

Chapter 18

Respect for the Inclinations of the Modern Youth

At the time, the Congress Seva Dal had organized a program called The United India Cycle Tour and appointed Nanubhai C. Patel to lead it. Nanubhai was the brother-in-law of Mota Swami's former son Ramanbhai. Dhirubhai Soni of Vaghodiya had suggested to him that before embarking on a tour of thousands of kilometers, as Swamishri is currently in Vadodara, he should take Swamishri's blessings that the tour may be completed successfully without any obstacles.

Swamishri was at a devotee's home in Lakkadpitha when Nanubhai and Dhirubhai arrived there in the morning. First, he informed Mota Swami of his endeavor. Mota Swami became incensed and rebuked him, "Oi, don't you have anything better to do? What will you achieve by cycling around?" As Swamishri

walked into the room, Mota Swami told him, “Swami! Tell him no. He should not go on a cycling tour.”

Swamishri laughed, took a freshly offered flower garland off Thakorji, and placed it around Nanubhai’s neck. Then he applied a *chandlo* to Nanubhai’s forehead and even had Mota Swami do the same. Then Swamishri told Mota Swami, “In the past, people would go on pilgrimage by foot. They are all going by cycle. The effort is the same!” Then, Swamishri clapped Nanubhai on the back and blessed him, “Go, your pilgrimage will be a success.”

Then Swamishri gave him some prasad and asked, “When are you leaving?”

Nanubhai said, “Bapa, we have planned to leave tomorrow.”

Swamishri said, “Go to Atladara in the morning and have Thakorji’s darshan and prasad before you set out.”

Nanubhai said, “Bapa, we are scheduled to leave at 4 a.m.”

Swamishri said, “Then we will have a meal ready for you at 4 a.m., but you should set out only after taking prasad.”

The following morning at 4 a.m., Swamishri himself served all the youths prasad. Moreover, he packed five pounds of sanctified magas for them to eat on the road. Then, after having darshan of Akshar Purushottam Maharaj in *mangala arti*, they commenced their cycle tour. Swamishri wrote letters to the devotees along their route all the way to Dhuliya, asking them to provide food and accommodations to all the youths on the tour.

During this time, Nathalal Yogina was working on publishing a photo of Swamishri in Vadodara. Initially, he had prepared a printing block. Then he visited the shop of Dhulabhai Patel of Limbasi and asked about purchasing paper for publishing Swamishri’s photo. Being from Limbasi, Dhulabhai was aware of Swamishri, and his cousin Vitthalbhai had accepted *vartman* from Shastriji Maharaj.

However, due to association with bad company, Dhulabhai had an aversion for Swamishri.

Thus, he asked Nathalal, “Why do you want to print a photo of a sadhu?” That question led to an intense discussion that left Dhulabhai winded. Meanwhile, Nathalal presented many examples and illustrations as evidence of Swamishri’s greatness. Then he said, “His mere blessings can cure terrible diseases such as tuberculosis and asthma.”

Then Nathalal told Dhulabhai, “You must have undergone the treatment of many doctors, but this particular doctor remains. Meet him, have his darshan, and take his blessings, and your wishes will come true.”

For four days, Dhulabhai thought over his discussion with Nathalal. Then, he heard that Swamishri was in Atladara. Thus, that evening he came with Nathalal Yogina for Swamishri’s darshan. When Nathalal took Dhulabhai to Swamishri, Swamishri was very pleased to see him. Swamishri clapped him on the back and

said, “We know him from the beginning. This is the brother of Vitthalbhai of Limbasi!”

Then, Swamishri blessed him that he would be cured of his illness. From that simple touch, Dhulabhai felt that not only had his disease been cured, but the questions assailing him had been resolved, and he experienced peace. Soon, he was cured of his illness, and he became a staunch follower of the Swaminarayan Sampradaya.