

Chapter 19

A True Friend

Around this time, Govindsinh Chudasama began to suffer from a painful inflammation of the liver and severe headaches. Although he received treatment from expert doctors in Rajkot, his condition did not improve.

When Swamishri came to Gondal to celebrate the Akshar Mandir *patotsav*, Govindsinh Chudasama came for Swamishri's darshan. Swamishri welcomed him with a sanctified flower garland. Govindsinhji sat before Swamishri, but at a glance, Swamishri realized he was ill and asked, "You look to be in poor health."

Govindsinhji said, "I have come specially to take your blessings for that."

Swamishri compassionately said, "You have pleased Swami immensely. So, you should not have to suffer this pain." Swamishri caressed

his abdomen and said, “Go, Maharaj will cure you.”

Govindsinhji said, “Bapa, I have another prayer. My job as Collector is quite difficult. Often, it causes me a great deal of trouble.”

Swamishri laughed and said, “From today, both of your difficulties are over.”

With Swamishri’s blessings, from that instant, his liver pain and headaches disappeared. Moreover, until he retired from his post as Collector, he found success in everything he did, earning a reputation within the government as a stellar administrator.

Until even the minor difficulties of the devotees were not eradicated, Swamishri would give blessings, do *dhun*, and, if necessary, even sponsor their medical treatment. When Swamishri learned that Pragjibhai of Junagadh was suffering from gastric troubles, Swamishri instructed him to come to Gondal, explaining that, “An expert Ayurvedic practitioner, Jivram Kalidas, resides here. He has affection for us.

We will request him to provide you with treatment.”

As soon as Swamishri arrived in Gondal, he sent a message to Junagadh summoning Pragjibhai. When Pragjibhai arrived, Swamishri himself took him to Jivram Kalidas’ clinic. Jivram Vaidya has immense reverence for Swamishri, as he saw Swamishri as a pillar, defender, and upholder of Hindu culture. Thus, Jivram welcomed Swamishri and asked how he could be of assistance. Swamishri introduced him to Pragjibhai and explained that he was suffering from gas pains. Jivram Vaidya examined him and provided him with the necessary medicines. Several days later, with his health much improved, Pragjibhai returned to Gondal to get more medicine and pay his fee. However, Jivram Vaidya refused his fee and said, “When such a great Sant as Swamishri comes to my clinic and requests me to treat a devotee like you, I consider it to be my great fortune. If you want to make a payment, offer it at his feet because the medicine I gave you was

simply ancillary to your recovery. Great souls do not acknowledge their agency. They shy away from the credit and divert the acclaim to people like me.”

Jivram Kalidas was renowned as an expert Ayurvedic practitioner throughout the country and abroad. He served as the royal physician of Gondal’s King Bhagwatsinhji. Moreover, he was an eminent scholar. Pragjibhai was astonished to hear such praises for Swamishri coming from his mouth. Moreover, thinking about how Swamishri himself has come to the physician’s clinic and taken such an interest in the problem of an ordinary devotee like himself touched Pragjibhai profoundly.

On Vaishakh Punam, Swamishri and the sadhus left Gondal for Rajkot. On the way, Swamishri stopped at the Rajkot Gurukul, where Shastri Dharmajivandasji welcomed Swamishri and took him to the small mandir for darshan.

From Rajkot, Swamishri traveled with 200 sadhus and devotees to Dangara and Bhadra

for the darshan before arriving in Jamnagar at the house of Ramjibhai Mistry.

Chaturbhai of Pandoli had come here from Africa specially for Swamishri's darshan. In the Jamnagar mandir, Kothari Somprakashdas welcomed Swamishri and the sadhus and took them for darshan. Then Swamishri visited the ashram of Andabava where Mahant Mayaprasadji honored him. Following this, Swamishri sanctified the homes of the Collector Saheb and Major Bhagwatsinhji. The railway officer Kumar Madhavsingh had also come for Swamishri's darshan.

From here, Swamishri went for darshan to Nishkulanand Swami's birthplace, Shekhpatt, before traveling with Sant Swami and other sadhus to Vanthali.

There is a beautiful temple in Vanthali. Devsinghbhai, Balajibhai, and other enthusiastic devotees of Vanthali made necessary arrangements for Swamishri and the sadhus. At night, the entire village gathered for a spiritual assembly. There was a veritable torrent of

spiritual discourses and kirtans. The students of the Ghanshyam Shikshan school presented a program of kirtans, skits, and asanas until midnight and pleased Swamishri and the sadhus. Throughout the day, Swamishri had visited about sixty homes.

At the request of Darbar Jorubha, Swamishri visited the village of Lakhani on Saturday morning. He visited the homes of about forty Darbars in this village. The heat was overwhelming, yet Swamishri traveled by bullock cart back to Vanthali and then took the train to Gondal, where he reached at 11:30 p.m.

Chhotubhai Vakil was a staunch Jain and thus not inclined towards Satsang. However, he had once met Prabhudas Lalaji on a train and, through their conversation, developed a respect for Shastriji Maharaj. Due to his respect for Shastriji Maharaj, Chhotubhai went for Shastriji Maharaj's darshan. Shastriji Maharaj blessed him that he would get his legal license and said, "We are going to get much of the Sanstha's work done through you."

After Shastriji Maharaj's passing, he developed a deep affection for Swamishri. Moreover, being denied his legal license on countless occasions, he had faith that Swamishri's blessings would make it happen, and he would often come to Swamishri for that reason.

Swamishri once instructed him, "Chhotubhai, we want to construct the *hari mandir* in Bandhiya. Please work to make that happen. The day the mandir's roof tiles are fitted will be the day that you receive your legal license."

First, Chhotubhai met Chandrasinh Bapu of Bandhiya and convinced him to donate land for the mandir, after which he began the process of mandir construction.

This time, when Swamishri arrived in Gondal, he expressed a wish to visit Bandhiya. After inspecting the ongoing construction work in the mandir, Swamishri was very pleased. On the day that Swamishri visited, the roof tiles were going to be installed. Chhotubhai served

in the construction, believing it to be his great fortune. Moreover, just as Swamishri had said, he received his law license on that very day. Chhotubhai realized the importance of the blessings of and service to the Sant.

Swamishri took the afternoon train to Wankaner, where he checked on the health of Manilalbhai and blessed him. Then Swamishri took the night train to Ahmedabad, where he arrived on 10 June 1953.

After having a bath and getting ready, Swamishri did darshan of Lalji Maharaj and spoke in the assembly about his travels in Saurashtra. Whenever Swamishri visited a new town or village, he would speak about the affection, devotion, and greatness of the devotees from the places he had just visited. Not only would the devotees find encouragement and inspiration in this, but it also helped increase the affection, respect, and enthusiasm the devotees had for each other, which Swamishri was always very effective in augmenting. Swamishri delighted in seeing

devotees meet and shower affection upon each other.

On the same day, Swamishri took the afternoon train to Atladara. Large crowds of devotees had gathered for his darshan at the Nadiad, Anand, and Vadodara stations. After having taken the Vishvamitri train from Ahmedabad, Swamishri changed to a local train and reached Atladara Station. At the station, Swamishri was greeted with the *jay naad* by countless enthusiastic devotees. They had Swamishri sit in a buggy and come to the mandir in a procession while singing *dhun* and bhajans. The great devotee Ullasrambhai had organized a *parayan* in the mandir from 6 to 12 June 1953 (Vaishakh *vad* 9 to Jeth *sud* 1, V.S. 2009). Ullasrambhai was delighted by Swamishri's arrival. Maganbhai spoke about Ullasrambhai's unwavering faith.

On Saturday, 13 June 1953, Swamishri left Vadodara in the evening on the express train to Gondal. After blessing a young boy from the family of Mohanbhai Adhia of Rajkot on the

occasion of his *yagnopavit* ceremony, Swamishri left Gondal on the mail train to Surendranagar.