough to travel there, as I can't even leave from here.”

Ramchandrabhai again prayed, “Bapa, there is a vast difference between going alone and going with you. We will experience great joy if you are with us.”

Shastriji Maharaj replied, “If that is the case, then take Yogi Maharaj with you. If Jogi comes, then understand that I have come. But, I personally will not be able to come.”

Everyone went to Yogi Maharaj, who was sitting in the assembly hall. Ramchandrabhai informed him of their conversation with Shastriji Maharaj. Yogi Maharaj was very pleased and said, “Aho, ho, ho! What great fortune to have darshan of the birthplace of our guru Shastriji Maharaj! Even if we were to roll around in the dust of that divine place, it would not be enough. But to allow all the devotees to avail of this opportunity, let us keep a three-day *parayan* on the Swamini Vato and the Harililamrut. Let us send invitations to every village so all the devotees may come to Mahelav

and have darshan of this holy place of pilgrimage.”

Yogi Maharaj looked at Narayanbhai and said, “So, Narayanbhai! Is this ok?”

Narayanbhai replied, “Yes, Swami! That is fine.”

Manibhai Salad remarked, “He is struggling financially, and I know that he has as much debt as he has hairs on his head.”

Yogi Maharaj laughed and said, “Maharaj will take care of his debt, and everything will turn out splendidly. He will make Narayanbhai happy. But, we want to hold an unparalleled *parayan* in Mahelav and have the victory knells reverberate in all directions. Shastriji Maharaj will fulfill all of Narayanbhai’s wishes, and he will be very pleased with Narayanbhai.”

Initially, the *parayan* was scheduled for 18 December 1950. However, since Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel had died just three days before this, Ashabhai and other devotees explained to Narayanbhai, “If we organize a

large celebration so soon after such a national leader has passed away, it will look very bad in society. So, we should cancel the *parayan* for now.”

Narayanbhai conveyed this to Yogi Maharaj, who declared, “One must not delay such auspicious tasks related to dharma. Moreover, we want to hold this *parayan* so that Vallabhbhai Patel’s soul may experience peace.” Accordingly, the *parayan* was rescheduled for 29 December 1950, and Ashabhai and the other prominent devotees were also pleased.

The three-day *parayan* was organized on Najabhai’s farm near the Gotarva well. A large canopy was erected to provide shade for the assembled devotees. Fifty-one men and fifteen women dressed in a special uniform served as volunteers handling the event logistics. Thus, with Yogi Maharaj’s inspiration and Narayanbhai’s support, the Mahelav *parayan* was an auspicious beginning to organized volunteer activity within the Sanstha.

On the *parayan*'s second day, a film was shown of Shastriji Maharaj's 85th Golden Jubilee birthday celebrations. Many people from the villages surrounding Mahelav had flocked to see this film. The village leaders and prominent devotees had gone to Atladara to bring Shastriji Maharaj to the Mahelav *parayan*, but he had flatly refused. On the occasion of the *parayan*'s conclusion, the entire village was fed. Then, Yogi Maharaj sanctified every single house in the entire village. Not a single household was left out.

At Yogi Maharaj's behest, Narayanbhai had prepared commemorative silver medallions, which Yogi Maharaj distributed to the uniformed volunteers. Yogi Maharaj heartily blessed them and said, "In the same way, we should have a large contingent of volunteers present in the Gadhada mandir *murti-pratishtha* celebrations so that they may please Shastriji Maharaj with their service."

Fulabhai Savdasbhai, a prominent devotee of the Vartal diocese in Mahelav, and Jethabhai

Rayjibhai, a leading Vaishnav devotee of Mahelav, had both attended the *parayan*. After its conclusion, they sponsored a meal for Yogi Maharaj and the sadhus.

Aksharpurushottamdas Swami was extremely pleased with the *parayan*, and he asked Yogi Maharaj to offer Narayanbhai his heartiest blessings. Pramukh Swami had taken a leading role in all *parayan* arrangements and volunteer coordination. Thus, by offering his matchless service and devotion day and night, he had pleased Shastriji Maharaj and Yogi Maharaj.

Serendipitously, Magshar *sud* 10, fell during the days of the *parayan*, and understanding it to be Yogi Maharaj's 56th birthday, the devotees expressed their love for Yogi Maharaj by singing his praises.³

After this unparalleled *parayan* in Mahelav, at the insistence of the devotees, Yogi Maharaj visited several villages before arriving in Ambli Vali Pol in Ahmedabad. Although Shastriji Maharaj was present here, the severity of his

illness had caused a sense of dejection to permeate the atmosphere. Yogi Maharaj's arrival slightly lifted the gloom.

It was around 8 p.m. when Shastriji Maharaj suddenly called Rameshbhai Dalal and said, “Where is Jogi? Call Jogi here.”

Rameshbhai informed Yogi Maharaj, who came to Shastriji Maharaj and stood before him with folded hands. Suddenly, Shastriji Maharaj shouted, “Who is that? What are you doing standing here? Get out!”

Yogi Maharaj immediately left the room with his hands still folded, not saying a word nor expressing the slightest surprise or agitation at Shastriji Maharaj's unexpected behavior.

3 At the time, the Satsang community was unaware that Yogi Maharaj's actual birthday was on Vaishakh vad 12.