

Chapter 14

Sickness Cast into the Sea

The following day, the local devotees accompanied Shastriji Maharaj, Nirgundas Swami, Yogi Maharaj, and the other sadhus to the train station to see them off on their trip to Karachi. An entire train compartment had been reserved for the group, and it was beautifully decorated with strands of flowers and asopalav leaves. As the train left the station, the devotees hailed it with shouts of “Akshar Purushottam Maharaj ni Jay!” The emotional atmosphere of parting left many of the devotees’ eyes glistening with tears.

The *parayan* in Karachi was unprecedented. Shastriji Maharaj’s talks of indomitable conviction, Yogi Maharaj’s talks of love and loyalty, Nirgundas Swami’s talks about consolidating *upasana*, and Narayanswarupdas Swami’s sweet-voiced talks of the glory of Maharaj and guru quelled the conflagration of

countless hearts and enveloped them in the soothing bliss of Paramatma.

One day, Karachi resident Lalshankar Joshi, nephew of Narayanbhai Vajjnath Vyas, told Shastriji Maharaj about his unbearable arthritic pain and prayed for blessings for a cure. Shastriji Maharaj said, “Speak to Jogi Maharaj. He will chant the Swaminarayan *dhun* and relieve your pain.”

Seven days passed in the blink of an eye, and the *parayan* reached its grand conclusion. Shastriji Maharaj and his entourage went to the train station to embark on their journey to Bilara, Rajasthan. For one reason or another, until that point, Lalshankarbhai had been unable to meet Yogi Maharaj to ask for his blessings regarding his illness.

Now, at the station, he was desperate to do so amid the huge crowds of devotees who had come to send off Shastriji Maharaj and the sadhus. Soon, the train arrived, and the sadhus settled into their seats. In the final minutes before departure, Lalshankarbhai squeezed

onto the train, found Yogi Maharaj, and rapidly informed him of his condition and Shastriji Maharaj's advice. Yogi Maharaj said, "Since you have taken the blessings of Shastriji Maharaj, your illness will be cured."

"But Swami! He had instructed me to take your blessings."

"Is that so?" Laughing innocently, Yogi Maharaj immediately began chanting the Swaminarayan *dhun* in a loud voice. Then, he patted Lalshankarbhai's leg and said, "Your sickness has gone from here into the sea! Now, you will feel better!"

Just then, the whistle blew, and the train started. Lalshankarbhai scampered off the train and reached the platform. But from that instant, his legs felt pain-free!

Shastriji Maharaj and the sadhus soon arrived in Bilara. Here, they commenced a *parayan* sponsored by Harisinhji Darbar, which lasted from 28 July 1947 to 3 August 1947. After the conclusion of the *parayan*,

Shastriji Maharaj and the sadhus traveled to Jaipur.

They were enthusiastically greeted by Shrinarayan, Ramnarayan, Satyanarayan, Ramswarup, Dr. Ganpatbhai Parikh, and other devotees. Dr. Ganpatbhai prayed to Shastriji Maharaj, “O compassionate one, please grace us with a weeklong *parayan*.”

However, Shastriji Maharaj said, “Your wishes for weeklong *parayan* will be fulfilled by Jogi Maharaj.” Then, from 4 August 1947 to 9 August 1947, Shastriji Maharaj held a five-day *parayan* in the mandir on the *Satsangijivan* in which he recited three chapters a day. Shastri Narayanswarupdas also recited ten chapters of the *Satsangijivan* each day.

Yogi Maharaj pleased the devotees by serving them and seeing to their needs. On the *parayan*’s concluding day, Yogi Maharaj delivered an extraordinary address.

Then, Shastriji Maharaj left Jaipur, and via Ahmedabad, traveled to Mumbai. Here, he made his accommodations in the Suryanarayan Vadi.

The following day, Shastriji Maharaj commenced a *parayan* on the Vasudev Mahatmya and delighted everyone by delivering discourses on this sacred text himself.

Gulzarilal Nanda, Hariprasad Choksi, Mohanlal Parekh, Harshadbhai Dave, Nanubhai Dave, Mahipatbhai Dave, Manilal Jasani, Kanji Dhanji Bhatt, Bhikhabhai Premanand Patel, and others regularly attended these sermons which went on from 9 September 1947 to 20 September 1947. On the *parayan*'s concluding day, at Shastriji Maharaj's behest, Yogi Maharaj addressed the assembly with his nectarine speech:

“On this Earth, rocky, cratered, nonarable land can be found in abundance, but cultivable land is limited. And of that arable land, fertile land, such as the soil of Gujarat, which can

support trees, flowers, fruits, and gardens, is more limited still. Moreover, soil that can produce cardamom, cinnamon, cloves, and other spices is exceedingly rare, and soil that produces gold is rarer still.

“This is just an illustration, but the point is that while there are many sadhus and sannyasis in this world, there are exceedingly few who will help one live according to dharma, guide the soul on the path of liberation, and take one to God. Shastriji Maharaj is such a sadhu. Recognizing him as such, we should fulfill our life’s ultimate purpose.”

Everyone was engrossed in Yogi Maharaj’s divine speech. A wave of divine bliss permeated the entire assembly, and everyone realized the incomparable divine glory of Shastriji Maharaj.