

# Chapter 14

## The Pull of Jogi's Presence

In the evening, everyone went to the Manavadar mandir for *sandhya arti*. Brahmachari Ghanshyamanandji and Brahmachari Purushottamanandji welcomed Shastriji Maharaj with a sanctified flower garland. Moreover, they invited everyone for lunch the following day. Shastriji Maharaj declined in order to forestall any potential discord from opponents in the Vartal diocese. However, due to the Brahmacharis' loving insistence, Shastriji Maharaj agreed to have breakfast there the following morning when they came for Thakorji's darshan. Then, everyone went for darshan at the sanctified spots around the village. They drew water from the Gangajaliyo Well. At Yogi Maharaj's behest, Gordhanbhai Brahmbhatt read aloud the inscription at the memorial site. Yogi Maharaj then recited five Swami Vato and shared the

glory of that holy spot with everyone. After the evening assembly, everyone retired for the night. The next morning, due to the *brahmacharis'* insistence, everyone had darshan and breakfast in the mandir. At Thakorshi Bapa's invitation, everyone had lunch at his house, where Shastriji Maharaj served all the sadhus and devotees *dudhpak* to everyone's delight.

From Panchala, they had planned to take the roadway to Meghpur, Piplana, Akha, Vanthali, and other villages for darshan of all the sanctified spots before traveling to Junagadh. Everyone was making preparations accordingly when Nirgundas Swami informed Manibhai Brahmbhatt and Gordhanbhai Brahmbhatt, "Yogi Maharaj will now remain here to collect the local devotees' tithes." Shastriji Maharaj also wished for this to happen.

Yogi Maharaj had woken early to prepare *khichdi* and *kadhi* for everyone. After serving everyone, he sat down to eat while Shastriji Maharaj dozed on his cot, and Nirgundas

Swami wrote letters. When Gordhanbhai arrived, Nirgundas Swami asked, “Where is Yogiji Maharaj?”

Gordhanbhai replied, “He is eating right now. Once he finishes, he is coming with us to Junagadh.”

Nirgundas Swami became irritated and said, “Who said he is coming to Junagadh? He is staying here to collect the tithes.”

Nirgundas Swami sent a *parshad* to call Yogi Maharaj. Although he was in the middle of his meal, Yogi Maharaj immediately got up, washed his bowl, drank some water, and rushed to Shastriji Maharaj.

Meanwhile, Shastriji Maharaj had woken and was sitting up in his cot. Everyone requested Shastriji Maharaj to allow Yogi Maharaj to accompany them to Junagadh so that he could point out all the sanctified spots, explain their glory, and narrate the incidents associated with them.

Shastriji Maharaj affectionately said, “Everyone is craving Jogi’s company. So, Jogi, go with everyone to Junagadh and show everyone around all the sanctified spots there.” Everyone was delighted with Shastriji Maharaj’s decision.

In Junagadh, everyone stayed at Kalyanjibhai’s house. Kalyanjibhai welcomed Yogi Maharaj and all the guests and prepared a delicious meal for them.

The next day everyone went to the mandir for *shangar arti*. Then, they went to the assembly hall and other sanctified spots around the mandir for darshan before returning to Kalyanjibhai’s house. In the afternoon, everyone had lunch, and at night all the sadhus and devotees departed Junagadh for Gondal by train.

In the train, as everyone was discussing the glory of the various pilgrimage places they had visited, Nirgundas Swami told Shastriji Maharaj, “Wherever Jogi goes, he would visit every single sanctified spot for darshan, and he

would strongly insist all those with him to do the same. But after having seen that sanctified spot once, what is the point of going there repeatedly? Just think about how much time it wastes!”

Hearing such criticism of Yogi Maharaj, Shastriji Maharaj instantly spoke up, “That is a characteristic of *parabhakti*—the highest devotion. Others also benefit greatly from it. They understand and consolidate the greatness of that holy place. Only with such an understanding can one realize the glory of the pilgrimage place, experience the bliss of pilgrimage, and attain the associated spiritual merit. Yogi Maharaj shows everyone each sanctified spot as if Shriji Maharaj and Swami are present there before our very eyes. Consequently, the devotees experience great peace. Moreover, Yogi Maharaj is so warm and hospitable that everyone, no matter who he is, would be touched and become a *satsangi*.”

Everyone fell silent listening to Shastriji Maharaj's description of Yogi Maharaj's divine

glory. Meanwhile, Yogi Maharaj remained seated, eyes closed, turning the *mala*.

As Yogi Maharaj had explained the glory of all the sanctified spots throughout their pilgrimage, the devotees had developed a profound respect and affection for him. Moreover, since Shastriji Maharaj was with them, everyone had the opportunity to personally witness and experience many inspiring incidents of Yogi Maharaj's devotional service and *nirdosh buddhi* for the guru.

As everyone departed from Gondal to go their separate ways, they took the divine memories of their holy pilgrimage together with Akshar Mandir's sanctified laddus, which had been packed for them by Yogi Maharaj for their journey home!

Shastriji Maharaj and Yogi Maharaj then traveled to Rajkot, Dhrangadhra, Surendranagar, and other places where they delighted the devotees with their divine presence and discourses. Then, from

Surendranagar, Shastriji Maharaj went to Sarangpur, while Yogi Maharaj went to Talaja, Bhavnagar, and Gadhada.

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