

# Chapter 16

## **Liberating the Populace from Bhupat's Reign of Terror**

Since the formation of the state of Saurashtra in 1948, Uchharangrai Dhebar had served as its Chief Minister. At 10 p.m. on 7 January 1952, he came to Akshar Mandir in Gondal to receive Swamishri's blessings for the government's efforts to apprehend a terrorist organization operating in the state.

At the time, some of the erstwhile princely rulers of Saurashtra were unhappy with the democratically elected government for taking away their powers and much of their land rights. To prevent further erosion of their powers by the state, they wanted to turn public sentiment against the government by fostering the impression that democratic rule led to lawlessness. Thus, they supported a gang of dacoits led by Bhupat Baharwatiya in killing innocent citizens around the state to spread a

reign of terror across the populace. As they supplied Bhupat with arms, ammunition, and shelter, the state government and its fledgling police force had consistently failed to apprehend him. As the entire state fell under the grip of Bhupat's reign of terror, Chief Minister Dhebar and his Council of Ministers became desperate to find a solution.

One day, Bhaktiba, the wife of Vaso's Darbar Gopaldas Desai, told Chief Minister Debhar, "If you take the blessings of Yogiji Maharaj and commit to a *manta* at Gondal's Akshar Deri, this problem will be resolved."

Accordingly, Chief Minister Dhebar met Swamishri and informed him of Bhupat Baharwatiya's reign of terror. Swamishri immediately began to chant the *dhun*, saying, "This dacoit will soon run away, and peace will return to the land." Swamishri blessed Chief Minister Dhebar.

Afterward, Chief Minister Dhebar confided to Bhaktiba, "Swamishri told me that, 'The dacoit will soon run away.' But where will he

run to? Moreover, he blessed me that in just a few days, this problem will be resolved, but I find his words hard to believe.”

Bhaktiba replied, “Swamishri is a great soul. His words invariably come true.” The conversation ended here.

However, a few days later, the Union government posted V. G. Kantikar, a decorated police officer, to Saurashtra to rid the state of the menace of Bhupat. Officer Kantikar arrested one of Bhupat's patrons, the younger brother of the erstwhile Maharaja of Bhavnagar, Nirmalsinh. Realizing that the authorities were closing in on him, Bhupat escaped to Pakistan via Kutch. Thus, Swamishri's words came true.

Chief Minister Dhebar was a leading politician in the Indian National Congress Party, and due to his secular beliefs, had no faith in miracles or prophecies. However, by Swamishri's grace, he had now experienced both in his own life. Consequently, he developed immense reverence and devotion for

Swamishri, who he saw as a divine manifestation of Paramatma.

After this incident, he began to regularly visit Akshar Deri and meet Swamishri for his darshan and blessings.