

Chapter 22

Understanding the Youths' Greatness

The youths traveling with Swamishri were sleeping at night in the mandir courtyard in Bandhiya. In the middle of the night, Swamishri rose to use the bathroom. Hearing the slight noise, Vinubhai also woke up. When he looked around, he was astonished to see Swamishri performing *dandvats*. Vinubhai sprang up, ran to Swamishri, and lifted him up. He looked at Swamishri inquisitively, wondering who he was doing *dandvats* to in the middle of the night? The mandir's *sinhasan* was in the opposite direction. In fact, he was doing *dandvats* in the direction of the courtyard, where everyone was fast asleep. When Vinubhai asked, Swamishri replied, "To the youths! They all have forsaken big cities like Bombay to stay with us, endure hardships, and offer their service, so I was overcome by

affection for them. I should understand their greatness, shouldn't I! The youths understand my greatness, so I should understand their greatness as well, right!"

"But, Bapa! How many times have you done such *dandvats* silently, in the middle of the night?"

"It's nothing," said Swamishri. "I do what I can." With that, he went back to sleep. When the youths found out about this the next day, they were wonderstruck and deeply touched by Swamishri's behavior.

As their summer vacations ended and the youths returned home, the continuous stream of Swamishri's handwritten letters began. For example, the youths had barely returned to Mumbai when Swamishri wrote a letter to the Bombay Yuvak Mandal:

Swami Shriji is Truth.

9 June '54, Gondal

Instructions for the Bombay Yuvak Mandal to follow:

Signed yours, Gnanjivandasji's Jay Swaminarayan. You have the wholehearted blessings of Gondal Akshar Mandir.

The youths would gain so much strength from these letters that such spiritual behavior would become an integral part of their lives.