

# Chapter 21

## **The Kshipra Transfigured into Akshar**

The train passed through Godhera and Dahod before arriving at Ujjain at 4 a.m. on 24 November 1953. Due to a lack of vehicles, Swamishri, the sadhus, and many devotees boarded a bus to Ujjain's Kshipra River, where Swamishri bathed Harikrishna Maharaj. Then, Swamishri sprinkled water from the river on the heads of everyone accompanying him. Holding his hands up with great enthusiasm, Swamishri declared that the Kshipra River's new name was Akshar River. He blessed, "Whoever bathes in this river will come into contact with Satsang."

Then, Swamishri went to the Gopal mandir, where he praised its architecture. Swamishri returned to the station and again gave darshan to all the pilgrims. Then, he took the microphone and imparted the pilgrimage's first

great nugget of wisdom: “When one attains true realization, one is not ensnared by *maya*. Just as a snakebird is unencumbered by water, similarly, even if such a being exists within *maya*, he remains unhampered by it. Only a being of such power can elevate infinite souls beyond *maya*.”

That night, in his compartment, Swamishri had everyone sing Muktanand Swami’s kirtan, “*Nārad aise sāche santki riti, jehi suni sādhu parat pichhānat...*” (Narad, listening to the ways of the true Sant, one can identify him... ) Then he explained, “Such an *ekantik Sant* is Maharaj’s everything. They were there in Maharaj’s time and are here today. According to Vachanamrut Gadhada II 30, only he is a Sadhu beloved by Maharaj. If one recognizes him, he won’t allow one to be ensnared by *maya*.”

Wherever the special train halted for the night, an assembly would be organized on the railway platform. In Agra, the assembly occurred at the railway station. Swamishri had

a singular focus and was teaching a single lesson:

“The purpose of this special train is to allow thousands of liberated souls to worship God. It has attained a divine status by its association with God’s holy Sadhu. Whoever recollects it will attain a great spiritual state. Today, the wish to take Pramukh Swami on a pilgrimage to Chhapaiya has been fulfilled. ‘Will this special train work? Will the pilgrimage be full of hardships and suffering?’ Many people had such thoughts. But the arrangements have been exceptional. Everyone is very impressed with us. Many people were disinclined from coming because of health problems, but we got them to come by hook or by crook. But all your diseases will be cured on this pilgrimage to Chhapaiya. Even if one eats less, they will feel reinvigorated, and the pain of a *shuli* will be transfigured into the prick of a thorn.

“We should make sure to offer our donations in these places of pilgrimage. Maharaj performed grand *yagnas*, fed hundreds of

thousands of Brahmins, and offered them monetary gifts. But since later administrators were greedy, they caused Swaminarayans to be known as greedy. But, if we donate money, people will see us positively, and they will attain liberation. So, you should definitely offer your donations.”

Naranbhai, a manager at a large company in Agra, was the son of the sincere devotee, Ambalalbhai of Ranakpur, near Ahmedabad. At Naranbhai’s request, Swamishri and the sadhus visited his company in the afternoon. Naranbhai garlanded Swamishri with flowers and offered puja to Thakorji. He arranged for the company’s entire staff to receive Swamishri’s blessings. On this occasion, Swamishri blessed the smallest workers, including the cooks, the servants, the drivers, and the horse cart driver, by garlanding them with sanctified garlands. Then, Naranbhai took Swamishri to see the Taj Mahal and brought him back to the station.

That evening, in his train compartment, Swamishri said, “We have attained the bliss of Akshardham. If we can understand this, then the eight attainments and nine treasures are encompassed within it. Where there is God, there will be a crowd of devotees. God likes that crowd.” Then, Swamishri recited a verse of Tulsidas:

“Chitrakut ke ghāt pe, bhai bhaktan ki bhid,  
Tulasidās chandan ghase, tilak kare  
Raghuvir.”

(Upon the banks of the Chitrakut, there is a large crowd of devotees. Tulsidas prepares the sandalwood paste, and Rama Bhagwan applies the tilak.)