

## Chapter 24

### “You Must Do the Work of Taking Me to Akshardham”

In the afternoon, Swamishri again went to visit Nana Akshar Swami. Akshar Swami became emotional and, with tears in his eyes, prayed to Swamishri, “Now, please take me to Akshardham. Maharaj will hear your prayer.”

Swamishri tenderly consoled him and chanted the *dhun* for him.

Then Swamishri went to see Mota Akshar Swami. Swamishri sat with him for a bit as a crowd of sadhus and devotees stood surrounding them. Swamishri told Mota Akshar Swami, “Tell us something.”

Mota Akshar Swami said, “There was a time when I did not know how to deliver spiritual discourses. Once, Shastriji Maharaj had told me to travel in the villages to foster Satsang. I replied, ‘Swami, when I was at home, I was not

a *satsangi*. At your word, I became a sadhu, and you immediately engaged me in construction work. You have never taught me how to speak on spiritual topics. You have always kept me focused on construction projects.’ Shastriji Maharaj turned his gaze to me, and it was as if his divine gaze penetrated something deep within. Shastriji Maharaj spoke to me for about half an hour, and it was as if he had uncapped a geyser of spiritual wisdom within. A torrent of spiritual knowledge began to flow. I had never held the Vachanamrut in my hand, but if any one of the 262 Vachanamruts were being read, I could instantly pinpoint, ‘In so-and-so Vachanamrut this sadhu asked this question and received this answer.’ This is all solely due to Shastriji Maharaj’s grace. Just as Shastriji Maharaj had done this for me, you must do something for me.” Mota Akshar Swami’s voice became choked with emotion as he prayed, “You must do the work of taking me to Akshardham. You have won Shastriji Maharaj over. Maharaj and

Swami do as you say. So, it would be good if you take me to Akshardham.”

Swamishri gazed upon Mota Akshar Swami with profound compassion. He chanted the Swaminarayan *dhun* in prayer and said, “You have served Shastriji Maharaj and pleased him immensely. So, Swami will himself come to fetch you.” Thus, Swamishri consoled him.

After taking everyone’s leave, Swamishri traveled to Vasad and then by train to Atladara. Upon arriving in Atladara, the sheer number of devotees from the Kanam and Vankal regions who had come for Swamishri’s darshan was staggering! The crowds were overwhelming, and people fell over each other to get Swamishri’s darshan, as if they were scared of Bapa leaving them bereft of darshan. Abandoning all restraint, the devotees crowded closely around Swamishri wherever he went.

But Swamishri was unchanging. The same joy shone brightly on his face. There was no special excitement in his mind about going to a foreign land. True, he was happy that he would

be able to fulfill Shastriji Maharaj’s wish and, traveling to the far-off continent of Africa, install the *murtis* of Akshar and Purushottam in a grand mandir in the port city of Mombasa.

Swamishri met each devotee with affection.

At midnight, thousands of devotees crowded the platform at the Vadodara train station. The dueling emotions of pain at the impending separation from their beloved guru and joy at the forthcoming spiritual victory he would achieve in foreign lands were visible in everyone’s eyes. As Swamishri traveled south by train in the early hours of the morning, similar crowds of devotees gathered for Swamishri’s darshan at the Bharuch and Surat train stations.

On the morning of 6 April 1955 (Chaitra *sud* 14, V.S. 2011), Swamishri reached Mumbai where he celebrated the Chaitra Punam festival.

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