

Chapter 10

Caring for All at the Ahmedabad Parayan

In August–September 1936 (Adhik Bhadharva, V.S. 1992), a month-long *parayan* on the *Satsangijivan* was organized at Ahmedabad’s Kashi Vishwanath Mandir. Shastriji Maharaj enlightened everyone with his spiritual discourses, which would last late into the night.

One day, at 4 a.m., Babubhai Kothari woke up at the sound of a small bell being rung. He looked over and saw that Yogi Maharaj was in the process of waking up Thakorji. Babubhai asked, “We only got to sleep by 1 a.m., and you are already up to wake Thakorji?”

Yogi Maharaj smiled and said, “It is time to wake Thakorji up, so we should be here.”

Babubhai Kothari thought, “It is as if Yogi Maharaj does not have a state of deep sleep!

This great sadhu who remains in a constant state of joy has attained such mastery over his *indriyas*! His devotion to God is exceptional!"

During this *parayan*, Yogi Maharaj had won over all the devotees through his sincere service. Early each morning, he would wake the devotees out of their slumber. He would softly say, "Take this *datan*," and hand them a fresh *datan* to brush their teeth. Moreover, he would himself only use the lower quality *datans* that remained after giving one to everyone else. Then, singing the *prabhatiya*, he would walk together with everyone to the Sabarmati River for a bath.

When he sang Muktanand Swami's *prabhatiya*, "*Dhyān dhar*" and "*Dhir Dhurandharā*" in his melodious, baritone voice, the words reverberating through the city streets would capture the devotees' imaginations.

When a devotee sponsored a meal at their home, Yogi Maharaj would prepare the meal for everyone and then offer Thakorji the

prepared meal sometime around 1:00 p.m. or 1:30 p.m. He would sing several long *thals*, such as, “*Avināshi āvo re, jamvā Krishna Hari...*”, gently swaying side to side while fanning Thakorji with a hand fan. He would repeatedly offer Thakorji water. He would put his hand to his throat and insist, “Maharaj! Swami! Please take a little more. Please eat.” While singing the *thal*, he would interrupt it with such heartfelt prayers. Nirgundas Swami would complain, “Jogi was just preparing the meals, and now he has sat down to offer the food to Thakorji? It will be Maharaj’s grace if we are able to sit down for lunch before 3 p.m.!”

Yogi Maharaj would prepare the meals with great love and enthusiasm. “Khengarjibhai! Is the yogurt fresh? Bring it here, and we will whip it to make *chhas*;” “Along with *dudhpak*, we should make *pattarvelia*, as they will go well together;” “Let us also prepare some *chutney-sambhal*;” “We want to prepare the

kadhi to be out of this world;” “We want to make Nirgun Swami happy!”

When it was time for lunch, he would tie his upper cloth around his waist and go down the rows of seated devotees to lovingly serve them food. He would make four or five rounds with each item to ensure everyone ate their fill. “Aksharswarup! What are you staring at? Go bring some more vessels of food and come make another round with me!” “Have some laddus! Have some dal! Have some *chhas*!” “Take some more *dudhpak*! Here are some fresh *bhajiya*! Have some cold water!”

After preparing such a magnificent meal with such love, the greatest and most astounding thing was that he would offer the food to Maharaj as if Maharaj were physically present there and eating it. Then, he would serve all the sadhus and devotees with the same love and understanding of their glory and experience the same bliss. Whenever someone would relay Yogi Maharaj’s divine service and devotion to Shastriji Maharaj, Swamishri would

tell everyone, “Although you are all mightily praising the love with which Yogi Maharaj prepared and served this meal, have any of you bothered to ask Yogi Maharaj how much he has eaten?” Only then would everyone realize that Yogi Maharaj had fasted that day!

Shastriji Maharaj would say that within the Vaishnav *sampradayas*, Acharya Vitthalnathiji Maharaj’s devotion is considered supreme. However, one with such devotion would not be inclined to perform austerities since one with an ascetic nature would naturally feel distant from the practices of feeding and serving Thakorji to earn his pleasure. But this unimaginable harmony of such supreme service and devotion and such equally supreme renunciation and austerities can only be found in Yogi Maharaj. His devotion rivals the devotion of Vitthalnathji, and his renunciation and austerities are absolutely unparalleled.

After the conclusion of the *parayan*, Shastriji Maharaj happily said, “Because Yogi Maharaj was here, our *parayan* was successful.

His care and hospitality for the devotees enabled them to take pleasure in listening to the *parayan*. One cannot find another sadhu like Yogi Maharaj no matter how hard one tries.” Thus, Shastriji Maharaj expressed his happiness with Yogi Maharaj by singing his praises.

The *parayan* was attended by guru Magan Bhagat’s disciple, Ambaram Bhagat of Rakanpar. Kacharabhai Master of Karjisan and Shankar Bhagat of Santej had also come and brought Ravjibhai of Chalasan with them for Shastriji Maharaj’s darshan. Shastriji Maharaj looked at Ravjibhai with a tender smile and said, “You are ours, from long back.”

Ravjibhai understood the meaning of these words, but he was unable to say anything at the time. With Shastriji Maharaj’s permission, he accompanied Shankar Bhagat and everyone else on a pilgrimage to the sacred sites of Sorath. They concluded their pilgrimage in Gondal, where they met Yogi Maharaj. He asked Ravjibhai, “Will you become a sadhu?”

There was unimaginable magic in Yogi Maharaj's words. His loving eyes held such spiritual charm that whoever he glanced at would have his smiling face imprinted upon their heart. Possessing a keen and analytical intelligence, Ravjibhai realized that this sadhu was a divine personality. So, he immediately expressed his willingness to be initiated as a sadhu.²

*

Premchand Asharam Bhagat of Ahmedabad was a disciple of Sant Saryudas Maharaj. As his guru lay on his deathbed, Premchand was disconsolate. He asked his guru, “What will become of me now?”

Guru Saryudas Maharaj replied, “Don’t worry in the slightest. You will meet an even more adept and powerful guru than me.”

When Premchand Bhagat had darshan of Shastriji Maharaj at this *parayan*, he attained samadhi in which he saw a vision of his guru Saryudas Maharaj. Saryudas Maharaj said, “I

had spoken to you of a great soul who would grant you liberation—that is this Shastriji Maharaj. So, accept Shastriji Maharaj as your guru.”

Premchand Bhagat had some farmland in the village of Naroda, near Ahmedabad. He took Shastriji Maharaj and Yogi Maharaj to sanctify his property. He had a well on the farm. Shastriji Maharaj had him draw some water from it, which he offered to Thakorji and then gave to everyone as prasad.

Premchandbhai said, “I want to sell this land, but no one is willing to offer me the market rate of `1,100 per *vigha*. Please bless me so that I might find a buyer.”

Shastriji Maharaj was unwell and remained seated at the well, but Yogi Maharaj sprinkled sanctified flower petals all around the farm.

Suddenly, Yogi Maharaj beamed and exclaimed, “Go! This land will fetch a price of `10,000 per *vigha*!”

Premchand Bhagat was delighted. Everyone returned to where Shastriji Maharaj was seated. Premchandbhai relayed Yogi Maharaj's blessings, and Shastriji Maharaj replied, "Jogi Maharaj is spiritually realized. So, whatever he says becomes reality. Offer a donation to Akshar Deri at his command."

Upon hearing about Yogi Maharaj's matchless glory from the mouth of Shastriji Maharaj himself, Premchandbhai and the other devotees were convinced that Yogi Maharaj's blessings would come true.

Soon after that, a buyer approached Premchandbhai and miraculously bought the entire property at a rate of `11,000 per *vigha*!

Thereafter, Premchandbhai and his son Ambalalbhai both pleased Shastriji Maharaj and Yogi Maharaj with their service.

² Ravjibhai was eventually ordained as Santvallabhdas Swami, and he became a great sadguru and mahant of Saranagpur mandir. He passed away to Akshardham in January 1993.