

Chapter 15

My Part in the Ritual Is Over

Shastriji Maharaj prepared to go to Gadhada for his final darshan of the *murtis*. He was eagerly waiting for Yogi Maharaj to arrive. Maganbhai arrived from Surat and gave Shastriji Maharaj the news that “Yogi Maharaj is arriving today.” Shastriji Maharaj was overjoyed and said, “Now I will feel at peace.”

As soon as Yogi Maharaj arrived, Shastriji Maharaj met him in high spirits. That evening at 7 p.m., they reached Gadhada. The following day, Shastriji Maharaj sat in a chair and was carried to the mandir.

Shastriji Maharaj bathed the *murtis* with water from the Ghela River, adorned them with *janois*, and applied a kumkum *chandlo* on therefore heads. He devotionally caressed all the *murti* and garlanded them. Then, he performed the *arti* of the *murtis* and remarked, “My part in the ritual is over. The *pratishtha* is

complete. Now, I don't want to come back here. Yogi Maharaj will come and perform the *artī*."

Who could realize the latent meaning in Shastriji Maharaj's words at that time?

Shastriji Maharaj and the sadhus returned to Sarangpur. Shastriji Maharaj had specially summoned the devotees from Africa on the auspicious occasion of the *murti-pratishtha* in Gadhada. Many devotees from India had also arrived in Gadhada. After a long conversation about the upcoming *pratishtha*, Ramjibhai Khatri told Shastriji Maharaj, "I want to sponsor a meal that you will also eat."

Shastriji Maharaj said, "I am only eating one morsel of food, so I won't be able to do justice to the meal you sponsor. However, Yogi Maharaj is traveling to Mumbai tomorrow. If he stays back, your sponsorship of a meal will be worthwhile."

Ramjibhai made his request to Yogi Maharaj, who agreed to postpone his trip. Shastriji Maharaj was happy to hear this and

said, “Yogi Maharaj possesses all sixty-four virtues of a true Sant, but in addition to those, he possesses infinitely more virtues. In infinite universes, there is no Sant like Yogi Maharaj. So now, you should feed him and offer him *dhotiyas*. Moreover, whatever service you offer to him will be accepted by me.”

So saying, Shastriji Maharaj had them prepare the meal of which he partook only a little, but he fed Yogi Maharaj enthusiastically.

In the afternoon, Shastriji Maharaj would sit under the neem tree in the mandir courtyard and delight the devotees with his presence. Sometimes, he would speak on important topics.

In the evening, Shastriji Maharaj asked Yogi Maharaj, Pramukh Swami, and all the sadhus and devotees to gather before him. He looked at Narayanswarupdas Swami and said, “Narayan Swami! In the assembly in Ahmedabad, I had draped my upper cloth around you and appointed you to sit on my seat. But, in this Satsang, Yogi Maharaj is eternally great.

Understanding this, everyone should behave according to his commands. Never do anything that will make him sad. He has forever behaved according to my wishes. There is no one else like him. Whoever serves him serves me. Understanding him to be in my place, all of you should serve him through mind, action, and speech. I will be pleased if you do that.”

After speaking further on the glory of God and his Sadhu, Shastriji Maharaj concluded the assembly. The following day, Yogi Maharaj left for Mumbai.

The devotees from Africa generally sat surrounding Swamishri’s cot. One day, Swamishri addressed Maganbhai, Harmanbhai, Tribhovanbhai, Ambalalbhai, C.T. Patel, and the other devotees, “There is no one in this universe like Yogi Maharaj. Vyasji has described the virtues of a sadhu in the Shrimad Bhagvat; but, if he has forgotten to write any virtues, even those virtues are in Yogi Maharaj. Between Yogi and me, there is not an iota of

difference. Make sure you recognize Yogi Maharaj. He is a Gunatit Purush.”

Other than these special, foundational talks, Shastriji Maharaj mostly remained silent. One could only hear him sometimes softly chanting the Swaminarayan mantra. Aksharpriyadas Swami, who was serving as his personal attendant, pleaded with Shastriji Maharaj, “Oh, merciful one, please eat a little bit.”

However, Shastriji Maharaj would not reply. Just then, a letter from Yogi Maharaj arrived. As soon as he heard this, Shastriji Maharaj perked up and said, “Aho! Yogi Maharaj is the manifest form of Gunatit. He is very great.”

After listening to the letter, Shastriji Maharaj asked for some food. Everyone seated there felt, “Shastriji Maharaj is constantly contemplating on Yogi Maharaj’s name, and upon hearing his name opened his eyes. Yogi Maharaj has wholly won Swamishri over.”

That evening, Kuberbhai, Thakarshibhai, Haka Khachar, and other devotees arrived from

Bhavnagar. Kuberbhai requested Shastriji Maharaj, “Swami, please shower your mercy upon us. As the auspicious date is approaching, please come to Gadhada.”

Shastriji Maharaj told him, “I was going to go to Akshardham today, but because of the intense love of these devotees of Africa, I was unable to! I have finished what needed to be done in Gadhada. I have completed my part of the ritual. Now Yogi Maharaj will perform the *artī*.”

Then, Shastriji Maharaj again lapsed into silence and did not respond to anyone. No one had the power to bring Shastriji Maharaj out from his pensive mood except for Yogi Maharaj! Only he would be able to do something. However, Maganbhai Secretary had forcefully taken Shastriji Maharaj’s permission to have Yogi Maharaj go to Mumbai to offer his blessings on the occasion of a wedding in the family of Morarka Sheth. Thus, it was impossible for Yogi Maharaj to return to Sarangpur immediately.