

Chapter 23

Empathy for Mute Beasts

After celebrating the Smruti Parva of Bhagwan Swaminarayan in Gadhadra, Swamishri traveled to Mojidad and celebrated the occasion of Bhadarva *vad* Amas at Narayan Dharo. Then, Swamishri traveled to Vagad.

From here, he requested Mahipatsinh to provide a bullock cart to transport them to Kanthariya. Intermittent heavy downpours were ongoing due to the monsoon. Thus, just as Swamishri reached Kanthariya and entered the mandir, heavy rains began. Swamishri performed *dandvats* to Thakorji, sat on his seat and immediately summoned Mahipatsinh and asked him, “Where have you tied the oxen?”

“Bapa, I have hitched them at Lal Bapu’s house.”

“Have you provided them feed?”

“Yes, Bapa, I have.”

Soon the rains let up, and many devotees arrived in the assembly which began with the singing of kirtans. Once again, Swamishri summoned Mahipatsinh and said, “Go and provide the oxen some more feed please!”

Mahipatsinh couldn’t help but wonder at how much affection and concern Swamishri had for even animals like these oxen!

During these years, Chuni Bhagat was staying in Swamishri’s service wherever he went. At Swamishri’s encouragement, he had memorized 102 Vachanamruts and chapters 2, 3, and 4 of the Swamini Vato. Swamishri had inspired many youths and sadhus to memorize the third chapter of the Swamini Vato. As they were traveling by bullock cart, Swamishri would often have Chuni Bhagat recite the Vatos and Vachanamruts he had memorized.

Accordingly, once Chuni Bhagat was reciting Swamini Vatos before Swamishri when he recited Swamini Vat 2/22: “Some people prepare food, some fetch water, some write, some study, some mow hay, and some take the

cattle to graze. In this way, people are engaged in various activities. One should understand all that to be the body's business, in which one should engage; but what must be done is something else altogether. What is that? To constantly remember Maharaj's *murti*, to learn *upasana* and *jnan*, to recognize satsang and *kusang*, and to establish a firm foundation so that one may be able to remain in Satsang—those are some of the types of things that need to be done. But when we tell people of these things that need to be done, they falter. But realize that without *jnan* everything is deficient. Moreover, the bad thoughts which arise within indicate deficiencies in *jnan*. Furthermore, Maharaj used to ask, 'For which sadhu does he have affection, and with which sadhu does he spend time?' Thus he would have us investigate."

Hearing this Swamini Vat, Swamishri remarked, "If this talk is incorporated into one's life, then no sadhu would ever leave the

monastic order. Such is the power of this supreme talk.”

Swamishri would often reveal such profound spiritual insights to his personal attendants during the relative solitude of their travels. His personal attendants would be enthralled to listen to such priceless spiritual techniques and, fully contented, would gaze at Swamishri with eyes brimming with gratitude.

In this way, after traveling through Vastadi, Chachana, Kanthariya, Bhoyska, Navagam, and Adval, Swamishri stayed in Mojidad for five days. From there, he traveled to Limbdi and Vadhwan before returning to Gondal.

As was his custom every year, Swamishri traveled through the villages of Jhalavad until around Dasherā. During Shastriji Maharaj’s time, Swamishri used to spend days upon days in these villages. Showering affection upon the Darbars, he had fostered their satsang. The elderly *satsangis* and landowning Darbars in this region were sticklers for etiquette and proper behavior. Consequently, ordinary

sadhus were unable to leave a positive impression on them. Only those steadfast in the observance of dharma and *niyams* and complete in their renunciation and *vairagya* could earn the respect of these Darbars. Ordinary sadhus could scarcely step foot in this region. In these circumstances, Swamishri had won over thousands of devotees through his service and devotion. Not only that, he had secured a place in their hearts. When these Darbars came to festivals, who would look after them in the crowds of attendees? Amidst numerous responsibilities and obligations that Swamishri bore during such festivals, he still managed to feed them piping hot *rotlis*, as was his custom when he had visited their villages years ago. He sent them hot water for their baths. He had even washed their clothes for them. Naturally, in the middle of such crowded festivals, they would search out Jogi, and he would search them out!

Perhaps they did not receive such facilities even at home! Where would they get piping hot

fulka *rotlis* in Kathiawad? And even if someone could get them, where could they find this pure love? They had received in Swamishri's lap a divine love and regard infinite times greater than what they might receive at home, and thus it was no surprise that "Jogi" resided on their lips and in their hearts.