

Chapter 22

Lessons on Spiritual Knowledge

One night in Kapolvadi, Swamishri was having a spiritual discussion with a group of youths. Often Swamishri would also instruct other senior sadhus to speak to the youth. He would primarily inspire youths to renounce the world and become sadhus or emphasize his motto of making do with whatever, wherever, and whenever things were available.

One day, Swamishri commanded, “None of the youngsters should use a pillow when sleeping at night. Sleep using your arm as a pillow.”

All of the youth respectfully accepted Swamishri’s command, but since it was the first day they were being tested, some youths went to sleep using a wooden platform as a pillow.

In the middle of the night, Swamishri was walking to the bathroom holding

Balmukunddas Swami's arm with one hand and a flashlight with his other. In the beam of the flashlight, he spotted Gunvantbhai Soni of Idar asleep with a small wooden platform under his head as a pillow. Awoken by the light, Gunvantbhai got up and touched Swamishri's feet. Swamishri laughed and said, "Guru! You can't use a wooden platform as a pillow. Use your arm as a pillow."

By this time, many of the youngsters had woken up. So, Swamishri gently said, "All of you go back to sleep. Everyone is exhausted, and if we make any more noise, everyone will wake up."

The youths who had woken up discarded the wooden platforms or planks they were using as pillows and went to sleep using their arm as a pillow. Swamishri wanted to train the youths from now to live the lifestyle of a sadhu so that in the future, they might form a cadre of sadhus embodying the ideals of saintliness.

At the time, Ramanbhai was studying in medical college. Swamishri routinely insisted

that he apply the *tilak-chandlo* daily. Ramanbhai would often counter with questions such as, “Why must we apply the *tilak-chandlo*? If we don’t, are we not a *satsangi*? And do all those who apply the *tilak-chandlo* embody the ideals of satsang in their life?” Thus, he would ask Swamishri many such questions.

Swamishri would never answer his questions. Sometimes, Swamishri would explain by narrating the parable of the sepoy who jumped into the water upon the king’s command and, as a reward, was granted an entire village. But Ramanbhai was unable to accept this. Moreover, he was scared of doing *tilak-chandlo* in his college.

When Swamishri would vehemently insist on this point, he would tell Swamishri, “Bapa, if you wish, as atonement for not doing the *tilak-chandlo*, I will perform a fast.”

Swamishri would lovingly reply, “We don’t want you to fast; we want you to do the *tilak-chandlo*!”

Later, Ramanbhai received a letter at his college from Swamishri stating, “If you do *tilak-chandlo*, you will experience great happiness.”

The words in Swamishri’s letter had a profound impact on Ramanbhai. It was as if he had attained some mystic inspiration from which he gained tremendous strength. And without any hesitation whatsoever, from that day, he started doing *tilak-chandlo*!

When Swamishri learned of this, he was extremely pleased with Ramanbhai.