

Chapter 16

Swamishri's Love Rouses the Youths

Around this time, Ramanbhai Patel⁵ of Anand met Swamishri for the first time. Before this, he had only heard Swamishri's name and harbored the impression that he was a good sadhu.

But during his vacation, he visited Gondal for the first time. He experienced boundless peace in Akshar Deri. Many devotees had come to Gondal, including Gulzarilal Nanda. At the time, Nandaji was a Cabinet Minister in the Government of India. When Ramanbhai went for Swamishri's darshan, he hesitated, thinking, "With so many devotees and such dignitaries here, how can I approach Swamishri?"

However, nothing escaped Swamishri's notice. As soon as Ramanbhai arrived, Swamishri called him near and said, "Go have a

bath and freshen up. Then I will serve you some breakfast.”

After getting ready, Ramanbhai returned to Swamishri. Swamishri took him to the kitchen, laid out an empty jute bag for Ramanbhai to sit, and served breakfast on a paper dish. While Ramanbhai ate, Swamishri sat across from him and smiled affectionately while continuing to insist he take more food. This continued until Ramanbhai finished eating. Experiencing Swamishri’s selfless love, Ramanbhai was overwhelmed. After he finished his meal, he realized that while he had sat on a cloth Swamishri had laid out for him, Swamishri had sat on the ground. He felt immense remorse at failing to offer Swamishri a seat. A feeling of reverence for Swamishri emerged from the depths of his heart.

Govindsinhji, the Deputy Collector of Morbi, came for Swamishri’s darshan the following day. Swamishri went with him in his car to Junagadh and Jetpur for darshan. Swamishri was always very eager to have darshan of such

places of pilgrimage. In each place of pilgrimage, Swamishri would never tire of going to every sanctified spot and sanctified object and explaining their glory to the accompanying devotees. Swamishri never held back in any efforts to increase the devotees’ faith and conviction in Satsang. He remained forever engaged in fostering in the devotees a sense of pride for the Sampradaya’s lineage and traditions.

On Vasant Panchami of V.S. 2008, Shastriji Maharaj’s birthday celebrations were held with great festivity in Atladara. Devotees from Charotar, Kanam, Surat, and Mumbai had arrived for the festival. Although everyone was absorbed in the joyous remembrances of Shastriji Maharaj, sometimes they would be assailed by the agony of separation. That is why thousands of devoted hearts yearned to meet their beloved Swamishri, who remained everyone’s sole refuge.

This is a hallmark of the Gunatit lineage. If one has recognized and loved the Gunatit Sant

in his true form, one would instantly become attached to the succeeding Gunatit Sant in the lineage, who is Maharaj's manifest form. One would not feel lonely or have any reservations. It would be impossible not to develop love for the one and unparalleled Gunatit Sant through whom the one and unparalleled Bhagwan Swaminarayan forever remains present on Earth because the entity remains the same, only the outer shell changes.

On the birthday of their guru, everyone sang the praises of Shastriji Maharaj, through which they felt the contentment of extolling Swamishri's glory. Swamishri elaborated on the same sentiment in his blessings, saying, “Shastriji Maharaj has not departed. He remains in our midst.” He also spoke about the greatness of Sadguru Nishkulanand Swami and the Shikshapatri. As everyone was absorbed in the glory of the present guru, on Shastriji Maharaj's birthday, everyone performed puja of the manifest guru and received his blessings. Swamishri exhorted the devotees to help in

quickly completing the Gadhada mandir project that Shastriji Maharaj had started.

After the festival, Swamishri, Pramukh Swami, and Mota Swami traveled to Ahmedabad and Sarangpur before arriving in Gondal. Then, they went again to Sarangpur, Gadhada, and Dwarka, before taking a car to Purushottampura.

5 Sadhu Swayamprakashdas (Doctor Swami)