

Chapter 15

Subordinate to All!

After celebrating the Gondal mandir *patotsav* on 27 April 1950 (Vaishakh *sud* 10, V.S. 2006), Yogi Maharaj had planned to visit Vekari, Charakhadi, Padavala, Mevasa, and other surrounding villages to collect tithes from devotees. For this purpose, Yogi Maharaj told Kothari Harijivandas, “Please prepare a bullock cart.”

Harijivandas Kothari replied, “There are no bullock carts free.”

Yogi Maharaj again requested, “If you can just have it drop me off on the outskirts of Gondal near the Bhutiyo Kotha, that will be fine.”

Finally, Harijivandas Kothari arranged for a bullock cart to drop Yogi Maharaj off on the outskirts of Gondal. Here, Yogi Maharaj sat under a banyan tree and told Nanjibhai, who

was accompanying him, “As soon as you see a bullock cart on the road, tell them that two sadhus wish to go to Vekari and ask if we can hitch a ride.”

Nanjibhai made his request to many bullock cart drivers, but no one agreed. Finally, tired of the constant rejection, Nanjibhai hired a car for `1.75 to drop Yogi Maharaj off at Vekari. Yogi Maharaj was pleased with Nanjibhai’s donation and finally reached Vekari.

Despite being the Mahant of Akshar Mandir, Yogi Maharaj always remained at the mercy of the *kothari*. But, since he forever remained a servant to all, Yogi Maharaj had no complaint with this arrangement. However, taking advantage of Yogi Maharaj’s saintliness, many sadhus kept him under their thumb. Yet, it seemed that Yogi Maharaj could find joy even in being suppressed by others! On this occasion, at least Nanjibhai was there to offer his timely service and please Yogi Maharaj.

The old mandir in Devchadi had been completely renovated, and all the villagers

decided to call Yogi Maharaj to perform the *murti-pratishtha*. Bhurabhai suggested, “Let us just distribute coconut and *sakar* and install the *murti* ourselves.”

However, Nanjibhai said, “We must call Yogi Maharaj from Gondal, have him install the sacred *murti* of Thakorji, and feed the entire village to mark the auspicious occasion.”

So, Yogi Maharaj traveled from Vekari to Devchadi. When he was informed about the *pratishtha*, he asked all the devotees, “What is your opinion on what we should do?”

Everyone together and replied, “We want to feed the entire village to celebrate the *pratishtha*.”

Yogi Maharaj was delighted to hear this as he found great joy in feeding others. Then, Yogi Maharaj made a list of the required provisions, including 400 kg of wheat, 100 kg of rice, and the appropriate quantity of gur, ghee, and other supplies.

Yogi Maharaj then called Naranji Maharaj's son, Bhaishankar, and had him make *sukhadī* from pure ghee.

On 5 May 1950 (Vaishakh *vad* 4, V.S. 2006), the *pratishtha* ceremony was celebrated with great festivity. Yogi Maharaj was taken through the village in a grand procession with musical instruments. Many devotees from the surrounding villages were also present for the *murti-pratishtha* ceremony. Shastriji Maharaj had sent a message expressing his regret for not being able to attend in person. Moreover, he had commanded Yogi Maharaj to perform the *murti-pratishtha* on his behalf.

A *yagna* was performed before the *pratishtha*. Harijivandas Swami, Harikrishnadas Swami, and other sadhus had arrived from Gondal. Following the *murti-pratishtha*, a large assembly was held, and sadhus and devotees delivered discourses and speeches. Finally, Yogi Maharaj instructed that everyone should leave only after taking *prasad*.

The entire village as well as devotees from the surrounding villages ate lunch, but a large quantity of *sukhadi* was left over. At Yogi Maharaj's command, it was distributed throughout the entire village, but a fair amount still remained.

After visiting devotees' homes that evening, Yogi Maharaj traveled to Shivrajgadh. Here, the devotees were building a *hari mandir*, and they had Yogi Maharaj perform the groundbreaking ceremony.

After traveling through several more villages, Yogi Maharaj reached Rajkot. Vignandas Swami's disciples, Purushottam Bhagat and Ambaram Bhagat, were staying in the Akshar Purushottam mandir here. Purushottam Bhagat had little regard for Shastriji Maharaj and Yogi Maharaj. Although, when they visited, he would make a show of offering respect.

While Yogi Maharaj was here, he contracted a severe case of diarrhea. So, he had to bathe repeatedly after using the toilet. At the time,

Dilvarsinh, the son of Khedubha Bapu of Kanthariya, and Tapubha were studying in Rajkot. They would heat water for Yogi Maharaj's bath. However, Yogi Maharaj would often stop them, explaining that he would take a bath with cold water. But since both youths had affection for Yogi Maharaj, they would insist on heating the water. Seeing this, Purushottam Bhagat would get angry and prevent them from heating the water, saying, "Why should a sadhu have a warm bath? Bathe in cold water."

Yogi Maharaj would avoid the conflict and bathe with cold water. Whenever he sat for a bath, he was accustomed to saying, "Maharaj bathe, Swami bathe." However, if he were bathing silently, while remembering Maharaj and Swami in his mind, Purushottam Bhagat would sneer, "Jogi! Why are you bathing mutely? Those who bathe without remembering God are bathing in blood. So stop bathing in blood, and start bathing in water."

Yogi Maharaj would calmly endure his sarcasm and again begin saying aloud, “Maharaj bathe, Swami bathe.” Thus did Purushottam Bhagat carry forward the legacy of Vignandas Swami.