

Chapter 13

Shedding the Fever Like a Snake's Old Skin

Shastriji Maharaj and Yogi Maharaj celebrated Shivratri in Mumbai. Then they traveled to Atladara, Radhu, and Dholka before arriving in Sarangpur for the Fuldol festival. In Sarangpur, the foundations were being dug for the mandir guesthouse. C.T. Patel of Africa came to Sarangpur for Shastriji Maharaj's darshan during this time. Shastriji Maharaj told him, "Chhotabhai! Join in the *seva*. Carrying baskets full of dirt for the mandir is a service that even the great devas cannot attain."

Chhotabhai faithfully joined in the service activity. However, he had never engaged in such hard manual labor before, and the strain on his body all day led him to develop a high fever at night. His head felt like someone was hitting it with a sledgehammer. Chhotabhai curled up on a thin blanket outside Yogi

Maharaj's room. The fever was so intense he began slipping towards unconsciousness. Soon, Shastriji Maharaj walked by and saw Chhotabhai's condition. Shastriji Maharaj said, "Rest. You will be better soon." Then, he sent for Yogi Maharaj.

Chhotabhai was in a semi-conscious state when he felt a loving hand caressing his head. That affectionate touch was life-giving. He opened his eyes to see Yogi Maharaj sitting next to him, patting his head! As Chhotabhai opened his eyes, Yogi Maharaj asked, "Chhotabhai, you've developed a high fever, haven't you? Very soon, by Swami's grace, your fever will abate."

Then, Yogi Maharaj sat by Chhotabhai's feet and began to slowly pull away the sheet with which he had covered himself. As Yogi Maharaj pulled the sheet away from each part of his body, along with the sheet, Chhotabhai felt his fever leaving from his head, then his chest, then his stomach, and then his legs. Just as Yogi

Maharaj pulled the sheet off his feet, Chhotabhai felt his fever leave completely!

While he was in Africa, Chhotabhai had read many books on the powers of yoga, and he had learned that adept yogis had the power to perform many miracles. He had experienced such powers in Shastriji Maharaj. While Yogi Maharaj had the same powers, Chhotabhai had seen him remain the smallest of the small in Satsang, humbly and affectionately serving every single devotee. This great sadhu, who considered himself very small, had concealed the tremendous power he had within him. But today, Chhotabhai was a witness to that great, miraculous power. Peace permeated his entire being.

From Sarangpur, Shastriji Maharaj traveled to Kariyani, Botad, and Ahmedabad, while Yogi Maharaj went to Bhavnagar, Rajkot, and Jamnagar. Shastriji Maharaj visited Jamnagar at the invitation of the Prince of Jamnagar State and met Yogi Maharaj there.

Then, Shastriji Maharaj and Yogi Maharaj traveled to Atladara before arriving in Sokhada on 26 April 1946.

During this period, Ramanbhai Desaibhai Patel came into contact with Shastriji Maharaj. He owned land in the villages of Anandpara and Suvachari. He had also met the sadhus of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu from the village of Malsar. Moreover, he was a member of the Radheshyam Raas Mandal, and thus, he used to perform the *raas* dance. At the time, Ramanbhai resided in Sokhada.

Shastriji Maharaj had Ramanbhai sing Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's kirtan, "*Panthāpanthi chhodo...*" Shastriji Maharaj was pleased to hear this kirtan, and he blessed Ramanbhai, "You should keep the company of Yogi Maharaj and do as he says."

Ramanbhai often brought his *raas* group for Yogi Maharaj's darshan. One day, Santvallabh Swami told Ramanbhai, "Men should not dance, or play *raas*, with women. This is against the teachings of our *sampradaya*. No

good will come of it, and it hinders one's devotional progress.”

Hearing this, Ramanbhai looked towards Yogi Maharaj and saw him nodding his head in silent agreement. So, Ramanbhai stopped dancing with his *raas* team and became a true *satsangi*.

Then, from Sokhada, Shastriji Maharaj and Yogi Maharaj traveled to Vasana, Anjesar, and Vadodara before reaching Ahmedabad.

From here, Yogi Maharaj traveled to Adval, while Shastriji Maharaj traveled in North Gujarat towards Kadi. He stayed at Chhotubhai's house along with Nirgundas Swami, Kothari Ishwar Bhagat, Mohanbhai Bagad, and other devotees.

At night, Shastriji Maharaj delivered an exceptional spiritual discourse. With great fervor, Shastriji Maharaj described the *paramhansas'* renunciation and *vairagya*, and referencing examples of their unparalleled spirituality, he gave an accurate description of

the enlightened state of these spiritual giants. Then, he said, “Although we cannot match their spiritual practices, we should at least try to tolerate the cold, heat, hunger, and thirst that naturally occur, and thus, restraining one’s senses, perform austerities. But for that, one needs devotion!”

Then, Shastriji Maharaj began to describe Yogi Maharaj’s life in great detail. He said, “Jogi is Jogi. So much love! His loving devotion resembles Vallabhacharya’s. While observing the waterless fast on Ekadashi, he prepares a full *thal* for Thakorji. There is no negligence in that. He has so much love for Thakorji!”

Sometimes, Shastriji Maharaj’s talks would naturally veer towards the greatness of his ideal disciple, while the sadhus and devotees with him would gaze eagerly with great enthusiasm at Shastriji Maharaj singing the glory of Jogiraj. They were wholly absorbed in observing this divine relationship of guru and disciple.

• • •