

Chapter 13

Enduring Hardship Is Devotion

Despite Shastriji Maharaj's delicate health, he was always ready to travel at the request of the devotees. Sometimes, Shastriji Maharaj would, on some pretext or other, send Yogi Maharaj in his place so the devotees would begin to understand his greatness. On other occasions, Shastriji Maharaj would find some excuse to travel through the villages himself.

After the Punam festival, Yogi Maharaj came to Atladara. From there, Shastriji Maharaj, Yogi Maharaj, a younger sadhu, a *parshad*, and Babubhai Kothari spent the night at Ranoli Station on their way to Sankarda. Because they had not informed the devotees in advance, no one was at the station to receive the sadhus with a bullock cart to transport them to the village. The sadhus had to tread a treacherous path through gullies, and that too in the dark of

night. But, everyone carried their cloth bags and walked to the village of Padamla.

Soon, Shastriji Maharaj was exhausted. So, Yogi Maharaj made a makeshift bed under a tree on someone's farm and had Shastriji Maharaj lie down. As he witnessed the unbelievable level of hardship Shastriji Maharaj and Yogi Maharaj were enduring to spread Satsang, Babubhai Kothari became emotional.

Yogi Maharaj then took his companion sadhu to the nearby village to secure a bullock cart. But when they found a household with a cart, the owner did not have any bullocks, and when they found household with bullocks, the owner did not have a cart. Finally, Yogi Maharaj secured one decrepit bullock cart and two bullocks. The driver was also of the same quality.

The bone-rattling trip on this decrepit bullock cart was agonizing, and Kothari Babubhai's entire body was soon aching. He told Shastriji Maharaj, "I can't tolerate this

torturous travel.” However, when he glanced toward Yogi Maharaj, Babubhai saw him engaged in the contemplation of God, saying “Maharaj, Swami” with a gentle smile on his lips. There was no trace of fatigue or frustration on his face.

When they reached Sankarda, Yogi Maharaj ordered provisions from the devotees’ homes and, late at night, made *khichdi* and *kadhi* to feed Babubhai Kothari and the accompanying young sadhu and *parshad*. Yogi Maharaj served them with such love that they forgot all about their fatigue.

Seeing Yogi Maharaj’s sentiment of pure service, Babubhai Kothari mentally offered his obeisance. The thought sprouted in his mind that this sadhu would surely embody great virtues in the future, and thousands of devotees would enthusiastically follow his every command.

From here, everyone went to Ahmedabad. Shastriji Maharaj stayed in Ahmedabad, and Yogi Maharaj went to Gondal.

On 26 January 1943 (Posh *vad* 5, V.S. 1999), Vanmalidas Sheth had organized a *parayan* in Babara. Although Shastriji Maharaj granted the bliss of his divine presence to the devotees, after several days, the devotees felt something was missing. Jogi's seat was empty. How could Shastriji Maharaj be at ease in his absence? Shastriji Maharaj often used to give the example of the Gopis, Krupanand Swami, Puja Dodiya, and others and say, "Today, Yogi Maharaj has such loving devotion. He is unable to live without God."

Shastriji Maharaj was ill at ease without Yogi Maharaj. Thus, he sent a message for Yogi Maharaj to come immediately from Gondal to Babara. Yogi Maharaj traveled to Babara immediately. On all such festivals, *parayans*, or special events, Shastriji Maharaj would invariably call Yogi Maharaj. On this occasion, Yogi Maharaj's arrival brought Shastriji Maharaj peace and the devotees great joy.

From Babara, Shastriji Maharaj and Yogi Maharaj went to Kariyana, Gadhada, Ningala, Tajpur, and Sarangpur.

All the sadhus in Sarangpur were overjoyed to have Shastriji Maharaj's darshan. From here, everyone traveled to Bochasan to celebrate Shastriji Maharaj's seventy-ninth birthday on Vasant Panchami. Everyone sang Shastriji Maharaj's praises with great enthusiasm and profound devotion to the guru. Then via Ahmedabad, Yogi Maharaj and Nirgundas Swami traveled to Adval, Chachana, and the surrounding villages.

An excellent *parayan* was organized in Chachana through the sponsorship of Puriba and the assistance of Bapubha, Amarsang, Dadubha, and others. Shastriji Maharaj also graced this *parayan*, and Yogi Maharaj inaugurated the *parayan* with his spiritual discourses.