

Chapter 24

A Bittersweet Farewell

From Ahmedabad, Swamishri set out for Bochasan. Large crowds of devotees flocked to the train stations in Ahmedabad, Nadiad, and Petlad for Swamishri's darshan before his departure from India. The devotees simultaneously experienced the emotions of great anguish at their impending separation from Swamishri, together with great joy that, "Now, the victory bells of Akshar Purushottam will toll in foreign lands. Swamishri's holy feet will fall on the vast continent of Africa, sanctifying the land and granting great spiritual merits to thousands of souls. The flags of Akshar Purushottam will flutter across the ocean." This overpowering joy prompted everyone to happily accept their physical separation from Swamishri as they all wished for Shastriji Maharaj's life work to spread around the world. Although devotees of the

manifest form of God forever desire to remain close to that manifest form, they felt that if the benefit of the manifest Satpurush's darshan and *samagam* would be received by new spiritual aspirants on the continent of Africa, then let them receive it, as we will follow Swamishri's commands and, through that, keep his divine form together with us. Thus did those devotees persuade their own minds to remain content, allowing them to experience the joy of having Swamishri's darshan today.

From Petlad, Swamishri traveled to Manibhai Brahmbhatt's home in Nar, where he performed the *murti-pratishtha* ceremony in his home. Then Swamishri met Khushaldada, who had met with Bhagatji Maharaj.

In the afternoon, Swamishri reached Bochasan. He celebrated the Punam festival on *sud* 12, and thousands of devotees from all around Central Gujarat flocked for Swamishri's darshan. The attraction of Swamishri's *murti* was such that no matter how much other work they had, the devotees felt an irresistible pull in

their minds that, “Let me just go for Swamishri’s darshan, because who knows when I will get darshan again?” Thousands of devotees, young and old, felt an extraordinary invisible pull, and only when they laid their heads in Swamishri’s lap and felt the clap of his blessings on their back did they experience a sense of peace that all was right with the world.