

Chapter 11

“Perform Pradakshinas and You Will Be Cured”

Around this time, Hirjibhai Sheth, his son, Sultanbhai, and his daughters, Roshanben and Fuliba, arrived in Gondal for Yogi Maharaj’s darshan. Hirjibhai had always had great affection for Yogi Maharaj, so whenever he came to Gondal, he would usually stay for several days. Unfortunately, Sultanbhai suffered from chronic stomach pains, and he experienced an acute episode after arriving in Gondal. After many previous failed treatments, his current medicine offered only slight relief but no cure for his malady. Hirjibhai took Sultanbhai for Yogi Maharaj’s darshan and said, “Jogi! Just look at his age. As a strapping young man of thirty-eight, why must he suffer from such a terrible disease! Please pray in Akshar Deri and bless us so that Gunatitanand Swami may cure him.”

Yogi Maharaj patted Sultanbhai and began to chant the *dhun*. Thereafter, Yogi Maharaj said, “Sultanbhai! Perform fifty-one *pradakshinas* each of Ghanshyam Maharaj and Akshar Deri, and you will be cured forever.”

Hirjibhai had planned to leave the next day, but Sultanbhai’s pain was so severe that he was in no shape to perform *pradakshinas*. So, Hirjibhai stayed for several days more, and after Sultanbhai performed the instructed *pradakshinas*, he went to speak to Yogi Maharaj. Yogi Maharaj led Sultanbhai to Akshar Deri, placed a hand on his head, and prayed, “Swami! Sultanbhai has followed your command. So, please cure him.”

Upon hearing these words, Sultanbhai experienced Gunatitanand Swami to be one with Yogi Maharaj. His pain receded, and he experienced a profound peace. After that, he never suffered from that condition again.

After having darshan of Yogiji Maharaj in Rajkot in 1928, Rajkot’s Nautamlal Master had developed a strong affinity for Satsang. As a public school teacher, Nautamlal was transferred from Rajkot to the village of Lakhtar. Whenever Yogi Maharaj passed through Lakhtar by train, he would send a letter to Nautamlal asking him to bring fresh water to the station. Nautamlal enthusiastically offered this service. In 1937, he was transferred to Jetpur, where he remained until 1950. During this period, Yogi Maharaj would visit his house once a year. Whenever Nautamlal would go to Yogi Maharaj and ask him to pray that he be transferred, Yogi Maharaj would laugh and say, “If you are transferred, then where will we stay in Jetpur? So, don’t nourish a desire to be transferred. Moreover, you are close to Gondal, so you can easily avail of the opportunity for darshan and *pradakshina* at Akshar Deri. So, it is good that you are here.”

Once, Nautamlal came to Gondal for Yogi Maharaj’s darshan. As he was in a hurry to

return home, he soon went to take Yogi Maharaj’s leave. But Yogi Maharaj insisted, “Have lunch before you go.”

Nautamlal explained, “But Swami, then I will miss my train and have to travel at night.”

Yogi Maharaj laughed and said, “For you, the train will be delayed for one hour. So, don’t worry. Have a proper lunch, and then go.”

Nautamlal thought about Yogi Maharaj’s words and felt, “Is this really possible?” But before Yogi Maharaj’s pure affection, he had no choice but to give in. Yogi Maharaj himself served Nautamlal lunch, and while offering him multiple helpings, he said, “Master! Don’t rush your lunch. You will reach the station in no time.”

After lunch, Yogi Maharaj gave him leave to go. Rushing out of the mandir, Nautamlal was sure that he had missed his train, But upon reaching the station, he was surprised to find that the train had not yet arrived! Yogi Maharaj’s words had come true. As Nautamlal

was pondering over Yogi Maharaj’s omniscience, the train arrived, and he boarded it for Jetpur. For the entire ride home, Nautamlal thought about Yogi Maharaj’s deep affection for devotees, which was often expressed through his loving insistence on feeding them and lengthening their stay in the mandir.

The humble and affectionate Nautamlal had served Yogi Maharaj sincerely. Whenever Yogi Maharaj and sadhus stayed at his house, they would feel as if they were staying in the mandir. Nautamlal’s house was in the Fulwadi neighborhood of Jetpur. From there, Nautamlal would take Yogi Maharaj and the sadhus in a horse cart to the Bhader River for a bath. Yogi Maharaj would experience great joy in bathing in the sanctified streamlet that Shriji Maharaj had bathed in long ago.

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In January 1940 (Posh, V.S. 1996), Shastriji Maharaj had summoned Yogi Maharaj to Ahmedabad, but Hirjibhai and the Rajkot

Satsang Mandal had sent a letter strongly insisting that Yogi Maharaj remain in Rajkot. Thus, Shastriji Maharaj sent a letter instructing Yogi Maharaj to stay in Rajkot and please the devotees.

Shastriji Maharaj, Nirgundas Swami, and other sadhus traveled from Ahmedabad, Anand, and Bochasan to Bhadran at the loving insistence of Tribhovandas of Africa. They stayed in Bhadran for two days. On 17 January 1940, while eating the meal sponsored by Tribhovandas and Jivabhai, Shastriji Maharaj remarked, “Aho! If Jogi was with us, we would have experienced such joy. We are really feeling his absence.”

All the devotees were surprised to see Shastriji Maharaj’s intense love for Yogi Maharaj.

In February, Shastriji Maharaj traveled to Valsad to buy timber, and then continued to Mumbai. In Mumbai, he stayed at the house of Govindashram Mithaiwala. Listening to Shastriji Maharaj’s talks about faith in Akshar

Purushottam and hearing Yogi Maharaj’s baritone voice singing kirtans such as, “*Mānākie chadyā re mohan vanmāli...*”, “*Shi kahu shobhā Swāminārāyanni nirakhi thare chhāti...*”, the devotees of Mumbai developed a deep love for Yogi Maharaj.

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