

Chapter 24

Unhesitatingly Sacrificing His Own Comforts

During this period, Akshar Swami's health was extremely delicate. He was unable to perform even his basic bodily functions on his own. Swamishri was very concerned about his deteriorating health. Consequently, during the Gondal mandir *patotsav* in Vaishakh, Swamishri had asked Pujari Harisevadas Swami to go to Bochasan to serve as Akshar Swami's personal attendant, but he had declined. Finally, Swamishri asked Balmukund Swami, "Will you go?"

"Of course, Bapa! As you wish," was Balmukund Swami's instant reply. That very day he accompanied Swamishri to Bhavnagar and then traveled with a *parshad* to Bochasan, where he immediately joined in Akshar Swami's service.

In Bochasan, Swamishri had expressed his immense pleasure upon seeing Balmukund Swami serving Akshar Swami. As Balmukund Swami was now to join Swamishri in the spiritual tour to Africa, Swamishri told Akshar Swami, “Swami, I have come to fetch Balmukunddas, as he will be traveling with me.”

Akshar Swami felt a jolt. Never had he had such a good, virtuous attendant who served with such humility. Thus, he began to lose his composure. As soon as Swamishri saw this, he called Balmukund Swami and asked, “You are scheduled to go to Africa, but what is your thought on this matter?”

Balmukund Swami replied, “Your command is my very life. So, I will do as you say.”

“Oh, ho, ho!” Exclamations of *rajipo* escaped from Swamishri’s lips as he said, “Continue serving Akshar Swami as we are very pleased with you for doing that!”

Balmukund Swami had been scheduled to go as Swamishri's personal attendant on the first spiritual tour outside of India for any sadhu. Who wouldn't be thrilled to visit a foreign country? But this sadhu, committed to sacrificing his all at the guru's command, remained happily in the service of Akshar Swami. Akshar Swami's eyes brimmed with tears of gratitude when he heard Balmukund Swami's decision. When Swamishri went to meet him, Akshar Swami grasped tightly onto Swamishri's hand for quite some time as tears silently flowed from his eyes. The sentiments of pure love were further reinforced through his tears. He exclaimed, "Jogi! You are Shastriji Maharaj himself. There is not an iota of difference between you and Swami. You are the very form of Gunatit!"

As Swamishri took his leave, he enveloped his obedient disciple in a warm, loving embrace.

As Swamishri's own health was poor, he required a sadhu like Balmukunddas Swami,

who would have obediently and eagerly served him as a personal attendant. Until now, the role of Swamishri's companion sadhu had been filled by a rotation of numerous willful and troublesome sadhus who generally failed to attend to Swamishri's needs properly. However, Swamishri never revealed any of the hardships he endured to anyone. Balmukund Swami was the first attendant he had who would serve him according to his wish.

If he had a good personal attendant while in a foreign country, his health would remain stable, and he would be able to travel even more extensively, endure more hardship, and further please the devotees. With this sentiment, Swamishri had wished to take Balmukund Swami with him. But seeing Akshar Swami's distress, Swamishri immediately changed his decision, motivated by the sole desire that Shastriji Maharaj's beloved elderly sadhu's care should be properly attended to, and he should not feel hurt.

Balmukund Swami was also so wedded to following Swamishri's command that he discarded the attraction of traveling to foreign lands and staying in Swamishri's service and wholeheartedly remained in the service of Akshar Swami. He abided by Swamishri's innermost wishes. Many sadhus were present, but who could follow Swamishri's command like this? For that, one would have needed to understand Swamishri's greatness fully!