

Divine Touch

Devotees' experiences with
Dadubhai N. Patel
(affectionately known as Kakaji),
the Founder of the Gunatit Samaj

Divine Touch

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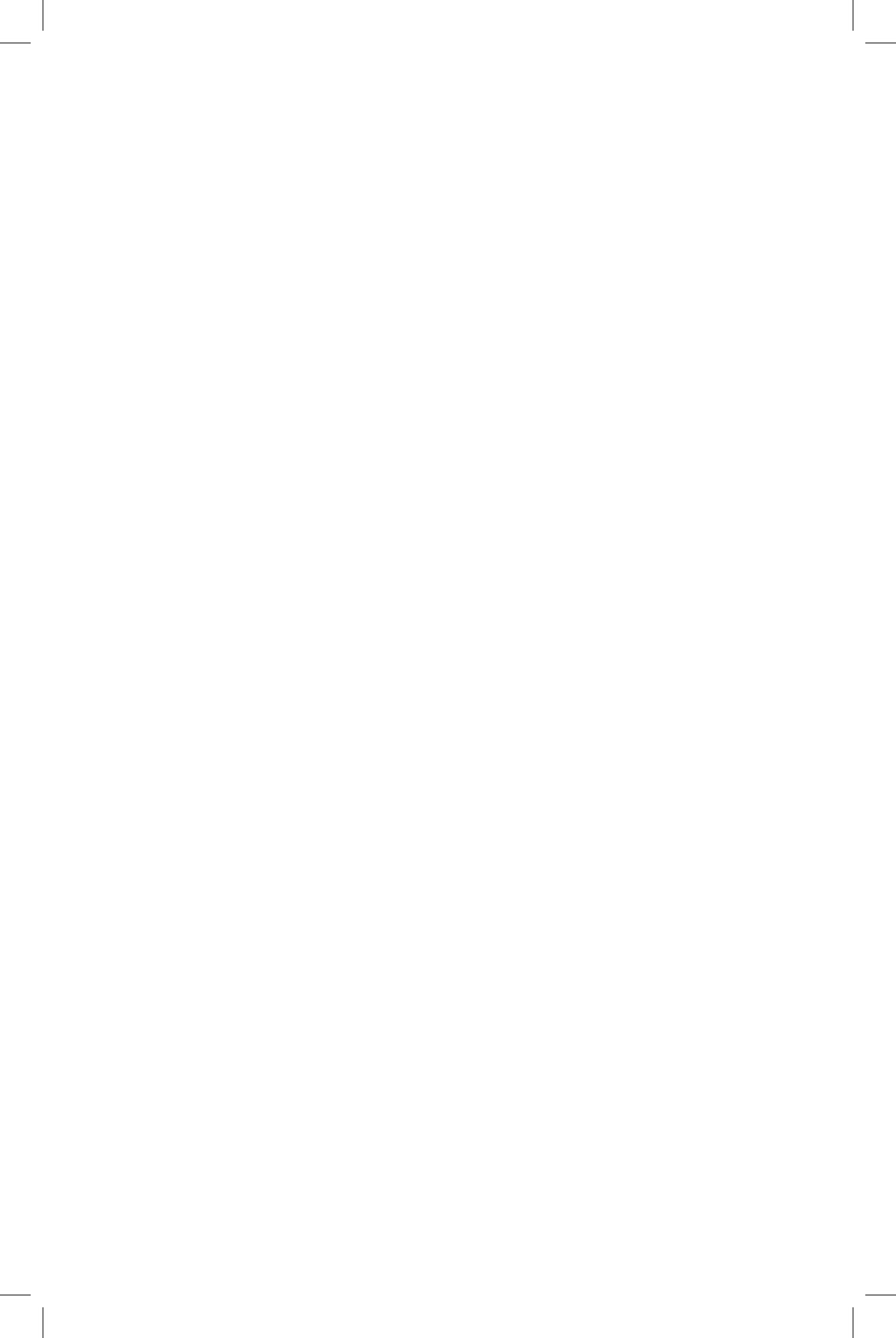
AKSHARPURUSHOTTAM
SATSANG KENDRA
- Sankarda, Gujarat, India

YOGI DHAM
- Samadhiala, Gujarat, India

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“I am a man of destiny, and Divinity is shaping the destiny of everyone. If we do not act accordingly, that part will remain undone. But we must take the responsibility so that God may assign work to us to fulfill His plan and execution through us - allowing us to develop full individuality and personality for a full life - joy, bliss, and real happiness, etc. Everyday is supreme, do your utmost superbly, within your limits, without fear, and with faith. Results will come automatically...”

- Kakaji



CONTENTS

KAKAJI – A SHORT BIOGRAPHY 1

DIVINE TOUCH..... 59

SAINTS

YOGI BAPA'S HEART 61

Hariprasad Swamiji, Sokhada

HELPED ME SUCCEED 63

Aksharvihari Swamiji, Sankarda

TO MAKE A WISH IS A SIN 63

Aksharvihari Swamiji, Sankarda

IMPORTANCE OF THE SMALLEST DIRECTIVE 64

Aksharvihari Swamiji, Sankarda

HAVE FAITH AND BE HAPPY 64

Aksharvihari Swamiji, Sankarda

UNFORGETTABLE SACRIFICE 65

Mukundjivan Swamiji, Delhi

YOGI BAPA IS STILL WITH US 71

Mukundjivan Swamiji, Delhi

UNDERSTANDING THE COMMAND 71

Purushottamcharan Swamiji (Kothari Swamiji), Sokhada

DISCIPLE'S CODE OF CONDUCT 72

Purushottamcharan Swamiji (Kothari Swamiji), Sokhada

CONSTANT SERVITUDE 72

Purushottamcharan Swamiji (Kothari Swamiji), Sokhada

UNDERSTANDING RESPONSIBILITIES 73

Purushottamcharan Swamiji (Kothari Swamiji), Sokhada

YOU ARE MY RESPONSIBILITY 74

Purushottamcharan Swamiji (Kothari Swamiji), Sokhada

YOGI BAPA'S BELOVED KNIGHT 74

Purushottamcharan Swamiji (Kothari Swamiji), Sokhada

GOD IS MY ONLY REFUGE 75

Purushottamcharan Swamiji (Kothari Swamiji), Sokhada

YOU ARE ALSO A SUN 76

Purushottamcharan Swamiji (Kothari Swamiji), Sokhada

UNIQUE UNIVERSAL DIVINE VISION 76

Purushottamcharan Swamiji (Kothari Swamiji), Sokhada

REMEMBERING THE PAST 77

Yagnavallabhdas Swamiji (Das Swamiji), Sokhada

LION-LIKE DEVOTION	78
<i>Yagnavallabhdas Swamiji (Das Swamiji), Sokhada</i>	
TRANSCENDING TASTE	78
<i>Yogi Swamiji, Sokhada</i>	
I WILL NOT GET ANGRY WITH YOU	79
<i>Yogi Swamiji, Sokhada</i>	
LIBERATION IN THREE DAYS	80
<i>Yogi Swamiji, Sokhada</i>	
TAKE LITTLE, GIVE MUCH.....	81
<i>Yogi Swamiji, Sokhada</i>	
ABOVE EMPTINESS AND MENTAL SPECULATIONS	81
<i>Yogi Swamiji, Sokhada</i>	
FOR MY SPIRITUAL PROGRESS	82
<i>Krishnacharan Swamiji (Shastri Swamiji), Sokhada</i>	
SECRET OF TANTRA.....	83
<i>Krishnacharan Swamiji (Shastri Swamiji), Sokhada</i>	
OMNISCIENT KAKAJI.....	84
<i>Nishkamjivan Swamiji, Sankarda</i>	
POWER OF PRAYER.....	84
<i>Mahapurush Swamiji, Sankarda</i>	
YOGI BAPA'S HUMBLE DISCIPLE	85
<i>Mahapurush Swamiji, Sankarda</i>	
INNOCENCE IN DEVOTEES	86
<i>Mahapurush Swamiji, Sankarda</i>	
A SAINT HAS NO STUBBORNNESS.....	86
<i>Brahmanand Swami, Sankarda</i>	

DEDICATED BROTHERS

YOGI BAPA'S FAVORITE SON.....	88
<i>Jashbhai Saheb</i>	
KAKAJI'S EVERY WORD	90
<i>Haribhai Saheb, Manavadar</i>	
KNEW HIM SINCE AGES	92
<i>Dinkar Uncle, Chicago</i>	
EXCEPTIONAL POWERS	93
<i>Dinkar Uncle, Chicago</i>	
I AM THE SON OF GOD	94
<i>Dinkar Uncle, Chicago</i>	
ESSENCE OF SPIRITUALITY	95
<i>Mahendra Bapu, Tardev</i>	
INSPIRED TO A HIGHER CONSCIOUSNESS	98
<i>Mahendra Bapu, Tardev</i>	

PLEASE ERADICATE MY FAULTS	100
<i>Mahendra Bapu, Tardev</i>	
KING OF SPORTSMANSHIP	102
<i>Mahendra Bapu, Tardev</i>	
UNDERSTOOD THE DESIRE	103
<i>Mahendra Bapu, Tardev</i>	
YOU ARE EVERYTHING TO ME	105
<i>Mahendra Bapu, Tardev</i>	
I WILL TAKE CARE OF YOUR WELL-BEING	106
<i>Mahendra Bapu, Tardev</i>	
BROADMINDED.....	108
<i>Mahendra Bapu, Tardev</i>	
HE IS OMNISCIENT	109
<i>Mahendra Bapu, Tardev</i>	
DIVINE VISION	111
<i>Mahendra Bapu, Tardev</i>	
LEARN TO MANIFEST HIM	112
<i>Mahendra Bapu, Tardev</i>	
KAKAJI IS EVERYWHERE	113
<i>Mahendra Bapu, Tardev</i>	
LIVE FOR DEVOTEES.....	115
<i>Mahendra Bapu, Tardev</i>	
PENNY WISE, POUND FOOLISH	117
<i>Mahendra Bapu, Tardev</i>	
TRUE RELATIONSHIP	118
<i>Mahendra Bapu, Tardev</i>	
DEVOTED TO DEVOTEES	119
<i>Mahendra Bapu, Tardev</i>	
EUROPE TRAVELS	120
<i>Mahendra Bapu, Tardev</i>	
THE FINAL DISCOURSE	125
<i>Mahendra Bapu, Tardev</i>	
SUPREME VISIONARY	129
<i>Bharatbhai Mehta, Tardev</i>	
PRAY AND HE WILL ANSWER.....	130
<i>Bharatbhai Mehta, Tardev</i>	
ACCEPTED MY WISH	131
<i>Bharatbhai Mehta, Tardev</i>	
YOUR WORD IS MY LIFE	131
<i>Bharatbhai Mehta, Tardev</i>	
FORTUNATE TO HAVE THIS DIVINE ASSOCIATION.....	132
<i>Bharatbhai Mehta, Tardev</i>	

REMAIN IN GOD-CONSCIOUSNESS.....	133
<i>Bharatbhai Mehta, Tardev</i>	
SOAP OF HEARTFELT ONENESS	134
<i>Bharatbhai Mehta, Tardev</i>	
MASTER OF SIMPLICITY	134
<i>Bharatbhai Mehta, Tardev</i>	
ACT AS DIRECTED	135
<i>Hemantbhai Vashi, Tardev</i>	
WORSHIPPER	137
<i>Hemantbhai Vashi, Tardev</i>	
SECOND LIFE.....	137
<i>Hemantbhai Vashi, Tardev</i>	
INDISCRIMINATE GRACE.....	139
<i>Hemantbhai Vashi, Tardev</i>	
THE GREAT LIBERATOR.....	139
<i>Hemantbhai Vashi, Tardev</i>	
SIMPLE INITIATION	140
<i>Hemantbhai Vashi, Tardev</i>	
FOR THE BENEFIT OF SOULS.....	141
<i>Hemantbhai Vashi, Tardev</i>	
THINK BIG.....	142
<i>Hemantbhai Vashi, Tardev</i>	
EVERY PRAYER REACHES KAKAJI	142
<i>Rameshbhai Soni, Tardev</i>	
TOGETHERNESS WILL MAKE YOGI BAPA HAPPY	142
<i>Rajubhai Bhatt, Tardev</i>	
DO YOU BELIEVE?.....	144
<i>Rajubhai Bhatt, Tardev</i>	
DIVINE MATHEMATICS	144
<i>Rajubhai Bhatt, Tardev</i>	
CONCERNED WITH EVERY SOUL.....	145
<i>Rajubhai Bhatt, Tardev</i>	
EVERY ACTION IS PURPOSEFUL.....	146
<i>Rajubhai Bhatt, Tardev</i>	
HE HELPED ME REALIZE MY FAULTS	146
<i>Harakhchandbhai Shah, Tardev</i>	
BALANCE YOUR MIND	148
<i>Harakhchandbhai Shah, Tardev</i>	
HELP ME RELINQUISH MY EGO.....	149
<i>Harakhchandbhai Shah, Tardev</i>	
OFFERING SERVICE TO GOD	150
<i>Harakhchandbhai Shah, Tardev</i>	

WE WANT TO BLESS THEM.....	150
<i>Ashwinbhai Patel, Tardev</i>	
GREAT COMPASSION.....	151
<i>Ashwinbhai Patel, Tardev</i>	
BLESSINGS TO STAY	153
<i>Ashwinbhai, Tardev</i>	
ANYTHING FOR SAINTS	153
<i>Ashwinbhai, Tardev</i>	
JUST TO REMOVE THE ASHES.....	154
<i>Rajubhai Thakkar, Tardev</i>	
EVEN THOUGH HE WAS OMNIPOTENT	155
<i>Rajubhai Thakkar, Tardev</i>	
BY HURTING A DEVOTEE, YOU HURT GOD	155
<i>Rajubhai Thakkar, Tardev</i>	
A DAY IN THE LIFE OF KAKAJI.....	157
<i>Arunbhai, Tardev</i>	
KAKAJI'S DIVINE PERSONALITY	160
<i>Arunbhai, Tardev</i>	
EVERYDAY SAINTLINESS	163
<i>Arunbhai, Tardev</i>	
WON OVER BY HIS COMPOSURE.....	163
<i>Ashwinbhai, Anoopam Mission</i>	
CONSTRUCTIVE EFFORTS TO GUIDE ME TOWARDS SAINTLIHOOD	164
<i>Ashwinbhai, Anoopam Mission</i>	
APPRECIATED THE GLORY OF ASSOCIATION	164
<i>Dr. Sanandbhai, Anoopam Mission</i>	
KAKAJI'S STERLING QUALITY	165
<i>Dr. Sanandbhai, Anoopam Mission</i>	
OMNISCIENT	166
<i>Dr. Sanandbhai, Anoopam Mission</i>	
GOD IS EVERYWHERE	167
<i>Dr. Sanandbhai, Anoopam Mission</i>	
HUMILITY.....	168
<i>Dr. V.S. Patel, Anoopam Mission</i>	
ALL DIVINE SAINTS ARE ONE	169
<i>Dr. V.S. Patel, Anoopam Mission</i>	
RELY ON THE MASTER, NOT ON THE MEANS.....	170
<i>Ratibhai, Anoopam Mission</i>	
DIVINE MEMORIES	171
<i>Ratibhai, Anoopam Mission</i>	

YOU ARE RIGHTLY PLACED.....	171
<i>Yashodharbhai, Anoopam Mission</i>	
FLOWER OF HAPPINESS.....	172
<i>Yashodharbhai, Anoopam Mission</i>	
CHANGED ME FROM WITHIN.....	174
<i>Yashodharbhai, Anoopam Mission</i>	
ALWAYS IMMERSSED IN DEVOTION.....	175
<i>Yashodharbhai, Anoopam Mission</i>	
TEST BY TASTING.....	176
<i>Yashodharbhai, Anoopam Mission</i>	
KAKAJI'S CHANTING	177
<i>Yashodharbhai, Anoopam Mission</i>	
REVELATION OF WHAT WAS TO HAPPEN.....	178
<i>Yashodharbhai, Anoopam Mission</i>	
REPENTANCE.....	179
<i>Umeshbhai Thakkar, Anoopam Mission</i>	
A DEVOTEE OF YOGI BAPA REMAINS POSITIVE	180
<i>Gopalbhai Saraiya, Anoopam Mission</i>	
SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP.....	181
<i>Arunbhai Patel, Anoopam Mission, Manavadar</i>	
ENGROSSED IN DEVOTEES.....	182
<i>Arunbhai Patel, Anoopam Mission, Manavadar</i>	
ONENESS OF DIVINE SAINTS.....	183
<i>Himmat Swami, Anoopam Mission, London</i>	
SPLENDOROUS PERSONALITY	184
<i>Kishorbhai Gilder, Mumbai</i>	
ALL-CONTROLLER	185
<i>Kishorbhai Gilder, Mumbai</i>	
DIVINE DISPLAY	185
<i>Kishorbhai Gilder, Mumbai</i>	
GOD'S BLESSINGS THROUGH THE SAINT	187
<i>Kishorbhai Gilder, Mumbai</i>	
KAKAJI'S FORMULA	188
<i>Kishorbhai Gilder, Mumbai</i>	
MIRACULOUS EPISODE	190
<i>Kishorbhai Gilder, Mumbai</i>	

DEDICATED SISTERS

PARAGON OF EXCELLENCE.....	191
<i>Sonaba</i>	
PURIFIED US	191
<i>Sonaba</i>	

ATTACHING TO MANIFEST DIVINITY	192
<i>Ben, Gunatit Jyot</i>	
BELIEF IN THE MANIFEST SPIRIT	193
<i>Jyotiben, Gunatit Jyot</i>	
TO PURGE THE DISEASES OF HUMANITY	194
<i>Jyotiben, Gunatit Jyot</i>	
ALWAYS READY	194
<i>Jyotiben, Gunatit Jyot</i>	
OUR DIVINE GUIDE	195
<i>Hansadidi, Gunatit Jyot</i>	
ALL DEVOTEES SEE DIVINITY	195
<i>Hansadidi, Gunatit Jyot</i>	
DIVINE EXPERIENCE	196
<i>Maniben P., Gunatit Jyot</i>	
INTENSE YEARNING.....	197
<i>Maniben P., Gunatit Jyot</i>	
SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE	197
<i>Gangaba, Gunatit Jyot</i>	
THE SAVIOUR	198
<i>Kamuben, Gunatit Jyot</i>	
SERVED WITHOUT EXPECTATION	199
<i>Maniben T., Gunatit Jyot</i>	
DIVINE VISION	200
<i>Harshadaben, Gunatit Jyot</i>	
REFINED TASTE	200
<i>Shardaben, Gunatit Jyot</i>	
THE GIFT OF GOD'S ABODE	201
<i>Sakarba, Gunatit Jyot</i>	
THE WISH FULFILLING GEM	202
<i>Sakarba, Gunatit Jyot</i>	
FREE GIFT	203
<i>Kalpanaben, Gunatit Jyot</i>	
LANGUAGE OF LOVE	204
<i>Hemaben, Gunatit Jyot</i>	
JOYOUS, DIVINE CONTACT.....	206
<i>Kusumben, Gunatit Jyot</i>	
THE POWER OF HIS WORDS.....	207
<i>Bhartiben, Gunatit Jyot</i>	
DIVINE PERCEPTION.....	207
<i>Bhartiben, Gunatit Jyot</i>	
PUNCTURED MY EGO	208
<i>Ramaben, Gunatit Jyot</i>	

CHANGE IN TEMPERAMENT	209
<i>Ramaben, Gunatit Jyot</i>	
MORAL OBLIGATION AND DIVINE MEMORIES.....	209
<i>Yoginiben, Powai</i>	
DIVINITY PERSONIFIED	210
<i>Yoginiben, Powai</i>	
LIVE IN THE PRESENT	211
<i>Yoginiben, Powai</i>	
NEVER ALONE.....	211
<i>Yoginiben, Powai</i>	
THE QUALITY HIDDEN IN OUR FAULTS	212
<i>Yoginiben, Powai</i>	
MENTAL SERVICE.....	212
<i>Yoginiben, Powai</i>	
THE GREATNESS OF SAINTLINESS	213
<i>Yoginiben, Powai</i>	
ANOINTED WITH HOLY WATER.....	213
<i>Jayshriben, Powai</i>	
ENJOYMENT IN DETACHMENT	214
<i>Jayshriben, Powai</i>	
EVERY MOMENT IS PRECIOUS	215
<i>Jayshriben, Powai</i>	
YES, KAKAJI	215
<i>Jayshriben, Powai</i>	
THINK POSITIVE.....	216
<i>Jayshriben, Powai</i>	
FREED US FROM ILLUSION.....	216
<i>Maltiben, Powai</i>	
WE ARE DIVINE BY HIS ASSOCIATION	217
<i>Maltiben, Powai</i>	

DEVOTEES

THE WAY I SAW KAKAJI	218
<i>Gordhanbhai Merchant, Mumbai</i>	
KAKAJI'S SILENCE.....	224
<i>Kantibhai Desai, Mumbai</i>	
INFINITE DIVINITY	225
<i>Kantibhai Desai, Mumbai</i>	
MAGNANIMITY OF YOGI BAPA	226
<i>Kantibhai Desai, Mumbai</i>	
LESSON FROM EXPERIMENTATION.....	226
<i>Shantibhai Sheth, Mumbai</i>	

OUR PRAYER WAS ANSWERED.....	228
<i>Shantibhai Sheth, Mumbai</i>	
FREED FROM DISEASE	229
<i>Mahendrabhai Gandhi, Mumbai</i>	
HE IS MY SON	230
<i>Mahendrabhai Gandhi, Mumbai</i>	
HIS DIVINE MEMORY	231
<i>Dinubhai Amin, Mumbai</i>	
FEARLESS BY GRACE.....	232
<i>Jayantibhai Soni, Mumbai</i>	
MY FATHER.....	234
<i>Nilkanthbhai Mehta, Mumbai</i>	
WE WERE MERE INSTRUMENTS.....	235
<i>Nilkanthbhai Mehta, Mumbai</i>	
RESPECT FOR ALL.....	236
<i>Nilkanthbhai Mehta, Mumbai</i>	
MY SAVIOR.....	237
<i>Ghanshyambhai Amin, Mumbai</i>	
PROPER GUIDANCE.....	238
<i>Ghanshyambhai Amin, Mumbai</i>	
THE MOST PRECIOUS GIFT OF LIFE.....	238
<i>Ghanshyambhai Amin, Mumbai</i>	
A MIRACLE	239
<i>Hemantbhai Merchant, Mumbai</i>	
END OF CONFUSION AND QUESTIONS.....	240
<i>Hemantbhai Merchant, Mumbai</i>	
I WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER.....	241
<i>Hemantbhai Merchant, Mumbai</i>	
DIVINE ENERGY.....	242
<i>Hemantbhai Merchant, Mumbai</i>	
FROM A HOUSE TO A PALACE.....	243
<i>Girishbhai Patel, Mumbai</i>	
LOVE FOR DEVOTEES.....	244
<i>Girishbhai Patel, Mumbai</i>	
THIS HOUSE IS A TEMPLE.....	245
<i>Girishbhai Patel, Mumbai</i>	
ALL FOR ME.....	246
<i>Kirtibhai Vajor, Mumbai</i>	
ENTHUSIASM FOR SATSANG.....	247
<i>Anoopambhai Purohit, Mumbai</i>	
REMEMBERED ME	248
<i>Anoopambhai Purohit, Mumbai</i>	

EXTRAORDINARY FIRST MEETING	248
<i>Lakshmanbhai Viharia, Mumbai</i>	
WON THEM OVER	249
<i>Lakshmanbhai Viharia, Mumbai</i>	
GIFTED ME WITH A NEW LIFE.....	249
<i>Lakshmanbhai Viharia, Mumbai</i>	
GAVE US A CHILD	250
<i>Ghanshyambhai Kothari, Mumbai</i>	
GREAT COMPASSION.....	251
<i>Ghanshyambhai Kothari, Mumbai</i>	
TAKE ME TO AKSHARDHAM	252
<i>Ghanshyambhai Kothari, Mumbai</i>	
YOU KNOW WHAT IS GOOD FOR US	253
<i>Ghanshyambhai Kothari, Mumbai</i>	
FACE TO FACE WITH DIVINITY	254
<i>Ulhasbhai Vadalkar, Mumbai</i>	
FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT	255
<i>Ulhasbhai Vadalkar, Mumbai</i>	
FEARLESS BLESSINGS	256
<i>Premjibhai, Mumbai</i>	
VISION OF DIVINITY.....	257
<i>Dasbhai Patel, Vidyannagar</i>	
THE SEAT OF AKSHARDHAM.....	257
<i>Dasbhai Patel, Vidyannagar</i>	
ENTHUSIASM TO SERVE.....	258
<i>Vithalbhai Patel, Anand</i>	
FARSIGHTEDNESS.....	259
<i>Vithalbhai Patel, Anand</i>	
SELFLESS GRACE	259
<i>Radheshyambhai Agarwal, Anand</i>	
AT FIRST CONTACT.....	260
<i>Kishor Masters, London</i>	
ENJOYING KAKAJI'S REMINISCENCES	263
<i>Ashwinbhai Popat, London</i>	
I STILL REMEMBER	265
<i>Bhagwanjibhai Rughani, London</i>	
THE BEGINNINGS	265
<i>Vinubhai Najarja, London</i>	
HIS EVERY WORD.....	266
<i>Vinubhai Najarja, London</i>	
THE UNIVERSE BELONGS TO HIM	266
<i>Vinubhai Najarja, London</i>	

TRUE VISION.....	267
<i>Pravinbhai Lad, Paris</i>	
REMOVED MY CONFUSION	268
<i>Shankerbhai Patel, Chicago</i>	
INNER CONTROLLER.....	270
<i>Manekben Darbar, Mumbai</i>	
WHATEVER THE SAINT SAYS IS BEST	271
<i>Pratimaben Parikh, Mumbai</i>	
RECEIVED YOUR GIFT	271
<i>Pratimaben Parikh, Mumbai</i>	
MASTER'S APPROVAL	272
<i>Pratimaben Parikh, Mumbai</i>	
HAPPIEST DAY	272
<i>Pratimaben Parikh, Mumbai</i>	
KEEP A SMILE ON YOUR FACE AND IN YOUR HEART	273
<i>Ilaben Amin, Mumbai</i>	
ACCEPTED MY PRAYER.....	274
<i>Ilaben Amin, Mumbai</i>	
COMPASSIONATE KAKAJI	274
<i>Hemlataben Purohit, Mumbai</i>	
INDISCRIMINATE GRACE.....	275
<i>Ushaben Vajor, Mumbai</i>	
LEARN TO CALL GOD DIRECTLY	276
<i>Ushaben Vajor, Mumbai</i>	
ACCEPTED MY DEVOTION	277
<i>Shardaben Unadkat, London</i>	
HIS MANY FORMS.....	277
<i>Shardaben Unadkat, London</i>	
KAKAJI IS HERE	278
<i>Kiranben, California</i>	
LIFE OF DIVINITY.....	279
HUMBLE PRAYER.....	289



Kakaji
(1918-1986)



DIVINE FAMILY

In the Swaminarayan family of Babarbai Patel and Surajben in the village of Karamsad, a pious son was born and given the name Nathabhai. For his kind and straightforward nature, he was also known as Saaraabhai. Yogi Bapa revealed that Dr. Nathabhai was the incarnation of Swaroopanand Swami.¹ At a young age, he received initiation² from Krishnaji Ada at the Rajkot temple. In meditation at the age of 17, he had a divine vision of Lord Swaminarayan.

After excelling in his studies, Dr. Nathabhai authored three books. When he was 35 years old, his first wife passed away, leaving behind a son named Chunibhai. Nathabhai thus remarried Diwaliben of Nadiad. They soon became the proud parents of Kamlaben (also called Maniben) and the family stayed in Karamsad, while Dr. Nathabhai ran a private dispensary (a clinic which also supplies medicine to its patients) in Borsad, near Anand.

On the full-moon day of every month, Dr. Nathabhai religiously visited the Vadatal temple and prayed before the image of HariKrishna Maharaj. During the enshrining ceremony of this image which was designed to Lord Swaminarayan's actual measurements, Lord Swaminarayan gave the blessings that through the special image, He would answer devotees' prayers. When Nathabhai prayed, an inner-voice told him, "Today I live in Bochasan, so go there." The following fortnight, with a rosary in his hand and standing on one leg, he intensely prayed once more. Again, the image commanded him to go to Bochasan. Convinced of the vibrations he received, he headed for

¹ As described in Swami Ni Vato 1/1, the supreme God, Lord Swaminarayan, had manifested on the earth along with His Abode, Gunatitanand Swami, and many liberated souls of Akshardham. One such liberated soul was Swaroopanand Swami, a senior Paramhansa in Lord Swaminarayan's retinue of powerful saints. Swaroopanand Swami had full realization of God at the subconscious level - thus while physically away from Lord Swaminarayan, he was able to envision God's image and actions. In order to serve Gunatitanand Swami in the form of Yogi Bapa, saints transmigrated as saints and devotees of the divine fellowship.

² Signifying initiation, devotees are given a *kanthi* (thread made of tulsi beads, worn around the neck) as they take a vow to follow the *panch-vartamaan* (abstinence from eating meat, drinking alcohol, committing adultery, stealing, and forceful conversion)

Bochasan, where Shastriji Maharaj was constructing the first Akshar-Purushottam temple.³ At the time, as if he was specifically waiting for Dr. Nathabhai, Shastriji Maharaj sat on the porch entrance of the temple. Dr. Nathabhai realized his spiritual quest had hit a milestone when Shastriji Maharaj omnisciently called him by his name. He began regularly visiting the Bochasan temple and donated a great deal for Shastriji Maharaj's cause of establishing Akshar-Purushottam temples. For the Sarangpur temple's opening ceremony in May 1916, Dr. Nathabhai financed the central idols of Akshar-Purushottam Maharaj. (The Sarangpur temple was the second Akshar-Purushottam temple.)

QUALITIES FROM BIRTH

On the auspicious day of September 1, 1916 (the 6th day of the dark-half of the Indian month of Bhadarvo in Vikarama Samavata 1972), Babubhai was born in Borsad. When Babubhai was five months old, Dr. Nathabhai visited Sarangpur for the enshrining of the image of Ghanshyam Maharaj; Diwaliben however stayed back to look after Babubhai. From birth, Babubhai was of delicate health; thus, Diwaliben's father, also Nathabhai Patel, took great care of him at Nadiad. In fact, Diwaliben's father (known as Dada) insisted that Babubhai remain in a cradle up to the age of two and a half.

On the auspicious day of June 12, 1918 (the 3rd day of the bright-half of the Indian month of Jeth in V.S. 1974) at 5 am in the morning, Dadubhai was born in Nadiad. From birth, he was very joyful and dynamic. Dada celebrated the occasion by offering sweets to everyone in the town. Eager to hear about Dadubhai's birth chart, Dada looked for Naaranji Maharaj, a village Brahmin and astrologer, for five days.

³ Lord Swaminarayan had described Gunatitanand Swami as His Manifest Akshardham and Choicest Devotee, and Gunatitanand Swami expressed that Lord Swaminarayan was the Ultimate God. Under the blessings of his guru Bhagatji Maharaj, Jaga Swami, and Krishnaji Ada, Shastriji Maharaj voiced creating temples with Akshar-Purushottam as the central idols. But he was excommunicated from the growing Swaminarayan group in 1905. From the time of Acharya Raghuvirji Maharaj and Acharya Ayodhyaprasadji Maharaj, whom Lord Swaminarayan had appointed as the heads of the movement, there was great regard and belief for Gunatitanand Swami. The actual separation however occurred because of crude human nature.

On the auspicious sixth day⁴ Dr. Nathabhai came to Nadiad to see his newborn son - amazingly meeting Naaranji Maharaj on the way home. Dadubhai was born in the Kark *raashi* (related to the Gemini/Cancer sign of the zodiac) so Naaranji Maharaj also suggested the name "HariKrishna" for the bright boy who was destined for a most magnificently divine life.

At 3 months, Diwaliben returned to Karamsad from Nadiad with Dadubhai, per Babarbai's request. Babarbai loved Dadubhai, and missed Babubhai who stayed in Nadiad with Dada. Dadubhai's extraordinary development foreshadowed the grand mission he was to undertake. At just 9 months, he began walking, and at 10 months, he started talking.

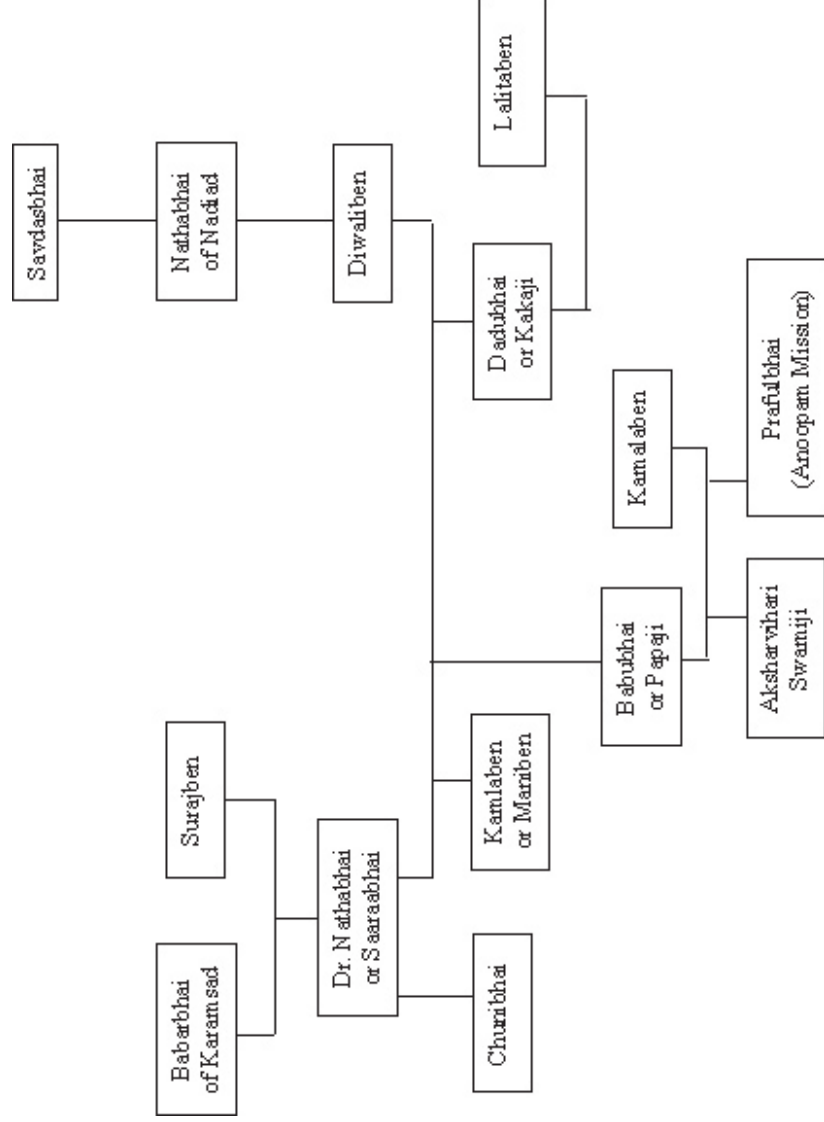
When Dadubhai was ready to enter school, the family moved to Anand. Dadubhai's free spirit was evident in school as well. Often, in order to avoid going to school, he would hide from his parents or tickle whoever tried forcing him to go. At the time, Dada insisted that Dadubhai secure a bright education at Nadiad along with Babubhai. Thus both brothers were enrolled for primary-education⁵ in a school in Nadiad and they visited their parents in Anand during summer vacations.

Babubhai was very disciplined and humble. He stayed at home with Dada to study and even helped with the business accounting ledger (especially after Dada's son, the brothers' maternal uncle, passed away). Dadubhai, on the other hand, would purposefully copy the ledger amount incorrectly to explain to Dada that, "At this age, kids should not be doing this type of work," and then go outside to play. Dadubhai was a risk-taker as well. Dadubhai, Babubhai, and a friend, Ravji, often accompanied a relative to the nearby lake where clothes were washed. Seeing other boys in the pond, Dadubhai abandoned helping to squeeze the clothes dry, and jumped into the lake to learn how to swim! A villager saved the brave young boy. Similarly, on the way home from a family function, Dadubhai jumped off a moving train traveling between Anand and Nadiad. Reaching home safely on

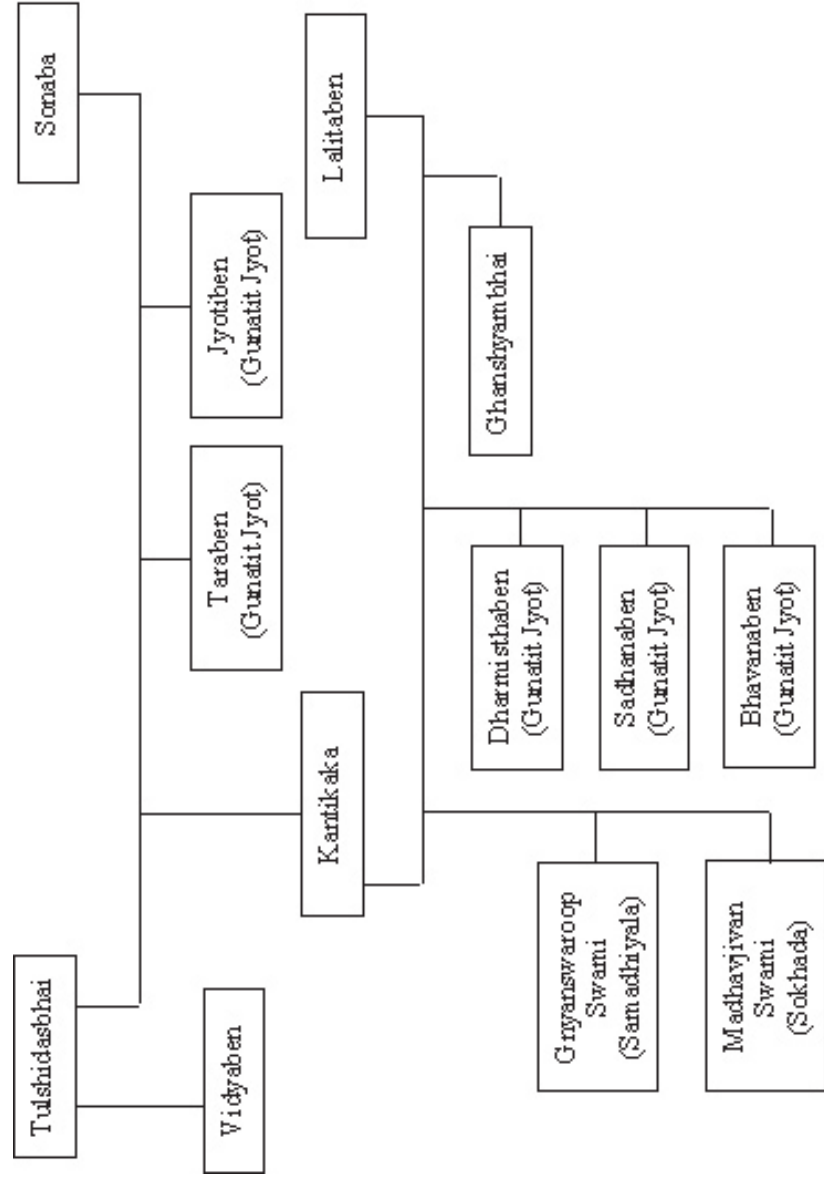
⁴ Hindu tradition describes that the goddess of fortune comes to write the destiny of a newborn child on the sixth day.

⁵ The British education system considers primary-school up to the age of 11 or about seventh-grade.

FAMILY TREE -
KAKAJI AND PAPAJI



FAMILY TREE
- SONABA AND
KANTIKAKA



his own, Dadubhai explained to the family that he wondered if he could get off and on a moving train similar to the hawkers. (In India, it is common to find many hawkers or peddlers trying to sell items such as food to passengers on trains.) Knowing his adventurous style, Dada prohibited Dadubhai to get on the roof of the house to fly kites during Uttarayan.⁶ But, when Dada was not aware, Dadubhai would quickly climb onto the roof, coming down quietly only after sighting Dada. Their grandmother however favored her loving Dadubhai. Indeed, seeing Dadubhai's antics and his grandmother's inclination, Dada called Dadubhai, "The Emperor of Delhi!"

Dadubhai was also a vast-thinker and had an exceptionally friendly personality. Because the townspeople at the time had no experience of airplanes, Dada skeptically told Dadubhai that humans could never fly in planes. Dadubhai however imagined new horizons, and enthusiastically proclaimed to his Dada that he too would fly in a plane one day. In order for his friends to get snacks from a prejudiced food stall owner, at night Dadubhai blew out the lamp from a street-vendor's stall so that his friends could fill their pockets with snacks. The villagers were reminded of young Lord Krishna who, accompanied by his friends, took butter away from the evil Kansa. In school too, Dadubhai would ring the bell to make sure that the children got time to play outside.

HEAVEN ON EARTH

The two brothers shared a unique friendship. During the Navratri⁷ festivals, the local community organized a drama depicting the life of Lord Rama. When Dadubhai was seven, and Babubhai nine, they enthusiastically watched the play together. Dadubhai would make way in the busy crowd to reserve a front seat for Babubhai and himself. At home as well, they would dress up and mimic the kings in battle. The

⁶ Uttarayan or Makar Sankranti – Around January 14 the sun's movement changes northward; the day is celebrated in India with the flying of kites.

⁷ Navratri – Hindu festival that lasts for 9 days beginning with the Indian month of Aso in which traditional dances are done in honor of Lord Shiva's consort, known as Shakti or Durga.

scene in which King Dashrath⁸ dies remained in Dadubhai's memory so later, he asked Babubhai, "What will happen to King Dashrath after he died?" Babubhai replied, "He will go to heaven." When Dadubhai asked, "What is heaven?" Babubhai replied, "It is a place where there are neither troubles nor misery, nor sense of 'yours and mine' – there is only happiness." Hearing this, Dadubhai exclaimed, "Then we will bring that heaven to earth!" He repeated, "We will distribute happiness to everyone by bringing heaven to earth!"

Dadubhai and Babubhai also took part in a school play based on the story of King Prithvi and Samyukta.⁹ Babubhai helped all the actors play out their parts, while Dadubhai played the role of King Prithvi. The day prior to the show however, the classmate who was to play the role of Samyukta fell ill. Knowing all the lines, Babubhai said he would take the role of King Prithvi, if Dadubhai played the role of Samyukta. Without considering what others would think, Dadubhai made sure that the play was a success. He disguised himself in the princess's role and even mimicked the voice of a woman. When the characters were announced at the end of the play, the audience applauded Dadubhai's marvelous acting!

Large carnivals also came to the town of Nadiad. During the time of Maha Shivaratri,¹⁰ one such fair was set up next to the Santrama temple. Rides and games were put up along with food stalls and merchant booths. Dadubhai and Babubhai decided to open a stall called "Paan¹¹ House." First, Dadubhai dug up the ground and plotted a tall flag that attracted passerby's attention to the young entrepreneurs.

⁸ King Dashrath – The father of Lord Rama, who dies after his beloved son is exiled to the jungles along with Sitaji and Lakshman

⁹ King Prithvi or Prithviraj Chauhan was a famous warrior and Hindu king of Delhi during the 12th century, the time of Mughal invasions. He met and fell in love with Samyukta, the princess of Kanauj. But Samyukta's father, King Jaichandra, considered King Prithvi as his enemy. He thus did not invite him during Samyukta's *svayamvara* or assembly in which a princess chooses her husband to be. Samyukta ignored all the princes, and garlanded a statue of King Prithvi. King Prithvi came out from the crowd and rode off with the princess.

¹⁰ Shivaratri – Hindu festival in honor of Lord Shiva on the 13th day of the dark-half of the Indian month of Maha.

¹¹ Paan – Famous Indian after-mint.

Dressed in traditional Indian attire and an angled hat on his head, Dadubhai voiced the unique quality of *paan* being sold. Onlookers irresistibly recognized Dr. Nathabhai's bright sons.

As was the custom at the time, at the young age of 10, Babubhai was engaged to Kamlaben Patel, daughter of Ambalalbai of the village Parbhani, on May 25, 1927. Five years later, she moved in with the family while Babubhai completed his studies.

STAND FOR TRUTH

Dadubhai's righteous spirit was also displayed in his youth. At the age of 10, while playing with his friends outside, Dadubhai often noticed a peddler selling bangles and bracelets to the village women. Dadubhai, who loved and respected his mother and sister dearly, noticed that the seller touched society's women with a negative intent. He thus set out to teach him a lesson. Sneaking up behind the seller, he jumped up, and knocked the basket of bangles to the ground. He then threw rocks at the seller and told him to treat society's women with respect!

When Dadubhai and his friends once set out to play cricket, the opposing team demanded that they get to choose who gets to bat first. To settle the disagreement, it was decided to do a coin toss. When the opposing team lost the coin toss, they still refused to give in. At the time, Dadubhai, who was the captain of the team, asked his friends to quit the game instead of playing with unfair terms. He commented, "To support the truth, one should be ready to give up games, position, and if necessary, one's own life." When the opposing team's captain began running toward Dadubhai with a bat, young Dadubhai courageously took stance with a stump in his hand, and reasoned with everyone to come to a peaceful agreement.

I HAVE COME TO DIE

When Dadubhai was 11 years old, Shastriji Maharaj visited Nadiad. There, Dadubhai heard Shastriji Maharaj's conversation with a devotee by the name of Ramchandrabhai. After getting remarried,

Ramchandrabhai stopped coming as frequently to the spiritual gatherings. He revealed to Shastriji Maharaj that he had so much love for his wife that he felt he was losing his attachment to Shastriji Maharaj. Shastriji Maharaj rebuked Ramchandrabhai and said, "Do you want me to take that 'pillar'¹² to Akshardham?"¹³ Ramchandrabhai pleaded that he would not be able to live without his wife, and yet he also wanted to experience the bliss of Akshardham. Shastriji Maharaj replied, "In order to experience the bliss of Akshardham, one must come after dying."¹⁴ This statement made a big impact on Dadubhai. The following day, Dadubhai woke up early in the morning and arrived with *prasaad* (sanctified food) to witness Shastriji Maharaj's *pooja* (early-morning prayer). When Shastriji Maharaj saw Dadubhai, he asked, "Why have you come so early?" Waiting for the question, Dadubhai replied, "Swami, I have come to die – I want your divine bliss." Shastriji Maharaj responded that these did not seem like the words of a young boy and Dadubhai disclosed that he had overheard Shastriji Maharaj say this. Looking at his sincerity and enthusiasm, Shastriji Maharaj fixed his gaze on Dadubhai and embraced him wholeheartedly.

ANYTHING FOR SHASTRIJI MAHARAJ

Diwaliben had much faith in Shastriji Maharaj, and encouraged Dadubhai and Babubhai to help Shastriji Maharaj's mission. Dadubhai was greatly moved witnessing the hardship that Shastriji Maharaj underwent. He was determined to help raise money in support of the construction work for the Akshar-Purushottam temples. Dada (Dadubhai's maternal grandfather) dealt in finances and had many contacts with moneylenders. Since, on many occasions, he had sent Dadubhai to collect money from them, Dadubhai's face had become familiar. Using this, Dadubhai went to the moneylenders and informed them that his grandfather required a certain amount of money. After

¹² Shastriji Maharaj referred to Ramchandrabhai's wife as a 'pillar' because she had become a support for him, while for a true devotee, the only support is God.

¹³ It is said that 'the person went to Akshardham' to indicate that s/he has passed away.

¹⁴ Shastriji Maharaj was actually telling Ramchandrabhai to be free of all desires and ego.

collecting about three thousand rupees, Dadubhai went straight to Shastriji Maharaj and offered the money saying, "My grandfather gives this as donation for the temple." Smilingly, Shastriji Maharaj replied, "I know that your grandfather would never donate this much money. Where did you really get it from?" Dadubhai then revealed that he borrowed the money from his grandfather's moneylenders. This was just the beginning of Dadubhai's resolve to fulfill any wish of his spiritual master!

Back in Anand, Dr. Nathabhai had started building a 3-story hospital on a leased property against the collateral of their home in Karamsad. But the business suffered because he was misled by the property owner, and also because he could not tend to the business properly since he began losing his eyesight due to glaucoma. Unfortunately, when Dadubhai was 12, Dr. Nathabhai lost his eyesight completely. As a result, he could not work and family debts started accumulating. Thus, along with witnessing Shastriji Maharaj's hardships, Dadubhai saw a change in the family's prosperity. He was determined to obtain a top education and earn money so that financial problems were relieved.

On May 7, 1935, at the age of 16, Dadubhai was married to Lalitaben of Nadiad. The family decided upon the marriage because the dowry would help offset some of the debt. (Lalitaben had very delicate health and mainly remained in Nadiad until Dadubhai settled in Mumbai.) Soon after, Shastriji Maharaj visited Nadiad with senior saints. When Dadubhai came to receive them, Shastriji Maharaj asked Dadubhai to remove his shoes and walk with Thakorji (the personal idol of Lord Swaminarayan that saints carry) in his hands while loudly chanting 'SwamiNarayan.' In this condition, in the midst of all of the saints, Shastriji Maharaj made Dadubhai walk along the street that his father-in-law and wife lived, and then across the town market. All the while, Shastriji Maharaj repeated, "Loudly chant 'SwamiNarayan.'" In the divine play of the master and disciple, Dadubhai showed that he belonged to Shastriji Maharaj and not any part of the world.

GONDAL TEMPLE ENSHRINED

In May 1934, Shastriji Maharaj built the third Akshar-Purushottam temple in Gondal around the Akshar Deri (memorial shrine of Gunatitanand Swami) and appointed Yogiji Maharaj as the *mahant* (head). In 1933, during the construction work, when Yogi Bapa was bit by a poisonous cobra, Shastriji Maharaj declined the doctor's medical treatment and instead used the power of the Swaminarayan *mahamantra* to cure him (the power of the mantra is related in Swami Ni Vato chapter 1, number 154). This was the first great display of divinity in Gondal. Later, Yogi Bapa would display similar divinity with Dadubhai.

PAPAJI AND KAKAJI GO ABROAD

Chunibhai, who lived in Mombasa (located in the country of Kenya, a city in the east coast of Africa), visited India that same year. As he was exceptional in his studies, Babubhai insisted that Dadubhai join their half-brother in Mombasa, and complete high school there.

While in school, to help alleviate some of the living expenses, Dadubhai took a tutoring job in Mombasa. He also enjoyed playing cards with friends, especially the game of bridge. He would say, "Bridge is not dependent on just luck – it involves knowing your partner." At the time, he also picked up the habit of smoking. Later when he returned to India, Shastriji Maharaj told him, "Dadu, there is a burning sensation in my chest." A devotee present immediately expressed that he would call a doctor, but Shastriji Maharaj interjected, "What is a doctor going to do? He can't stop my burning. My Dadu will cure me!" With folded hands, Dadubhai said, "What can I do, I don't know about medicines," and Shastriji Maharaj replied, "But you are the son of a doctor. Do you want me to be cured?" Dadubhai exclaimed, "Yes dear master, I will do anything for you." Shastriji Maharaj explained, "My chest is burning because of your habit of smoking. Tell me, 'from today onwards I will not smoke.'" Dadubhai right away agreed, and Shastriji Maharaj expressed that his pain was gone! Dadubhai was so attached to Shastriji Maharaj, that from that day forth he quit smoking.

In 1936, before continuing higher studies in London, Dadubhai returned to India to seek the blessings of Shastriji Maharaj. At the time, Shastriji Maharaj advised Dadubhai to do eleven rosaries every morning. When Dadubhai suggested it might be difficult to complete eleven rosaries daily because of the fast-paced life abroad, Shastriji Maharaj said, "Do two rosaries instead, but after taking a bath." The incident showed the open and sincere father-and-son relationship between Dadubhai and his dear master, Shastriji Maharaj.

In 1937, Papaji set out to Mombasa to begin a teaching career in the same school that Chinubhai was employed.

For many years, Dr. Nathabhai's health was steadily deteriorating. In 1939, when Dadubhai was 21, his father passed away. In 1941, Babubhai went to India and then returned to Africa, while Kamlaben stayed back in Nadiad. In 1945, she rejoined him in Mombasa. Babubhai earned a modest living in Mombasa, concurrently sending money to repay the family's debt in India and also to Dadubhai to complete his foreign education.

In London, Dadubhai obtained a B.S. in Economics from the reputed London School of Economics. During the end of his education, the British were in the midst of World War II. As a result, Dadubhai was enlisted in the war, and later transferred to Ceylon (the British name for Sri Lanka) where he finished his final exams. He also obtained a B.A. with honors in Philosophy from Ferguson College in Poona. In 1944 Dadubhai sought the blessings of Shastriji Maharaj who was in Sarangpur.

STAY IN MUMBAI

Shastriji Maharaj asked Dadubhai what he planned to do now that his studies were completed. Dadubhai answered that he could start a lucrative career if he returned to London – at the time, in India he could earn about 500 rupees/month, while in London, over 5000 shillings/month. (The rupee closely followed British currency, which up to 1971 consisted of a pound equaling 20 shillings.) However, Shastriji Maharaj told Dadubhai to live in Mumbai, work for three years, and then start his own business in "white material." Further, Shastriji Maharaj asked Dadubhai how much money he would like to make in the business.

When Dadubhai responded 2 *laakh* (100 thousand rupees), Shastriji Maharaj blessed Dadubhai that his profit would equal at least 5 *laakh* in the very first year.

Shastriji Maharaj told Dadubhai that he would immediately get a job. In just a week's time, Dadubhai met an old friend who told him about a manager opening at a fertilizer company owned by Mr. Nanavati. The interviewers were impressed by Dadubhai, but were not willing to give him a higher salary. Thus, Dadubhai mentioned his education abroad, but the chairman responded by saying, "I have gone to London as well." Dadubhai boldly retorted, "A person who works on a boat may visit London many, many times; but it is the quality of one's experience that counts, not the quantity of times visited!" The chairman smiled at his valor and agreed to Dadubhai's requirements. Dadubhai thus settled in Dadar, Mumbai.

In July 1945, Shastriji Maharaj inaugurated the fourth Akshar-Purushottam temple in Atladra.

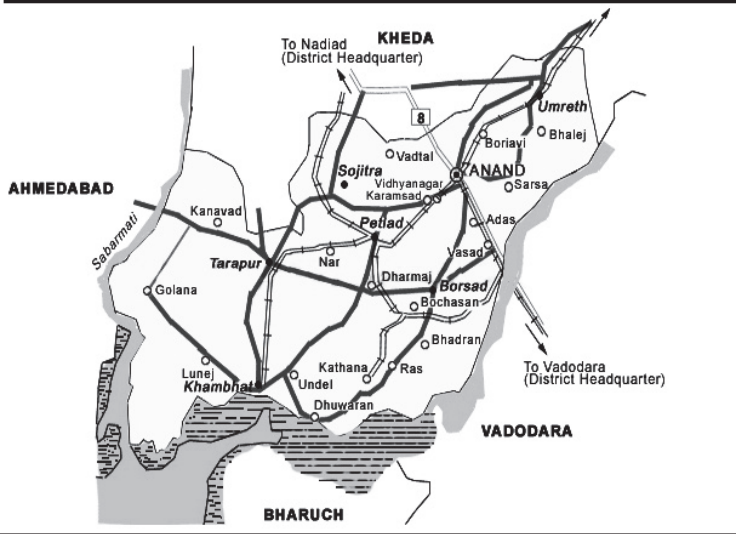
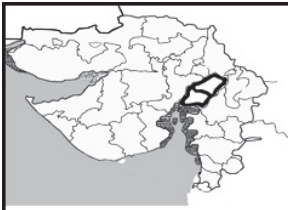
TWO FAMILIES BECOME ONE

In 1946, Dadubhai received a letter from Nirgun Swamiji,¹⁵ informing him to meet Sonaba, a devoted family from Virsad that lived in the Sonawala Buildings in Tardev. At the time, Dadubhai's sister, Maniben, also lived in the Sonawala Buildings. (Dadubhai lived in 6D, while Sonaba lived in an adjacent building in 8C.)

Sonaba was a devout follower of Shastriji Maharaj - her entire life followed his every command. When Shastriji Maharaj arranged her marriage with Tulshibhai Amin, he explained that the marriage would only be for 15 years. When their son, Kantibhai, was 11 years old, Sonaba's husband passed away, also leaving behind two daughters, Taraben and Jyotiben. When Shastriji Maharaj visited Mumbai, he used to stay at her home. She in turn served Shastriji Maharaj with the greatest devotional fervor. (Coincidentally, the family had financed the elaborate doors to the Sarangpur temple.)

¹⁵ Nirgun Swamiji was a *kothari* (caretaker of temple administration) at the Vadtal temple. He left along with another *kothari* and five saints in support of Shastriji Maharaj. Four months later, he was initiated as a saint.

DISTRICTS OF KHEDA AND ANAND IN GUJARAT STATE





MUMBAI

Dadubhai admired and respected Sonaba for this firm devotion. When Maniben's husband, Ravjibhai, went to Africa for business, he insisted that Dadubhai and Lalitaben move in with her in Tardev. With a common spiritual goal, Dadubhai's and Kantibhai's families united to form one divine family.

SHASTRIJI MAHARAJ'S DIVINE PLAY

In 1946, Dadubhai went back home to Nadiad and invited all of his friends and relatives to meet Shastriji Maharaj. Shastriji Maharaj arrived in Nadiad on a horse cart driven by a person named Rasul. When they arrived near Dadubhai's home, Shastriji Maharaj argued with Rasul for asking for one *aanaa* (one-sixteenth of a rupee) more than agreed upon. When Rasul would not budge, Shastriji Maharaj created a commotion in front of all of Dadubhai's friends and relatives. When Dadubhai stepped in and said "Rasul, I will pay," Shastriji Maharaj stopped him and said, "Your money is my money – he does not deserve a penny more!" Finally, when a person to whom Rasul owed money, saw all of this, he ordered Rasul, "Do not to take any money from Shastriji Maharaj." Seeing the ordeal, the townspeople questioned Dadubhai, "What kind of greedy guru have you chosen?" Dadubhai, on the contrary, loved Shastriji Maharaj's style. He saw pure divinity and grace in all of Shastriji Maharaj's actions, and explained this essence to all that came into his contact. When Rasul finally became quiet, Shastriji Maharaj blessed him, "The next time I come to Nadiad, you will own two carts." And of course in a short time, Shastriji Maharaj's blessings came true!

DIVINE BROTHERHOOD

In April 1950, a devotee asked Shastriji Maharaj to visit Mumbai and hold a 7-day scriptural reading at the Suryanarayan Hall in Bhuleshwar. After Shastriji Maharaj arrived in Mumbai, the devotee talked about postponing the program. Sonaba thus asked Dadubhai and Kantibhai to pick up the expenses so that the plans would remain intact. Shastriji Maharaj was very pleased, and over 500 devotees attended the reading.

When Dadubhai and Kantibhai met Shastriji Maharaj the next day, Shastriji Maharaj began a divine play. He sorrowfully expressed, "At this old age, why did I think about constructing these temples? See this letter has come - we have to pay 27 thousand rupees (for the Gadhada and Sarangpur temples). Where can I get such money?" Saying this, he started crying. Dadubhai and Kantibhai immediately interjected that they would get however much money was necessary, even if it meant incurring a debt. With Dadubhai and Kantibhai's devotion, Shastriji Maharaj showed happiness and said, "Both of you give 27 thousand rupees." Dadubhai and Kantibhai did so that very same evening.

Shastriji Maharaj then explained to Dadubhai, "Your father, Dr. Nathabhai, asked me once, 'Do great divine saints have all the powers of God?' When I said 'Yes,' Dr. Nathabhai replied, 'How can we know this?' So I said, 'If one person gives money for the Gadhada temple, then believe its God's power.'" Grabbing Dadubhai's hair, Shastriji Maharaj exclaimed, "That person is you!" To this, Dadubhai replied, "I am not doing anything, I am just giving you what is already all yours." Shastriji Maharaj smilingly said, "What do you mean? Ok, I will stay one more day - give 16 thousand more now, and 4 thousand later for the golden thrones of the AksharPurushottam idols."

Shastriji Maharaj then placed his hands on both the heads of Dadubhai and Kantibhai and bringing them together, he said, "From today, you are divine brothers. Do not separate, under any circumstances. You will bring spirituality to the world." He then called Yogi Bapa and asked him to bless the pair as well.

AGRI-ORIENT INDUSTRIES AND SHASTRIJI MAHARAJ'S BLESSINGS

Dadubhai learned all about the fertilizer industry after working in Mr. Nanavati's company for three years. Shastriji Maharaj then told Dadubhai to start his own business, keeping Kantibhai as a partner. (After Kantibhai incurred a debt in an unsuccessful paint factory venture, Sonaba prayed to Shastriji Maharaj that he get an elder brother to guide him through the difficult times - in this way, Shastriji Maharaj also satisfied Sonaba's prayer for a brother to look after her son.)

Along with a friend who worked with him at Mr. Nanavati's company, Mr. Ranade, Dadubhai established the Agri-Orient Industries, and contended to gain a government contract to import fertilizer bags through Mumbai. Many companies fought for the contract which required an established line of credit with a deposit of 50 thousand rupees. Dadubhai borrowed money from friends and relatives hoping to win what would be a very lucrative agreement.

During this time, Shastriji Maharaj planned to construct a temple in Gadhada.¹⁶ When he came to Mumbai, he stayed at Kantibhai's home for several days. After explaining Vachanamrut Loya 3 for over six hours, Shastriji Maharaj asked Dadubhai how much he could donate. Dadubhai answered 15 thousand rupees. Shastriji Maharaj however replied, "You are the only one I can bank on. Reverse the numbers and give me 51 thousand rupees." Dadubhai agreed and gave the money he had borrowed for the line of credit! Shastriji Maharaj was so pleased with Dadubhai, he said, "Just as Lord Vishnu was won over by king Bali, I am won over by you. Ask for whatever you wish. I am very pleased with you." Shastriji Maharaj, who had divinely acted as the recipient, showed that he was capable of giving anything a devotee desired. Dadubhai expressed he did not desire anything of this world, but Shastriji Maharaj insisted he ask for something. Thus Dadubhai said, "Just as you anointed sandalwood paste on your master Bhagatji Maharaj, and he embraced you and blessed you, please allow me to anoint you with sandalwood paste." (Images of God are typically anointed with sandalwood paste in the summertime - devotees do this with the prayer to have coolness or peace within.) Shastriji Maharaj happily agreed, and the next day Dadubhai and Kantibhai's families came to Nandaji's¹⁷ bungalow with three pots of sandalwood paste. Dadubhai anointed the paste on Shastriji Maharaj's divine body, and

¹⁶ In 1947, India gained independence, and Govindsinh Chudasama was appointed as the Collector of the Bhavnagar region. He helped get the land to Shastriji Maharaj where Lord Swaminarayan originally envisioned the temple (on top of the hill).

¹⁷ Gulzarilal Nandaji was a simple freedom fighter that sided with Mahatma Gandhiji in the pre-1947 era, during which India rallied to gain independence from Britain. Despite being the Prime Minister of India, Nandaji, along with Lal Bahadur Shastri, were renowned as "modern-day King Harishchandra." (Harishchandra was the king of Ayodhya and a man of great principles. He

Shastriji Maharaj embraced Dadubhai. Shastriji Maharaj also imprinted his footprints on Dadubhai's chest and on a white cloth, and blessed him, "I will forever reside in you. The business will earn in millions. You will be the savior for all in need." Shastriji Maharaj then commanded, "Know that I am Yogi [Bapa], and Yogi is me. He is my body and soul." Yogi Bapa exclaimed, "Dadubhai, you are *brahmroop* (totally purified and liberated)!"

Despite not having placed the required deposit, with Shastriji Maharaj's blessings, Dadubhai went to gain the government contract. On the elevator to the office where he was to present Agri-Orient Industries, he met Mr. Nanavati, who laughed at Dadubhai's attempt to compete with him. Dadubhai confidently replied that everything was under the control of his guru! In the meeting, Dadubhai convinced the contract officer to give him the contract without the line of credit. Profits from the first year of business alone equaled 7 *laakh* or 0.7 million rupees! The business successfully expanded gaining 27 warehouses and a staff of 350.

was legendary for always telling the truth and for keeping his promises, as attested by sage Vishwamitra.) Gandhiji had advised his colleagues to spend their time reading religious scriptures like the Mahabharat and the Gita whenever they were imprisoned for involvement in the famous non-violent, non-cooperation movements. Nandaji also read Swaminarayan texts such as the Vachanamrut and the Shikshapatri. By 1947, he had compiled 40 spiritual questions while in jail. After being freed, he headed to meet Shastriji Maharaj in Mahemdavad, near Ahmedabad, to satisfy his queries. Shastriji Maharaj asked Nandaji to first rest, and then began a discourse in which he omnipotently answered all 40 questions. From experiences with Shastriji Maharaj, Nandaji became a staunch devotee and by involvement with the political movement, he held several ministry posts. In early 1951, Shastriji Maharaj asked Nandaji if there was a higher government position than his current post. Nandaji replied, the Railway Minister post. Shastriji Maharaj then asked if there was a higher post than that of a Railway Minister. Nandaji replied, the Home Minister post. Shastriji Maharaj again asked if there was a higher post than Home Minister, and Nandaji expressed that the highest position was that of a Prime Minister. Shastriji Maharaj thereafter blessed Nandaji to become India's Prime Minister. Knowing Nandaji's weak nature however, many of the devotees present began laughing. Shastriji Maharaj remarked that their laughing indicated they doubted his own supremacy; he thus exclaimed that Nandaji would become India's Prime Minister twice!

When Dadubhai was little, along with his father, he traveled with Shastriji Maharaj on a bullock cart from Sarangpur to Botad. The journey was so rough, Shastriji Maharaj held onto Dadubhai to keep from falling. Dadubhai was brought to tears seeing the hardship his guru had to undergo. At that time he had promised himself that he would one day buy a car for his guru to travel in comfortably. True to his promise, one of the first things Dadubhai did was buy a car for Shastriji Maharaj! In this way, Dadubhai earned in millions, but donated everything for Shastriji Maharaj's cause. He became known as "the wealthy businessman from Mumbai who gave everything to his guru." For example, in 1949, Shastriji Maharaj's birthday was celebrated in Atladra with a Suvarna Tula (weighing with gold). Many suggested that it was not appropriate to weigh a saint in gold, and thus *saakar* (sugar cubes) be used instead. Dadubhai and Kantibhai donated hundreds of thousands of rupees and insisted that Shastriji Maharaj be viewed as the most divine saint.

MASTER OF DIVINITY

Shastriji Maharaj asked Dadubhai to employ many devotees who did not have jobs in the Agri-Orient business. Even if employees were not necessary, Dadubhai would hire anyone Shastriji Maharaj commanded. Further, many devotees would read scriptural books instead of doing work, but Dadubhai only looked at their divine relationship with Shastriji Maharaj. Dadubhai also had to do much traveling and Once, when he returned from a short trip to Delhi, he found that 7 *laakh* rupees had been misappropriated to a false account. Dadubhai immediately knew who might be responsible for this,¹⁸ but did not

¹⁸ This incident occurred in 1948, about one year after the business's creation. In regards to this particular devotee, Shastriji Maharaj had told Dadubhai, "Do not trust him in company matters, and never ever make him a partner." After Shastriji Maharaj passed away in 1951, Yojiji Maharaj told Dadubhai to accept that same devotee as a partner! Without saying a word, Dadubhai agreed. After attaining *saakshaatkaar samaadhi* of Lord SwamiNarayan in Gondal by Yogi Bapa's grace on February 3, 1952, Kakaji left the business in the hands of the partners. This same devotee began selling imported fertilizer after mixing it with dirt. As the company's principal owner, the Indian government thus filed a criminal case against Kakaji. For

say anything. When Dadubhai went to see Shastriji Maharaj at Nandaji's bungalow, Shastriji Maharaj was resting in an inside room but Yogi Bapa met Dadubhai and took him to a window overlooking the (Arabian) sea. Yogi Bapa asked Dadubhai, "What do you see?" Dadubhai replied, "I see the ocean." Yogi Bapa said, "Do you not see Shastriji Maharaj? In the land, air, and sea, there is only one governing power - our master Shastriji Maharaj. Then in devotees, don't you believe that Shastriji Maharaj is the governing power? I understand [what happened] Dadubhai. But don't see his faults. Do not charge him. Keep a vision of divinity." Dadubhai agreed and followed Yogi Bapa's command. Wholly pleased, Yogi Bapa said, "With your faith in Shastriji Maharaj, when you go to London you will gain a big order and this loss will be recovered." From that day forward, Dadubhai made up his mind that he would never see faults in any devotee. As a result of this, Yogi Bapa exclaimed, "Dadubhai, you are *'nirdoshbuddhi naa raja'* or the master of divinity!" and embraced him.

FRIENDLINESS IN LONDON

For the business, Dadubhai traveled throughout Europe many times. While staying at the Savoy Hotel in London, Dadubhai met Godfrey Philips, the founder of today's major technology company. By chance, Dadubhai met Mr. Philips in a park and during their conversation, explained to him the importance of friendship. Mr. Philips remembered a moment from his own history in which a friend had faithfully lent him money twice before he secured his patent on an inexpensive way to manufacture quality electric light bulbs. The help of that friend had led Mr. Philips to become the leader of a massive corporation. He was so deeply touched by Dadubhai's words that he invited Dadubhai

the case, Yogi Bapa told Kakaji to keep a cheap lawyer and go to the case without any preparations or worries. The case lasted from 1954 to 1961, when the judge in whom Mr. Ranade witnessed Yogi Bapa's image, finally acquitted Kakaji. The same devotee played a large part in excommunicating Kakaji from the divine fellowship in 1966. But during the devotee's last days, Kakaji went to the hospital to pray for his well-being. With tears in his eyes, he expressed that "The biggest mistake I made in my life was going against you. Please forgive me!" Kakaji replied, "Do not think that way. You were only an instrument in Yogi Bapa's divine plan."

to his home. There, Dadubhai talked about the purpose of his visit to London: to acquire licenses to import fertilizers to India. Mr. Philips contacted some people and handed over India distribution rights of farming chemicals to Dadubhai at no cost. Mr. Philips's business colleagues were astonished at the decision but Mr. Philips waved them off saying that Dadubhai was a great man, and had imparted the essential truth that, "friends are our greatest asset."

SHASTRIJI MAHARAJ'S SPIRITUAL HEIR

Shastriji Maharaj and Yogi Bapa had a historical meeting with Acharya Devendraprasadji Maharaj at the NaraNarayan temple in Kalupur, Ahmedabad in 1948. Shastriji Maharaj expressed that he was not concerned with building temples nor was he interested in administration and management of the religion. His only aim was to display the true worship of Lord Swaminarayan along with His Choicest Devotee and Abode, *Anaadi Mool Akshar Moorti* Gunatitanand Swami. And so the reunion of the two groups that had formed under the Swaminarayan sect was discussed. Shastriji Maharaj expressed willingness to place all the new temples and assets in the charge of the other group as long as the central AksharPurushottam idols were kept intact. Devotees present at the time were concerned how the Akshar-Purushottam doctrine would flourish if such a proposal were entertained? Shastriji Maharaj looked at Dadubhai and said, "Do not worry about that. The person who will spread the true worship of Gunatitanand Swami along with Lord Swaminarayan has already manifested!" A divine light emerged from Shastriji Maharaj's eyes and fell upon his spiritual heir, Dadubhai.

AKSHAR-PURUSHOTTAM ENSRHINED

During Sharad Poonima¹⁹ in 1949, Dadubhai went to Gondal. A large event was kept in remembrance of Gunatitanand Swami's birthday. At the time, Shastriji Maharaj gifted Dadubhai with a relief paint-

¹⁹ Sharad Poonima – The full-moon day of the Indian month of Aso (around September-October) which is Gunatitanand Swami's birthday.

ing of Akshar-Purushottam Maharaj. When Dadubhai bowed down to touch Shastriji Maharaj's feet, the end of the picture frame touched Shastriji Maharaj's toe. Shastriji Maharaj remarked, "You have put the weight of the entire world on me, so now I can put all of my weight on you. We have much work to do for Akshar-Purushottam Maharaj." As Shastriji Maharaj then sat down, Dadubhai continued looking at his feet. Shastriji Maharaj's feet were swollen up, so he said, "Why are you looking there? Look at my face." When Dadubhai looked up, a great brilliance was visible on Shastriji Maharaj's face. That brilliance remained with Dadubhai forever – even while in Mumbai he was able to see whatever Shastriji Maharaj was doing. Thus Akshar-Purushottam Maharaj was enshrined in Tardev and in Dadubhai's heart. (The same Akshar-Purushottam Maharaj image still remains at the Tardev temple.)

FOR THE FUTURE OF THE DIVINE FELLOWSHIP

From Atladra, Shastriji Maharaj came to Sarangpur in April 1950. There he gave the blessings that whoever even appreciates the two large entrance gates of the temple would be liberated. He also talked about Yogiji Maharaj as an image of Aksharbrahm Gunatitanand Swami. He then came to Ahmedabad in May. He sent a letter to Dadubhai to especially come. And on May 21 in Ambli Pol (old temple location in Ahmedabad),²⁰ Shastriji Maharaj appointed 28-year old Narayanswaroopdasji as the president²¹ of the group. Shastriji Maharaj expressed that though Narayanswaroopdasji was young, he was very bright and capable, and should remain under Yogiji Maharaj's command.

During this time, diagnosed with throat cancer, Nirgun Swamiji was very ill, and thus stayed in Mumbai. Shastriji Maharaj asked Kantibhai to take care of him. When Kantibhai was about to take Nirgun Swamiji to see a doctor in Anand, Nirgun Swamiji refused and said to take him

²⁰ In May 1962, Yogiji Maharaj inaugurated the sixth Akshar-Purushottam temple in Shahibaug, Ahmedabad.

²¹ Pramukh Swamiji – Shantibhai was born on December 7, 1921 in the town of Chansad, and initiated by Shastriji Maharaj as Narayanswaroopdasji at the young age of 18.

straight to where Shastriji Maharaj was instead. On May 30, after offering his services to the Akshar-Purushottam cause, Nirgun Swamiji passed away.

EXPERIENCES ABROAD

In 1950, Kakaji went on a steamer boat (the SS Kampala) from Mumbai to Mombasa to meet Babubhai and tell him about Shastriji Maharaj's greatness. After a week's stay, Dadubhai went with his brother-in-law Ravjibhai to Rhodesia, Zimbabwe in Africa, and then continued with his European business travels. During this time, while physically separate from Shastriji Maharaj, Dadubhai maintained a constant communion with his master. Dadubhai was once on a flight leaving from Brussels to Paris,²² and just as the plane was about to take off, he had a vision of Shastriji Maharaj urging him to leave the plane at once. Despite already being on the runway, Dadubhai urged the pilot that everyone should leave the plane at once. He explained that his guru was giving him a premonition that the plane was in danger. As soon as everyone got off, the plane caught on fire because of a gas leak in the fuel pipe leading to the engine. When the passengers rejoiced, "Dadubhai is our savior," he took out a photo of Shastriji Maharaj and explained to them, "My Jesus is alive in India today! He inspired me to get off the plane."

Similarly, Kakaji attended an All Religions Conference in Zurich, Switzerland and talked about Shastriji Maharaj and the glory of the Hindu faith. Nandaji was the president of the Bharat Sadhu Samaj (Society of Indian Saints), and was invited to attend as a representative of the Hindu faith. He thus asked his good friend, Dadubhai to attend on his behalf. Many representatives talked about sending missionaries to India to free the people of its "backward religion." Hearing this Dadubhai interjected, "The Jesus in whom you believe, is alive today in India. You do not have to send missionaries, but students, to India if you want to spiritually progress also." One representative remarked,

²² Dadubhai was going to attend the birthday party of a German business partner's daughter, Suzie. Dadubhai was so handsome, virtuous, and vibrant that wealth and women were naturally attracted to him – but he declined everything for his guru's orders.

"If God is manifest in India, prove it!" Dadubhai remembered Shastriji Maharaj and said, "My guru says there are two representatives that are thinking about wanting to smoke, and three of you are thinking about plans to attend a party afterwards." Moved by his words, the representatives that did in fact have such thoughts came forward and applauded Dadubhai's faith. Dadubhai in turn showed everyone the image of Shastriji Maharaj that he always carried with him.

LETTER TO PAPAJI

In a letter dated April 6, 1951, from London, Dadubhai wrote to Babubhai in Africa, displaying his love and faith for Shastriji Maharaj. Dadubhai wrote:

"The ephemeral life of Europe does not affect me at all. I want eternal bliss and peace. For that, I have one guide – Yagnapurushdasji (Shastriji Maharaj). And with his shelter, I will fight against the strength of this world and beyond. And one day I will amaze everyone. But do not worry - I will not put you in loss. I am a worker that works day and night. I like to work because of the good impressions that our father gave us. Without fearing anyone, except my guru, I do not need the strength of anyone in this world. I want the eternal divine. In the world beyond, I am not even scared of demigods - then what of this world? Thus, keeping patience, do not worry about me.

This world is false. Because our senses cannot see Akshardham, we only assume how it is. Cambridge professors have proved that Newton's theories are wrong when it comes to the universe and God. Similarly, after some time, today's theories will also be wrong. Then what is right? How can we base our lives on these theories? I do not want limited light. I want to see the total light of Akshardham, and be capable of it. Then whatever happens is true. In that experience is real happiness and bliss. Thus, patiently keep blessing me."

SHASTRIJI MAHARAJ PASSES AWAY

Back in India, on May 8, 1951, Shastriji Maharaj bathed and worshiped the idols for the Gadhada temple. He said Yogi Bapa would enshrine the idols, and returned to Sarangpur, where he passed away on May 10. Shastriji Maharaj wrote a letter to Dadubhai just a few days prior to this to attend the installation ceremony at Gadhada on May 16. A great sadness overwhelmed Dadubhai on his last days abroad; but he learned about Shastriji Maharaj's passing away only after returning to India. Hearing the news, Dadubhai went straight to Gadhada and met with Yogi Bapa, where they wept together in Shastriji Maharaj's memory.

Yogi Bapa then asked Dadubhai, "Will you help me in my revolution?" Dadubhai replied, "Please dear master, you only have to command me." As originally planned by Shastriji Maharaj, on May 16, Yogi Bapa continued with the installation ceremony of the fifth Akshar-Purushottam temple. In Sarangpur, Yogi Bapa and Kakaji constructed a beautiful marble memorial shrine for their beloved guru Shastriji Maharaj.

MAN OF ELECTION

In December 1951, the newly shaping Indian government was to hold its first general election. Nandaji was given a ticket to run for elections in the rural Sabarkantha district of northeastern Gujarat by Morarji Desai of the Congress party. His opposition was a popular independent candidate, the King of Idar. Yogi Bapa looked to Dadubhai to fulfill Shastriji Maharaj's blessings and help Nandaji win the ministry position.

At first, Dadubhai responded that he would employ as much of his personnel and resources as were required to defeat the wealthy King of Idar. However, Yogi Bapa insisted that a victory would only be possible if Dadubhai himself committed to the election. Reminiscing Shastriji Maharaj's final words that "Yogiji and I are one," Dadubhai left the growing business in the hands of Kantibhai and others, and agreed to personally back Nandaji until the election was won.

Despite facing great hardships, Kakaji faithfully endured to actualize Shastriji Maharaj's blessings and Yogi Bapa's command. The King of Idar engaged 35 cars to canvass the region – Dadubhai however saw that the solicitation had a minimal effect on the farmers who worked during the daytime in their farms. Dadubhai thus setup devotional song programs in the evenings with the help of Shankar Bhagat. In the presence of Nandaji, Dadubhai had Shankar Bhagat sing devotional songs such as "*Nandanaa Laalaa re, taaro bharasho mane bhaare...*" (O son of Nanda, Lord Krishna, I have strong faith in you). Dadubhai then explained to the prospective voters that while they had never seen the King of Idar, here was Nandaji in front of them, and was someone they personally knew and could trust to communicate their needs to the government in Delhi.

Once, when Dadubhai, Nandaji and Shankar Bhagat were on the way back from a devotional songs program, their car broke down. As they were fixing it, they were confronted by a tiger emerging out of the jungle. Dadubhai prayed, fearlessly left the car, collected leaves, and lit them on fire so that the tiger would instinctively run away. They were saved from the tiger, but still stuck in the middle of the jungles. When Dadubhai prayed again, several outlaws came out of the jungles. Dadubhai explained to them that they were devotees and needed help pulling the car into town. With their help, Dadubhai and the group finally reached home. The ordeal taught the group that by Dadubhai's prayers, the impossible was possible!

In an attempt to impede the rising popularity of Nandaji, the sister of the King of Idar conspired a plan to kill Dadubhai. She joined the Congress party and invited Dadubhai to her home. She brought out two cups of tea, one of which she had poisoned. Of the two cups, the one filled to the brim was poisoned, but out of respect, Dadubhai picked up the cup that was not filled. The king's sister went back into the kitchen and fervently left the tea with thoughts of an alternate plan. In just a few minutes, a servant ran out from the kitchen exclaiming that the family cat had died because it had sipped some of the tea. Her plan to kill Dadubhai was unveiled and Dadubhai explained to her that victory was surely Nandaji's because all of the merits of the king were transferred to Nandaji's party!

Finally, late night on election day, a preliminary count showed that the King of Idar was ahead by 15,000 votes. Hearing this, Nandaji left unhappily for Ahmedabad and the King of Idar ordered *penda* (sweets) in preparation for the next day's celebration. As Dadubhai and his election group stayed awake all night praying to Yogi Bapa, the morning news came that Nandaji had in fact won by 26,000 votes!

KAKAJI'S SAAKSHAATKAAR

After the election, Dadubhai came to Atladra to receive Yogi Bapa's blessings. Yogi Bapa rejoiced that Dadubhai had greatly pleased Shastriji Maharaj and said, "Dadubhai, I want to show you Lord SwamiNarayan of Akshardham as He is." He thus took Dadubhai to the Gondal temple. Yogi Bapa gave him five almonds saying that they were specially charged to induce a *samaadhi* (divine trance). Dadubhai however shared the almonds with fellow devotees²³ - he crushed the almonds and mixed them into milk. Everyone present took a spoon of milk, but nothing happened. The next morning, Yogi Bapa smilingly replied that this time Dadubhai should eat the almonds all by himself. Dadubhai again insisted on sharing - he kept three almonds for himself, and asked fellow devotees to crush the remaining two, add them to milk and distribute it amongst themselves. Again, nothing happened. The following morning, Yogi Bapa again asked Dadubhai to eat the almonds all by himself. He told Dadubhai, "You are of special nobility, and the others will experience the bliss of Akshardham later by your blessings." On February 3, 1952, by Yogi Bapa's grace, after the *aarti*, an immense flood of light originating in the image of Ghanshyam Maharaj consumed Dadubhai. Dadubhai fell unconscious in front of the temple, and remained in *samaadhi* for the next three days. Yogi Bapa asked devotees²⁴ to rest Dadubhai's body comfortably, and the second day, it was taken to the hall area. Dadubhai's soul traveled

²³ Sonaba, Kantibhai, Taraben, Jyotiben, Diwaliba, Maniben and others had come to Gondal as well and many had helped with the campaign work.

²⁴ Chuni Bhagat, Chaganbhai, Haka Khachar, Naranbhai Sheth, Nirannamukta Swamiji, and others present.

along with Yogi Bapa across the various heavens, culminating in the vision of Lord SwamiNarayan in Akshardham along with Guru Shastriji Maharaj and Guru Yogiji Maharaj.

Dadubhai's *saakshaatkaar* (realization of manifest God) *samaadhi* changed the direction of the movement.²⁵ When Dadubhai awoke from the *saakshaatkaar samaadhi*, he remained in an ecstatic nature. He left all worldly activities, talked for hours at a time, and displayed immense powers. He began revealing to fellow devotees that Yogi Bapa was not an ordinary saint, but a manifested image of Lord Swaminarayan.

THE SAAKSHAATKAAR EXPERIENCE IN KAKAJI'S OWN WORDS²⁶

The third day of February 1952 was a momentous day in my life. By total obedience, trust, love, and sincerity towards the master, I left my huge and lucrative business. The selfless service rendered in the interest of Shri Nandaji's election campaign for a period of two months, brought me his special blessings and grace.

First, he initiated me by giving me special almonds, which were offered to HariKrishna Maharaj in the morning *mahapooja* (morning ritual prayer to God and His devotees). For three days, with single-pointed devotion, I was to continuously chant 'SwamiNarayan' while remembering Shastriji Maharaj – incidents from his life, his teachings, and his blessings. Total internal purification ended on the second day by the observance of silence, introspection, and *pradakshina* (circling clockwise God's image or the memorial shrine) of Akshar Deri the entire day. Five injunctions were to be carried out three times a day. Deep prayers were to be offered for one hour straight.

The last day was the day of fasting. Before 5 o'clock, Yogi Bapa told me to circle around the Akshar Deri 200 times (called *parikrama*), and conduct *mahapooja*. The *shaktipat* (transmission of divine energy from

²⁵ A painting with Yogi Bapa and Dadubhai depicting the event was drawn on the inside walls of the Gondal temple, and Yogi Bapa noted the event in his personal diary (given in Patra Sanjivani).

²⁶ Given in The Real Essence of Tantra, published by Yogi Divine Society in 1978.

guru to disciple) had already begun. At 5:30, after bowing down to Yogiji Maharaj's lotus feet, he embraced me and an overflowing love illuminated the center of my heart. I felt a rise in my blood pressure, and heaviness on my brain. My subconscious was fully awakened, and at 7:00, Yogi Bapa placed his hands on my head and requested Maharaj to give me the ultimate experience of the divine nature of Guru Shastriji Maharaj, and the Highest Being Sahajanand Swami with His Eternal Abode, Gunatitanand Swami. In front of the image of Ghanshyam Maharaj, enlightenment naturally came.

Immense rays, as if coming from innumerable suns, engulfed me, and suddenly, my spirit was separated from my physical body. A huge roar or sound was observed - observers told me later that I cried loudly with the roaring sound of a lion for three minutes, and then everything became quiet. I was lifted higher and higher, at a speed beyond all mathematical figures. The first experience was a separation from my physical and mental coverings. The only cognizance my pure self had was of the images of Guru Yogiji Maharaj and Guru Shastriji Maharaj.

Any idea or thought was instantaneously fulfilled. There was a vision of the entire universe with all of its objects and subtle elements. This phenomena or illumination was felt but could not be explained. There were numerous other planes and categories of evolutionary stages which were also shown by Guru Yogiji Maharaj.

The second experience was transcendence of my spirit from the bonds of *mahasunya* (deep void or emptiness). It is described in the Shrimad Bhagavat²⁷ that *jivan-muktas* (liberated souls that have renounced the world) or illuminated souls travel in a cosmic body on this lighted path through the complete darkness of *mahasunya*. Scriptures describe only a divine entity or avatar (incarnation) that has fully conquered passions and purified the inner self and has equivalence with Eternal Brahma (AksharBrahm or Gunatitanand Swami) can pass the *mahasunya*. Thus, it can only be transcended by the pure grace of a divine master of the eternal abode of Akshardham. The highest emancipated *jivan-muktas* reside in this eternal abode.

²⁷ The Shrimad Bhagavat – One of the 18 Puran, authored by Vyasji, contains 12 skands (cantos) detailing the incarnations of Lord Vishnu.

On my entry into the atmosphere, which was beyond all planes, my spirit assumed a new divine form. This divine consciousness can only be experienced. It was most enjoyable, delightful, peaceful – far more than any other mystical experience. The third step was realization of eternal bliss and the all-pervading presence of the divine master. God was seen in him, and Shastriji Maharaj was also seen in him – all were seen in Yogiji Maharaj!

After this period of 72 hours of *samaadhi*, I remained as *brahmroop*, totally different and separate from all psychophysical aspects, yet living in this world. The distinguishing quality that became so natural was spiritual equality in good and bad, right and wrong, love and hatred. All thoughts, all actions, all movements now originate from him [Yogiji Maharaj] and I enjoy *suhradbhaav* (heartfelt oneness with fellow devotees). Supernatural powers always remain in our service but they can be used according to God's will for creating confidence and faith in truth seekers.

The final evolution and spiritual status of the soul was completed here. It was not just nirvana or *moksha* or liberation, but the beginning of *gnyaan-samaadhi* – imbibing of [Gunatitanand Swami's] divine qualities. Though working in an ordinary manner, I could always remain in permanent communion with the master, the Divine Supreme Being. His presence is always felt inwardly and also outwardly as human beings with whom I share their joys and sorrows, with love and friendliness, without any sort of expectations. My humanly desires, egoistic tendencies, all sorts of ambitions and expectations have completely disappeared. The sense of male and female has dropped out. The entire vision changed into divinity – I could see Lord SwamiNarayan in my heart, in this life, and in this world. All objects and forms were seen as *brahmsvaroop* (totally pure and liberated; or associated with divinity).

SPREADING YOGIJI MAHARAJ'S GLORY

News quickly spread throughout the divine fellowship about Dadubhai's *samaadhi*. His business partners such as Mr. Ranade believed Dadubhai had a mental breakdown; Sonaba, Maniben, and others witnessed Shastriji Maharaj in Dadubhai; and Chhaganbhai

and devotees, began calling Dadubhai, “*Chota Yogi*” or “Junior Yogiji Maharaj.” Dadubhai contained vast powers, including being able to omnisciently see the past, present, and future. Chhaganbhai accounted several such occasions. Once when Nandaji was coming by train to Gondal to see Yogi Bapa, Chhaganbhai and Harshadbhai went to the Rajkot station to receive him. Kakaji told them, “The train will come 3 hours late.” Kakaji’s words were revealed when they arrived at the Rajkot station. Some time later, Chhaganbhai received a call saying his daughter was hurt after having fallen down. At the time, it was hard to immediately get a hold of people by phone. Seeing Chhaganbhai’s distressed face, Kakaji said, “Do not worry. Your daughter is all right. She has no fractures. Right now she is standing on the terrace and is wearing a yellow dress.” When a call finally reached Chhaganbhai, everything that Kakaji said was revealed as true.

The message crossed the seas, and soon Babubhai heard about his brother’s ecstatic state. He came to Mumbai in April 1952. Witnessing Dadubhai’s state first hand, Babubhai asked Yogiji Maharaj what would happen to his brother. Yogiji Maharaj replied, “Keep total divinity in him - he will be fine in a few days.”

Dadubhai’s experience was contagious – Babubhai also experienced a realization of Yogiji Maharaj’s divinity. Babubhai finally decided not to return to Africa when Yogiji Maharaj told him to become a partner in Agri-Orient Industries and take over the family responsibilities. In December, Babubhai asked his son, Rameshbhai,²⁸ who was back in Mombasa with Chunibhai, to also come to Mumbai. Devotees poured into Tardev, and along with Rameshbhai, everyone began calling Dadubhai, “Kakaji” (respectful name for “uncle”) and Babubhai, “Papaji” (respectful name for “father”).

Kakaji arranged seminars at various places, reverberating Yogiji Maharaj’s unique identity. For example, at the time, a verse on Yogiji Maharaj was not recited during prayers – so Kakaji instructed Bhagvadrai Dave to write one. When Kakaji recited it in front of every-

²⁸ Rameshbhai (b. 1936) – Initiated by Yogiji Maharaj as Aksharvihari Swamiji in 1961 when 51 educated youths were initiated.

one, Yogiji Maharaj said, "These qualities describe Shastriji Maharaj." But Kakaji encouraged everyone to sing the glory of manifest Divinity, Yogiji Maharaj.

TOGETHER AT CHHAPAIYA

In late 1953, Yogiji Maharaj asked Kakaji to meet Nandaji, then the Home Minister of India, and request that a railway station be developed in Chhapaiya. Thus Kakaji went to Delhi and discussed the matter with Nandaji. To ensure that plans proceeded swiftly, Kakaji visited Lal Bahadur Shastri, the Railway Minister, along with Nandaji. Explaining the wishes of Guru Yogiji Maharaj, Kakaji told Lal Bahadur Shastri the importance of Chhapaiya as the birthplace of the supreme incarnation of Lord Swaminarayan. Lal Bahadur Shastri promised the station's prompt construction, and the next morning, Kakaji, Nandaji, and Lal Bahadur Shastri went to see Jawarhalal Nehru, India's first Prime Minister. Lal Bahadur Shastri was so overwhelmed by Kakaji's devotion that he introduced Kakaji to Nehru and expressed Yogiji Maharaj's desire for a railway station at Chhapaiya. Reminded of his meeting with Yogiji Maharaj in Gondal once, Nehru promised that the government would take every effort possible to see the railway's completion.

With its construction, Swaminarayan devotees were able to conveniently visit the pilgrimage place of Chhapaiya. As it was Shastriji Maharaj's wish to take the saints to Chhapaiya, Yogiji Maharaj asked Kakaji and Chhaganbhai to organize a special pilgrimage tour. First, Kakaji went to see Acharya Devendraprasadji Maharaj at the Kalupur temple. He informed him of the development, and extended an invitation on behalf of Yogiji Maharaj to grace the station. Acharya Maharaj was very pleased and expressed that he would be happy to make the arrangements for the saints' stay. At Chhapaiya, young Tejendraprasadji Maharaj welcomed Yogiji Maharaj and everyone rejoiced together at the birthplace of Lord Swaminarayan.

YOGIJI MAHARAJ'S GLORY ON FOREIGN LANDS

In January 1954, per Yogiji Maharaj's command, Kakaji went on the first spiritual tour to Africa. Kakaji was to herald faith in manifest Divinity on foreign land. Accompanied with Chhaganbhai and Harmanbhai, in a period of about three months, Kakaji visited devotees throughout today's Kenya and Uganda. Many had faith in Shastriji Maharaj, but had not yet developed a similar faith in Yogiji Maharaj. He was still considered an ordinary saint, and equated with others – for example, Kakaji saw that most of the families did not even have a photo of Yogiji Maharaj in their homes.²⁹ Thus wherever Kakaji went, he talked about the glory of Yogiji Maharaj. With the faith that Kakaji stirred amid devotees, Yogiji Maharaj was now enthusiastically called to grace Africa. In April 1955, Yogiji Maharaj made his first trip outside India³⁰ spreading loving devotion amongst devotees. He enshrined the image of Akshar-Purushottam Maharaj at a temple in Mombasa, and established a memorial shrine in remembrance of Maganbhai. (Maganbhai was a staunch devotee of Shastriji Maharaj, who played an active role in spreading the faith in Africa. Kakaji and Papaji also kept a special scriptural reading in his remembrance in Mumbai.)

After Yogiji Maharaj returned to India, a grand welcome-back ceremony was held in Mumbai and then in Vadodara. Yogiji Maharaj asked Kakaji to come to Vadodara where a big procession was organized. There were two decorated elephants, one for Yogiji Maharaj and another for Mota Swami and saints to sit on. At the time, Manibhai insisted that Kakaji also sit on top. Kakaji however maintained, "I have not gone with Yogiji Maharaj to Africa. So why should I sit on top?" Manibhai replied, "You went last year and glorified Yogi Bapa's name and prepared all the devotees. Since then, it was my wish that you are welcomed in a procession. I see you as Yogiji Maharaj's shadow." When Kakaji accepted Manibhai's devotion, many showed disfavor that Kakaji was allowed to sit along with saints. History was repeating it-

²⁹ Shantaben Popat, now known as Ben in Gunatit Jyot, mentions this. She later came to India to live as a dedicated woman saint for Yogiji Maharaj.

³⁰ Kakaji, Khengarjibhai, and Manibhai Patel (of Salaad village) ensured that Yogiji Maharaj, along with Mota Swamiji, Nirannamukta Swamiji, and Vakil Swamiji went comfortably by plane instead of the long journey by steamer boat.

self - similar to Gopalanand Swami,³¹ Bhagatji Maharaj, Jaga Swami,³² Shastriji Maharaj, and other divine entities of the past, Kakaji began facing great opposition in accomplishing guru Yogiji Maharaj's mission and flourishing Yogiji Maharaj's true glory.

³¹ Gopalanand Swami (1780-1851) is *Anadi Mahamukta* (eternal highest liberated entity) of Akshardham, and the spirit of Lord Krishna that manifested during Lord Swaminarayan's time. He had mastered *ashtaang-yoga* (eight-fold discipline leading to divine-consciousness) and helped spread the glory of Lord SwamiNarayan. Only 13 days after Swaminarayan Bhagwan passed away, several devotees instigated Raghuvirji Maharaj's elder brother Gopaljibhai that since he was the eldest son of Ichharamji (Ayodhyaprasadji Maharaj was the eldest son of Rampratapji, Swaminarayan Bhagwan's elder brother), he held the true right to the Gadi or seat of the Acharya. Though inwardly feeling a little upset, Raghuvirji Maharaj was very softhearted, and so would not object when his elder brother began sitting on the Gadi. Seeing Raghuvirji Maharaj's predicament, Gopalanand Swami became disturbed and created the effect that Swaminarayan Bhagwan had entered the body of a saint named Keshavdas. Keshavdas captured everyone's conscious and scolded them, saying, "Only Raghuvirji Maharaj has the right to the Vadtal Gadi, as he is the Acharya that I have appointed." This story eventually reached Nityanand Swami in Umreth, who sent his disciple Pavitrnanand Swami to Vadtal to investigate. In Vadtal, Bhagvadanand Swami had written a letter to the Ahmedabad Gadi accusing Gopalanand Swami of creating a new "God" and misbehaving in *satsang*. The letter urged that Gopalanand Swami be demoted from saffron robes to white. The decision was made to do this in the presence of both Acharya at a congregation. When Gunatitanand Swami found out about this, he immediately left for Vadtal and convinced everyone of the grave mistake. In Swami Ni Vato, Gunatitanand Swami also explains that due to opposition, Gopalanand Swami's prized commentary on the Gita was burned.

³² Jaga Swami (1827-1901) was a choicest devotee of Gunatitanand Swami. After renouncing family life, he stayed with Gunatitanand Swami for 14 ½ years (during which time he noted many of the talks included in Swami Ni Vato). Gunatitanand Swami was so happy with him, that he hugged him 40 times in one month, and openly took his side. After Gunatitanand Swami passed away, many continued to insult and abuse him seeing his popularity and outright expression of Gunatitanand Swami's identity. But Jaga Swami remained in Junagadh for 48 years, finally telling Shastriji Maharaj to openly carry the Akshar-Purushottam doctrine with the blessing, "All your wishes will be fulfilled."

THE CENTER OF AKSHARDHAM

In a letter to Kakaji, Yogiji Maharaj addressed Tardev as “*Akshardham nu takhat*” or “the center of Akshardham.” The Tardev temple was a busy Mumbai hub for spiritual activities. While accommodating devotees and youth (that were studying in college and aimed to become saints), Kakaji incessantly talked about Yogiji Maharaj’s glory. At the same time, Kakaji tirelessly took up the work of the group’s many festivals and celebrations, and even instrumented the group’s first newsletter.³³ Along with Kakaji, Papaji, and Kantikaka,³⁴ Popatbhai Tanna, Gordhanbhai Merchant, Gordhanbhai Kapadia, Gordhanbhai Patel (of Nar), Rasikbhai Merchant, Purushottambhai Soni, Chandrakantbhai Desai, Dhanprasadbhai Mehta, Nalinikantbhai Dave, Jayantibhai Soni, Bhagvatrai Dave, Dhirubhai Bhatt, Ramanikbhai Ada (of Borivali), Raisibhai Ada, Chandrakantbhai Thakkar, Mahendrabhai Gandhi, Dinubhai Amin, Jethabhai Trivedi, Babubhai Darbar, Amubhai Darbar, Purushottamdasbhai Vichi, Nagardasbhai Kothari, Chhaganbhai Patel, Kakubhai Thakkar, Rasikbhai Patel, and others created the atmosphere of a divine family based on Yogiji Maharaj’s principle of harmony, heartfelt oneness, and unity.

SECOND SPIRITUAL TRIP TO AFRICA

Per Yogiji Maharaj’s wish, on September 26, 1959, Kakaji along with G.K. Swamiji and Arunbhai Dave (Ishvarcharan Swamiji) headed to Africa from Mumbai on a steamer boat. (Vakil Swamiji, who went earlier, was not able to sing the true glory of Yogiji Maharaj.) Yogiji Maharaj asked Rameshbhai (Aksharvihari Swamiji) to later join Kakaji. Finally, on October 24, Pramukh Swamiji, Balmukund Swamiji, Sant Swamiji, and Vinu Bhagat (Mahant Swamiji) also came to Africa. By staying there for many months, *satsang* was instilled in the hearts of devotees.

³³ From March 1952 to November 1965, to the delight of devotees, Khengarji Chauhan, the editor of the ‘SwamiNarayan Prakash’ magazine monthly highlighted Kakaji’s awe-inspiring articles.

³⁴ Per Yogi Bapa’s command, by 1960, Kantikaka took up all the financial responsibilities of the two families, so that Kakaji and Papaji could spend all their time for Yogiji Maharaj’s cause.

Kakaji returned to India with Yogiji Maharaj on June 17, 1960. During the 8½-month stay abroad, Yogiji Maharaj and Kakaji bravely ventured many new centers in southern parts of Africa as well.

FIFTY-ONE SAINTS

After Kakaji's *saakshaatkaar samaadhi*, Yogiji Maharaj expressed a desire to create 51 young educated saints. When he asked Kakaji, "Will you totally submit yourself in my plan?" Kakaji replied, "You do not have to ask, you only have to command" and thus Kakaji completely devoted himself to fulfill this mission. Yogiji Maharaj asked Kakaji to visit places throughout Gujarat, and many youth centers formed.³⁵ Youths from all walks of life were attracted by Yogiji Maharaj's divine love. But the new wave was not void of resistance. When parents and devotees alike questioned Yogiji Maharaj's insistence to form the group of young saints, Kakaji was there to swallow the negativity and opposition. Often, Yogiji Maharaj would even say, "It is not me, but Dadubhai, that wants to make all these saints!" Kakaji would then explain to all that under Yogiji Maharaj's shelter, their children would gain the highest position in the universe, that of sainthood. He would solve the families' difficulties and gain their consent. At the same time, Kakaji gave inspiring discourses and love to the youth that decided to tread the saintly path.

On May 10, 1961 (during Yogiji Maharaj's 70th birthday celebration and *kalash-vidhi* - ceremony of fitting the temple spires with golden pinnacles) 51 young educated saints took initiation. Among these were Aksharvihari Swamiji, Mukundjivan Swamiji,³⁶ Purushottamcharan

³⁵ In Manavadar, a youth center began as early as 1954, with the help of Devsibhai and his devoted sons, Haribhai Saheb (who was thus called "Chota Kaka" or "Junior Kakaji") and Kurjibhai (today's Kothari Swamiji of Haridham). Of the 51 young saints that took initiation in 1961, 18 were from the Saurashtra region of Gujarat, India. Today, Haribhai Saheb continues to guide devotees to live a dedicated life.

³⁶ Mukundjivan Swamiji – Dilipbhai Mehta (b. 1937), today known as Guruji, continues Kakaji's mission while staying in Delhi where there is a grand AksharPurushottam temple.

Swamiji,³⁷ Keshavjivandas Swamiji,³⁸ Svayamprakash Swamiji,³⁹ and other divine saints. At the time, Prabhudasbhai,⁴⁰ a leading youth, also expressed a desire to take initiation. Yogiji Maharaj applauded his admiration for Kakaji, and planned for him to become a saint four years later.

³⁷ Purushottamcharan Swamiji – Kothari Swamiji, the motherly saint at Haridham, he is Hariprasad Swamiji's heart, and a shining example of divine saintliness.

³⁸ Keshavjivandas Swamiji – Vinubhai Patel (b. 1933), took initial initiation (in white robes or *paarshadi diksha*) in 1957. After initiation in 1961, Yogiji Maharaj made him the *mahant* (head) of Aksharbhuvan, Dadar, thus he is popularly known as Mahant Swamiji. When Yogiji Maharaj sent saints to Mumbai, Kakaji would instill in them Yogiji Maharaj's glory and tell them to take Mahant Swamiji's guidance.

³⁹ Svayamprakash Swamiji – Ramanbhai Patel, today known as Dr. Swamiji, studied for a doctorate staying for sometime at Tardev.

⁴⁰ Prabhudasbhai – From his first meeting with Yogiji Maharaj in Anand in the 1950s, Prabhudasbhai Patel (b. 1933) became attached to Yogiji Maharaj. After serving as a divine secretary to Yogiji Maharaj, in 1965 he was given *paarshadi diksha* on Dashera (Aso *sud* 10, celebrating Lord Rama's victory over the demon Ravan). During his initiation on Sharad Poonima (Aso *sud* 15, the birthday of Gunatitanand Swami) as Hariprasad Swamiji, Yogiji Maharaj exclaimed, "I am performing a *yagna* (ritual ceremony) similar to the one Lord Swaminarayan held for Gunatitanand Swami's *diksha* (initiation)." (On the occasion of Gunatitanand Swami's *diksha*, Lord Swaminarayan arranged an 18-day *yagna* in Dabhan, near Nadiad.) Yogiji Maharaj then gave the blessings, "[For the "train" or strength that helps devotees tread the path to Akshardham] Mahant Swamiji is one engine, and now I am adding a second engine. Under his leadership many others will be inspired to become saints." Though normally done by the saint's closest relatives, Kakaji financed this *yagna*. In this way, the two shared a unique friendship. The *shlok* or verse "*Dikshaa arpi aho gunatit samee...*" explains the *advait* relationship or divine oneness that Kakaji and Hariprasad Swamiji share.

NEW HORIZONS IN VIDYANAGAR

As part of the youth movement, early on, Yogiji Maharaj asked Kakaji to visit Vidyanagar.⁴¹ Kakaji stayed at Vidyanagar and mixed with the fellow students to instill Yogiji Maharaj's glory. The youth cleared one of their hostel rooms to create a temple and a place for Kakaji to stay. Soon, even the Vice Chancellor of the University, Dr. R.D. Patel, was swept away by the divine spirit of the group! Under the guidance of Jashbhai Patel,⁴² many youth, including Ashwinbhai, Shantibhai, Ratibhai, Sanandbhai, V.S., Harshadbhai, Poonambhai, Rameshbhai, and Vithaldas expressed an eagerness to become saints. Putting Jashbhai Saheb's hand in Kakaji's hand at Radhu (a small town in the district of Kheda), Yogiji Maharaj charted a new spiritual horizon for the group. Per Yogiji Maharaj's instructions, Kakaji took up a one-year project to build a hostel for the college-bound children of devotees, named 'AksharPurushottam *Chatralay*.⁴³ After much effort, Yogiji Maharaj inaugurated the hostel on June 20, 1965.

From the time of Lord Swaminarayan, many women lived unmarried, dedicated lives. For example, Dada Khachar's sisters, Jivuba and Laduba broke all social ties, and remained dedicated only to Lord Swaminarayan. Such was the devotion of Jamkuba of Macchiaav, Laadhibai of Bhuj, Rambai of Jetpur, Raajbai of Vaankia, and Adiba of Panchala, amongst many others. In the AksharPurushottam branch, by great devotion to Yogiji Maharaj, many female devotees also expressed to live such dedicated lives. After 1952, when Papaji and Kakaji asked Yogiji Maharaj about Taraben and Jyotiben's marriage, knowing the sisters' devotional state, Yogiji Maharaj replied, "What if they re-

⁴¹ Bhaikaka, the founder of the Vidyanagar Township (est. in 1947) and University (est. in 1956), had the vision to build a great educational center in Gujarat and thus along with fellow devoted colleagues, made great efforts to bring professors and leading faculty members to the area. Per Shastriji Maharaj's wish, Yogiji Maharaj visited the institution for its spiritual advancement. Yogiji Maharaj later assigned this service to Kakaji.

⁴² From his first meeting with Yogiji Maharaj at the age of 10, Jashbhai Patel (b. 1940) also became naturally attached to Yogiji Maharaj. He led the youth group in Vidyanagar, attracting many friends to also join in devotional activities.

⁴³ *Chatralay* – Hostel

main unwed, and enter the state of sainthood?" Many more daughters of faithful families of the *satsang* continued to show an eagerness to enter sainthood. (In 1956, Hansadidi began living in Tardev; in 1959, Deviben; and so on.) Just as devoted families offered their sons for the *satsang*, the parents of daughters had faith in Yogiji Maharaj and Kakaji and Papaji, and happily allowed them to live dedicated lives.⁴⁴

After 51 young educated saints were initiated in 1961, Yogiji Maharaj told Kakaji and Papaji his desire to initiate 51 more saints, this time women saints! In 1963, in Shastriji Maharaj's room, Yogiji Maharaj asked Kakaji and Papaji to create an establishment in Vidyanagar where women could separately and independently worship God. (Yogiji Maharaj had always emphasized the Gondal temple. Thus Kakaji and Papaji suggested that a women's establishment in Gondal could aptly support the group's spiritual activities. Yogi Bapa, however, asked the two brothers to build the establishment on their own plots in Vidyanagar. At the time, Kakaji urged Papaji to be the president of the trust for the plots. Under Kakaji's instructions, Jashbhai Saheb, Virendrabhai Patel, Ratibhai Patel, Kanjibhai Patel, and other dedicated brothers from Vidyanagar and Manavadar looked after its construction.) On June 21, 1965, Yogiji Maharaj conducted the foundation ceremony at Vidyanagar. When he visited again, while sprinkling flowers in all the rooms, seeing the size of the kitchen, Yogiji Maharaj remarked, "Very soon this kitchen will be too small to accommodate all the women saints!"

IMAGE OF BHAGATJI MAHARAJ

The opposition, insults, and abuse that Kakaji faced strikingly parallel the life of Bhagatji Maharaj (1829-1897), a choicest disciple of Gunatitanand Swami. Bhagatji Maharaj experienced a *saakshaatkaar samaadhi* (divine realization trance of Gunatitanand Swami's identity) by Gunatitanand Swami's grace. For openly voicing Gunatitanand Swami's unique glory as *Mool Akshar*, he was ultimately excommunicated from

⁴⁴ Amongst these were Kashiba (Nadiad), Gangaba, Dahiba, Kusumben (Anand), Bhanuben (Bhadrana), Hemaben, Shobhanaben, Kamuben, Ramaben, Mandaben, Jayaben, Madhuben, Savitaben, etc.

the divine fellowship. When the news reached Gunatitanand Swami, He explained, "If I tell Pragji Bhakta (Bhagatji Maharaj) to stop glorifying my name, he will listen to me" - but the decision was still put forward. Bhagatji Maharaj however proclaimed, "I am totally dedicated to Lord Swaminarayan – thus even Lord Swaminarayan Himself cannot excommunicate me!" And thus while excommunicated, he continued to talk about Gunatitanand Swami's identity. Shortly thereafter, in 1867, Gunatitanand Swami passed away. After 3 years, Bhagatji Maharaj was allowed to enter the *satsang* again. But people still could not stand his rising popularity, and thus this time his disciple-saints were excommunicated. One of the saints was Yagnapurushdasji (Shastriji Maharaj). Bhagatji Maharaj reprimanded the saints and told them to ask for forgiveness. The *satsang* committee however said they would only allow them to reenter in white robes (instead of saffron). The saints however remained happy, getting the chance to be in Bhagatji Maharaj's company while excommunicated.

Once, Shastriji Maharaj requested to embrace his master Bhagatji Maharaj with sandalwood paste. Reciprocally, Bhagatji Maharaj was pained to see the innocent saints undergoing hardships. Finally, Acharya Viharilalji Maharaj sent a letter asking the saints to reenter *satsang*, staying in Vadtal. Shastriji Maharaj in turn accorded a grand welcome to Bhagatji Maharaj to Junagadh. Bhagatji Maharaj soon passed away and 8 years later, due to crude human nature, Shastriji Maharaj was again excommunicated.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ When Viharilalji Maharaj suddenly passed away, no one was left to assume the Gadi. The *satsang* committee went to Chhapaiya and brought a young Acharya named Lakshmiprasadji Maharaj. Shastriji Maharaj, who was very close to Viharilalji Maharaj and the *satsang*, advised the young Acharya to remain within the commands of the Shikshapatri so that the *satsang* would continue to flourish properly. Lakshmiprasadji Maharaj, however, rebuked Shastriji Maharaj and thus diluted the Acharya responsibility of taking care of saints. By way of letters, the Acharyas were responsible for assigning saints the place to go for *satsang*. But Lakshmiprasadji Maharaj did not assign a place for Shastriji Maharaj, and told him that he can go anywhere. Eventually Lakshmiprasadji Maharaj instrumented Shastriji Maharaj's excommunication. The *satsang* committee later expelled Lakshmiprasadji Maharaj. The separation that occurred in the *satsang* was thus a result of crude human nature.

Kakaji's rising popularity and open expression of Yogiji Maharaj's identity as the manifestation of *Mool Akshar* created similar situations. But in the face of the resistance, Kakaji held Guru Yogiji Maharaj's every command - the first of which was to support the creation of 51 young saints. He then took on Yogi Bapa's command of creating a separate and independent establishment for women saints. For this, again, due to crude human nature, in 1966, Kakaji was excommunicated along with Papaji. After this, for 20 years, Kakaji continued spreading the glory of Yogiji Maharaj. Until his last breath, he gave his everything in support of all the saints and devotees that were also removed for siding with him.

THE DIVINE PLAY

On May 17, 1966 Yogi Bapa's 75th birthday was celebrated on a grand scale in Vidyanagar. Kakaji, Papaji, Pramukh Swamiji, Mahant Swamiji, Hariprasad Swamiji, Jashbhai Saheb, Haribhai Saheb, saints and devotees celebrated the occasion. The opposition however was at its climax and this was to be the last celebration together in Yogiji Maharaj's presence. Yogiji Maharaj again and again repeated to imbibe the qualities of "*samp, suhradbhaav, ekta*" or harmony, oneness, and unity, and described "*ekta ej ekaantik panu*" or unity is the highest liberated state. Kakaji's devotion was such that he was willing to swallow all the insults and opposition in order that the group could stay together. He joyfully faced the hardships for Lord Swaminarayan and his guru's mission.

Yogiji Maharaj finally envisioned that the group had to be allowed to separate into two. And for this, Yogiji Maharaj trusted Kakaji's unparalleled devotion. While physically separate, Kakaji would carry on the divine mission with even greater spirit! While physically separate, he would keep everyone's glory flourishing. Shastriji Maharaj explained Yogiji Maharaj's devotion by likening him to a child that a mother sacrifices: in order for a mother to escape with the rest of her children from a fire, she places the sacrificial child on the ground and steps over him so that the family can be saved. Similarly, Kakaji was Yogiji Maharaj's sacrificial son.

On May 28, 1966, it was announced at the Bochasan temple that Kakaji and Papaji were excommunicated from the group. Kakaji heard the message while in Vidyanagar, and sent Jashbhai Saheb and Haribhai Saheb to 'Prabhu Krupa'⁴⁶ (a building at the women's establishment) to tell Papaji the news. Jashbhai Saheb and the aspirant devotees whom Yogiji Maharaj had asked to become saints were told to vacate AksharPurushottam Chhaatralay. Kakaji asked the brothers to go to Yogiji Maharaj, who said, "I am where Kakaji and Papaji are so do not hesitate and support the two brothers." Thus, under Kakaji and Papaji's guidance the aspirant brothers were to continue their spiritual mission.

As the sad news spread to all of the centers, many saints willed to support Yogiji Maharaj's devotees. From the Dadar temple, under the guidance of Hariprasad Swamiji and Aksharvihari Swamiji, 38 saints went to see Pramukh Swamiji and the committee in support of Kakaji and Papaji. Pramukh Swamiji, though, was not there, and when they returned to Dadar, the temple doors were closed to them for siding with the two brothers. And so, the saints that were initiated by Yogiji Maharaj went to Tardev where Kakaji was present. Kakaji insisted they return to Dadar but there as well, the innocent saints were not allowed inside. Elder saints that could not voice anymore against the decision silently gave strength to the saints for rightly supporting God's devotees.

In Tardev, Kakaji exclaimed, "As long as blood courses through my body, I will make sure that these innocent saints get proper care and provisions." The saints stayed at Tardev for the next 4 days while Kakaji made arrangements for their stay at a small, old temple in Sokhada.⁴⁷ Kakaji collected money from friends and business acquaintances, so that the saints would not have to ask for food. For the next several years, Kakaji gave much strength and prayers to all the saints that had once left the world due to Yogiji Maharaj's divine love. By his discourses, the saints' glory for Yogiji Maharaj intensified, and they learned to experience his omnipotent spirit. Under the guidance of Hariprasad Swamiji and Aksharvihari Swamiji, despite the hardships,

⁴⁶ Prabhu Krupa – Today, it is where Papaji resides at the Gunatit Jyot.

⁴⁷ Old Sokhada temple – A Swaminarayan temple run by local devotees that had faith in Kakaji and Hariprasad Swamiji.

a divine happiness remained with the saints. With the growing support of devotees, by 1968, Kakaji established a temple in Sankarda for the saints as well. Today, saints continue to lead a divine life at the Sankarda temple under Aksharvihari Swamiji's guidance.

GUNATIT JYOT AND ANOOPAM MISSION

Prior to the excommunication, 10 elder women saints administered the women's temple. By June 1, 1966 many more women saints moved into the Vidyanagar establishment as planned, adorning the vows of sainthood. With the split, Papaji remained in Vidyanagar to support the women who had left the world in dedication to Lord Swaminarayan. The administration created for the group was titled the Gunatit Jyot Mahilaa Trust (with Kakaji, Papaji, and Gordhankaka as the trustees for administrative purposes). From 51, the number of women saints rapidly grew to over 450 today – and not a single aspirant ever left her dedicated life.

On Posh Pournima⁴⁸ in 1968, Kakaji, Papaji, and Sonaba blessed Jashbhai Saheb and the eight aspirant brothers that Yogiji Maharaj asked to become saints to live the life of saints while remaining in society. (The blessings were granted in Shreeji Colony, where the brothers stayed at the time. As more brothers joined the movement, Rameshbhai Patel of Mumbai donated his newly built bungalow as their residence, and Papaji named the abode 'Anoopam.'). Known as '*karma-yogi*' or '*vratdhaari*' *saadhaks* the aspirant brothers would earn a living offering selfless service in society, while at the same time living in dedicated devotion to Lord Swaminarayan. With the help of Jashubhai Bhatt of Umreth, Kakaji, Papaji, and Saheb planned an Adhesives Company. For two years the business did not show profit. But Kakaji placed more funds into the business and blessed, "I prayed to Lord Swaminarayan and Gunatitanand Swami at the business's inception. So it has to run well!" With his business contacts, Kakaji also worked hard to procure raw materials for the business. Thus Yogiji

⁴⁸ Posh Pournima – The full-moon day of the Indian month of Posh, which falls on around January. On this day in 1810, Gunatitanand Swami was given *diksha* (initiated into sainthood) by Lord Swaminarayan in the town of Dabhan.

Maharaj's vision of a new horizon in sainthood took root with the name "Anoopam Mission."⁴⁹ On Poshī Poornima in 1978, Kakaji and Papaji selected a uniform for the dedicated brothers: the saintly robes of a blue shirt and beige pants, signifying the sky and the earth (and the union of saintliness and modern society). As the group's humanitarian works expanded, the people of the town of Mogri donated land for the renowned AksharPurushottam Technical Institute. Adjacent to this, the brothers moved into the Brahmjyoti complex in 1985, where today there are over 125 dedicated brothers.

YOGIJI MAHARAJ IN MUMBAI

In 1970, Yogiji Maharaj went on his third foreign trip. He enshrined the image of AksharPurushottam Maharaj in the Nairobi temple, as well as in a small temple in London.

From Gondal, he went to Mumbai where he left his physical body on January 23, 1971 at the Bhatia Hospital adjacent to the Tardev temple. The divine body was kept against a pillar at the Dadar temple for a day, and then flown to Gondal where a memorial shrine was constructed. (The Gondal temple houses the AksharDeri or the memorial shrine of Gunatitanand Swami as well.)

YOGI DIVINE SOCIETY

Kakaji emphasized to the saints to imbibe the qualities of saintliness, to keep focus on chanting and prayers, and experience Yogiji Maharaj's divine presence in every moment of life. When Yogiji Maharaj passed away, Kakaji asked devotees to continue their spiritual progress by seeing the spirit of Yogiji Maharaj in Hariprasad Swamiji, Papaji, Saheb, Aksharvihari Swamiji, Sonaba, Pramukh Swamiji, Mahant Swamiji, saints and devotees.

Under the emblem of the Yogi Divine Society,⁵⁰ Kakaji saw the progress of the Sokhada center, and also established centers in Delhi, Mumbai, and Chicago.

⁴⁹ Anoopam Mission – The non-profit trust was granted in 1976.

⁵⁰ Yogi Divine Society – For the administration of the growing *satsang*, the

After 1971, Hariprasad Swamiji and Kantikaka also organized the celebration of Kakaji's birthday and divine realization day in public. On June 3-4, 1978 Kakaji's 60th birthday was celebrated on a grand scale in the Sanmukhanand Hall in Mumbai.

By the inspiration of Hariprasad Swamiji and saints, many more wanted to renounce the world and devote to Lord Swaminarayan. Thus after 1971, Kakaji and Hariprasad Swamiji initiated many more saints. They also toiled greatly to establish a grand temple in Sokhada, which was inaugurated in 1980 as 'Haridham.' On Ramanavmi⁵¹ 1981, Kakaji, Papaji, and Hariprasad Swamiji enshrined the magnificent and blessed idols of AksharPurushottam temple. Today in Haridham, over 200 saints lead a divine life, dedicated to Lord Swaminarayan, as dictated by Yogiji Maharaj and Kakaji, and under the guidance of guru Hariprasad Swamiji, and elder saints such as Kothari Swamiji, Prem Swamiji, Das Swamiji, and Shastri Swamiji. A separate women saints' branch also flourishes by the guidance of Premben and others.

DELHI AND POWAI CENTERS

Shastriji Maharaj wished for *satsang* to spread to the north, where Lord Swaminarayan had taken birth. (Lord Swaminarayan was born in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh, which is 340 miles or 547 kilometers from India's capital, New Delhi. When Shastriji Maharaj gave an image of AksharPurushottam to Kakaji in 1949, he also gave one to Nandaji with the blessings, "Enshrine this image in Delhi and spread the message of Lord Swaminarayan in northern India.") Yogiji Maharaj also expressed this desire. Kakaji thus began visiting Delhi as early as 1968 and opened his grace to many devotees there. At the same time, Kakaji asked Mukundjivan Swamiji (Guruji) to lead the movement.

non-profit group's registration was approved in 1977. In support of an Ayurvedic Research Center, Kakaji inspired Lilavati Munshi, founder of Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan, and wife of Kanaiyalal Munshi (former Governor of Mumbai) to donate land in the adjacent town of Vasana.

⁵¹ Ramanavmi – Lord Swaminarayan and Lord Rama's birthday, the 3rd day of the bright half of the Indian month of Chaitra.

Shastriji Maharaj had also asked Kakaji to live as brothers with Nandaji. Thus throughout his life, Kakaji supported Nandaji in all of his endeavors. For the Bharat Sadhu Samaj, Nandaji and Anand Swami (secretary and leading saint of the Bharat Sadhu Samaj who helped obtain a place for Guruji and saints in Delhi to stay), asked Kakaji to help with the 1973 celebrations of Swami Ramatirth's Centennial.⁵² From this, many leaders such as Shri V.S. Page (Chairman of Maharashtra State Legislative Council) and Shri G.S. Pohekar (Indo-Japanese Association President) came in touch with the Swaminarayan satsang.

After his government minister roles in the late 70s, Nandaji also formed the Manav Dharma Mission Trust.⁵³ Part of the trust was an ayurvedic pharmacy in Kurukshetra. When it did not run well, Nandaji's friends, Chandrabhan Sharma and Kalyandevji Maharaj (an eminent saint of Northern India), called upon Kakaji, who along with devotees spent three years (1980-1982) bringing it up and then handed it over to the Trust. (Kakaji asked Mahendra Bapu, Rajubhai Bhatt, and Mahendrabhai Patel to help with the operations of the pharmacy. Mahendrabhai Patel, a devotee, is a doctor in ayurvedic practice and today he heads the ayurvedic pharmacy in Haridham.)

By Kakaji's inspiration, Lord Swaminarayan's bicentennial was celebrated in Delhi in 1981 on a large scale, attended by over five thousand devotees. In 1983, Kakaji acquired land from the Delhi Development Authority with the help of Minister HKL Bhagat, who witnessed Kakaji's divinity. This would be the future home of a grand AksharPurushottam temple. Around 1983, Kakaji and Guruji once traveled to Haridwar. During the spiritual visit, they bathed in the Ganges River and visited many temples including a beautiful 7-story construction dedicated to

⁵² Swami Ramatirth (1873-1906) – A renowned professor of mathematics, Gossain Tirth Rama of Punjab, India, deeply studied the Gita and with the vision of God, dedicated himself in devotion to Lord Krishna. He also brought the knowledge of the Vedanta to Japan and San Francisco, USA.

⁵³ The Manav Dharma Mission Trust had a vacant center in Chattarpur, Delhi as well. In 1979, Kakaji set up Uttamcharan Swamiji to stay there for a couple years, along with Bhai Swamiji (who was initiated in 1961, and helped flourish the center with Guruji early on in Delhi). Kakaji then found a place for Uttamcharan Swamiji to reside in Ludhiana, Punjab. Uttamcharan Swamiji, who had been initiated by Yogiji Maharaj in 1961, passed away in early 2000 after creating a temple in Ludhiana.

Mother India. Guruji openly asked Kakaji, "This temple is not even dedicated to the manifestation of supreme God and yet they get an abundance of donations." The temple had a statue of the donor along with a plaque, indicating he had donated 1,111,111 rupees. Guruji remarked, "On the other hand, we can hardly collect 11 rupees in *aarti*!" At that time, Kakaji blessed, "Here, we will get a donor who gives even more - and not to inflate his ego or not to record his task, but to purely please God!" True to Kakaji's words, in 1993, with the support of Malkani Saheb (who met Kakaji only once) and devotees, a large temple was established with the *moortis* (divine images) of AksharPurushottam Maharaj, Shastrjii Maharaj, Yogiji Maharaj, Kakaji Maharaj, and *gunatit* saints. Akshar Jyot is the Delhi women's wing, headed by Anandi Didi. Under Guruji's guidance, the Delhi center today continues to flourish and help many to devote to Lord Swaminarayan.

Kakaji knew Chandrabhan Sharma since working with Nandaji for the ministry elections. Experiencing divinity in the presence of Kakaji and Yogiji Maharaj, he donated a large property in Powai to the AksharPurushottam cause. Yogiji Maharaj conducted a *yagna* (ceremony signifying the land's inauguration) on the land, and prophesized that, "There will be a grand temple here and the price of the land will increase like gold!" In 1978, Sharmaji donated the sanctified part of the land to Kakaji. Kakaji held many functions at the area, and from a jungle, the area soon became a magnificent part of Hiranandani Gardens where today stands the International Spiritual Research Center, a testament to Kakaji's universal vision and borderless spirituality. Guided by the dedicated brothers of Tardev, the ISRC was inaugurated on February 3, 2003.

In 1980, an apartment (Prashant Apartments) in Powai, in which Yogiji Maharaj conducted a scriptural reading in 1962, was purchased as the residence for a women saints' branch titled 'Gunatit Mahilaa Kendra.' Today, Yoginiben, Madhuriben, Shardaben, Jayuben, Niluben, Meeraben, Siddhiben, Minaben, and Artiben serve a devoted life while residing there.

AKSHAR-PURUSHOTTAM ABOUND

In this way, while principally staying in Tardev, Kakaji supported the Gunatit Samaj, a four-winged (men saints, women saints, youth, and householders) divine establishment to help all devotees achieve progress. Just as Bhagatji Maharaj, Jaga Swami, and Krishnaji Ada were choicest disciples of Gunatitanand Swami, Kakaji taught devotees to see divinity in all *gunatit* or God-realized saints that were blessed by Shastriji Maharaj and Yogiji Maharaj. Further, Kakaji emphasized that all branches work in harmony based on the ultimate principle of Lord Swaminarayan's supremacy. Kakaji repeated this message in his last recorded speech on January 26, 1986 at the Gunatit Jyot during the celebration of his divine realization day after Gunatitanand Swami's Bicentennial Celebrations. He revealed this as the inner desire of Shastriji Maharaj and Yogiji Maharaj, who blessed that they want to make many like Bhagatji Maharaj, Jaga Swami, and Krishnaji Ada, i.e., *brahmsvaroop* or completely liberated.

On Posh Poonam in 1969, Kakaji, Papaji, and Sonaba blessed five brothers to live dedicated lives while staying in Tardev with Kakaji: Rameshbhai Soni,⁵⁴ Mahendrabhai Shah (Bapu), Rajubhai Thakkar, Rajubhai Bhatt, and Ashwinbhai Patel. By the early 1970s, Bharatbhai Mehta, Hemantbhai Vashi, Harakchandbhai Shah, and Arunbhai Shah also began staying at Tardev. With them, Kakaji served the Gunatit Samaj, authored several books,⁵⁵ and made many divine trips to Europe, the UK, and the United States. Living with Kakaji's ideals, together the nine brothers earned Lord Swaminarayan's grace and continue to give the peace and bliss of Akshardham to all.

⁵⁴ After serving Kakaji and the divine society, Rameshbhai Soni passed away in 1989.

⁵⁵ Lord SwamiNarayan and Applied Brahm-Gnyaan (1973), Divine Grace (1977), The Real Essence of Tantra (1978), Gnyaan Samadhi (1981), PanchYagna (1981), Gunatito-Aksharambrahma (1983), Essence of Purna-Yoga (1984), Gunatit Svaroop Darshan (1985)

In 1973, Kakaji made his first spiritual trip to the United States with Jashbhai Saheb and Harshadbhai Bhatt.⁵⁶ On the Fourth of July long-weekend, Dinkar Uncle⁵⁷ came from Elkhart, Indiana to Chicago, Illinois⁵⁸ where he met Kakaji for the first time. From the first meeting, there was a divine reunion of the perfect master and disciple. For the next 13 years, Dinkar Uncle served Kakaji, creating a divine bond that reached the heart of Lord Swaminarayan. Dinkar Uncle shone divinity in all God-realized saints and created oneness with all devotees.

On June 21, 1981, on the 200th anniversary of Lord Swaminarayan's manifestation, Kakaji enshrined the image of Lord Swaminarayan at Dinkar Uncle's Waukegan home. (The image was displayed at Lord Swaminarayan's Bicentennial Celebrations in Sokhada, and presented to Kakaji by saints. When Kakaji opened the image, he remarked, "Lord Swaminarayan is telling me, 'Take Me beyond the oceans [to America].'" This image is a colorized copy of the original black-and-white Lord Swaminarayan picture that is preserved at the Oxford Museum.) At that time Kakaji gave the blessings, "Any prayer done here together for even fifteen minutes, will be answered." Kakaji also gave Dinkar Uncle the same blessings as Jaga Swami had given to Shastriji Maharaj: "*Sankalp naa karo e tamaari khot, ane puraa naa kariye, e hamaari khot*" or "We will fulfill all your prayers." In 1983, Yogi Divine Society, USA was established by Kakaji with Dinkar Uncle as its President. In 1985, with Mahendra Babu and Dinkar Uncle's help, Kakaji planned Hariprasad Swamiji's first trip to America. Finally, on October 20, 1985, at the 200th anniversary of Gunatitanand Swami's manifestation, Kakaji enshrined the image of Gunatitanand Swami at the Waukegan temple.

Today, in humble service and discourses resembling Gunatitanand Swami and Yogiji Maharaj, the torch of pure devotion leading to ultimate liberation is kept lit by Dinkar Uncle, along with Guruji, Babu, Bharatbhai, Vashibhai, saints and devotees.

⁵⁶ Harshadbhai Bhatt – A devotee who was a Member of the Mumbai Municipal Corporation.

⁵⁷ Born in a blessed Swaminarayan family, Dinkar Uncle was born on Sharad Poornima in 2000 VS (October 1, 1944). After coming to America in 1966 to obtain a Master's degree, he moved to Waukegan, Illinois in 1976 when he got a job with Abbott Laboratories.

⁵⁸ At Hasmukhbhai Patel's home in the northern suburbs of Chicago, Illinois.

In 1985, Kakaji helped acquire land in Samadhiala for Nirmal Swamiji,⁵⁹ Madhavcharan Swamiji, and Gnyaansvaroop Swamiji who were forced to leave the old group in 1983. In this way, Kakaji worked to help all of the saints that Yogiji Maharaj had initiated. A temple was established at the location in 1994, with a growing school.

⁵⁹ Nirmal Swamiji – Born in 1940, he was initiated by Yogiji Maharaj in 1956 on Sharad Poornima in Gondal. He was later appointed as the *mahant* (head) of the Sarangpur temple, which is close to Samadhiala.

KAKAJI'S FOREIGN TRAVELS

TIME	PLACE	TRIP HIGHLIGHTS
June 1973	UK, United States/ Canada	<p>With Jashbhai Saheb and Harshadbhai Bhatt</p> <p>Stop in London before arriving in Chicago</p> <p>Graces New Jersey, New York (Buffalo), Pennsylvania (Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Harrisburg), Washington DC, Rhode Island (Pawtucket), Massachusetts (Boston), Maryland (Baltimore), Indiana (Elkhart, South Bend, Munster, and Indianapolis), Michigan (Detroit), Iowa, Missouri (St. Louis), Ohio, California (LA and San Francisco), Florida (Orlando and Miami), Georgia (Atlanta), North Carolina (Charlotte and Raleigh), Alabama (Huntsville), New Orleans, Texas (Houston)</p> <p>Visits Canada (Niagara Falls and Toronto) on this and subsequent trips</p> <p>First divine meeting of Kakaji and Dinkar Uncle</p>
May 1977	UK, United States/ Canada, Europe, Middle East	<p>With Mahendra Bapu and Rajubhai Thakkar</p> <p>Stop in London before arriving in Chicago</p> <p>Visits old business friends in Germany</p> <p>Sends Mahendra Bapu and Rajubhai Thakkar in the company of Dilipbhai Popat to France, Luxembourg, and Switzerland</p> <p>Stop in Kuwait (Dr. Hansaben Raithatha) on the way back to India</p>
July 1979	United States/ Canada, UK	<p>With Rameshbhai Soni to Dinkar Uncle's Waukegan home</p> <p>Stop in London while going back to India in September</p>
June 1980	Sri Lanka	<p>With Rameshbhai Soni, Mahendra Bapu, and Harshadbhai Bhatt</p> <p>Meets Buddhist dignitaries and saints in Colombo</p>

June 1981	United States/ Canada, UK	With Mahendra Babu and Rajubhai Bhatt Enshrines Lord Swaminarayan's image at the Waukegan temple Tells Anoopam Mission to buy building in Denham, Middlesex (move from Wimbley location which was obtained in 1978)
June 1983	United States/ Canada, UK, Europe, Middle East	With Mahendra Babu to Chicago With Vinubhai and Ashwinbhai who were in UK, visited Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, and Italy where spiritual meetings were held with a large group of foreigners in August Inspires devotees in Paris Stop in Kuwait (Dr. Hansaben Raithatha) while going back to India
June 1984	UK, Europe, United States/ Canada	With Bharatbhai visits London, France, Switzerland and Italy Joins Mahendra Babu and Rajubhai Bhatt in Chicago
August 1985	UK, United States	In April, Kakaji sends Mahendra Babu to join Dinkar Uncle in Chicago to organize Hariprasad Swamiji's first visit to the United States Hariprasad Swamiji makes his first trip to America this summer Kakaji comes in August after stopping by in London with Rajubhai Bhatt Enshrines Gunatitanand Swami's image at the Waukegan temple in October
July 1986	UK, Europe, United States	After stopping by in London and Paris, Mahendra Babu and Dinkar Uncle organize the first Gunatit Gnyaan Shibir in St. Louis. Kakaji planned the shibir prior to passing away; it was graced by Jashbhai Saheb, Ben, and devotees

HUMBLE BEGININGS

After celebrating Gunatitanand Swami's Bicentennial in 1985, Kakaji gave many suggestions of his divine plans of passing away. Days before, Kakaji invited all saints initiated by Yogiji Maharaj for a special

seminar to Mumbai so that they would get final association. Kakaji expressed, "How can I spread the message of Lord Swaminarayan alone?" Thus while remaining low profile himself, Kakaji supported saints and devotees as "the second line of leadership" to carry Yogiji Maharaj's work. Kakaji emphasized, "It is the group that governs" and his messages were for the future – the spiritual attainment of generations to come. Then suddenly, on March 7, 1986, Kakaji passed away in Mumbai at the Bhatia Hospital.

He who had carried us to our greatest height, left as he had entered: without recognition. He came from Akshardham, and left Akshardham wherever his steps graced, wherever his eyes passed, and wherever he breathed. In supporting Shastriji Maharaj, he glorified AksharPurushottam; in revealing Yogiji Maharaj, he glorified manifest Divinity; and in the creation of the Gunatit Samaj, he showed the highest state of oneness.

Kakaji's body was placed on the simple sofa on which he had many times talked about the glory of his lineage. Devotees poured into Tardev, along with Papaji, Hariprasad Swamiji, Kantikaka, Mahendra Bapu, Bharatbhai, Vashibhai, Nirmal Swamiji, Kothari Swamiji, Prem Swamiji, Das Swamiji, Gnyaansvaroop Swamiji, saints and devotees. After *aarti* was offered, Kakaji's body was carried down the 84 steps of the Tardev temple. The ambulance van went to Sokhada, Sankarda, Gunatit Jyot, and finally to Brahmjyoti. There, Jashbhai Saheb, Mukundjivan Swamiji, Haribhai Saheb, Ashwinbhai, Shantibhai, Sonaba, Jyotiben, Taraben, and devotees prepared the memorial shrine. Garlands were offered, the carriage was lifted, and the pyre was lit as devotees shouted, "*He Kakaji Amar Raho* – Kakaji, live forever!" In the hearts of devotees, Kakaji in fact became eternal and his presence became even stronger.

On November 27, 1986 Kantikaka also passed away, and his memorial shrine was created in Powai.



Divine Touch

Devotees' experiences
with Kakaji



SAINTS

YOGI BAPA'S HEART

Hariprasad Swamiji, Sokhada

In Mahendra Bapu's personal diary, Hariprasad Swamiji noted three events between Yogi Bapa and Kakaji that have greatly inspired him. The events are also described in the book 'Sahradayi,' which Swamiji published during Kakaji's 60th Birthday describing divine qualities that were shown through Kakaji's life.

1. Before the existing temple in Dadar was constructed, saints lived on the third floor, referred to as 'Aksharbhuvan.' A man named Mr. Solder rented the second floor. Yogi Bapa asked Kakaji to show Mr. Solder other places so that our group could have all three floors. (There was a police office on the first floor that Nandaji was going to help get vacated.) Kakaji worked very hard to follow Yogi Bapa's command - he showed Mr. Solder about sixty places, but every time Mr. Solder refused. Finally, when Mr. Solder agreed, another issue came up: the devotee accompanying Kakaji said, "When you move, leave the water heater and ceiling-fan here." Because of this, Mr. Solder again questioned if he should move – yet the devotee remained adamant. Throughout the ordeal, Kakaji did not lose patience with Mr. Solder or the other devotee. At the time, Kantikaka ran a transportation company - he thus suggested that we would move everything free of charge if Mr. Solder left the water heater and ceiling-fan at the apartment. Kakaji thus kept oneness with everyone while fulfilling Yogi Bapa's orders.

Some time later Nandaji visited Aksharbhuvan to meet Yogi Bapa and Kakaji. Kantikaka, Chaganbhai, and devotees were also present. In his speech, Yogi Bapa expressed, "Chaganbhai worked very hard to vacate Mr. Solder's apartment! Thanks to him, the saints will benefit." In this way, Yogi Bapa gave all the credit to Chaganbhai. All the while, Kakaji remained in equanimity. He truly believed that Yogi Bapa in fact did everything. When Yogi Bapa suddenly garlanded Kakaji, Nandaji asked, "Then why did you praise Chaganbhai so much?" Yogi Bapa re-

plied, "The credit always goes to the president, but Dadubhai's service is egoless and only to please me." (Chaganbhai was the president of the Mumbai branch.)

2. Kakaji, Madhavcharan Swami, and I were traveling from Atladra to Bochasan with Yogi Bapa in Jeevabhai's car. Yogi Bapa asked to stop the car at a sacred place where Bhagatji Maharaj stayed for one night. (Bhagatji Maharaj was greatly insulted and excommunicated for talking about the glory of Gunatitanand Swami. In working for Yogi Bapa's mission and flourishing Yogi Bapa's true glory, Kakaji's life draws a divine parallel to Bhagatji Maharaj's life.) During this time, Kakaji faced much opposition, and there were plots to excommunicate him from the group. Yogi Bapa named those very same people and asked Kakaji to bow down to them, offer them garlands, and ask for forgiveness. Kakaji naturally replied, "Bapa, I will do whatever you say!" Hearing this, Yogi Bapa embraced Kakaji and gave him a sanctified rosary that belonged to Gopalanand Swami. Hariprasad Swamiji expresses, "Kakaji was the most apt to carry out Yogi Bapa's work. Kakaji bowed down to the people that wanted to excommunicate him, with the feelings of his guru Yogi Bapa. Yogi Bapa was won over by Kakaji's vision of divinity - that day, all could witness the highest state of Bhagatji Maharaj!"

Similarly, I once witnessed Kakaji intensely cry in front of Yogi Bapa. Six months after the incident, I asked Kakaji what was the significance of that display? Yogi Bapa had openly sided with Kakaji against people that were opposing him. Kakaji was pained to see his guru having to combat all the negativity. And so, Kakaji prayed intensely that he would happily bear all the insults of the world as long as Yogi Bapa was never marred.

3. The third event is given in the Introduction section, titled 'Master of Divinity.'

Swamiji writes to Babu: "Every day I remember these three incidences. You too should contemplate over them. By Kakaji's grace, our actions and emotions will be purified, and we will start living with a divine-consciousness. May we totally surrender to him, see him in all, and live per his guidance. He is our support, shelter, and strength.

Kakaji had the highest relationship with Yogi Bapa - similarly, remembrance of these three incidences will strengthen our divine relationship with master Kakaji."

HELPED ME SUCCEED

Aksharvihari Swamiji, Sankarda

In 1952, I was studying in Mombasa, Africa. Per Papaji's request, after my Cambridge exams, I came to Mumbai where I had the opportunity to serve Yogi Bapa. In 1953, Yogi Bapa and devotees including Papaji, Sonaba, Kantikaka, Taraben, and Jyotiben went on a special pilgrimage by train. At the time, I stayed with Kakaji at Tardev. I was very fond of driving, and thus Kakaji asked me if I wanted to drive to Nasik, where the train was going to take a stop, and see Yogi Bapa. I was very pleased, and so picked up a jeep from the Liberty Motors garage where cars were parked. Accompanied by Chaganbhai's son, Kiritbhai, we went on our way. I had no knowledge of car repairs or maintenance, but was happy for the chance to drive and meet Yogi Bapa. Along the way, the car kept over-heating and so we had to stop every few miles to let the engine cool down. Soon the tire tube started popping out. We did not even have a repair kit or spare tire. But we slowly proceeded, thinking, "If we get stranded, neither of us even knows directions very well!" We started from Mumbai at 6 AM in the morning, and safely reached Nasik by the evening. We met Yogi Bapa and received his blessings us. Thus, Kakaji's grace protected us, and he simultaneously divinized our likings.

TO MAKE A WISH IS A SIN

Aksharvihari Swamiji, Sankarda

Once when I went up to the 6D apartment (Tardev) to have lunch, I overheard Kakaji speaking, "It is a great sin to make a wish (*sankalp*)."

I was confused by the statement, but it stuck in my mind. I had just come from Africa, and was still quite new to the divine fellowship. But I had enthusiasm to follow Kakaji's words. After a few days, I had the opportunity to travel with Yogi Bapa and serve him. Every pilgrimage place we went to, Yogi Bapa would give water in everyone's hand

and say, "Come on, let us make a wish." (In Hindu ritual, a devotee makes a holy wish with drops of water in his hand, signifying that he is taking a vow in the witness of the *panchbhut* or all five elements, earth, water, light, air, and space.) I however, would take the water, remember, "To make a wish is a great sin" and sprinkle the water over my head. I soon learned that the "wish" Kakaji was talking about was a mundane desire, while Bapa asked us to make a divine "wish." Thus, I did not have deep knowledge but Yogi Bapa and Kakaji accepted my innocence and with their love, helped me progress.

IMPORTANCE OF THE SMALLEST DIRECTIVE

Aksharvihari Swamiji, Sankarda

After initiation, I stayed at the Dadar temple in Aksharbhuvan. I was interested in photography, and thus worked to arrange taking a color photo of Yogi Bapa. I was greatly pleased that the photo came out very well. Yogi Bapa had a beautiful smile and was adorned with a nice garland. As the first color photo of Yogi Bapa, the image came out very radiant. Everyone wanted a copy, and so, I asked the senior devotees to make many more copies. When Kakaji visited Dadar, he was extremely pleased that I took the photo. He asked, "How much are they charging you per copy?" I replied, "20 rupees, but at a wholesale price we can get it down to 17 rupees." Kakaji remarked, "For this divine cause, they should be able to offer it at half the price – tell them to charge 10 rupees." At first I thought, "It is just not possible. It's hard to get a discount, especially from a company like Kodak. How would they understand the purpose for which we want so many copies?" But I inquired, just to follow Kakaji's command. To my surprise, the manager immediately agreed at the 10 rupee rate. Thus, if we have faith in Kakaji's words, his smallest directive comes true.

HAVE FAITH AND BE HAPPY

Aksharvihari Swamiji, Sankarda

Once while at the Dadar temple, I became so confused that I felt my mind had stopped working. In the evening, I just sat down, closed my eyes, and chanted with a rosary in my hand. Kakaji entered the room

I was in, and just stood in front of me without saying anything. After five minutes, I opened my eyes and saw Kakaji. I only said, "Chanting the rosary is my refuge." Kakaji right away understood my state, and thus asked, "Will you do one thing? Meditate for a half-hour." I replied, "I cannot meditate right now." Kakaji said, "Fine, then do so for 15 minutes." I again replied, "I cannot meditate for even 5 minutes right now!" Kakaji had many 'formulas' – he suggested several other things I could do. But I insisted that I would not be able to do any of them at the moment. Finally he said, "Then for 10 minutes, without even considering the content, write [a few verses from] Swami Ni Vato." I agreed, and Kakaji left for the train station to go to Gondal and meet Yogi Bapa. At the station, Kakaji wrote on the back cover of a blank envelope, "I asked you to write Swami Ni Vato for 10 minutes. But now I suggest you meet Mahant Swamiji and do precisely what he says." He gave the note to a devotee and asked him to give it to me at the Dadar temple.

Upon receiving his message, I approached Mahant Swamiji and told him frankly, "Kakaji told me to write Swami Ni Vato for 10 minutes, but then he told me to do what you say. But please, do not give me anything too difficult right now." Mahant Swamiji suggested, "We get Yogi Bapa's letters here, and you have the gift of deciphering his writing without any difficulty. Thus, instead of copying Swami Ni Vato, copy the letters." I immediately agreed, and continued with this work for the next 10 days. In that short time, I became joyous and peaceful. Following the instructions of divine saints leads to divine happiness.

UNFORGETTABLE SACRIFICE

Mukundjivan Swamiji, Delhi

I saw my beloved spiritual masters Yogi Bapa and Kakaji for the first time in 1954 at Sunderbai Hall in Mumbai. It was an unforgettable and blessed day. With the first meeting I was overcome by Kakaji's power. I was captivated, and felt that both Yogi Bapa and his secretary were supreme.

Kakaji's divine personality attracted me like a powerful magnet attracts iron. And if Kakaji had not accepted me, I would not have been able to understand Yogi Bapa's magnanimity; more so, I could not

have flourished in the divine fellowship. With each encounter, Kakaji's overpowering love brought me closer to him. Every day and night I thought of going to Tardev. I became obsessed - morning, evening, and any free time - I thought about Tardev.

It was all due to Kakaji's divine love. He cherished me so much that he overlooked my handicaps and gave me inspiration and led me towards God.

Frankly, we are enlightened because of the nourishment from these blessed saints. It is our great fortune that Shastriji Maharaj and Yogi Bapa descended on this earth and brought with them their divine son, Kakaji. In his distinguished, divine career, he constantly faced unpleasant situations, but the smile on his face never left.

He had a noble personality. I remember him with his glasses and a handkerchief in his hand, gently chanting and absorbed in the pleasant memories of his masters, Shastriji Maharaj and Yogi Bapa. To serve their devotees was his only yearning. He neither desired anything nor had any expectations. Fame and achievements did not matter to him. He did not look for appreciation, and ridicule did not bother him. He unconditionally loved all - always showering immense affection on everyone who came in his contact, whether rich or poor, young or old. Kakaji made everyone feel that they were special to him. Only someone who does not treasure anything but God can give us this unique feeling- so much such that we thirst to see his ever-presence.

He was so great that he never made those in his company feel inferior to him. He acted in a manner such that no one could fathom the depth of his wisdom. In favorable circumstances, anyone can uphold the dignity of truth, non-violence, celibacy, ethics, justice, etc. But Kakaji suffered insults without any fault. He was treated with indifference and contempt, but he remained filled with happiness. He gave importance to all, love to those that showed jealousy, and made himself small to give greatness to others. In fact, his life was a divine mission of the greatest height of saintliness.

When I look back at Kakaji's life, and think about his continual effort to help those in his contact, I am reminded of a story.

Socrates was condemned to death by the parliament of Athens. The court advised him, "We are prepared to release you if you stop arousing the youth of this country by your talks."

Without hesitation, Socrates replied, "Citizens of Athens, I consider you as my own. So I would like to tell you, I certainly respect you, but the command of God is greater than the acceptance of your expectations. Thus as long as there is breath in my life, I will keep telling you that these insignificant things which you consider as the most valuable - money, fame, and respect - are worthless. I will never cease to tell you about the truth, even though it means I have to die a thousand times." How great was his faith in truth, and how noble was his love for his countrymen.

Kakaji's philosophy on how to conduct life is very similar to that of Socrates. He continually shed light on the eternal truth. He toiled hard to deliver this message to make us totally happy. He had great faith in manifest divinity. His love for all of us was refreshing. His intense life ignited the flame of awareness in our lives, and showed us the supreme truth.

From the beginning, he taught us the habit of daily remembering manifest divinity, offering repentance prayer at night, and remaining in prayer from within. He exemplified Yogi Bapa's slogan of spiritual harmony, heartfelt oneness, and unity. He said by becoming best friends with two fellow devotees, one can purge his crude nature. He gave us the Four-Point Program (to read from a holy book, to do a good deed, to offer prayer in morning, and to do repentance prayer at night). We were taught to keep a vision of non-difference; to not rely on one's own limited strength, but rely on the master; and to live in universal brotherhood.

Yogi Bapa was an exceptionally powerful individual. Though he is not physically present, by working together, we can positively experience that Yogi Bapa is with us. Kakaji told us this message again and again.

But we could not understand Kakaji's subtle language. At times we were unresponsive, and did not pay much attention to his talks. He asked us many times, "Did you see the room in Ambli Pol, Ahmedabad, where our two supremely divine masters, Shastriji Maharaj and Yogiji

Maharaj, resided? They had the capacity to travel in a golden chariot, yet they stayed in a small room." Kakaji was trying to convey that we do not need a materially wealthy fellowship. Crowds of millions, large processions, and stunning temples should not influence or make an impression on saints. Real saintliness lies in remaining immersed in God, and to make other devotees also remain absorbed in God. Even today, Kakaji's apartment in Tardev bears testimony to his words - the person who founded all of our centers - the king of kings - lived in an ordinary room.

In reality, Kakaji's subtle language can only be understood if we transcend the mind, intellect, senses, and our preconceived notions. If we do not listen to him with alertness or do not deeply contemplate over his talks, his efforts to give us a new direction will go in vain. The following incident is an expansion of this thought.

I had to give a book to Mr. R. K. Patel in Delhi. I sent the book with Kakaji's assistant with the instructions to keep it on the table so that Kakaji could write his blessings. At night, when Kakaji picked up the book, he found that the binding was up side down. When I went to him at night, he told me, "The writer printed the book about a great saint, and the binding is upside down." Kakaji kept harping on this subject. I felt maybe Kakaji was doing this because I was prejudiced against the writer. The next day, from morning till night, he kept repeating the same thing. In the evening when I went out for a walk with Rajubhai Bhatt, I asked him, "Rajubhai, Why has Kakaji been harping on this subject all day." Rajubhai exclaimed, "Guruji, why are you playing games with me? You understand everything!" I replied frankly, "I really don't understand!" Rajubhai replied, "According to me, Kakaji is trying to explain that if we consider everyone as a representative of God, how can we not like the writer? So maybe, you should have given greater care to the book- at least notice that the binding was backwards yourself. You did not even bother to look at it." From the discussion, I gathered that our minds are so preconditioned that we do not reconcile ourselves with what the great saint really tells us. This restricts our vision. I was prejudiced against the writer, and that is why Kakaji was repeating these things. We are always surrounded by our beliefs and therefore accept suggestions according to

our preconceived notions. He loved us so much that by any means, Kakaji would convey his message to us so that we do not commit mistakes.

Lord Swaminarayan gave us an invaluable opportunity to be with Kakaji. He considered every action of those in the association as divine - he believed, without accepting this, one will never be able to attain liberation. Whoever honored this great salesperson of Akshardham's message reaped divine riches far beyond their imagination. He believed in universal brotherhood (*sarvadeshiyata*). This is visible in the following incident.

Once when I lived in Sankarda, Kakaji came to visit me. I sat with him for a long time while he dictated the matter for an English brochure. He wanted to take the brochures with him on his next trip abroad. So he insisted that I finish the publication right away and give it for printing. He told me that he would pick up the brochures before his next trip. After Kakaji left, I made the manuscript ready within five days. During this period, Kakaji repeatedly asked me on the phone whether I gave the brochure in for printing. So I went to Vidyanagar to meet Vithaldas for the print job. After reaching there, Papaji asked me, "What brings you here?" I gave the manuscript to Papaji and informed him about the work. Papaji saw the manuscript and said, "This is in English. I do not think we need to print English books right now. Well, go ahead and give the draft to someone. And instead of having it printed, just make photocopies." I was aware that Kakaji gave me instructions to print the brochures before his next visit. But then I immediately remembered the more important thing Kakaji said: to see him in Papaji. And this was an opportunity to see Kakaji in Papaji. Thinking thus, I did not pursue the matter of printing, and did not send a message to Kakaji either.

While on his earlier visit he insisted on having it printed, I was surprised that on Kakaji's next trip to Sankarda, he never even asked me about the brochure! So when I brought up the subject of printing the brochures, he said, "Yes, what happened?" I then gave him all of the details. Hearing this, he showed happiness, came closer to me, and patted me on the back. He said, "Good job. That is precisely what you should have done. I am not concerned whether it is printed or not, but am really happy that you saw me in Papaji. We should not only

maintain faith in this unity, but work towards accelerating it. If we do not measure up to this standard, we will be defeated. The day when just five devotees are inclined towards this spiritual understanding, I will celebrate it as my most glorious day."

From his talks, we get a sense of Kakaji's devotion towards spiritual unity. This was his mission. Therefore, he would often say, "I believe in groups, but not in groupism," and thus put greater emphasis on unity and universal brotherhood. He talked of an unlimited fellowship, and so, he himself, became freely available to devotees of all centers. He affirmed that without a united fellowship, one cannot achieve single-minded worship towards God (*ekaantikbhaav*).

The greatest blessing Kakaji bestowed on Bhai Swami and me was asking us to live in Delhi. Today, everyone may say that we took great pains, but in reality, we did nothing. We never did any penance, and yet he kept us on a path of flowers. To establish our center in Delhi, Kakaji struggled and met hardships. When I accepted his proposal to live in Delhi, he gave me blessings and said, "Since you have put faith in a saint like me, all of your wishes will be fulfilled." He humbled himself so that we may develop and progress - where can we find such a divine person like Kakaji?

Now that we know how much he persevered, and if we really love him heartily, we must accept his blessings, words, slogans, and advice as coming from divinity, and never become indifferent to his teachings. If we fail to do this, it will be our spiritual death.

His benign, beneficial, and truthful discourses will always remain immortal. The more faith we have in his teachings, the more strength we can draw from him. And to that extent, our faults and crude nature will disappear on their own - they will have no chance to remain. For even a moment, we should never remain restless or be depressed. We should be open to continuously receive his strength, inspiration, and deep understanding. Then our life will be smooth-sailing. As Kakaji said, "Then we will commit no mistakes." We will be inspired by divinity - by Kakaji. We have a golden opportunity right now. If we just pause and ponder how grand his life was and the way he carried himself; and for whom? Let us follow his ideals and in the presence of divine saints, let us pledge to leave our intellectual considerations. Let us get together, help one another - open the floodgates of spiritual in-

timacy and make his efforts come true. This will be a true celebration. Intensely, I pray to Lord Swaminarayan, Gunatitanand Swami, and all divine saints to give us understanding and strength.

YOGI BAPA IS STILL WITH US

Mukundjivan Swamiji, Delhi

I was in the old Sokhada temple when Yogi Bapa passed away. I was lost in thought, "What will happen to us now? Who will keep us happy? Who will enlighten us and show the true path?" When Kakaji came to the Sokhada temple, he usually went straight to the temple room. But this time, he went straight to his quarters where I was sitting. He immediately said, "Whatever happiness Yogi Bapa has given to you, we will give you the same happiness! Don't think Yogi Bapa has passed away. He is always with us." All of my worries ended and I felt peace and bliss from within.

UNDERSTANDING THE COMMAND

Purushottamcharan Swamiji (Kothari Swamiji), Sokhada

Yogi Bapa planned a special trip by train to Saurashtra (region in western Gujarat) and Rajasthan (state north-east of Gujarat). Yogi Bapa often organized such trips so all devotees could visit the various pilgrimage centers. Kakaji also came on the trip, and I was part of the youth volunteer group. During the journey, every devotee got a chance to see and listen to Yogi Bapa. After visiting Saurashtra, we proceeded towards Rajasthan. After traveling the entire night, we arrived at a station in the morning. We had rented out the entire train, and so there was no time limit at the halt. A senior devotee announced, "Everyone should remain at the station to bathe, use restrooms, etc. We have too large of a group – so only elder devotees will be allowed to go into town." On the way out, Kakaji told me to join him to help serve the senior devotees. I, however, hesitated because I wanted to rigidly follow the instructions given. Thus Kakaji went alone. When Kakaji returned, he noticed that I was confused. So he laughingly said, "Don't think the dawn breaks only when the rooster crows." I right away realized Kakaji's message and felt sorry

for not having obeyed him. For the first time, I understood that our *saatvik* (the quality of worldly goodness which is still subject to one's own beliefs) thoughts come in the way of experiencing total divinity. At the time, I did not realize that in front of the master's command, everything else is insignificant.

DISCIPLE'S CODE OF CONDUCT

Purushottamcharan Swamiji (Kothari Swamiji), Sokhada

Yogi Bapa planned a pilgrimage to five centers in Saurashtra by bus. Many devotees wanted to attend, and so, some of the elder devotees suggested that it would be too difficult to take buses. Kakaji, nevertheless, seized the opportunity to support Yogi Bapa's wish. He made complete arrangements for the buses. He planned that a senior devotee be in every bus to ensure everyone was seated on time, etc. In this way all the buses started on the pilgrimage tour. When we stopped at Mangrol, I offered Kakaji some fresh coconut water and said, "Kakaji, you made such great arrangements that everyone that went against Yogi Bapa's idea will have to stay quiet." Kakaji angrily replied, "How dare you say this. Everything occurs due to Yogi Bapa's blessings and according to his plan alone." Kakaji could not stand hearing the slightest negativity about any devotee. "Juniors should respect elders, and only look after their own progress. They should only keep appreciating the good of others." Until his last breath, Kakaji gave us liberating knowledge.

CONSTANT SERVITUDE

Purushottamcharan Swamiji (Kothari Swamiji), Sokhada

Everyone that took vows to become saints once traveled with Yogi Bapa. As the day of initiation and renouncement from worldly life approached closer, Yogi Bapa one-by-one gave permission to the youth aspirants to meet their family members for the last time. When I approached Yogi Bapa to seek his permission, he said, "Leave when Dadubhai tells you to." So when Kakaji visited the temple I asked, "When should I go home?" He replied, "Do so whenever Yogi Bapa says so. He is our sun, and we are all like stars." But when I returned

to Yogi Bapa, he would repeat, "Visit your home when Dadubhai tells you to." I went back and forth between Yogi Bapa and Kakaji several times, getting the same response.

Finally, once at midnight in Ahmedabad, Yogi Bapa asked me, "Don't you want to go home?" I replied, "It is only possible if I talk to you and Dadubhai together." At that time of night, Yogi Bapa asked Kakaji to come to the temple and said, "When should he go home?" Kakaji replied, "You are the master - he will go home whenever you want." The next day Yogi Bapa finally gave me permission to go home.

The master and perfect disciple enacted this drama for me. Although Yogi Bapa asked Kakaji to grant my leave, Kakaji did not act independently. What an incomparable humble service and oneness!

UNDERSTANDING RESPONSIBILITIES

Purushottamcharan Swamiji (Kothari Swamiji), Sokhada

On January 21, 1961, the auspicious day of Vasant Panchmi (the Indian date of Maha sud 5, signifying the coming of springtime, the day is the birthday of Shastriji Maharaj in 1865, and the day Lord Swaminarayan wrote the Shikshapatri in 1826), Yogi Bapa initiated ten devotees into sainthood. Prior to the initiation, Aksharvihari Swamiji, Gnanswaroop Swamiji, and I, along with other saints, took the opportunity to listen to Kakaji's discourses.

On the evening of January 19, I met Kakaji in his room where he gave me my final instructions of spiritual guidance. He explained, "Now that you will become a saint, remember to always work [while] keeping Mahant Swamiji as your guide. Always remain obedient to him. Conduct yourself in a manner that would please him. Live your life exactly according to his wishes. Live a life such that you do not embarrass him. If you please him, you will have the honor to be blessed by Yogi Bapa, and Yogi Bapa will forever remain pleased with you." Further he said, "Do not ever remain idle."

He gave me these two blessings. From the beginning, I had tremendous attachment with Kakaji. On that day, he gave me a clear perception of my responsibilities. After we were separated from Mahant Swamiji, Kakaji told me to see Hariprasad Swamiji in the same divine way.

YOU ARE MY RESPONSIBILITY

Purushottamcharan Swamiji (Kothari Swamiji), Sokhada

All of us saints studied Sanskrit while staying at the Akshar Mandir in Dadar. Kakaji used to visit and talk to us about Yogi Bapa's glory. Afterwards, Kakaji would individually meet all those who had problems. Before his visit, all the saints that wanted to talk with Kakaji would give me their names. I would make the time arrangements for them to sit and talk to Kakaji in private. One-by-one the saints met with Kakaji, while he lovingly and patiently listened to them. He solved all their confusions and made them worry-free and joyous. After one meeting, I brought some fruits to Kakaji in a small plate. He asked me, "Are there any saints left?" I replied, "Yes, me." But before I could start talking about my personal issues, Kakaji gave me some sanctified fruits saying, "Come on, eat this." He then got up and told me to come upstairs in the room where there was an idol of Yogi Bapa. Pointing his finger at the image, Kakaji said, "From today, I take your responsibility." He went out of the room, put on his shoes, and again while leaving repeated, "From today, I take your responsibility." Since that day I experienced my spiritual progress become simple. Whenever there is a problem, I think, "Who has taken my responsibility?" That thought alone brings me to a happy, worry-free, and divine state.

YOGI BAPA'S BELOVED KNIGHT

Purushottamcharan Swamiji (Kothari Swamiji), Sokhada

The following incident occurred in Rajpur where a scriptural reading was arranged. Yogi Bapa had a seat on stage along with four dignitaries. Since the previous day, Yogi Bapa kept saying, "We will really enjoy when Dadubhai comes." Kakaji had gone to Bhaktipriya Swamiji's house to put his bags. (At the time, Bhaktipriya Swamiji was

a *kothaari* or temple administrator and had not yet taken initiation into sainthood.) Yogi Bapa was about to take a bath when a devotee informed him that Kakaji just arrived. Yogi Bapa, thus, waited until he got to see Kakaji. Many suggested Yogi Bapa to go ahead and take a bath, but he did not budge. When Kakaji arrived, Yogi Bapa wholly embraced him.

In the morning session, everyone was seated at their respective places. Yogi Bapa said, "Dadubhai, please say something." When Kakaji went to Yogi Bapa to pay his respects before speaking, Yogi Bapa said, "Guru, talk exactly as it is." In a moment, Kakaji understood what his master wanted. Kakaji talked at great length about Yogi Bapa's unparalleled divine glory. He explained, "There is no one more fortunate than us - just a glimpse of Yogi Bapa pales the splendor and resplendence of millions of suns and moons. Yogi Bapa is our manifest God. There is not the slightest difference between Yogi Bapa and Gunatitanand Swami!" The next day after Kakaji spoke, only Yogi Bapa's seat remained on the stage - the other dignitaries sat on a cloth on the ground! Kakaji's contribution was to make the whole world know Yogi Bapa's unique and unparalleled identity.

GOD IS MY ONLY REFUGE

Purushottamcharan Swamiji (Kothari Swamiji), Sokhada

The Sankarda temple was built during very harsh times. There was great opposition, but devotees gave whatever little they could. Devotees from Mumbai, etc. gave us money so that a place for the saints that had been excommunicated could be built. When Kakaji came, the entire atmosphere changed and everyone became joyous in his service. I lightly said, "Kakaji, many devotees don't have children - give them children, and we will get more donation that will help us." Looking at me as if he was disappointed in my words, he said, "Purushottamdas, did you say that?" Everyone became quiet for several minutes. And Kakaji repeated, "Purushottamdas, did you say that?" I regretted my mistake and understood that though Kakaji was all powerful, his only refuge was God. He lived solely on the strength

of God. Even during the most unfavorable times, he maintained happiness, deriving strength only from God, by praying and chanting. He expected all of us to live such a life as well.

YOU ARE ALSO A SUN

Purushottamcharan Swamiji (Kothari Swamiji), Sokhada

While Gunatitanand Swami's bicentenary was being celebrated in Haridham, one early morning, Kakaji came down the stairs after bowing down to the image of God. With the bright sun above us, Mukundjivan Swamiji and I approached Kakaji. Kakaji stood for some time and then raised his hand and pointed to the sun. He then said, "That is the sun in the sky - I am also the sun." Kakaji then put his hands on my chest and said, "You are also the sun. And from this day onwards, we both are one." Then he put one hand on Mukundjivan Swamiji's chest and pointing at me, he said, "This is the sun - I am the sun - and you are also the sun. From today onwards, we are all one."

I could only imagine Kakaji's grand vision of Yogi Bapa. He manifested Yogi Bapa within his heart, radiated his light upon all of us, and envisioned us with that same divinity.

UNIQUE UNIVERSAL DIVINE VISION

Purushottamcharan Swamiji (Kothari Swamiji), Sokhada

At the time, all of us saints stayed at the old Sokhada temple. We always gave a card to whichever saint's birthday was being celebrated. This incident took place when it was Madhavjivan Swamiji's birthday. He was interested in audio-recording equipment, and took care of that department. So the saints made a card in the shape of a record. The card included photos of Akshar-Purushottam Maharaj, Shastriji Maharaj, Yogiji Maharaj, Kakaji, and Swamiji. There was no room left on the card to place a photo of Papaji, and so it was left out. When we showed the card to Kakaji, he showed unhappiness. He remarked, "You all do not have a universal divine vision. Why didn't you put a photo of Papaji?" The saints answered, "There wasn't room on the card." Then Kakaji replied, "Then you should have made the

other photos smaller." In this way, Kakaji showed his disfavor towards our action. Kakaji held a unique vision of seeing oneness in all divine saints.

REMEMBERING THE PAST

Yagnavallabhdas Swamiji (Das Swamiji), Sokhada

It was around 1954. I was young, and our family lived at Kohlapur. Kakaji and Kantikaka visited us because they knew Gordhankaka. Upon first sight, I was won over by his personality. My heart was naturally attracted to him. I still remember when Mukundbhai (now known as Mahapurush Swamiji) and I were given the opportunity to sit with him during dinner. Giving us sweet pudding, Kakaji said, "You are from Lord Swaminarayan's time. You will serve God well. You are morally and intellectually enlightened." Thus, from our youth, Kakaji envisioned our spiritual progress.

Two to three years later when we visited Mumbai, we were excited to meet Dadubhai again. When we met Yogi Bapa for the very first time, he said exactly what Kakaji said, "You are from Lord Swaminarayan's time. You will serve God well. Will you become a saint? Say, yes!"

During our youth, we had the great opportunity to be with Yogi Bapa and saints during vacation time. Mahant Swamiji told me, "If you want to make good use of your time with Yogi Bapa, then associate with Madhav Swamiji from the group of saints, Prabhudasbhai from the youth, and Dadubhai from the elders."

My relationship with Kakaji strengthened as I talked to him about my problems. When it was decided for me to become a saint, many relatives opposed the idea. But knowing Yogi Bapa's desire, Kakaji took the responsibility of convincing everyone that the path of sainthood was right for me. Thus, from the beginning, I experienced the unique oneness and love between Yogi Bapa and Kakaji.

LION-LIKE DEVOTION

Yagnavallabhdas Swamiji (Das Swamiji), Sokhada

For the second commemoration of Gunatitanand Swami's bicentenary celebrations I came to Tardev, Mumbai. Before leaving for Haridham, when I bowed down to Kakaji, he said, "How many lion-like or brave devotees have accepted Hariprasad Swamiji, not as a human, but as totally divine? Acceptance of that is truly celebrating Gunatitanand Swami's bicentenary. I will pray for all of you. You all also pray."

Kakaji never wanted any disciples to join him. He always encouraged them to establish a rapport with other divine saints. He was only interested in helping everyone progress spiritually - he solved all of their problems and prayed for them. This was his unique characteristic.

TRANSCENDING TASTE

Yogi Swamiji, Sokhada

I was very young when I took initiation into sainthood. When all of us young saints were seated at Tardev in front of Kakaji, he asked each of us in order, "What would you like to eat?" Everyone gave their choice. When it was my turn, I said, "I like sweet balls (*gulaab jaambu*) a lot." Thereafter, whenever I came to Tardev, Kakaji always offered me sweet balls. Once he made me eat about 75 sweet balls! Even if I could not eat that much, he kept insisting, "Eat one more." The next day for dinner, Kakaji again had sweet balls. He shouted, "Yogi - sweet balls are here!" I was in the last room, but ran to Kakaji hearing all the commotion. When I saw the sweet balls in Kakaji's dish, I again felt like eating them. Kakaji started eating the sweet balls while I reverentially looked on. He then gave me one sweet ball from his plate and said, "From now on you will not eat sweet balls."

Some time later in the afternoon, Kakaji was eating a plate of spicy fried vegetables (*bhajia*). I sat next to him. He took one hot fried vegetable and gave it to me saying, "Take this sweet ball." I took it, but did not eat it. Then he gave me a second one saying, "Come on, eat it. This is the second sweet ball. I am blessing you that from today,

you will gain control over your appetite for taste." Accepting Kakaji's blessings, I ate the two spicy fried vegetables. And indeed, since that day, I completely lost my appetite for any tasty food. Even if someone right next to me is eating sweet balls, I have no desire of eating them. This is all due to Kakaji's blessings.

I WILL NOT GET ANGRY WITH YOU

Yogi Swamiji, Sokhada

At the insistence of Hariprasad Swamiji, Kothari Swamiji often sent me to Mumbai. Whenever I went to Mumbai, Kakaji would rebuke me, "You do not attend the spiritual meetings, nor offer prayers. And you are not attentive while serving." One day, Kakaji rebuked me five times! Because Kakaji was getting angry at me, after staying in Mumbai for two weeks, I decided to return to Haridham.

I did not tell this to Hariprasad Swamiji. But when I informed Kothari Swamiji, he explained, "Kakaji is getting angry with you because he knows that you are his." That evening, Swamiji called me and also rebuked me, "You do not serve properly when you go to Tardev. You should serve everyone there and make everyone happy." When I told this to Kothari Swamiji he asked me to return to Mumbai. I felt I had problems in both places. At last, with a heavy heart and tears in my eyes, I returned to Mumbai. Before leaving, when I bowed down to Hariprasad Swamiji, he happily embraced me. At Tardev, I loved serving Kakaji, but remained afraid that he would become angry with me. The first night, I could not even sleep. When I saw the light in Kakaji's room on, I went up to his door, but then returned where I was to sleep. Because I made a resolution to serve Kakaji, I got up again, and this time peeked inside. When I saw Kakaji reading a book, he asked me to sit down. For about 15-20 minutes he kept on reading. Once in a while, he would look at me and say, "Yogi, I will not rebuke you from now on." I felt peaceful from inside, and from that day, Kakaji never got angry with me. In that way, I passed Kakaji's and Hariprasad Swamiji's test and they showered great happiness on me.

LIBERATION IN THREE DAYS

Yogi Swamiji, Sokhada

I used to come to Tardev along with Das Swamiji. Kakaji repeatedly told us, "King Parikshit attained liberation in seven days. If you are ready, I can also give you liberation in seven days. But, you are weak and slow. You have no valor. You don't want to do it! If you want to, the path is open." I kept listening to these powerful talks of Kakaji. I felt, "If Kakaji can give the liberated state in 7 days then I want it." So one day, I approached Kakaji and said, "If you will give me the liberated state in 7 days, then I am ready." Kakaji was very happy hearing this. He replied, "Parikshit was liberated in 7 days. But I will liberate you in just 3 days!"

The following day, Kakaji said, "Where will we go? Ajanta-elora, Ganeshpuri, Lonawala, Vihar Lake?" I said, "Wherever you say." Then Kakaji planned with Harshadbhai Bhatt to go to the Vihar Lake. On Friday evening, from the moment we sat in the car, Kakaji started chanting. The next morning, Kakaji tied blindfolds on our eyes and said, "Do not see anything. If you have to eat or go to the washroom, someone will assist you. Only in order to take a shower, you may remove the blindfolds." In this way, for three days we wore blindfolds. Kakaji exclaimed, "Why is your mind repeatedly going elsewhere? Keep holding Yogi Bapa's image!" On the third day, while taking off the blindfolds, Kakaji kept his hands on our eyes. When the blindfolds were removed, Kakaji was the first person we saw.

The seminar ended, and we returned to Tardev. That night, I went to Kakaji and asked, "Why don't I feel a total difference after the three days?" Kakaji replied, "If I showed you the grand merits and strength that are within you now, you would first get rid of your enemies. You have that much power now. I am not showing it to you for your own good." In this way, Kakaji constantly worked for our spiritual progress.

TAKE LITTLE, GIVE MUCH

Yogi Swamiji, Sokhada

Whenever Kakaji came to Haridham, I would be in his service. On each occasion, I brought a new rosary for Kakaji that had specially polished beads and a silky fringe. One day early in the morning, Kakaji went to Vidyannagar, and returned to Haridham in the evening. When he returned, before even having water, he started chanting. At the time, I had not placed a rosary for him. After the chanting ended, he asked for a rosary. And so, I came to give him a new one. He put the rosary in his pocket and said, "Yogi, I want to take 1 or 2 more with me." I said, "Ok, I'll bring them right away." When I headed for Yogi-Ashram (saints' residence at Haridham temple) from Anirdesh (Hariprasad Swamiji and Kakaji's residence at Haridham temple), Kakaji said, "I want to take 3 to 4 rosaries with me. I want to take 4 to 5." When I went to open the door, he said, "I want to take 5 to 6 rosaries." After I opened the door to leave, he shouted, "I want to take 8 to 9 rosaries."

At the Yogi-ashram, when I opened the drawer, I saw there were a total of 13 rosaries. At first I thought, "Kakaji last asked for 9, so I should take that many." But then I thought, "Why don't I take all 13. Look who is asking for them!" With this in mind, I returned to Anirdesh with all of the rosaries. Kakaji was waiting right outside the door. Showing much happiness, he embraced me and gave blessings. With our smallest pure feelings, Kakaji showed much favor, and gave great inspiration.

ABOVE EMPTINESS AND MENTAL SPECULATIONS

Yogi Swamiji, Sokhada

This incident occurred during Gunatitanand Swami's bicentenary celebration. During Kakaji's visit to Haridham, Hariprasad Swamiji asked me to be in Kakaji's service. Kakaji stayed awake late into the night reading scriptures. Then, after drinking milk or tea, he would go to sleep. I was in his service for three days. On the last day, Kakaji woke up at 4 AM, went to the washroom to freshen up, and then sat

down on a chair. I also awoke at the time, and gave water to Kakaji. Kakaji drank the water and looking at me, asked, "Have you gone above the feeling of emptiness and mental speculations?" Hearing this I just stood there with my hands folded. Kakaji repeated the question, "Have you gone above the feeling of emptiness and mental speculations?" I did not understand what Kakaji was trying to say. So I thought, "If Kakaji asks me a third time, I will say, 'If you sleep, yes, it will be purged.'" When Kakaji asked me the same question for the third time, I right away responded, "If you sleep, yes, it will be purged." Hearing this, Kakaji got up from his seat and immediately, went to sleep. And I too went to sleep. But I could not sleep - when Kakaji woke up at 6, I was still awake. Right when I saw Kakaji waking up, I got up to massage his legs. Kakaji immediately asked, "Has your feeling of emptiness and speculations of the mind purged?" I said, "If you have mercy upon me, then it will be purged." Kakaji replied, "Only when a great saint has great mercy upon a soul, will it be purged. Besides that, it can never be purged. Just as you humbly folded your hands at night, if you do the same on every occasion, then it will definitely be purged." What energy Kakaji contained to make all of us true divine, humble saints!

FOR MY SPIRITUAL PROGRESS

Krishnacharan Swamiji (Shastri Swamiji), Sokhada

The following incident happened in 1969. During those days, I stayed at Tardev with Mukundjivan Swamiji. The excommunication events were still fresh in everyone's mind, and so, I was very careful about my behavior. I did not want to misrepresent Kakaji and have others further criticize him as a result of my actions.

One morning during Kakaji's discourses, he said, "Our Shastri Swami is very noble." He repeated this a couple times during his discourse, and so I wondered why he kept saying it. I thought about Kakaji's statement the entire day, but could not find the answer. At night Kakaji asked me, "What would you like to eat tomorrow?" I replied, "I am fasting tomorrow."

The next day a devotee came to see Kakaji. This was the first time he came to Tardev since the excommunication in 1966, and so, he was feeling a little embarrassed. Kakaji told him, "You should come here. Do not feel embarrassed." Kakaji talked to the devotee at length and rid him of his feeling of guilt. Kakaji then asked, "What would you like to eat?" The devotee replied, "I am fasting." Kakaji affectionately replied, "We have snacks that are perfect for fasting!" (Typically such snacks would not be taken on days of fasting.) Kakaji then asked someone to bring snacks and tea. The devotee happily accepted the break-fast and joyously left with Kakaji's blessings. All the while, I wondered, "This devotee has come to Tardev after much deliberation. Then why is Kakaji testing him like this?"

After he went, Kakaji said, "I had great fun. And the devotee ate with pleasure whatever was offered. But in between, Shastri Swami became confused!" I realized that the purpose of fasting is the divine saint's blessings, and more importantly, Kakaji did not care about anything but our progress. By creating such incidents, Kakaji helped me reach greater spiritual heights.

SECRET OF TANTRA

Krishnacharan Swamiji (Shastri Swamiji), Sokhada

In 1978 Kakaji published a book titled, *The Real Essence of Tantra*. When he came to Sokhada he asked me, "Did you read the book?" I replied with folded hands, "I do not know how to read English. But can you please tell me its gist?" Kakaji replied, "I will tell you its essence in just one sentence: If you have a hundred good qualities but do not have a relationship with God, it is equal to zero; and if you have ninety-nine bad qualities, but have a relationship with God, it is a hundred percent! This is the real essence of tantra."

OMNISCIENT KAKAJI

Nishkamjivan Swamiji, Sankarda

In 1956 Kakaji was kind enough to take me with him to Delhi. At the time, I had not yet taken initiation into sainthood. We stayed at Bhanubhai's home. Kakaji also made arrangements for me to tour Delhi and Agra for a couple days while he visited Nandaji's home each day. He once told me and Bhanubhai to also come to Nandaji's bungalow at 5 PM. Because Nandaji was the Home Minister, there was high security at his home. And so, Kakaji had informed the watchman, "Two people will come by rickshaw. One older fellow and one young boy wearing black trousers and a blue checkered shirt."

In the morning, I left with Kakaji wearing brown trousers and a white shirt. In the evening, while traveling with Bhanubhai he suggested, "It is cold. Let us stop to have some coffee." And so we sat and drank coffee. All of a sudden I sneezed so hard that my coffee spilled all over my trousers and shirt. I started cleaning the soiled portion, but Bhanubhai suggested, "We are close to home. Why don't you just change?" Thus, I changed, wearing exactly what Kakaji described to the watchman.

At Nandaji's bungalow, we were asked, "Who are you here to see?" Bhanubhai replied, "We want to see Dadubhai." He replied, "Yes, Dadubhai told me what you would be wearing. Please come in." I was amazed that Kakaji knew everything that was going to happen! I became very happy hearing the guard. In many such incidents Kakaji showed me his magnanimity and divinity.

POWER OF PRAYER

Mahapurush Swamiji, Sankarda

Hemantbhai and Mahendrabhai's beloved mother passed away in 1958. At the time, their father, Rasikbhai Merchant, was a professor at a government college in Visnagar. And so, he left Visnagar and came to Mumbai permanently. He then wrote a letter to the college asking if he could teach at the Mumbai branch. He explained that he needed to stay in Mumbai because his wife passed away, leaving behind two small children. But the person that received Rasikbhai's application

refused the request. He stated that a transfer was only possible after completing three years of work at the college. Rasikbhai mentioned this to Gordhanbhai, who told Kakaji about the matter.

Kakaji said, "Please ask your brother to come to Tardev tomorrow morning. We will offer a special prayer to God during *svaroopयोग* (prayer to God in the presence of the saint one has met)." The next morning, when Rasikbhai came, Kakaji prayed intensely to God and said, "Rasikbhai, God says that your application will be approved in 15 days. Apply to the education board again, and you will receive the transfer to Mumbai." Kakaji ended with an inspiring discourse.

Rasikbhai applied again, and the same person that said a transfer was not possible, miraculously allowed it this time! Exactly as Kakaji had said, within 15 days, Rasikbhai was given the approval. And he did this just because the person was in the association of a devotee!

YOGI BAPA'S HUMBLE DISCIPLE

Mahapurush Swamiji, Sankarda

In 1960 I traveled with Yogi Bapa as his assistant during a special pilgrimage by train. Kakaji was also with us. After visiting many holy places, we arrived at Ratlam, and the following night, we started for Anand. The train that arrived from Ratlam was so crowded that it was impossible to find any space for Yogi Bapa and the saints. Since it was night time, everyone was sleeping, and no one would open the doors. We looked several times from the engine to the last compartment, but could not find any space. Kakaji then spoke to the guard. He explained Yogi Bapa's greatness and brought the guard to him. Afterwards, the guard opened a first class carriage and woke-up some of the passengers. He made sitting room for Yogi Bapa and Balmukund Swamiji, the saint who accompanied him. But because there was no room for luggage, the guard put all the bags in the Attendant carriage. Kakaji stayed in the crammed space all night to look after the belongings. He remained standing all the way to Anand, without any sleep. In this way Kakaji shouldered all of Yogi Bapa's responsibilities. He accepted difficulties with a smile and displayed an incomparable spirit of devotion toward Yogi Bapa.

INNOCENCE IN DEVOTEES

Mahapurush Swamiji, Sankarda

In 1960, a pilgrimage tour by train was set up with Yogi Bapa. A famous singer who memorized many devotional songs relating to Shastriji Maharaj and Yogi Bapa accompanied the group. With his melodious voice he sung throughout the trip and made everyone happy. Accompanying him were also about four paid instrumentalists. He also attended our general meetings where Yogi Bapa encouraged him to sing devotional songs. After visiting Jaipur-Udaipur, we reached Bilada, where Dajibapu's son-in-law resided. Because it was cold outside, Yogi Bapa stayed back at the bungalow and rested while devotees visited the town. While saints were cooking in the kitchen, Kakaji and I wrote a few letters and did some accounting work. The singer-devotee approached me and asked for ticket money for him and his assistants. I told him to ask Yogi Bapa first, but he remained waiting nearby. When our work was done, Kakaji and I got up. As Kakaji reached for his bag, the singer-devotee snatched money from Kakaji's hand and proceeded to his room! I was stunned and angered that he did this, especially to Kakaji! But Kakaji remained composed and quiet. Kakaji did not say anything to the devotee, nor did he complain to Yogi Bapa.

In the same manner, I witnessed a devotee once snatch a pen from Kakaji's shirt pocket. Another devotee snatched the watch right off of Kakaji's wrist. Though they showed no respect, Kakaji tolerated everything, only looking at their slight association with Yogi Bapa. He envisioned everyone with innocence and as an image of his master - and taught us to live in this manner as well.

A SAINT HAS NO STUBBORNNESS

Brahmanand Swami, Sankarda

This is an incident of Kakaji's ultimate saintliness. In February 1986, Kakaji came to Sankarda for the last time. He was sitting in the front room of Prabhu Krupa (saints residence at the Sankarda temple), and saints, youth, and devotees were sitting by him. At the time, a devotee came with tea and put it on a table in front of Kakaji. So Kakaji took the cup and started drinking the tea. But the tea was still hot,

so he put it back saying, "The tea is still hot." The devotee replied, "Give it to me, Kakaji. I'll cool it and bring it back." But before the devotee could take the cup, Kakaji put some cold water from a glass on the table and poured it into the tea. Kakaji then said, "There, the tea is cold now!" Then he said, "A saint should have no stubbornness." Saying this, he started drinking the tea. After drinking the entire cup, he repeated, "There, it's cold now."

This was the last time I saw Kakaji at Sankarda, and he gave me a special memory. Even today, whenever I remember Kakaji, I am able to remember the incident immediately. I think, "He is such a God-realized saint that his entire life gives inspiration to aspirants." In his heart, he only had one wish – that we all gain the highest state of saintliness. I pray that we may live our life imbibing the saintliness you wanted to impart us.

DEDICATED BROTHERS

YOGI BAPA'S FAVORITE SON

Jashbhai Saheb

Kakaji's *saakshaatkaar* (experience of *samaadhi* or divine trance) on February 3, 1952 is an auspicious day for all of us. Much has been written on devoting oneself to manifest divinity or God in the form of the realized saint. But until this time, it was not put into total practice such that there is total liberation. After the *saakshaatkaar*, Kakaji announced to the world that Yogi Bapa is the manifestation of Gunatitanand Swami, God's Eternal Abode!

After Yogi Bapa passed away, Kakaji's *saakshaatkaar* day was celebrated publicly for the first time in Mumbai. I came a week in advance to help with the preparations. Kakaji and I went together to distribute the invitation cards. One devotee (the daughter of Bhatessa Saheb of Africa, who had great regard for Kakaji) asked Kakaji, "What is the invitation for?" Kakaji replied, "We are celebrating the realization day of Kakaji, who is a divine saint." Kakaji said this to all who asked and requested they attend the celebration. Distributing the card for one's own celebration would naturally be embarrassing - but it was a different case with Kakaji. His life of humility and innocence brought a smile on everyone's face. We learned that in fact, as devotees, we should have talked about Kakaji's glory and worked hard for him.

Kakaji left a business that was worth millions and his entire life became absorbed in Yogi Bapa. Yogi Bapa became his life and soul. He spent 18 to 20 hours a day talking about the magnanimity of Yogi Bapa. Yogi Bapa desired to prepare 51 educated youth to become saints – Kakaji took on this task. He established youth activities and inspired youth to come closer to Yogi Bapa. In this effort, Kakaji did whatever was required to make them happy: he gave them gifts, he helped them get admission to college, he arranged tours with Yogi Bapa, etc. Many would say, "You are wasting time behind the youth." But Kakaji remained unperturbed – he believed that serving the youth was a great service. To come to every individual's level and uplift them was a difficult task - but Kakaji's love for Yogi Bapa knew no hurdles.

Kakaji's discourses were full of energy and captivated all youngsters. He spoke to them of Yogi Bapa's glory and how they could wholly dedicate to Yogi Bapa. Listening to Kakaji was a blessed experience. Thus whenever Kakaji talked, the hall would be packed to its capacity. When 51 young saints were initiated in 1961, Kakaji's biggest task was accomplished, and Yogi Bapa was immensely pleased.

Kakaji guided us and directed us on the path of spirituality as well. The construction work of the Akshar-Purushottam Hostel was entrusted to Kakaji by Yogi Bapa. During this period, Kakaji regularly visited us in the hostel and explained passages from the Vachanamrut and Swami Ni Vato. Because of Kakaji's efforts and blessings, many decided to dedicate their lives to Yogi Bapa - Ashwinbhai, Shantibhai, Dr. Sanandbhai, Ratibhai, V.S. Patel, etc. We have no words to express our admiration and love for Kakaji - his untiring spirit inspired and brought out the very best in us.

Kakaji instructed us, "Live together in harmony. Unity is the highest state. If you are united, your crude nature will be purified and you will enjoy true bliss." Today, we are all united by Yogi Bapa and Kakaji's great affection. At the same time, Sonaba showered continuous affection, and Papaji imparted glory. Thus the foundation was formed - Kakaji, Papaji, and Ba were the force behind our unity, and our singular purpose was to make Yogi Bapa happy.

While remaining at the highest elevated state, Kakaji completed all the work that Yogi Bapa had undertaken. I still remember once in the hostel, a devotee shouted ill words against Kakaji for almost one hour! He expressed that Kakaji should not support the establishment for dedicated sisters. Unable to tolerate the abuse to Kakaji, many saints even went away. But Kakaji was unmoved. Beyond that, many times, Kakaji even prostrated on the ground in front of the same people that insulted him! Without an iota of ego, attachment, or expectations, Kakaji's only goal was to follow Yogi Bapa's command.

It took one year to build the hostel. Throughout this period, we had the opportunity to be in Kakaji's company and service. When the trustees decided not to help us financially, Kakaji asked Shantibhai to write letters, and we went from village to village to collect funds. We only received small donations - but with Kakaji's grace, the hostel

was built and we were able to carry out Yogi Bapa's wish. The Akshar-Purushottam Hostel was ultimately inaugurated by Yogi Bapa on June 20, 1965.

I was also witness to the creation of the Gunatit Jyot (an establishment where women can live a dedicated life of sainthood). In the face of tremendous opposition, it was an impossible task. Trustees (temple administrators) did not want the Gunatit Jyot to be formed. But by Kakaji's hard work, on June 21, 1965, the foundation ceremony was conducted by Yogi Bapa. A normal person would become frustrated and depressed with such opposition and open hostility. Kakaji was defamed and treated with indifference - but he remained untroubled and kept a constant vision of divinity in everyone.

Until his last breath, Kakaji served Yogi Bapa keeping a divine state of equanimity - that is why he could say, "Today is Kakaji's *saakshaat-kaar* day - please join us!" For Kakaji was Yogi Bapa's favorite son!

KAKAJI'S EVERY WORD

Haribhai Saheb, Manavadar

In 1954, under Yogi Bapa's direction, Kakaji started the first youth group in the town of Manavadar. Manavadar is close to Junagadh where Gunatitanand Swami stayed for over 40 years. Kakaji prepared me to lead the group's spiritual activities. Kakaji's discourses trained us to be dedicated volunteers in service of Yogi Bapa. He gave us so much love and fulfilled our wishes to make the entire town vibrate with Yogi Bapa's glory. The town was thus known as Kakaji's *Gokul-gaam*. (Lord Krishna spent His childhood in the town of Gokul, mixing with all the cowboys. Similarly, Kakaji spent much time with all the devotees in Manavadar, such that almost every family allowed a son or daughter to become a saint in the divine fellowship.)

That year was the first time Yogi Bapa came to Manavadar. Kakaji had talked about Yogi Bapa so much that over five thousand people gathered to see him. On June 12 (Kakaji's birthday), Yogi Bapa inaugurated the memorial shrine (*deri*) we created in Manavadar. Yogi Bapa gave the blessings that devotees will earn the same spiritual

merit doing *pradakshina* (ritual of circling clockwise around the *deri*) of the memorial shrine in Manavadar, as is gained by doing *pradakshina* of the Akshar Deri (Gunatitanand Swami's memorial shrine) in Gondal!

Though Kakaji remained Yogi Bapa's eternal humble servant, on many, many occasions we experienced that in fact, Yogi Bapa was Kakaji, and Kakaji was Yogi Bapa. Kakaji was *vachan-siddh*, i.e., every word he uttered was the divine truth.

Once, Yogi Bapa asked Kakaji to meet Pawari Saheb, a government officer, to complete a certain task. We thus took a rickshaw to his bungalow. Pawari Saheb was very helpful, and we were able to get the required paperwork. Before leaving, Pawari Saheb said he would have one of his vehicles drop us off if we needed a ride. Kakaji replied, "No thank you, we have a car." I knew we did not have a car, but remained quiet. As Pawari Saheb came outside to see us off, I wondered what Kakaji was up to? In the meantime, a white car passed by, and Kakaji waved at him to stop. Kakaji asked if we could get a ride back to the Shahibaug, Ahmedabad temple. The driver agreed, and Pawari Saheb happily waved goodbye. All the way back I thought about the strength that is behind every word of divine saints.

Another incident occurred when I traveled with Kakaji by train. Kakaji never wasted a single minute. While waiting at the train station, he wanted to write some letter postcards to a few devotees. So he told me, "Please get some postcards from the ticket agent." I wondered, "How could I get postcards from the train station? This is not a post office!" But I kept faith in Kakaji's words and stood in the line where train tickets were sold. When it was my turn, I asked the ticket agent, "Can I buy some postcards?" The agent replied, "That is odd. I just bought some postcards for myself from the post office before coming to work today. You can have a couple of mine." I returned to Kakaji with the postcards and an experience of his universal divinity.

Kakaji's speech contained nothing but Yogi Bapa's magnanimity. A renowned saint was once scheduled to visit Gondal, and it was arranged for Yogi Bapa to take part in the meeting. The saint was 120 years old and for many years, he had spent six months at a time in a cave in the Himalaya Mountains wearing just a single loin-cloth. Thus the townspeople were excited during his visit to Gondal. Yogi Bapa

asked Kakaji to come with him and then asked him to talk at the occasion. Kakaji spoke about Yogi Bapa's glory at length and had the townspeople realize that a true saint was in fact in their hometown!

In 1963, Yogi Bapa's birthday was celebrated in Manavadar. My father, Devshibapa, guided the group for the celebrations. My brother (now Kothari Swamiji) and I were very enthusiastic to make the event a grand occasion. By Kakaji's blessings everyone worked together and we even got a high school ground to hold the celebrations. On the occasion, many more youth were initiated by Yogi Bapa to become saints.

KNEW HIM SINCE AGES

Dinkar Uncle, Chicago

My first meeting with Kakaji on July 7, 1973 was unforgettable. At the time, we were living in Indiana and Kakaji came to Chicago, which was about 150 miles away from our home. My wife, Sudhaben, knew Kakaji since her childhood. After our marriage, she applied for a U.S. visa. In order to get it right away, Kakaji asked her to chant a rosary eighteen thousand times. With his blessings, she quickly got the visa. While Kakaji was in Chicago, both of us went to meet him and get his blessings. In my first meeting, I was taken aback by his divinity, and decided to dedicate myself to him. It was as if I knew him since ages. We then invited Kakaji to visit our house, and he gracefully accepted the invitation.

I had never gone to the hospital. But that same year, during the period Kakaji was traveling in the United States, I had an appendix operation. When my wife told this to him over the phone, he said he would come visit us. Kakaji had come to the U.S. with Jashbhai Saheb and Harshadbhai. But in order to save money on tickets, Kakaji said he would come alone. When Sudhaben gave this message to me, I insisted on sending airline tickets for all three of them. I knew Kakaji loved all devotees, and therefore considered myself fortunate to offer my services to his devotees as well. Kakaji was very happy with my gesture and accepted me.

Since then, Kakaji regularly visited us during his travels to the U.S. Thus, my relationship with him strengthened. Every spiritual aspirant has incidents with the God-realized saint, that in Kakaji's words are, "Uncommon, above the intellect, and miraculous." I experienced such divinity with Kakaji's grace.

EXCEPTIONAL POWERS

Dinkar Uncle, Chicago

My wife passed away on March 16, 1981, leaving two kids at home. Kusumben, Sudhaben's elder sister, took the responsibility of raising the two children. At the time, I frequently had to go out of town for company business. Whenever I traveled, my young son refused to eat until I came home. Because of this, Kusumben found it difficult to take care of them all alone. She suggested I should find a job with less traveling so that the children would not feel lonely.

At that time, my boss approached me and told me about an opening for a manager position within the company. I had been working at Abbott Laboratories for five years, but did not have managerial experience. When Kakaji came to Chicago, Kusumben talked to him in a straightforward manner, "Kakaji, Dinkarbai must get this job so that he can stay at home and take care of the children." Kakaji suggested, "Let us start chanting so that Dinkarbai gets the job." Thus, Kakaji made us chant and offer prayers.

Afterwards I applied for the job and was called for an interview. However, I soon found out that an outside candidate was selected for the position. He was going to start work the following Monday. When Kusumben told Kakaji this, he replied that he prayed to Lord Swaminarayan, and thus this was not possible! Kakaji prayed again and said, "Dinkarbai, that job is yours. The person will get a better job elsewhere and will not show up."

Indeed, exactly what Kakaji said happened! The other person got a better job with Johnson & Johnson, and the position was again open. I was called to apply for the position again and soon had another interview. With Kakaji's blessings, I got the managerial position, and my traveling came to an end.

I AM THE SON OF GOD

Dinkar Uncle, Chicago

Kakaji came to the U.S. for the fifth time in 1983. A day before his departure, we kept a 'farewell' celebration at the Francisco Hall in Chicago. A few days earlier, I had gone to an optometrist to fix my glasses. While they were being repaired, the optician said, "I have visited India and learned meditation. I also met many yogis and traveled to the Himalayas - I am very interested in spiritual matters."

I responded, "My guru, who is a great saint, has come to Chicago. He is returning to India, so we have kept a 'farewell' celebration tomorrow. You are more than welcome to come. I am sure you will enjoy the event." She responded, "Yes, I will surely come."

The next day, the lady came to the celebrations accompanied by a friend. I requested that she sit in the front row, but she preferred to sit all the way in the back. While Kakaji's discourses were going on, she tried to hypnotize Kakaji! She soon realized that her black magic was useless in front of a true saint. Instead, she saw a white aura in place of Kakaji and could only hear his voice! She, thus, begged for forgiveness from within.

After the meeting was over, she came to meet Kakaji and revealed frankly her negative intentions. Looking at Kakaji, she said, "You are God. You are Absolute Energy." Kakaji replied, "No, I am only a son of God." She continued, "I have been to India many times and have met many saints. But I have never seen the snow-white, thick aura I saw around you. Such a pure white color could only emanate from a soul that is totally pure. You are the greatest saint!" Kakaji again told her, "No, it is not that way. There are many saints possessing greater energy than myself. But you have to find them."

Kakaji's humility further struck her. She went on, "You are really great. You are a God-like person. Please bless me!" She bowed down to Kakaji and said, "I would like to come to your *ashram* (hermitage) and would like to know more about how I could stay there." Kakaji replied, "Continue with your meditation for another two years and then we will decide." She replied, "You are truly great. You can read my thoughts." She left with Kakaji's blessings.

ESSENCE OF SPIRITUALITY

Mahendra Bapu, Tardev

Yogi Bapa assigned the duty of molding my nature to Kakaji, a great, divine architect of souls. I had a friendly, yet father-and-son relationship with Kakaji. Lovingly, he would address me as his "Arjun." From our first meeting, I felt as if I belonged to him. Kakaji knew that I was restless in nature and would tell me, "I do not want to crush your spirit, but I want to divinize it. As difficult as it is for you to comprehend and unite with God now, later you will find it just as difficult to detach from Him.

He saw my aggressive nature from a different perspective and would tell me, "You have an audacious personality with a capacity to fight, and I admire your retaliating yet resilient spirit." On many occasions I argued with Kakaji just for the sake of argument, and that too with the help of the knowledge gained from him, but he never showed disappointment or indifference towards me. At times, I may have wavered in my affection towards him, but his love for me never abated nor his resolution to embolden me ever falter. I would remain open with him, but my mind would still play games. Yet, he never distanced himself from me. And more so, he freely and casually discussed and analyzed incidents of his personal life with me. He taught me to be judicious in my interaction with those of opposite temperaments whereby giving me precious lessons to see divinity on all occasions. He gave the message of friendliness by setting the example himself, and showered ceaseless motherly affection.

I asked complex questions regarding the basic faults of the human intellect. Without getting annoyed or upset, he convinced me patiently quoting references from the Vachanamrut, Swami Ni Vato, and other authentic religious texts. Through this method, Kakaji logically analyzed the obstacles I faced and transformed my consciousness. He explained the nature of the human mind with logical interpretations. He talked about man's need to justify his ego, and how past memories driven by the vital forces surface on the conscious being. He taught me how to supercede these forces that impeded my personal progress and move towards maintaining spiritual equanimity. By answering intricate questions with his unique teaching methods, he intellectually persuaded and convinced me.

In 1979, after asking me to leave my career, Kakaji kept me in the company of friends who had the same vision of cultivating spiritual intimacy. We watched as he remained unperturbed in the face of the most difficult situations with limited resources – this was because he lived with supreme faith in Lord Swaminarayan. In numerous instances, looking only to the relationship (that the individual had with God), he humbled himself and worked with friendliness. At times, unconditionally accepting the terms of the opposing party, he would still get the work done. By observing him, one could witness the bliss of the almighty Lord within him.

His expressions had the stamp of eternal truth. But if anyone insisted on some intellectual, traditional, ephemeral or worldly interpretation, Kakaji patiently remained humble towards the person, and would hint upon the truth while remaining in a witnessing spirit.

With perseverance and through subtle clues, he guided individuals towards the path of righteousness; all the while, never insisting upon its acceptance. Finally, when the eternal truth was accepted, he did not take the credit for himself. Rather, he gave it to those who accepted the truth. He achieved greatness by giving appreciation to others. Neither disturbed by indifference or by expectations, he took special care of every devotee of the Gunatit Samaj by showering unconditional love.

Furthermore, he showed us how to achieve a liberated consciousness by helping us win over the “illuminated darkness” of self-illusion and false-reality. While expanding upon this subject in a letter, he said, “Truth seekers and realized souls may also sometimes suffer from an existential awareness – [this awareness is expressed] in the role of a spiritual leader, counselor, or critic; through personal analysis, and opinions that he gives by virtue of his right; or by playing ‘hide and seek,’ and by ‘subtle politeness.’” The great master realizes this deviation but chooses to bear with it - even allowing the disciple to revel within it because the disciple truly believes that this is the real way of a liberated soul. It cannot even be described as arrogance or ignorance, but rather the highest level of illusion. Thus it is an “illuminated darkness.” Revealing this, Kakaji drenched us with an incessant flow of compassion.

While explaining this subject further, Irina Starr, an enlightened soul, writes, "People often expect some degree of power over others and over circumstances, and they often have deep-seated desires for a certain elevation and the esteem and regard that goes along with it. All this may be gratifying to the personal ego but it is certainly not the path to deeper spirituality. A most heartfelt and fervent prayer of mine was 'Make pure the hidden intent of my heart.' I wanted my motives – seen and unseen to be pure and I wanted my soul's growth, just as I wanted the glorification of God and not any glorification of the self at all. This is the only opening to the highest and purest aspect of spirituality."

Kakaji celebrated the glory of the great mantra of Lord SwamiNarayan. By continually singing devotional hymns, he inspired everyone to join in. If any devotee wanted to act upon an idea, Kakaji asked to implement the technique of "wait, wait, wait, and then go forth." He thus taught us to leave everything to God and watch it with impartiality. If the previous thought were to mature after this process, act upon it cheerfully with the spirit of "living dangerously." To this day I have accepted this eternal truth as a discipline. With this unique method, one can rise above their flaws and ignore the vagaries of the mind. With the help of God, it allows one to take the leap that lets one transcend the mind.

"Joyous forgiveness" does not mean you tolerate unfairness. Kakaji accepted the total omnipotence of Lord Swaminarayan. He always looked to find the divinity in others (*nirdoshbuddhi*). By doing so, he remained optimistic, and kept a firm conviction in the sovereign supremacy of Lord Swaminarayan. Up to his very last breath, Kakaji dedicated himself fully to Lord Swaminarayan. The teachings from Kakaji's life will take us into this dedicated stage too, and help us spread his glory. With his belief in the immortality of divinity, he carried the divine light within him. On behalf of all spiritual aspirants, it is our humble request that Kakaji take us away from various stages of illuminated darkness.

I have not written this article out of hypocrisy, to satiate my ego, to nurture my pride, or by the virtue of my relationship with Kakaji. Whatever essence I have been able to collect from the life of this God-embodied soul (*brahmsvaroop*) will enable us to gain insight into the

life of this spiritual sage of the age (*yug-purush*), and like a beacon of light, he will guide us further on the royal road to happiness. In the larger interest of the common good, the presentation of the truth has to be made within constraints. This is because due to the limitation of the reader, scriptures can potentially be turned into weaponry. But if we look towards the essence and contemplate upon it, we shall have proper guidance in the changing moods of our lives. By treading this path together in harmony, we can live a life of friendliness (*maitri-bhaav*). Therefore, let us unite and enjoy the essence of these experiences and practice it in our lives.

INSPIRED TO A HIGHER CONSCIOUSNESS

Mahendra Bapu, Tardev

The year was 1966. After graduating from college, while I did not have a job, I stayed at Tardev to serve Kakaji. At the time, all of the aspirant sisters of Tardev had gone to Gunatit Jyot in Vidyanagar. Jethabhai Soni, Rameshbhai, Prafulbhai, Ghanshyambhai, and I were in the service of Kakaji. Routinely, Prafulbhai left for work and Ghanshyambhai, for school. I would stay at Tardev and carry on with the temple duties. At the time, there was no kitchen at Tardev, and so, meals were prepared at Kantikaka's home. When we brought the prepared meals for Kakaji, he would eat very little. By doing so, he lovingly served us instead.

Kakaji never allowed us to remain idle. If we were free, he kept us occupied in chanting God's name. Often, he would speak upon a topic, and we took notes to prepare articles. He then asked us to make copies and send them to Sokhada, Sankarda, Vidyanagar, Manavadar, and other centers. Thus he trained us and imparted knowledge by keeping us engaged in chanting, discourses, and service.

Whenever I visited Yogi Bapa he insistently made me say, "I will become a saint." I really wanted to serve Yogi Bapa, and felt that if I were to say "No," I may lose the opportunity to be in his personal service. I thus had no choice, but to say "Yes." Otherwise, I had already decided not to join the saintly order; nevertheless, I told myself that if my future children desired to be saints, I would have no objection.

Kakaji gave us strength by asking us to write articles and participate in chanting and prayers. But when Kakaji said to me, "You are one of the two hundred saints that Gunatitanand Swami gave lessons of transcendental knowledge (*brahmvidya*)," a mixed feeling set within me. I was eager to reach the ultimate spiritual goal in this life, but at the same time, I was aware of my incapability. Because of my unrefined qualities, I was unable to remain in righteous thoughts for more than ten minutes a day.

But as stated by Shri Aurobindo, divine persons do not consider this:

"Our incapacity does not matter - every human being contains a part of the divine force. If one puts his trust in it, his incapacity will be changed into capacity. Difficulties and struggles themselves become the means toward achievement."

Aware of my duality, I approached Kakaji to ask what I should do if I wanted to join the team of initiated brothers. Kakaji would deliberately say, "No, no, we want you to get married to a handsome girl." Upon hearing this, all of the elders would mock me by saying, "You do not address a girl as being 'handsome' - by making this statement, Kakaji is pulling your leg." After listening to this, I again approached Kakaji. He then said, "You do not have to think about it at all. You have to accept the path of Priyavrat and Ambrish (householders that lived an ideal spiritual life)." I became further confused. This internal conflict was intolerable - I once wept and thought to myself, "What kind of nature do I have? Why has Kakaji kept me in this divine association knowing I have this nature? If it were not so, I would not be in this dilemma." With his divine vision, Kakaji saw my predicament. Thus, he called me and said, "You should not think of anything now. I will discuss the matter with Papaji, Sonaba, and Saheb, and we will finalize a decision by the full moon day of Posh (Indian calendar month corresponding to parts of December and January)." At last, on the full moon day of Posh, to my surprise Kakaji declared, "Take the vow - there is no girl born for you." After having taken this vow, Kakaji gave me a new life.

Earlier, on many occasions Kakaji exhibited his clairvoyance and divinity. From these experiences and observations, I came to firmly believe that to come across a friend like Kakaji was next to impossible.

He would take care of us and protect us, even by putting himself at risk! Because of my firm conviction in Kakaji, I had no hesitation in the spiritual path chosen for me (as a dedicated spiritual aspirant). I read in the Vachanamrut that "The day you understand this divine saint as he truly is, from that very day, you will have triumphed over your desires, anger, and crude nature."

Through his chanting, prayers, discourses, and seminars, Kakaji molded me to become immune to any worldly attachments. I salute my Divine Architect who helped me reach greater heights.

Many thanks to my master Yogi Bapa who sowed the seeds of ultimate knowledge, and to my master Kakaji who nurtured and protected me when I was presented with challenges, helped me to remain composed, and built a temple in my heart by his selfless love.

PLEASE ERADICATE MY FAULTS

Mahendra Bapu, Tardev

Lord Krishna used Arjun's warrior-like qualities to make him a divine instrument. He transformed Arjun's crude nature and all of his undesirable qualities into flawlessness. In the same manner, Kakaji often created incidents to transform my hasty and impatient temperament into perfection.

In around 1967, two close devotees, Bikhukaka and Chandubhai Daji resided in Vadodara. At the time, very few people had access to telephones in India. Chandubhai did not have a phone at his home and Bikhukaka, though he had a phone, had hearing trouble. As a result, Kakaji had a difficult time conveying messages from Mumbai to Hariprasad Swamiji and saints. Vidyanagar did not have any means of communication either. At times, messages had to be sent all the way from Ahmedabad via Jashubhai Bhatt. Due to these circumstances, Kakaji wrote letters for correspondence with the rest of the Gunatit Samaj. After writing, Kakaji would ask me to mail the letter via "Saurashtra Mail." Often times, Kakaji would give the letters at the last minute, and so we would pay the extra late fee.

The departure time for Saurashtra Mail was 7:30 PM. Therefore, I would give Kakaji a pen and pad at 6 PM. However, Kakaji would remain engrossed in his discourses and chanting. Thus, we were not able to talk to him either. He would begin writing the letter when there were only ten minutes left. Just four minutes before time, he would say, "Bapu, take this mail and post it." After taking the letter, I would run...jump the railway boundary wall from Slater Road...and finally run on the railway tracks. Within three and a half minutes, I would reach the station. Right when I would drop the letter in the train mailbox, the train would start. Feeling proud of having succeeded in delivering the letter, I would come back to the temple. This was my daily routine.

One day, there was only three minutes left when Kakaji told me, "Post this letter." As I only had three minutes, I ran to the station - but this time, the train was already in motion. I ran as fast as I could and caught hold of the tail-end of the luggage-van door near the guard's compartment. Hanging outside the train in this manner, I went to the Dadar station. As the train slowed down at the station, I got down and dropped the letter in the R.M.S. mailbox. In spite of the hectic run, I never complained to Kakaji why he gave me the letter at the last moment. Instead, I was happy to know that I had the opportunity to render divine service to Kakaji. Nevertheless, since then, he never sent me to mail a letter late. And if at all he wanted to send a letter, he would give me a letter he had written well in advance.

Through this process, Kakaji used my hasty and impatient nature for the service of the divine. I ran on the railway tracks many times, but I never sprained my legs, nor did I fall when it was dark outside. Even the ticket-checker never stopped me. I ran on Kakaji's request - thus, it was God who inspired me to run. Similarly, God inspired me to walk. Whenever I think of these incidents, I shake my head and wonder how I managed to reach the mail-train without any accidents, especially when trains run on all four tracks. Only Kakaji knows...

Kakaji was greatly benevolent to create such occasions, to transform our unrefined nature, and make us truly happy.

KING OF SPORTSMANSHIP

Mahendra Bapu, Tardev

My nature was sharp and short-tempered, and my qualities, aggressive. But during the blessed moments that Yogi Bapa prompted me to agree, "I shall be a saint," he sowed seeds of divinity within me. Moreover, hearing Kakaji's discourses, I became further determined to pursue a direction towards God. But inherent negative thoughts compelled me to deviate from this path. In spite of Kakaji, Papaji, and all of the divine saints' collective decision to initiate me on the full moon day of Posh (Indian month, roughly corresponding to the American months of December and January), I had doubts from deep within as to whether my nature would be transformed - these very thoughts frightened me.

In 1969, Kakaji took us on a pilgrimage to holy places sanctified by Lord Swaminarayan. We also stopped in Manavadar, which was called a "*Gokulyu gaam*." (Gokul was the pilgrimage town where Lord Krishna spent His childhood with his cowboy friends; Kakaji similarly spent much time with the residents of Manavadar.) During the travels, we all experienced a sense of contentment. I experienced a refreshing sense of exhilaration in the company of my spiritual friends and in the loving presence of my master. I felt closer to him and experienced his openness. Enjoying this proximity in seclusion, I felt assured and without agitations.

During one such blissful moment in the town of Vanathali, light-heartedly, I asked Kakaji, "If my nature is transformed, I will believe that you are the manifest spirit of Yogi Bapa." I continued by saying, "And when I am fully convinced, I will then consider you a manifest divine entity."

I had, of course, decided to proceed towards the path of spiritual realization under the shelter of Kakaji, but I made these remarks in jest.

My faith in Kakaji grew stronger, knowledge flourished, and my mind became stimulated with a spiritual awakening. My shortcomings no longer tormented me. Because of Kakaji's blessings, I was transformed. Referencing Swami Ni Vato 1/14, Kakaji explained the positive

qualities hidden in my faults. Gradually, positive qualities surfaced and a sense of service and humility manifested - my spirit became empowered. I had no complaints now.

Afterwards, on many joyous occasions, Kakaji would remind me, "*Raja*, remember those days?" Even during crowded meetings, while addressing the assembly, Kakaji would say, "Bapu has challenged me - when you receive my blessings, you will become a divinized saint - Bapu, is that right?" He would want me to say "Right," and going further he would ask me, "With your blessings, have I become a divinized saint?" Upon hearing this banter, I would laugh and bursting with happiness, I experienced a supreme sense of satisfaction. How supremely great you are, Kakaji!

In Kakaji's presence, everyone felt especially open. Kakaji never evaluated us based on our language, thoughts, or actions. He was the personification of divine intellect (*nirdoshbuddhi*). He was vibrantly spirited. He came down to our level, replied to our queries, and made us happy. Just the twinkling of his eyes revealed innocence. Kakaji never expected us to be formal or artificially courteous - he gave us great depth. He showered love and helped us flourish, allowing us to think freely. Kakaji helped every spiritual aspirant grow from within. And as a result, our hearts exclaim,

Oh my Lord, In every moment of my life, My body and my soul longs for you - Every fiber of my being is indebted to you, and I am unable to ever repay that debt.

UNDERSTOOD THE DESIRE

Mahendra Bapu, Tardev

Yogi Bapa delegated the work of molding my spirit to Kakaji. Thus my relationship with him was, "I belong to Kakaji, and Kakaji belongs to me." With this heartfelt link, I was anchored to him with a chord of love. I was close to him like an elder son is to his father. In terms of love, I had established a deep affection for him.

Thus I used to make personal decisions for Kakaji: what soap he should use, the type of trousers (*dhoti*) he should wear, whether he should change his clothes when going out, what kind of bag he should

keep when he travels, etc. Kakaji was very simple. He accepted whatever was available, while I was more concerned with Kakaji's image. But everything he did had deep spiritual meaning.

During his tours in India, Kakaji used a twenty-inch suitcase and an airbag to keep sundry items. Thinking about Kakaji's comfort and needs, I changed his bag six, maybe seven times - Kakaji accepted everything I would do. However, Kakaji always thought of the convenience of others first. His favorite one was an old and simple bag.

Kakaji chose to not keep a permanent personal attendant. Wherever he went, he always thought of the convenience of the local *sevak* (one who performs *seva* or service) - would it be convenient for him to open the new type of bag and arrange his clothes?

Many times, I argued with the other dedicated brothers (spiritual aspirants of Tardev) over the selection of items suitable to Kakaji's personality. The items might have even been unusable, but I would still use my "veto power" and do exactly as I liked. Such was my aggressive and obstinate style.

After one such deliberation, I bought another twenty-inch sleek bag that was similar to what Kakaji had been using previously. Pleased, he said, "You have done a good job. On your own, you understood my choice." With a hint of annoyance, I said, "Why didn't you tell me this before?" To this he replied, "If I told you, you wouldn't be able to make the decision by yourself."

After this incident, on June 12, 1968, during a seminar held at Tardev to celebrate Kakaji's birthday, overwhelmed with emotion, I said, "I thought I had an exclusive relationship with Kakaji, and Kakaji exclusively belonged to me. But today, I affirm that Kakaji belongs to all, and everyone loves him. I only pray that I may wholeheartedly devote myself to him, and it always pleases me to see everyone loving Kakaji even more than I do. So that Kakaji is better served, I would like others to be trained like I have been. Whenever I am not available, they too are able to serve him. Therefore, Kakaji, please give me strength so that I leave my presuppositions and stubbornness, and allow others to serve you. Please remain in my heart."

With this prayer of mine, Kakaji was visibly moved. With tears of joy, he patted me on my back. I was humbled when I saw Kakaji's eyes filled with tears. Even today, I fondly remember the occasion.

YOU ARE EVERYTHING TO ME

Mahendra Bapu, Tardev

With a recommendation from Kakaji, I was given the opportunity to work in a company as a Quality Control Engineer. Initially, I had been placed on a probationary term. Two months after starting however, there was a workers' strike. The strike lasted for four months. When I finally heard the company was back in operation, I went back to work a few days later. As I entered the front gate of the company, I met my manager who asked, "Why didn't you come in for work?" To which I replied, "According to the stipulation in the probation letter, if someone were to harm me, do you think the company would be held responsible?" Considering my reply insolent, he said, "We now have less work and do not require your services. We will call you if needed."

After this occurrence, I went to meet the managing director of the company. He was Kakaji's friend, and so I informed him of my situation. He asked both the manager and me to see him that afternoon. In the meeting, the manager told him about my rude answer. I expressed my regrets but it was not enough to appease his bruised ego.

I informed Kakaji about all this when I came home. Kakaji spoke to the manager's father on my behalf and asked for forgiveness. Kakaji also requested the father to talk to his son. Further Kakaji added, "I shall send a letter as well. Please tell him to let Mahendra Shah continue with the job."

Kakaji then said to me, "Start work from tomorrow." Before going the next day, he prepared a letter of apology. Reading it, I refused to give the letter. I said, "There are many companies in this world. They do not have a monopoly. I do not want to do a job where you have to apologize for me to keep the job!"

Not paying attention to my request, Kakaji said, "I have spoken to his father. You may go now and he will allow you to continue. Bring the letter back after the manger reviews it." I replied, "I'll go, but I won't show him this letter, nor will I give it to him! Whether he wants me for the job or not, I don't care!"

The next day, I went to the office and sent a message for the head boss. As I waited in the canteen for a reply, the boss came to me and said, "Mr. Shah, why are you waiting here? Please go and start working." Thus it was no longer necessary for me to show the letter, and I continued with my job.

In all, I worked with the company for twelve years, but the words that Kakaji wrote in the letter are still fresh in my memory. I made the mistake, and Kakaji begged for forgiveness. He even prayed for me! It is really difficult to fathom the sterling qualities of such a divine entity. Kakaji could have very well drawn attention to my discourteous behavior and reprimanded me - but instead, he overlooked my mistake. He never saw the faults of devotees, but did what was in their best interest.

Since this incident, Kakaji has been everything to me. As time passed, he supported me like a brother, gave the warmth of a mother, the protection of a father, and as a friend, shielded me from mistakes I made. He repented for mistakes that I made. He blessed me with the promise to take care of me and protect me. For me, Kakaji:

You are my mother and my father; You are my brother and my friend; You are my knowledge and my wealth; You are to me, all in all, manifest divinity, my spiritual master.

I WILL TAKE CARE OF YOUR WELL-BEING

Mahendra Bapu, Tardev

In 1969, I took the decision to live life as a *saadhak* (dedicated devotee or spiritual aspirant) under the benign shelter of my divine master, Kakaji. In spite of my renunciation, I would work as a *karma-yogi saadhak* (renunciate who works in society, but lives for God). During the span of my work, Kakaji often told me, "You are doing this job to experience God in all."

In 1979, Kakaji asked me to leave my job. At the time, I was earning well working as a Materials Manager. So I thought to myself, "So far I had been a 'DENA bank' (one who gives money), but now I will become a 'LENA bank' (one who takes money)." I did not like being in this situation. By nature, I had always been independent. But in spite of these thoughts, I left my work for good at Kakaji's command.

Kakaji once arranged a seminar in Vihar Lake. Upon entering the PWD bungalow, Kakaji met me at the door and said, "*Raja*, you have my blessings. From now onwards, I will take care of your well being. I give you the same blessings that Lord Krishna promised Arjun - it is my responsibility to take care of everything you do as well as fulfill your ultimate destiny.

Per Kakaji's wish, after a few days, I went to Delhi. At the time, he sent me a very encouraging letter, which still gives me inspiration. The text follows below:

Dear Bapu,

Go to Kurukshetra (region near New Delhi where the Mahabharat War commenced) and find out the [construction] cost of one room and hall. We will send the required amount in the name of Yogi Divine Society. Install the image of His Divinity Yogi Bapa on the 23rd. Lord Swaminarayan will be very happy. I have spoken to Premjibhai about this matter.

Stay there and continue your divine mission by devoting yourself to God. Live without any desire or expectation. I shall return on June 4 from Sokhada. Afterwards, your Guruji's (spiritual master, referring to Kakaji) birthday will come. So on the 11th you should return [to Tardev]. You belong to us...

You must have sent the resignation letter. Do not be bothered. Shriji Maharaj (Lord Swaminarayan) is with you all the time. Now let Him work for you and inspire you at every moment. Every month, you will receive Rs. 400 as interest and the other things will be arranged after finalizing the flat. Therefore, do not worry at all. After all, all of your commitments are taken care of, including your contributions to Yogi Divine Society. As you had ex-

pected, you will still have the bank balance. But what is the usefulness of more money? Real happiness is found when you make the great saint (*motaapurush*) happy - and that is true wealth.

Spend six hours everyday in prayer and service and leave the rest to Yogi Bapa. According to the direction given by your master, you should now live life with clear inspiration. Your life will be full of joy and peace. Be happy and keep Swamiji [Mukundjivan Swamiji] happy also. Help him in his work. He belongs to us.

Yours,

Dadukaka's Jai Swaminarayan.

From a worldly perspective, I left my job upon Kakaji's order. However, by doing so, he blessed me with such a divine understanding that I came to believe that this is the happiest day of my life. I felt that I am now fully directed towards the real mission of my life.

To fulfill my spiritual mission, his close association elevated my consciousness. This continued awareness, inspired by the attributes of those who have attained liberation, enables me to experience the presence of Kakaji. How fortunate I am that he is my eternal driving force.

BROADMINDED

Mahendra Bapu, Tardev

Whenever Kakaji told me something, I always questioned it. This was my relationship with him. If Kakaji were to say, "It has to be done this way," my question would be, "Why does it have to be that way?" Though I was argumentative, internally I was ready 100% to do exactly what he wanted me to do. The frankness helped me understand Kakaji's true depth and magnanimity.

While Kakaji and I were returning from New York, we had a stop over at the Kuwait Airport. Being transit passengers, we had to wait in the airport for our connecting flight. Since we had to wait about four hours for our flight, we decided to take a stroll around the airport where there were duty free shops. Many travelers thronged the crowded shops. The maximum crowd was at the gold jewelry shop.

Every ornament in the store had a price and weight tag attached to it. Also on each tag, there was a label indicating that it was made from "24 carat gold." From the weight and price, I calculated that gold ornaments were much cheaper in Kuwait than in India. Kakaji was standing close by as I said to him, "Kakaji, the gold is inexpensive here and besides it is 24 carat gold." Kakaji replied, "They write 24 carat, but in fact, it is only 18 carat." Being over-wise I said, "Kakaji, the king of this country travels in a gold-plated car! It is plentiful in this country! Why should they give wrong information? Besides, the government of this country is strict with thieves. If found guilty, their hands would be cut off." Hearing my argument, Kakaji said, "I shall give you money. How much do you need? You can buy whatever you want." And so, he gave me money. But he added, "I have learned from experience - you also can go ahead and learn from experience. We must test the truth, and not accept borrowed truth." I understood what he wanted to convey and decided not to buy anything at all. I just went around a while and returned. Afterwards, Kakaji did not ask me at all about my purchases. His generosity and sportsmanship still lives in my heart. I pray to Kakaji that I develop such broadmindedness. I do not want to be assertive, and I want to live with joyous forgiveness. I wish to leave behind all of my evaluations so that I can act in a manner that pleases him.

HE IS OMNISCIENT

Mahendra Bapu, Tardev

A devotee friend of mine once gave money on credit to an acquaintance. They did not establish a contractual agreement, but the person who borrowed the money promised to return it in a short time. He even told my friend that he would offer interest. My friend was pleased as he received the interest in a timely manner for quite some time. But gradually, the person stopped paying interest, and also hesitated in returning the principal amount. My friend was afraid he was going to lose all of the money. So reluctantly, he informed me, "Mahendrabhai, please talk to my friend, and if possible, use your influence or pray for me. But somehow help me get the money back. Otherwise I will be in big trouble." I explained to him, "Before giving the loan, you should have consulted a few people. And if you wanted to keep the matter

private, you should have at least consulted with Kakaji before making any decision. And you should have investigated the man's credit history." In self-defense, he explained, "I did not ask you, but I did speak to Kakaji." This made me feel sorry for my friend. I started thinking, if my friend asked Kakaji before giving the money, he should not have had any problems. But it was not the case. I was baffled.

Two days later, I asked Kakaji, "My friend is having a difficult time collecting his loan. Do you think he will get his money back?" Kakaji did not reply. I then asked an immature question: "You have God with you. Then when my friend gave his money after getting your consent, why did he still have a problem?" My intention of asking this question was to remove my doubts, not question Kakaji's authority. Moreover, I was curious to find out why God created this situation. Nevertheless, the tone with which I asked the question was aggressive and confronting. Therefore Kakaji replied with the same forcefulness, "First, ask him whether he came to me before giving the money, or after giving the money! He already gave the money before meeting me. Regretting having given the money, he set his mind to rest by coming to me and telling me about it. If I said he made a mistake, he would start worrying about it right away. Instead I said, 'Ok' so at least he would remain in a good spirit for some time. Then whatever was to happen would come to pass. Bapu, you say 'I am omniscient' but when the time comes, you do as you like. Even with you, your friend was not open. The information he gave was incorrect. Now go and ask him whether he told me about the loan beforehand or afterwards." When I asked my friend about the details of the transaction, he very sheepishly replied that in fact he asked Kakaji after giving the money. Fortunately, as a result of Kakaji's prayers, he received his money later in small amounts.

In our life we undergo similar circumstances where we listen more to others, and doubt the spiritual master (*satapurush*). Even in his presence, our mind plays tricks in order to cover our own faults. But in the company of divine saints, the more uncomplicated and simple we stay, the more we benefit.

DIVINE VISION

Mahendra Bapu, Tardev

Flying from New York to Florida, I sat next to Kakaji. The previous day, I heard about an unpleasant incident that occurred amongst religious groups. In regards to that, I asked Kakaji a question: "After five thousand years, there are several branches in the Vaishnav sect of Lord Krishna. In other religions too, after a thousand or so years, there are many branches. But here, it has only been two hundred years since Lord Swaminarayan established our sect, and already we have so many branches. What will the situation be like in five thousand years? How many different branches and gurus will there be?" Kakaji did not reply to my question, but started looking outside the window. After some time, he said, "Bapu, don't you think our plane is flying at a high altitude?" I replied, "Yes, Kakaji." Going further he said, "If you try to see something below from this window, can you see anything?" I replied, "No." Then he said, "Just like you cannot see anything on the ground from this height, when you elevate your consciousness towards Lord SwamiNarayan, you will not be able to see any quarrels or problems. You will not see any divisions, but will accept everything to have a divine purpose." I logically thought, "From such a high height, one cannot see anything on the ground, but that does not mean there are no problems. Even though we cannot see it, everything is still there - trees, buildings, lakes, roads, etc." Thus I was not convinced - I did not have Kakaji's divine vision, and my logic oversaw Kakaji's argument. Though I was not convinced that "everything is divine," I accepted Kakaji's answer and remained quiet. Kakaji was of course aware of my internal conflict.

After some time, the plane landed at the Atlanta, Georgia airport. Our connecting flight was going to depart after two hours. After taking a stroll, we sat quietly in a corner with our luggage. All of a sudden Kakaji got up and went to the airline ticket counter. It was noon and there were no travelers at the counter. Kakaji asked the officer, "How many airlines are in business in America?" The officer referred to her airline directory and said, "There are a total of 169 airlines." While this was going on, I sat in the adjacent lounge, looking after the luggage. Kakaji called me to the counter and in my presence asked the same question again. The lady repeated, "169 airlines." Kakaji looked at

me and said, "Do you understand Bapu. 169 airlines are working. All of the airlines are in business. Those offering good service will certainly do well. In the same manner, if we serve devotees with spiritual harmony and friendliness, we should not have any problems. Lord Swaminarayan runs this universe, and is supreme."

Thus Kakaji gave me my answer in this way. Although there are many branches in the Swaminarayan movement, Lord SwamiNarayan is the supreme-controller, and all can co-exist in harmony and benefit society. Kakaji had a unique way of handling any situation by harmonizing the intellect and heart. He gave us a divine vision and attitude.

LEARN TO MANIFEST HIM

Mahendra Bapu, Tardev

The bicentenary of Lord Swaminarayan was celebrated in 1981. At the time, Kakaji installed a beautiful image of Lord Swaminarayan at Dinkarbhai's home in Waukegan, Illinois. A devotee that lived close by regularly came to Dinkarbhai's home for discourses and prayer (*sat-sang*). She had great respect for Kakaji. Her husband was from Africa, and they were both very non-traditional. In the beginning she was not even vegetarian – but as she devoted more time to spiritual activities, she soon stopped eating meat. At home, when she started eating vegetables instead of meat, her husband became upset.

During this time, the lady also lost her job. This gave her husband an opportunity to vent his anger. He said, "I knew that you would lose your job. You do not eat meat now, so how could you expect to keep your vitality?" He was obstinate and gave her an ultimatum, "If you do not start eating meat again, I will start fasting. Tell your Dadukaka that if I die, he will be held responsible." She ignored his demand and her husband went on fasting. Both of them remained hungry for three days. On the fourth day, the lady discreetly gave a letter to Kakaji expressing what her husband was up to. Kakaji replied, "Ask your husband to meet me for five to ten minutes." The next day when her husband came to Waukegan, Kakaji comforted him by chanting in front of the image of Lord Swaminarayan. The chanting continued for a half hour while her husband watched Kakaji. As the prayer went

on, the devotee's husband saw a bright light emanating from Lord Swaminarayan's image. Soon the entire room was filled with light. Amazed, he kept watching. After this, he repented, but in his mind resolved, "If Kakaji is really what he claims to be, he will offer me sanctified food (*prasaad*) to break my fasting."

Kakaji finished chanting and while offering food to Lord Swaminarayan, told the husband, "Shriji Maharaj tells me to give this sanctified food to you." As Kakaji gave him the food, the husband bowed down, filled with emotions. He later joined Kakaji for dinner as well.

The gentleman very happily gave a blank check to Kakaji and said, "We have plenty. You can write whatever figure you think fit." Kakaji told him to write only eleven dollars, but added, "Give consent to your wife for having stopped eating meat." He responded, "From now on, I will never insist that she eats meat, because she belongs to God."

Whenever anyone came to Kakaji with a question or problem, he first remembered Lord Swaminarayan and Gunatitanand Swami. He sought Their blessings and then solved the problem. Kakaji would say, "He [God] is with us, learn to manifest him." Although Lord Swaminarayan and Gunatitanand Swami were always with him, on such occasions, Kakaji made devotees aware of the presence of God too.

Today, I still remember the image in which Kakaji has infused divinity - Lord Swaminarayan listens to our prayers. God is manifest. The Waukegan temple has become a place of pilgrimage for all devotees in the United States. There, Dinkarbhai, a God-imbibed saint who is beyond all desires, talks to God and gives comfort to all.

KAKAJI IS EVERYWHERE

Mahendra Bapu, Tardev

I accompanied Kakaji to Ludhiana in Northern India. Many devotees reside in the towns of Ludhiana, Jagraon, and Moga within the Punjab state. Due to Kakaji and Mukundjivan Swamiji's tremendous efforts, the divine fellowship has flourished in Delhi and the state of Punjab.

A few days before our arrival, Gurubaksh Singh's sister just got married. Her mother-in-law wished that Kakaji visit them and bless her daughter-in-law. Thus Kakaji visited them and gave everyone much happiness. There, we met Indrajit Singh, a relative of theirs who had come from London. His Indian passport was about to expire soon, and it would ordinarily take over fifteen days to get a new passport from Chandigadh. Indrajit had come on company-leave, and so was very worried about losing his job if his return was delayed. After everyone spoke to Kakaji about the matter, he said to me, "Bapu, write down his passport number, etc." Kakaji then told Indrajit, "I am going to Chandigadh tomorrow. I know someone in the office and I will give him the details of your passport. When you go there, you will receive your passport immediately. Do not worry." I knew Kakaji's itinerary - from here, he was going to go to Ambala and then Kurukshetra. The following day he was scheduled to fly from Delhi to Mumbai. There was no plan of going to Chandigadh in the itinerary! I wondered, "What was the use of getting Indrajit's passport details?" But since Kakaji asked me to do so in front of everyone, I jotted down his passport number, etc. The next day, we left Ludhiana and reached Delhi via Kurukshetra as planned. That same evening we flew back to Mumbai, with Chandigadh forgotten.

Afterwards, I accompanied Kakaji to London that same year. Upon reaching London, Kakaji asked me to call Indrajit Singh. He enthusiastically replied, "How nice, I will come immediately for his blessings." When he came, Kakaji asked, "How are you? I hope all is well. How is your job?" Indrajit replied, "Due to your blessings, my passport was ready within a half hour, I got to London back on time, and my job was saved." Narrating the incident, he explained, "I reached Chandigadh just a half-hour before the office closes at 4:30 PM. But right when I reached there, an officer approached me and took my passport. By the time I filled out a passport form, the chief officer, whose signature was needed, was about to leave the office. So the officer took my form and went into the office for the chief officer's signature. He shortly returned and asked me to fill out the rest of the form. He then pasted my photograph in the appropriate place. My passport was ready in just fifteen minutes!"

Upon hearing Indrajit's story, my logical mind began arguing, "How much of a bribe did the officer ask for?" He replied, "Bapubhai, I am against bribery - I would never give money. The officer did not take a single penny from me."

This was yet another experience of Kakaji's divinity. I resolved that I should consider every action of the spiritual master (*satapurush*) as divine. Every word of the God-realized saint commands all of time and the universe. He has the ability to enter into anyone and get his work done. Our mundane assessments, social considerations, and inclination to see human traits in divinity, do not allow us to put complete faith in their words – and thus we are unable to live a blissful life.

LIVE FOR DEVOTEES

Mahendra Bapu, Tardev

In 1981, Kakaji and I went to Baltimore to meet one of Lalitkaka's friends, Bhupendrabhai. When I called him, Bhupendrabhai wasn't home because he was on vacation, but later returned my call and invited us to his home. The following day, Bhupendrabhai's wife prepared food for us in the morning and then both of them left for work. Bhupendrabhai however asked his friend, Jayantibhai to take us sight seeing. He was going to pick us up at 9 in the morning. It was past 10 o'clock, and he still had not shown. At about 10:15 AM, Jayantibhai called and said, "I will be there in a half hour." I replied on the phone, "Please come soon. It is already late, and the White House closes at 1:00 PM." Hearing our conversation, Kakaji immediately snatched the phone from my hand and said, "Jayantibhai, take your time. We are nicely seated here. Would you like to have tea or coffee when you come? Today, you have to join us for breakfast. My secretary (Bapu) is very good at acupressure and he will help you relax by treating you. You may come according to your convenience - we are not in a hurry." After putting the phone down, Kakaji rebuked me, "Do you think that the whole world has to live for me? I, myself, think that I live for others! Don't you think this man must be tired after being at work the entire night? How can you order him like that? You will have

to observe a fast today. Only then will you become more vigilant. We should always think of others first. You should also understand that he does not even know us right now.”

After some time Jayantibhai arrived. Kakaji asked me to prepare coffee and breakfast for him, and then said, “This is my secretary who is very good at acupressure.” Kakaji then told me to treat him. I gave him acupressure according to Kakaji’s wish. Afterwards, we went by car to see the White House. We did not hit any traffic and only after we were let in the White House, did they close admittance for the day. Thus everything was arranged conveniently, without any problems.

On the way there, Kakaji patiently heard Jayantibhai’s experiences and difficulties and spoke to him with friendliness. He did not allow Jayantibhai to spend a single penny. Jayantibhai was touched by Kakaji’s warmth and freely discussed his problems with Kakaji. “I am very disturbed. I have left my happy life in India and have embraced unhappiness by coming here. My wife doesn’t have a steady job either. I have to incur a debt just to meet my expenses. I don’t know what to do. Should I go back to India or continue staying here? I am really confused.” Kakaji assured him protection and said, “Jayantibhai, today you have met a great saint – and because you have served him, your destiny has changed. Continue to stay here for six months and everything will be alright. Your desire to buy a motel will be fulfilled and you will find much happiness. Remember Lord Swaminarayan and His saints everyday for five minutes and He will take care of you.” In this way, Kakaji was very pleased with Jayantibhai and blessed him. In 1985 Jayantibhai came to a seminar where we met him again. He was now well settled and thanked Kakaji by inviting him to his house.

Kakaji had one principle: if you want to be happy, give happiness to others. He trained us to live life with that awareness too. He had no expectations from anyone, and whoever offered him devotion was sheltered. Moreover, he was most pleased if you served devotees. Kakaji was truly a great philanthropist.

PENNY WISE, POUND FOOLISH

Mahendra Bapu, Tardev

While once traveling in New York City with Kakaji, we came across a big shopping mall on 74th street. The devotee that took us around indicated that the area was a tourist hot-spot. He said, "We should park the car here if you want to shop." I wanted to buy a small auto-focus camera. So we parked, put money in the parking meter and left, while Kakaji waited inside the car. We visited many shops but could not find the camera that I wanted. It was getting late and so we dropped another coin in the meter. I thought that Kakaji did not have to trouble joining us, so said, "Kakaji, please be seated for a little more time. We will return shortly." In this way, we continued shopping for the camera. At last, after about one hour, we found the camera. We quickly returned to Kakaji who was sitting in a meditative posture in the car waiting for us. When we came, Kakaji said, "Bapu, I need to use the restroom." So we stopped by a nearby Pizza Hut before going to a devotee's home. Though Kakaji sat the entire time we shopped, he did not rebuke me or even say one word. In a few days, I forgot the incident. After completing the foreign tour that year, we returned to India.

The following year, I again came to New York City with Kakaji. Our car drove through the same route as the previous year. I was deep in my thoughts when Kakaji said, "Bapu, do you remember this place?" I replied, "No, Kakaji." He said, "Try to remember." I thought hard, but could not remember. Kakaji said, "*Raja*, remember that day you made me sit in the car and went to purchase a camera. I had to sit outside for over forty-five minutes." I immediately recollected the incident. Kakaji continued, "You spent forty-five minutes searching for the camera, but how much did you benefit - twenty-five dollars? Do you know that you could have spent that precious time with me? But you wasted it. If you had paid even fifty dollars more and bought the camera, it would still have been cheaper."

Thus we pay more attention to money than searching for God's grace. I felt good having saved a few dollars, but I actually wasted precious time that could have been spent in the company of a divine saint. Thus we are "penny wise, pound foolish."

I remember the divine incident when Gunatitanand Swami graciously gave a lesson to Bhagatji Maharaj. Once, while cleaning vessels, Bhagatji Maharaj lost his concentration from God's memory (*Smruti*) for just a moment. Gunatitanand Swami instantaneously remarked, "Why did you lapse while remaining in your God-consciousness?"

Kakaji insisted that our thoughts, feelings, and actions always remain directed towards God.

TRUE RELATIONSHIP

Mahendra Bapu, Tardev

There was a family in Mumbai whose children Kakaji and Kantikaka looked after and treated like their own. The family once had financial problems with Kantikaka. The matter however was cleared when their son, who lived in the United States, visited Mumbai. Their mother, who was unaware that the matter was resolved, went to the United States for some occasion.

So when Kakaji visited the United States, he went to meet her. They discussed the financial matter with Kakaji the entire night, and as a result, Kakaji hardly slept. They did not even ask him to rest. They only expressed their resentment. Besides, they were indifferent and discourteous, and yet asked Kakaji to give blessings as if they had the right to demand that their social problems be solved. Kakaji blessed them in spite of their indifference and stayed with them for two days. We were with Kakaji on the trip, and could not tolerate this. So we said, "Kakaji, you have done so much for their family and in spite of this, for such a small amount, they have been so ungrateful - not even allowing you to go to sleep. We could have stayed at some motel, but this discourtesy is unacceptable."

Kakaji explained to the devotee, "It does not matter how they have behaved today, but I remember the services they offered the first time I came to the United States. I remember how they served Saheb. They took us sight seeing and invited us again to eat *dhokdi* (an Indian food item). I remember everything they did." Overwhelmed, the devo-

tee said, "I am reminded of the divine feelings of seeing God in all like Yogi Bapa." All of the devotees were moved by this attitude, and they bowed down to Kakaji in reverence.

Since then, whenever Kakaji visited the United States, he visited that family. Even if they did not come by, Kakaji would go as far as borrowing a devotee's car to see them. The family may have invited him just out of a formality, but Kakaji would still never forget to visit them. They did not render any more service to him - but Kakaji did not have any expectations from them. He was above indifference and showered affection only. Whether they were polite or impolite, he always looked to the better and brighter side of any situation.

Any word from the mouth of a God-imbibed (*gunatit*) saint is always God's word. Kakaji never referred to this boy as his "son" out of a mere formality, but in fact, treated him as a real son and ignored his, as well as his family's indifference. He maintained a relationship in the true sense of the word, and taught us the lesson to act in this manner as well.

DEVOTED TO DEVOTEES

Mahendra Bapu, Tardev

In 1977, I visited the U.K., Europe, the Middle East, United States, and Canada for the first time with Kakaji. We took the 'Cosmos Tour' visiting several countries in Europe via London. In 1981, when I returned with Kakaji, I traveled throughout the U.S. I had twelve 'Visit U.S.A.' flying coupons, so I flew to twelve major cities across the country. Additionally, we traveled thousands of miles by car with Dinkarbhai. At the time, I had the thought, "I traveled to many landmarks in Europe such as the Swiss Alps, and I have seen much of this country – but I still have not seen the Himalaya Mountains in India." So I told Kakaji, "You showed me around the world, but I have not seen my own country yet! I want to go the Himalaya Mountains with you."

It was October 1981, and Kakaji explained, "The snowy mountain roads going to the pilgrimage places of Badrinath and Kedarnath close around November." But he promised we would go between August and September of 1982.

The following year, when we visited Delhi, Kakaji asked a devotee to rent a car with a driver that could take us to the Himalayas via Haridwar and Rishikesh. (At the time, our center did not own any vehicles yet.) Rameshbhai Soni and Rajkumar (a devotee from Delhi) joined Kakaji and me. We trekked the arduous path up, and stayed the night in a valley region of Kedarnath. During this time, Kakaji became ill and experienced chest pain due to the thinning air (Badrinath-Kedarnath is over ten thousand feet above sea level). There was no medications available in the pilgrimage, and so, all we could do was massage Kakaji and put balm on his body. I was touched that Kakaji traveled with me just to fulfill my desire. We rented extra blankets, and Rameshbhai applied balm several times throughout the night. The next day we were going to climb many kilometers up to the Shiva temple. Because of Kakaji's health, we told Kakaji to remain resting. But Kakaji said, "I will be all right after bathing in the hot spring waters." The next day Kakaji was still very weak. Despite this, he asked that a palanquin take him to the place where horses were available for transportation. In this way, we visited the temple and planned to head back home the next morning. We asked Kakaji to see a doctor when we came down to Haridwar, but Kakaji started feeling better and said we should go straight to Mumbai. Prafulbhai Zaveri brought a doctor to the Delhi center with a portable ECG (a device that monitors the heart's function by tracing its electrical impulses). The doctor suggested Kakaji's heartbeat may have become slightly irregular causing the chest pain, and his blood pressure was slightly high. Thus, the doctor suggested that Kakaji rest for at least 15 days. But Kakaji was eager to return to Mumbai to help devotees, and thus he neither rested in Haridwar nor Delhi. Finally, in Mumbai Dr. J.C. Patel did some more tests at Jaslok Hospital, and also asked Kakaji to rest. From the pilgrimage I learned that while we think we are devoted to Kakaji, it is he who is devoted to devotees!

EUROPE TRAVELS

Mahendra Bapu, Tardev

In 1978, Kakaji wrote a book titled, "The Real Essence of Tantra." It was published by Yogi Divine Society during Kakaji's Diamond Jubilee Celebrations. In the book's appendix, Kakaji notes, "Aspirants belong-

ing to any religion, class, creed, country, color, or sex – with an open mind and loving heart, interested in spirituality, are welcome to contact Yogi Divine Society to participate in a 7-day seminar.”

Dr. Radislav, an Italian truth-seeker, found the book at a library, and contacted the Tardev temple by letter in March, 1981. He indicated that if he were given a 15-day advance notice, a group of aspirants would like to come to India and receive initiation.

First, Kakaji informed Dr. Radislav to gather a group of like-minded devotees and sit in meditation at a particular date and time in Italy. Kakaji said that from India he would sit in meditation and shower divine vibrations to the group. The group felt an inner upliftment by Kakaji’s instructions. He also sent 4 articles to them.

That summer, along with Rajubhai and me, Kakaji planned a stop in London on the way back from America. He asked Dr. Radislav to come to the Anoopam Mission in London, where the brothers made arrangements for their 7-day stay. (At the time, Anoopam Mission was located in Wembley. Upon Kakaji’s command, Anoopam Mission acquired the Denham, Middlesex location the same year.) The group of truth-seekers experienced divinity in Kakaji’s company – they asked Kakaji to come to Italy so that more people could meet him. Kakaji promised that he would visit them during his next trip.

In 1983, I again joined Kakaji on his foreign trip when he planned to visit Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, and France. Kakaji’s nephew, Vinubhai and his son Ashwinbhai took us everywhere in their new car starting from London. It was my first trip traveling Europe with Kakaji, and so I packed a lot of canned foods to serve Kakaji along the way. We first headed for Belgium to the home of a sister (Ushaben Kapadia) who was in contact with the divine fellowship. In order to cross the English Channel from Dover, the car was to go on a ferry boat. Because we missed the first ferry boat, we were delayed by about 4 hours, reached Belgium at 6 PM, and reached Antwerp at 9 PM. It was Sunday night, and all we had was a home address and a map of Europe in our hands. Because of the foreign language, it was impossible to find our way around the small streets. Kakaji asked us to stop on the road and start chanting. In no time, a couple came by and offered to help. We followed them for some time, but the exact address could not be found. So they took us to a crossing that had a map

of the city. After locating the place, Ashwinbhai suggested we would now find the place on our own. But the couple refused to leave us until we safely reached our destination! They said, "Unless we know you reach there safely, we won't be able to sleep at night." I was amazed that even though they did not know us, nor did they hardly speak English, they were willing to help. Kakaji taught me to take the refuge of prayers and also be generous to others in need as well.

After staying two nights in Belgium, we headed to Germany, and met Raj, the son of a family (the Kapoor family, known from the Chatarpur temple) that knew Kakaji from Delhi. Raj had come on a visitor basis, and stayed in Gelsenkirchen with a Punjabi friend. The family was worried they had not heard from their son for a long time. With just the address of the Punjabi friend, Kakaji promised them he would meet Raj. Even if we did not have his phone number, Kakaji said, "I will search every corner of Germany, and find your son!" As Kakaji knew some words of the German language from his business travels, we soon arrived at the address. There, we found that both Raj and his friend no longer resided there. The person there, Abdul, who was from Pakistan, however was still in contact with the Punjabi friend and thus took us to meet him. From there we were finally taken to where Raj stayed. During the ordeal, Abdul became very close to Kakaji. He insisted that we stay at his home and also told Kakaji about his personal problems (he had married a German girl, but was worried about their relationship because of her alcohol addiction). Kakaji asked me to do a *mahapooja* (special ritual prayer to God and His devotees) the next morning, chanted for 30 minutes, and then offered everyone sanctified water. Kakaji then asked Abdul to bring a paper and pen, and personally wrote a letter to his wife! Kakaji said, "She will come back. And because we have prayed for her, she will change her habits." As it turned out, the girl was the daughter of a priest, and changed by Kakaji's words. I was amazed to see the effect of Kakaji's blessings irrespective of the person's religion, country, etc.

From Germany, we planned to head toward Italy, stopping overnight in Zurich, Switzerland. At the hotel in Zurich, the receptionist knew English and was very friendly. She exclaimed, "I have seen the movie Gandhi. And I respect the Indian way of life." She offered us a

deluxe room at the normal rate, heated the canned food for us, and even provided us with utensils! Again, I witnessed how greatly everything worked out.

Our original plan was to take the train to Italy. With the change in plans, Kakaji asked me to send a telegram to the group. I, however, did not send it because I thought we would reach there anyway by the time they receive the telegram. When I tried calling from on the road, I was unable to get a hold of anyone - the group was at the train station, anticipating Kakaji's arrival. In this way, we reached Trieste where Kakaji told us to book a hotel room. We had Dr. Radislav's address, so Ashwinbhai and I took a taxi there, while Vinubhai and Kakaji stayed back at the hotel. Kakaji and Vinubhai went to a café and sat outside to have some coffee. By chance, a friend of Dr. Radislav, who was on his way back from the Trieste station, saw Kakaji in his saffron upper garment and thus stopped his car in the middle of the street. He ran to Kakaji and asked, "Are you Dadukaka. I saw your photo." Kakaji said, "Yes." He continued, "Everybody is waiting for you at the station. Please come with me, and I'll take you there." Kakaji and Vinubhai went with him and they met the entire group. In the meantime, we unsuccessfully returned to the hotel, but to our surprise Kakaji and Vinubhai were missing. While waiting in our room, Kakaji, who kept a hotel business card with him, called to inform us that he reached safely at the place of a devotee named Malvina. Kakaji told us to sleep at the hotel since we originally told them that only two of us would stay. Throughout the trip Kakaji taught me the importance of all of his words.

All sixty people in the group were very enthusiastic to finally meet Kakaji face to face. Malvina, who was a vegetarian, and Vinubhai, who was a good cook, made Indian food for everyone. After meditation and chanting, many of the group asked to talk to Kakaji in private.

Malvina told Kakaji, "I am always attracted to visit India again and again. But while in India, I often think about returning back to Italy. Why is this so?" Kakaji explained to her that in her last life, she was a queen in the town of Udaipur. The following year, she arranged a trip to Udaipur via Delhi. When she walked through the palace at Udaipur, everything became familiar to her, and she could recollect her connection. When Kakaji passed away in 1986, Kantikaka sent her a short

message informing her of Kakaji's passing away. In remembrance of Kakaji, she lit a candle at night in front of the photo of Kakaji. Despite being a very short candle, by the morning it was still lit. She thus expressed, "Kakaji has only left physically, but his divine light is still with me." In 1987, she came back to India to pay homage to Kakaji. So I took her to Kakaji's memorial shrine at the Anoopam Mission in Mogri. As she walked around the memorial shrine, I remember Ashwinbhai noted, "We say Kakaji is still with us, but Malvina seems to be walking as if Kakaji is really walking next to her!" In Vidyanagar, she expressed a desire to go back to the palace in Udaipur. Thus I arranged for her visit from Vidyanagar. But the next morning, she said, "Bapu, I saw Kakaji. Not in a dream, but as I see you! And he told me, 'The past is past. Forget the past. If you remain in the past you will be miserable. Thus, don't go to Udaipur.'" Although a car from the Anoopam Mission came to take her, she now said she no longer wanted to go. Before she returned to Italy, I still remember her words, "I have met many masters, but all that can be said of Kakaji is, 'Kakaji is Kakaji!'"

Another person that spoke to Kakaji personally was Lucy. She was a young girl in college, and right when Kakaji saw her, he said, "Postpone your marriage." Hearing this she was amazed and told Kakaji her story: "I am in love with a man who is married. He loves me too, but his wife has threatened to kill me if I ever see him again. When I talked to my church minister, he told me to stop the affair immediately. But when I talked to an astrologer, he indicated something else. I am now confused – what should I do?" Kakaji replied, "If I tell you what to do, it will just add to your confusion. Thus, instead, why don't you seek your own answer? God speaks to me, and he can speak to you too. God will show you what is in your best interest." Kakaji asked her to chant 'SwamiNarayan' for 5 minutes, gave her a short prayer to recite at night, and a picture of Yogi Bapa. He then said, "You will get your answer within 21 days." In about 10 days, Lucy asked the man she loved if he would spend the long weekend with her. The man, however, made some excuses, and refused. Lucy's roommate knew Lucy would be alone in the dormitories, and thus asked her to join her at her parent's place. When they boarded the bus to go to her roommate's parent's home, Lucy saw the man with a third woman! She, thus, realized that he was unfaithful to both her and his wife. After this, she wrote a letter to Kakaji expressing her gratitude and

how "she could not live without the SwamiNarayan mantra." In 1984, when Kakaji visited again with Bharatbhai, she had gotten a new job as a secretary for the United Nations. She thus set up a gathering so that other staff members and friends could also meet Kakaji.

Finally, while visiting France, we met Pravinbhai Lad and Thakorbbhai Lad for the first time. Though very devoted, the people there had many financial and legal difficulties. But with Kakaji's blessings, on my next trip in 1986, I witnessed their fortune change toward the divine. Throughout our Europe travels, I witnessed that wherever Kakaji went, God traveled with him, and he gave the happiness of God to all.

THE FINAL DISCOURSE

Mahendra Bapu, Tardev

In the days preceding his passing away from this world, Kakaji spent most of his time chanting with devotees. There were three to four sessions of chanting per day, lasting an hour and fifteen minutes each. During this, he gave specific instructions that no one should get up in the middle of the prayer session. One could leave the main hall only after the prayer ended. If he wanted to get up during the prayer, he should not sit in the main hall during that time. Moreover, in the last six months, he gave further indications by saying, "Yogi Bapa is with us, he is with us, he is with us. He is never apart from us. He is always here. The universe cannot exist without him. He is with us." And he would tell us to read from Pragat Ni Paraavaani (Gospel of Yogi Bapa).

"Lord Swaminarayan has not left us, Gunatitanand Swami has not left us, enlightened souls have not left us – they are all here. Lord SwamiNarayan has most definitely not left us – He is with us, He is with us, He is with us. You should believe that He dwells in our hearts. With this clear understanding, our ignorance is eradicated. This is part of true and unique devotion. These exalted souls will never leave us. Without their care, the universe would not exist. Therefore have faith in the divine existence of God."

While giving indications of the future, Kakaji would say, "I shall not talk more now. I shall observe silence! After the bicentenary of Gunatitanand Swami, I shall take a huge leap such that everyone in the divine fellowship will be in wonder." Rajubhai thus humbly asked, "Kakaji, we do not understand your divine play. Please let us know what we should do." Kakaji replied, "Do not worry - you all shall be illuminated from within."

One morning while listening to Kakaji's discourse, I overwhelmingly became absorbed in his talks. I felt I had a conscious rapport with him. Consequently, I made a fervent prayer with tears in my eyes, "Oh Kakaji, you are manifest divinity! There is no desire left after attaining your blessings. Whatever knowledge you have imparted cannot even be found in scriptures. How great you are, and how fortunate we are! I pray from the depth of my heart that you empower us so that we can digest your knowledge, become qualified to be your divine children, and tell the whole world about your magnanimity!"

As if he read my mind and understood my intense emotion, Kakaji said, "Bapu, you are right. I'm warning you, achieve all that you can now - later your Dadukaka will be out of reach!" Upon hearing this, I would think that Kakaji is right - such a magnanimous personality will surely not be available. So many people will come to see him and seek his blessings. I must make the most of this precious time I have alone with him. It never occurred to me that Kakaji implied that he will no longer be with us in a physical form - that he planned to return to his heavenly abode.

Interrupted by a phone call, my discussion with Kakaji halted. For three hours straight, I had listened with rapt attention to Kakaji's discourse, which was like the outpouring of the Niagara Falls. My thirst had been quenched! I arose when a devotee called me for tea. In the meantime, Kakaji returned from his phone call and said, "Where are you going? Be seated and go after hearing this message. From now, I am going to observe silence. You will now have to live life according to the knowledge that I have imparted." Continuing, he specifically asked me to read the following discourses from Swami Ni Vato: 2/90, 2/168, 2/141, 4/99, 5/93, 11/232, 11/79, and 14/219.

The essence of these particular discourses as Kakaji explained them is as follows:

For divine masters, wealth has no importance or value. God's work will carry on regardless. (2/90)

In the early days there was nothing on the ground. Since then, many institutions have been built, many are now being built, and in the future many shall be built. But the most important thing is to spend time with the saint, attend discourses, and meditate. (2/168)

You will come across only a few persons who do not give importance to wealth. More especially, the one who is attached to Lord Swaminarayan certainly does not give importance to it. It is said, to those who have already found God to be the most precious, what else is of value in this world? (2/141)

Only those that have fully tuned themselves to God overcome aspirations for wealth. Such God-dwelling personalities do not think of money because they know that the goddess-of-wealth, Laxshmi, always remains in their service. When God's mission is to be carried out, through His sovereign supremacy, all people are inspired to share and participate in the divine cause. Divine saints of this description live through intuition, in choice-less awareness, and never think about gaining money by any means.

Lord Swaminarayan said one may have built temples from bricks of gold or performed severe penance to the point of emaciation. However, I shall only be pleased when one realizes me as I fully am. (4/99)

One must understand God as omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent, and the ultimate entity.

While explaining Vachanamrut sections Kariyani 8 and Gadhada Middle 17, Gunatitanand Swami said, instead of understanding the way this [divine knowledge] is, we have been attached to insignificant things like bricks, stones, wood, money and people; and while this building was to be repaired, we were very much anxious as to when it would get complete so that we could continue with our discourses. This body will perish and the discourses [that purifies one's inherent nature] will remain incomplete. (5/93)

At the time, many devotees aggressively worked towards activities contributing to the growth of temples. And as a result, none of them had the time to attend discourses or for meditation and prayers. Kakaji further explained that while both, the building of temples for

the growth of the spiritual community and participation in discourses and prayers were necessary, greater attention and priority should be given to discourses and prayers.

Involving yourself in temple work in this manner is indeed beneficial. However, through work alone, one progresses laterally, not spiritually. For instance, if someone were to scold you while performing such work you may feel offended and choose to leave the temple all together! However by realizing that your ego is only at fault, the incidence does not affect you. Divine strength and understanding is attained only by imbibing and practicing the knowledge of these discourses.

When priority is rightfully given to discourses and prayers, one realizes that he belongs to God and that he works in the service of God. Ultimately, one realizes that he has not done anything at all, but rather, God has worked and used them as a means to complete His task.

We live in a materialistic world where means of transport, institutions, and disciples, etc. are all found in abundance and have been given greater importance. What will they do? They will only be the instruments of bondage and therefore, are worthless. (11/232)

Those dedicated to temple activities must remain especially aware of these above-mentioned hurdles.

We help people leave the company of bad people, give priority to divine association, and talk about God. When the people are purely devoted, they will automatically spend their resources only for the fellowship and thus the temple will be supported, and souls will progress. Lord Swaminarayan has taken this initiative and we shall follow the same technique - God is our priority, material things are secondary. (11/79)

Even if temples are made of gold, they will remain here. However, spiritual temples will remain eternal. Therefore, make your body the temple of God. How can you serve unless you have intense aspiration for liberation? [And how will you get that aspiration unless you understand the glory of God through discourses?] How best can I serve by using my body, senses, and mind? One who believes this will be able to perform service. (14/219)

Gunatitanand Swami truly understood the glory and supremacy of Lord Swaminarayan. If you understand this knowledge the way He has prescribed, your innermost loving wish will be to serve God and

His devotees to the best of your abilities. Effortlessly, you will be purified. However, without this understanding, even in this association, it is quite possible, more so even probable, to be impacted by negative influences.

This last discourse of Kakaji will be very useful to those aspirants who want to prosper spiritually. With this assurance, I bow down to his lotus feet.

SUPREME VISIONARY

Bharatbhai Mehta, Tardev

I first met Kakaji in 1969. At the time, weekly spiritual meetings for youths were held at Kandivali. Mahendra Babu came especially from Tardev to conduct the meeting. Through his efforts, I started coming to the Tardev temple. During our college days, Vashibhai, Arunbhai, and I came in contact with Kakaji.

I met Kakaji for the first time in Tardev. The event will always remain etched in my memory. He was seated on the sofa in the main hall, with a cup of tea on the table in front of him. A few of the dedicated youth were sitting near him listening to his discourse. I bowed down with folded hands and took my seat.

It was love at first sight. I felt that I knew Kakaji for ages - that, "I belong to Kakaji, and Kakaji belongs to me." Words cannot express the overwhelming sense of joy I experienced that day. Before Kakaji drank the tea, he offered it to me. Considering it as sanctified food (*prasaad*), I relished it with each sip and felt awakened. Kakaji looked at me lovingly, and his divine gestures fulfilled me.

I was speechless, but from within, words began to flow, "Oh Kakaji, today you have accepted me, given me sanctified food, and considered me as your own - you have accepted this devotee who has no knowledge, skill, or identity. I only have one prayer: how can I best serve you and make God happy?"

Kakaji must have heard my inner heart's wish. He was a supreme visionary, who could clearly see my life chart. He invoked the goodness in the core of my heart, and created a divine relationship with me.

From then onwards, I met him on many occasions. He gave immediate answers to all of my questions and thoughts. Many, many incidents convinced me of Kakaji's divine and omniscient identity. He was divine, and I, an ordinary human being. He gave me strength to live the life he wanted me to live. When I prayed, he answered; when I resolved, he guided; when I was confused, he showed me the correct path. He changed my perception through prayer, service, and meditation. He took away any negativity from my life, and helped me reach my goal. He showed me the techniques to realize the eternal truth (*ekaantik dharma*) and live in God-consciousness.

PRAY AND HE WILL ANSWER

Bharatbhai Mehta, Tardev

Mahendra Bapu had an enormous impact on my spiritual quest. He inspired me to contribute my very best to serve devotees and the divine fellowship.

The following incident took place in 1970. Kakaji arranged a seminar (*shibir*) at the Tardev temple. Mahendra Bapu told me in advance, "I will let you know when we have the program – make sure you attend." The evening of the program, it rained heavily. So it was difficult to get messages from the temple. I really wanted to go and still did not hear from Bapu. What could I do?

I remembered Yogi Bapa's saying, "If troubled, take the shelter of chanting God's name." In front of a small image of Yogi Bapa in my house, I started chanting "SwamiNarayan." Within ten minutes, despite the heavy rain, Bapu's younger brother, Arunbhai, came to my house and said, "Bapu is calling you." Hearing this, I was overjoyed. Our master is always listening - pray, and he answers immediately.

ACCEPTED MY WISH

Bharatbhai Mehta, Tardev

The following is another incident that took place in 1970. I regularly attended the weekly spiritual meetings to listen to Kakaji's discourses. But because there were a lot of people I was unable to meet him. Being new, I really wanted to meet him on a one-to-one basis. The meetings were held on Sundays in Kandivali - I figured if I went to Tardev, I would get the chance to personally meet Kakaji.

In those days, Babu conducted the Sunday meetings in Kandivali. So I asked him, "Would it be alright if I went to the Tardev temple on Sunday?" Babu explained, "Since the meetings are here, it would be better to come here." From the beginning, I had high regard for Babu, so I followed what he said and stayed at Kandivali. But right when I came to the next meeting, Babu said, "Immediately go to Tardev. Kakaji is calling you to help write up an article." I became immensely happy.

He heard my desire, accepted my faith, and created an occasion to fulfill my wish. How generous Kakaji is!

YOUR WORD IS MY LIFE

Bharatbhai Mehta, Tardev

During the holidays in May and June of 1971, a month long youth seminar (*shibir*) was arranged in Vidyanagar. Harshadbhai conducted the seminar. I was new to the divine fellowship at the time. I participated with great enthusiasm, and was eager to contribute to the activities. All the youth were given a weekly program, and were asked to attend the prayer sessions. Everyone prayed for one hour thinking, "Yogi Bapa, please bless us so that we may better understand you." I sat on the steps of the terrace and prayed before an image of Yogi Bapa and Kakaji.

Afterwards, when I visited Tardev, Kakaji was sitting on the sofa along with Chandrakantbhai. After paying them my respects, I stood nearby. Kakaji asked me, "What do you want to do? Do you want to get married or live as a dedicated aspirant (*saadhak*)?" I did not know

how to reply. I remained standing, looking at Kakaji. He then said, "You are our Shantibhai - carrier of peace...you will distribute 'pills of peace' to everyone." Upon hearing this, Chandrakantbhai told Kakaji, "If you want him to distribute 'pills of peace,' then it would be better if he remain unmarried." Kakaji promptly said, "You should now live with the idea that there is no girl born for you."

From that day forward, all of my desires and worldly ambitions were extinguished. I was firmly convinced that nothing is required to be done. I firmly knew that I should wholly live according to Kakaji's wish – this became my life mantra. This was my first moment of spiritual bliss. To serve Kakaji and live the life he wants for me became my only goal.

Kakaji's command was my life; his memory, my vehicle of progress; and to live according to his desire, my spiritual discipline.

FORTUNATE TO HAVE THIS DIVINE ASSOCIATION

Bharatbhai Mehta, Tardev

Kakaji first went abroad in 1973. Before leaving, he insisted that we regularly adhere to the "Four Point Program (to read from a holy book, to do a good deed, to offer prayer in the morning, and to do repentance prayer at night)." Kakaji was going to be out of the country for four months. Vashibhai and I strictly followed the program with the intention of making Kakaji happy. When Kakaji returned, he was happy to see our progress. By the end of 1973, Kakaji called both of us to permanently stay at the Tardev temple.

This was the beginning of a life of "togetherness." I had the good fortune to live with seniors like Mahendra Bapu, Rameshbhai, Rajubhai Bhatt, Rajubhai Thakkar, and Harakhchandbhai, and friends like Hemantbhai Vashi, Arunbhai, and Ashwinbhai. Above all, I had the shelter of Kakaji and the love of Kantikaka. Staying with the fellow spiritual aspirants, it was like being moved from a small puddle to a vast ocean. I continued going to college while staying at the temple. At the same time, I remained busy in prayers and service.

He tested us and ensured that we would pass as well. He gave us strength and encouraged us to pray and serve; and if a trace of ego was found, he quickly removed it. He taught, "Do not feel inflated when someone flatters you, and do not feel despondent when someone scolds you." He prepared us to live a life of equanimity.

REMAIN IN GOD-CONSCIOUSNESS

Bharatbhai Mehta, Tardev

Kakaji frequently organized seminars at Lonavala, Matheran, and other places. In the short duration of the seminar, he gave us slogans and formulas that would take us further in our spiritual progress. I gained close personal contact with Kakaji during the small seminars.

The following incidence occurred while traveling with Kakaji for one of these seminars. The arrangement in the car was such that besides the driver, two more passengers had to sit in the front. The car was packed. Even the trunk was full. Kakaji insisted on keeping a bag near his legs so that those sitting in the back were not inconvenienced. When the car started, the devotees sitting in the back requested very humbly, "Kakaji, please give us the bag. We are not at all inconvenienced. Please do not take the trouble."

Kakaji replied, "Such things do not bother me; but the way you are so concerned bothers me." In a small matter like this, Kakaji gave us an important lesson: while you are in the company of a God-imbibed saint (*motapurush*), put your mind to rest and just be with him. Do not allow your own beliefs and opinions to interfere, but rather, just concentrate on him. It is important for a spiritual aspirant to only remain in God-consciousness.

SOAP OF HEARTFELT ONENESS

Bharatbhai Mehta, Tardev

All of the *saadhak* brothers (dedicated spiritual aspirants) lived together at Tardev under Kakaji's shelter. While in the process of collectively gaining spiritual height, each person also tried to please Kakaji in his own way. Our desire to please him was good, but what he really wanted could only be known if he told us.

One time, there was a discussion about what soap we should get for Kakaji. One brother suggested, "This time, we shall order 'Jasmine' brand soap. Its fragrance is good and it is not slippery." Another suggested, "'Lux' is better. We have been using it from the beginning. Otherwise, we should get 'Cinthol,' but no other inferior quality soap." Yet another brother explained, "This time, I have decided we should get 'Pears' soap since it is transparent. It is made from glycerin, and is soft."

Similarly, each person suggested a preferred soap – we could not come to a conclusion as to which soap to get for Kakaji. So all of us brothers approached Kakaji and asked, "Kakaji, which soap would you prefer? Kakaji, realizing that there had been much debate upon the topic, looked at all of us and said, "I would like to use the soap of heartfelt oneness (*suhradbhaav*); even if it is made from clay, I will accept it."

The incident was simple. But it shows Kakaji's real desire for us brothers to act in unison and with a sense of togetherness. Yogi Bapa's slogan, "Heartfelt oneness is the divine way of life" was portrayed by Kakaji in this incident. On many occasions, he exhibited his preference of togetherness and friendliness.

MASTER OF SIMPLICITY

Bharatbhai Mehta, Tardev

Kakaji always welcomed suggestions from his colleagues. If he organized a program and if a colleague suggested a change, Kakaji would change the entire program according to the other person's convenience.

Once, a program had been arranged to visit the areas of Saurashtra and Manavadar. Letters were sent out and tickets were booked. Just a few days prior to departing, Popatbhai Tanna came in the morning to see Kakaji at Tardev. He was a regular visitor. Kantikaka was also present at the time. Kakaji told Popatbhai, "We are going to Manavadar. Can you and Kantikaka arrange a welcome reception for Becharkaka who is arriving from London?" Popatbhai replied, "Kakaji, your presence here is essential." Kantikaka also requested, "If you stay back, I could take my car and accompany you to Manavadar. We can go together by car." In his characteristic manner Kakaji agreed, "Good, the program is cancelled." He thus cancelled the trip to Manavadar, and remained present for Becharkaka's reception.

Referring to this incident Kakaji told us, "Look, what have we lost in behaving in this manner? By agreeing, Kantikaka came with us by car. Further we were able to accommodate three more devotees." Kakaji's mathematics were simple yet profound. That is why we call him the master of simplicity!

ACT AS DIRECTED

Hemantbhai Vashi, Tardev

When I first came in contact with Kakaji in 1972, I was in my third year of college. During vacation time, I visited the Tardev temple. At the time, Mahendra Bapu regularly came to conduct spiritual meetings. This is how I became associated with the divine fellowship's activities. Mahendra Bapu devoted much of his time for us youth. I was delicate and skinny. Although I was in college, I looked as if I were a young child in grade school. Kakaji very affectionately addressed me as "*bachudia*" or "little kid" and loved me as he would his own son. Though I participated in the activities of the divine fellowship, I did not have deep knowledge. I just loved Kakaji, like a child loves his father. He would not speak to me about religious matters - he just reciprocated my love.

I remember once when Kakaji received a call from Bangalore. It was around four in the afternoon and Natubhai, Shardaben, and Vithaldas requested Kakaji to come visit them in Bangalore. I was standing next to Kakaji at the time. After the call ended, Kakaji asked me, "*Bachudia,*

would you like to come to Bangalore with me?" Rameshbhai had taught me that whatever Kakaji asks, just say, "Yes." So I replied, "Yes, Kakaji, I will come." This was the first instruction he had ever given me.

Kakaji then told me, "Bring a railway concession (a discount on train fares for students) from your college tomorrow." The next day when I met our college's Vice Principal, he said I could only use a railway concession to visit my home town. Remembering Kakaji, I told the Principal that Bangalore is my hometown (even though it really was not). The principal insisted that I give it to him in writing, and I finally received a concession form.

At the time, Nilkanthbhai rendered the service of reserving tickets for our organization. So Kakaji told him to book a reservation for me from the Dadar station, and make sure that I got on the train. But because of the short notice, I was unable to get reservations. Nilkanthbhai told me to remember God and just get on the train - there would probably be an empty seat available for me. Remembering Kakaji, I sat in the unreserved compartment.

I was a bit scared because this was the first time I traveled as far as Bangalore on my own. The person sitting below me realized that I did not have a booked seat. He said to me, "I have a sleeper and a window seat. When I occupy this seat, you can sleep on the sleeper. And when I need to sleep, you can sit in the window seat." By God's grace, sleeping and sitting accommodations were arranged for me, and I reached Bangalore safe and sound.

Kakaji arrived at Bangalore the next day. It was the first time I went with Kakaji as his assistant (*sevak*). At night, I asked Kakaji if I could massage him and relieve some of his fatigue. Since I was frail, I was not able to exert much pressure. Nevertheless, Kakaji showed appreciation for the little services I offered.

After blessing devotees at Bangalore and Vellore, Kakaji returned to Mumbai by flight. At the time, a spiritual seminar for youths was arranged in Ganeshpuri. Jashbhai Saheb, Haribhai Saheb and many saints were to attend. Kakaji told me to go straight to the Ganeshpuri seminar with Natubhai.

It took twenty-four hours to travel from Bangalore to Ganeshpuri. I was tired when I reached there, but Kakaji told me to participate in all of the activities. I replied, "Kakaji, I am not prepared for the contests. I do not know anything." But Kakaji encouraged me, "Remember God and everything will be okay." Remembering God, I participated in every competition - essay writing, debate, singing devotional songs, and the memory competition. On the last day when awards were given out, I won first prize as the Best Seminar Participant, and received Kakaji and Saheb's blessings. I learned that whatever you do at the insistence of a God-imbibed saint (*motapurush*), the results are bound to be the best.

WORSHIPPER

Hemantbhai Vashi, Tardev

In 1973, Kakaji accepted the invitation to celebrate Swami Ramtirth's 100th birthday. By then I had already started living at the Tardev temple. A few days after my moving in, Kakaji said, "From tomorrow onwards, you shall perform the *mahapooja* (ritual worship of God and His devotees)." I did not know how to perform the *mahapooja*, nor could I even recite stanzas in Sanskrit. But with Kakaji's word, I started performing the *mahapooja* regularly. I do not know how it was possible - but somehow I managed to do it. Doing this has proved to be invaluable in my life - the responsibility helped me become a true 'worshipper.'

SECOND LIFE

Hemantbhai Vashi, Tardev

I started working for Meso Pvt. Ltd. in 1983. At the time, the company opened a new factory in Kandla (near Gandhidham), Gujarat in June, 1983. Since I was new employee, I spent many hours there and worked hard.

Jitubhai Shah, Dineshbhai Patel, and other staff members working at the Kandla site all experienced an evil spirit at the factory location. Thus they requested me to conduct a *mahapooja* (ritual worship of God and His devotees) there. When I informed Kakaji about this, he told me that we would arrange it soon.

In January, 1985, Kakaji agreed to come to Kandla. Our production manager, Dineshbhai Patel, was very pious and had great respect for Kakaji, and so, he requested that Kakaji stay at his home during his visit to Kandla. With Kakaji's blessings, he has become a successful businessman today.

Mahendra Bapu, Rameshbhai Soni, and I came on January 12, 1985. Kakaji had planned to take a flight from Mumbai the following day. Though we booked a hotel room for Kakaji, he preferred to stay at my manager's home. Kakaji did a *mahapooja* at the factory and also prayed for the prosperity of Meso Pvt. Ltd. Since then, Meso has grown and remained steady despite economic instability.

Along with Bapu and Rameshbhai, Kakaji had lunch at Dineshbhai's house. When Kakaji went to rest, Dineshbhai and I thought that we could go back to the office, and come back by evening and arrange a gathering for others to meet Kakaji as well.

We did not have a car at the time, so we traveled by Luna motorcycles from his residence to the factory. Prior to that time, I had never driven a scooter before and so I carefully followed Dineshbhai on his side. On the way, a big truck came speeding from behind and started honking his horn. Not knowing what to do, instead of moving to the left, I swerved to the right and the truck struck me at full speed. The truck slowed down and came to a halt. Shocked and grief-stricken, the bystanders all searched for my body under the truck. Stunned, Dineshbhai thought, "What will I tell Kakaji?!" Though my motor-bike was totaled, miraculously, I came out from under the truck with just slight scratches!

Dineshbhai and all the onlookers were shocked to see me alive. I truly felt that Kakaji came to Kandla at that particular time just to give me a second life. Today, whenever I visit Kandla, remembering Kakaji's grace brings tears to my eyes.

As planned, that evening, there was a gathering - Dineshbhai reserved a hall for a large meeting. But because of the holidays and since we were new to the area, very few people actually came. Bapu, Rameshbhai, Dineshbhai and I were all embarrassed. But Kakaji was unmoved. He gave a discourse as if there were thousands of people there. Such was Kakaji's equanimity.

INDISCRIMINATE GRACE

Hemantbhai Vashi, Tardev

There is a Jain devotee by the name of Jadavjibhai, who is in close association with many Jain saints and groups. He regularly visited the Jain temple in Mulund, Mumbai.

He was particularly in contact with a woman saint who suffered from migraines. When Jadavjibhai talked to her about Kakaji, she requested Kakaji to come visit and bless her. Due to Jain custom, she herself could not travel long distances.

When Jadavjibhai talked to Kakaji, Kakaji happily went to Mulund and met her. He told her to chant while remembering her spiritual master.

After many years, when the lady saint visited Mumbai again, she specially asked Jadavjibhai if she could, this time, visit Kakaji's place. She had completely recovered by Kakaji's simple prayers! Jadavjibhai explained to her that Kakaji had passed away. The lady saint was moved to tears and said that Kakaji would live in her memories forever.

THE GREAT LIBERATOR

Hemantbhai Vashi, Tardev

Kakaji was once sitting on the sofa in Tardev, looking out the window while in deep thought. After some time, he looked at me and asked, "Who is history's great liberator?" I replied, "Abraham Lincoln." Kakaji, pleased with my answer, called me near and patted me on

the back. Then he said, "Sahajanand Swami was the greatest liberator! He took souls beyond illusion." I soon experienced this in Kakaji's company.

My family lived in Kandivali. Whenever I went to Tardev, my mother asked me to say 'Jay SwamiNarayan' to Kakaji. Thus I regularly told Kakaji, "My mother says 'Jay SwamiNarayan.'" During vacation time in 1972, I, along with Bharatbhai, Arvindbhai, Sandeepbhai, etc, went to Tardev daily. I silently prayed to Kakaji that my attachment to my home and family not get in the way of my spiritual progress.

That year, Mahendra Babu's sister, Bhartiben, was to take initiation into sainthood and permanently go to live at Gunatit Jyot in Vidyanagar. Thus many people came from Kandivali to see her. Her mother, Savitaben, was crying, and many devotees including my mother were consoling her. When I came to Tardev, I showed off to Kakaji, "Savitaben was crying, but my mom did not cry!"

Hearing this, Kakaji replied, "In that case, we have to conduct a drama!" All of us were always excited when Kakaji would do such things; this time, Kakaji's divine play was to help me progress. Kakaji said, "Tell your mother, 'I am going to become a saint. Hariprasad Swamiji is initiating the first group of saints, and I am nominated to be part of the saints' group.'"

I happily went home and that same night, told her as planned. Immediately she began crying; she cried so much that the next morning, her eyes were swollen! I realized what Kakaji had done. He removed my worldly attachment for my mother, and her worldly attachment for me. By Kakaji's grace, we created a new spiritual relationship. When I told Kakaji what happened he laughingly remarked, "It is easier to give advice than practice it in one's life."

SIMPLE INITIATION

Hemantbhai Vashi, Tardev

In 1973, at the behest of Anand Swami of the Bharat Sadhu Samaj (Society of Indian Saints), Kakaji helped celebrate Swami Ramatirth's centenary in Delhi.

I helped collect donations by visiting the Bharti Vidya Bhavan, the Premपुरi Ashram, the Sadhu Bela Ashram, the Mahalaxmi temple, etc. during the mornings and evenings. Hence, though I lived in Kandiwali, I stayed at Tardev at the time. When the work ended one day, I approached Kakaji who sat on the sofa under the window. He was eating lunch, so I offered rice, and then said, "I finished my work for Ramatirth's centenary. Jivanbhai is going to Kandivali - I can go home with him." Kakaji replied "Home? This is your home." That was my only "initiation." From that time forward, I lived at Tardev.

On July 7, someone told Kakaji it was my birthday. After the meeting on Sunday, Kakaji called all the devotees and said, "Vashi, you continue to tolerate everyone's scolding, and you will attain a state like Bhagatji Maharaj!"

FOR THE BENEFIT OF SOULS

Hemantbhai Vashi, Tardev

All of Kakaji's actions were for the benefit of souls. I obtained a Bachelor's in Commerce in 1973. Mahendra Bapu took me to Kakaji and requested that I continue my studies by completing an L.L.B. (Bachelor of Laws). Bapu figured in the future it would be nice to have a lawyer in the divine fellowship.

But Kakaji knew I was very hyper, both physically and mentally. To divinize my hyperactive nature, Kakaji told me to get a degree in Chartered Accountancy (C.A.). To complete a C.A. while staying at the temple was next to impossible. But Kakaji saw to it that I successfully completed the C.A.

During *mahapooja*, Kakaji used to put an apple or coconut on my head so that I sit still, and then tell me to chant. Kakaji then told me to repeat, "Pass, pass." Thus by his mere grace I obtained the C.A. degree. When it was time to get an internship, Kakaji set up incidents such that I was in touch with the right contacts. Though I progressed professionally, Kakaji's aim was to channel my energy to bring maturity. In all ways, I thank him for my development.

THINK BIG

Hemantbhai Vashi, Tardev

Like Shastriji Maharaj and Yogi Bapa, Kakaji accepted financial difficulties. Due to which, I always had the desire to raise funds for Yogi Divine Society. In 1983, when I joined Meso Pvt. Ltd., Sampat Kebra, Mangal Bhandani, and I planned to setup a fundraiser consisting of an evening of devotional songs sung by a famous singer, Anup Jalota. I humbly told Kakaji about our plan, indicating our target was to raise 100,000 rupees. Kakaji blessed me and said, "Always think big! You will raise 125,000." As it turned out, we raised exactly 125,000 rupees!

EVERY PRAYER REACHES KAKAJI

Rameshbhai Soni, Tardev

In 1977, I went to Sri Lanka with Kakaji, Bapu, and Harshadbhai Bhatt. Kakaji stayed at one devotee's home, while Bapu, Harshadbhai and I stayed elsewhere together.

One night, I dreamt that Kakaji was not able to sleep because of mosquitoes. I, thus, prayed for Kakaji's rest. The next morning, I asked Kakaji whether he had any difficulties sleeping that previous night. Kakaji replied, "Yes, there were a lot of mosquitoes, but thanks to your prayer, I slept and rested well."

TOGETHERNESS WILL MAKE YOGI BAPA HAPPY

Rajubhai Bhatt, Tardev

In Yogi Bapa's words, the Tardev temple is the "center of Akshardham" or "Akshardham *nu takhat*." It was the reservoir from where spiritual intimacy originated or "*aatmiyata ni Gangotri sthaan*," and for many years, the place where Kakaji incessantly talked about the glory of keeping heartfelt oneness (*suhradbhaav*) and a divine intellect (*nirdoshbuddhi*). He taught every aspirant at the temple to live with friendliness (*maitribhaav*), and never see faults in others - he taught to see Yogi Bapa in all.

Once, many devotees from Mumbai planned to attend a function in Vadodara, Gujarat. Kakaji and Kantikaka were going to go early, so Kakaji said to me, "Raju, prepare a list of devotees, book their tickets, and bring everyone safely to the celebration." When I made the list, I had to book tickets for seventy devotees. To book the tickets, I went to the train station early in the morning, and stood in line for several hours. At one time, I was only able to get a certain number of tickets. Thus to get all of the tickets, I had to go to the station many times. It also so happened that devotees would daily call to change their travel plans. They would say, "Three people have dropped, and so only two will come on the trip now" or "We now want to go early, so book our tickets for an earlier day." Others would call and say, "Cancel two of our five group tickets." And all the while, most of the payments had not even been made. To compound the problem, at the station, often the reservation required would not even be available, and alternative seats were assigned.

Because of the frequent changes, I became very tense. And if I told devotees to give me a definitive plan, they would remark, "Kakaji invited us to attend the celebration." This really made me frustrated. I wondered what to do? Many thoughts clouded my thinking. So I decided to directly talk to Kakaji about the matter. After a few days, Kakaji returned and I told him everything. I argued with him, "Frankly, I do not know how to deal with this situation."

After patiently listening to my arguments, Kakaji advised, "See Raju, such things will always happen. You should not be bothered. Our only aim is to serve and please Yogi Bapa. You should not tell devotees anything. If anything is missing or appears wrong, you can blame it on me. Yogi Bapa is the only truth. To please him, we would tolerate anything. Also, we have to work together. That will make Yogi Bapa really happy. If you feel there is even a minute breach in keeping heartfelt oneness, then leave everything to Yogi Bapa. Whatever happens is his responsibility. We should remain worry-free. Yogi Bapa is omnipotent - he will arrange everything. Do not feel pressured. Remain joyful and know that Yogi Bapa is always with you." In this way, Kakaji gave me a lot of strength, removed all my difficulties, and I became at ease. Kakaji thus taught me how to best serve God's devotees.

DO YOU BELIEVE?

Rajubhai Bhatt, Tardev

One evening Kakaji was chanting in his usual energetic way along with a few youth and devotees. After forty-five minutes, he said, "Let us meditate for two minutes." Everyone closed their eyes and started meditating. During the meditation Kakaji said, as he always did, "Who are you? To whom do you belong? Who is Yogi Bapa?" He continued, "Take a deep breath. Fully inhale and then stop. With all your feelings recite, 'Dear Maharaj, Dear Swami, purify and strengthen my senses and conscious. Bless me so that my soul becomes a real devotee.' Now exhale slowly, up to the energy center below your navel. All impurities have now been removed."

After conducting this breathing exercise (*pranaayam*) three times, Kakaji said, "The world may not believe, others may not believe, but do you believe?" Kakaji's words touched me from deep within. Nevertheless, I thought, "Kakaji gave this slogan to all of us." Immediately, Kakaji repeated, "The world may not believe, others may not believe, but Raju, I am asking you, do you believe?" Hearing this, I became stunned and was thoroughly convinced that Kakaji is aware of every thought we make." He talked to my inner-soul and awakened me. How gracious he was! When I accepted as he said, he looked at me and said, "Raju, this is your slogan." From then on, Kakaji kept me alert by repeating this if I ever appeared inattentive during a dis-course.

"The world may not believe, others may not believe, but Raju, do you believe?" What a blessing!

DIVINE MATHEMATICS

Rajubhai Bhatt, Tardev

Kakaji's life was wholly God-centered. His only purpose was to make every soul that came in his contact liberated (*brahmroop*) and guide him on the path to God. Nandaji asked Kakaji to handle the operations for the Kurukshetra Pharmacy. For many years, the pharmacy incurred losses. The devotees who went there suggested, "We cannot run this

pharmacy. We are losing all the money we put in it." Kakaji replied, "I do not care whether the pharmacy earns or loses money - I want to give you the training to live in harmony, and live a God-centered life."

In the same manner, Kakaji supported the celebration of Swami Ramtirth's centenary. It was a huge success. Because of this, Mr. Pageji, Chairman of Maharashtra State Legislative Council, Mr. Pohekar, Indo-Japanese Association President, and Mrs. Lilavatiben Munshi, wife of the renowned writer, Kanaiyalal Munshi, were all very impressed.

A brilliant thinker and physician, Pageji often said, "I have seen Kakaji sitting on a high pedestal in a big meeting, and also serving as an ordinary worker. He accepted any situation, and remained carefree and happy. Kakaji exemplifies the man of equanimity described in the Bhagavad Gita." Enthusiastically, Pageji was ready to participate in all of the programs organized by Kakaji. What a deep impression Kakaji made in the hearts of all!

CONCERNED WITH EVERY SOUL

Rajubhai Bhatt, Tardev

Kakaji wrote the book Panchyagna in 1981. The book needed to be printed within seven days. All the relevant matter was ready, but the preface by Nandaji (Former Prime Minister of India) was left to be done. I casually asked Kakaji, "We have matter for the preface from Papaji, Hariprasad Swamiji, Mukundjivan Swami and others. Why do we need to additionally get it from Nandaji?" Kakaji replied, "You would not know. We want Nandaji to write a few words. After insisting on having Nandaji's preface, he kept one blank page in the book for him."

Soon after, Kakaji went to the United States. I also went with him as his assistant (*sevak*). There, Kakaji had a discussion with Chadrakantbhai's son. He asked many questions, so Kakaji offered Panchyagna, and told him to read it at his own leisure. The boy however asked, "Is there an authoritative person who recommends the book?" Kakaji replied, "Yes, the 'First Man' of our country. Who is America's 'First Man'?" The boy replied, "President Regan." Kakaji then explained, "India's 'First Man' is the Prime Minister." Kakaji then

opened the book and showed him the review of the former-Prime Minister of India, Nandaji. Happily, the boy accepted the book. Kakaji had the foresight to please every soul.

EVERY ACTION IS PURPOSEFUL

Rajubhai Bhatt, Tardev

When Kakaji went abroad, he accordingly wore a pant and shirt. To protect from the cold, he wore socks and *mojdi* (shoes worn in Indian villages). Normally people would wear shoes with pants, so the *mojdi* looked odd. Many times we suggested to Kakaji that the *mojdi* did not match, and that instead he should wear regular shoes. But Kakaji insisted on wearing the *mojdi*. Once while waiting at the subway station in New York, Kakaji stood in a spot such that coming down the stairs, only his *mojdi* were visible. Only after coming down could Kakaji's face be seen. Seeing his *mojdi*, one passerby commented, "How nice." Kakaji immediately looked at us and playfully said, "See, everyone who sees the *mojdi* appreciates them."

I am fortunate to remember such divine actions of Kakaji. When we returned to India, Kakaji sent a letter to the devotee who made the *mojdi*, and encouragingly said, "Your work was greatly appreciated abroad." This made him very happy.

There is always a purpose behind every action of a great God-centered person. But due to our narrow and mundane vision, we cannot always appreciate them. As a result, we may question his actions. But his grace is infinite. He demonstrates that his actions are not logically guided, but God-guided, and thus strengthens our faith. Kakaji was most generous!

HE HELPED ME REALIZE MY FAULTS

Harakhchandbhai Shah, Tardev

Kakaji always worked towards changing the basic inherent nature of every devotee that stayed with him.

Kakaji repeated the subject in order to give clues to the aspirant brother (*saadhak*). Kakaji then allowed him to find his own solution. He would then express an immense satisfaction which would bring peace and happiness to the aspirant.

Tardev was a mixture of devotees of different natures and temperaments. Naturally there was some friction amongst those living together. This allowed our inherent natures and habits to be exposed, and lead to progress. It also helped shine our good qualities and special talents. Our end desire however was to please our master, Kakaji. Times that we may have mistakenly seen a fault in fellow devotees, Kakaji gave us correct insight and made us understand that all is done by God, others are His divine instruments.

Once it so happened that I fell victim to my inherent nature. Hearing about the matter, Kantikaka called me to his house and scolded me. Since I did not believe I was at fault, I became upset. Kantikaka's words of reprimand made me tense. I tried my best to look past the incident, but the harsh words kept arising in my thoughts. It made me restless and so I decided to go for a walk. I returned back to the Tardev temple after five hours.

At the time, Kakaji was sitting in his room with another aspirant brother. Since it was tea time, I went to the kitchen to prepare tea for him. A devotee brought a few snacks that day, so I took the snacks and tea to offer to Kakaji. The door was closed, and both of my hands were holding the tray, so I kicked the door open with my foot. However, at the same time, the devotee inside went to open the door. The door thus slipped from his hands and I fell back spilling tea all over myself. I screamed as my shirt was stained, and my hands and legs were burned. Kakaji got up and asked, "What happened?" I replied, "He let go of the door and scorching hot tea spilled all over me!" Upon hearing this, Kakaji immediately corrected, "The door slipped...God did this."

In response, I did not say a word. I put the tray back in the kitchen and applied lotion to the burnt skin. Later, when I felt better, I came back to Kakaji. Again, he asked the same question as before, "What happened?" to which I again replied, "The brother let go of the door and the hot tea spilled all over me!" Again Kakaji corrected, "The door slipped...God did this."

That day, Kakaji asked me the same question several times to which I answered with the same response. Each time Kakaji corrected me in the same way. Kakaji asked me the same thing one more time before I went to sleep. I casually replied, "God wanted it to happen." Kakaji smiled with a sense of satisfaction, "Yes, God had done it." Right then, the pain went away and as if ice was placed on my burnt skin, I felt a soothing sensation!

Afterwards, Kakaji called me and offered sanctified food (*prasaad*). He handed me two sweets (*pendaa*) and said, "You eat one and give the other to Kantikaka." I went to Kantikaka with the sweets with a sense of apprehension. Since he scolded me that morning, I found it difficult to approach him. I thought he would get upset with me again. But when he saw me, there was a smile on his face. I was pleased that he happily accepted the sweets. My disturbing thoughts disappeared and as if nothing happened, my heart danced with delight.

When I think of this incident, I realize how much Kakaji wanted devotees to progress. Kakaji had his own unique method of training us to cultivate friendliness (*maitribhaav*) and harmony. He gave us every opportunity to correct our shortcomings and at the same time instilled in us a sense of great spiritual intimacy (*aatmiyata*). Who can bring about such a transformation of nature except the enlightened saint (*ekaantik satapurush*) who is in tune with God? We are grateful to him for his patience and for his distinctive teaching method.

BALANCE YOUR MIND

Harakhchandbhai Shah, Tardev

By way of small incidences, Kakaji tested how far we succeeded in imbibing his teachings. He tested our patience to the point that we would almost explode! At the end, we witnessed the purification he wanted to give us.

For a time, I handled the banking work for our non-profit society. Kakaji assigned all the banking work to me, including depositing money in the bank, bringing cash, depositing checks, and keeping the bank account in order. I thought everything was running smoothly, but Kakaji wanted to test my progress. He once told me, "Bring me the

balance of all of our accounts." So I went to the bank and retrieved the balances. The second day, he again said, "Get me the balance of all of our accounts." So again I went to the bank and got the balance again. This soon became a regular occurrence. Almost everyday, even if there were no new transactions, Kakaji asked me to get the balance. Yet, Kakaji continued asking me for the balance!

Naturally, because I asked for the balance everyday, the bank officer became angry with me. He would say, "Why do you want the balance everyday?" What could I tell him? I struggled and fought with my mind – but it was difficult to maintain composure. Two months passed and was really frustrated. So I finally told Kakaji, "The staff members are becoming upset with me. They ask me why I ask for the balance everyday. Do we not have any other work to do? Keep a separate diary for yourself." In reply, Kakaji only smiled. But since that day, he stopped asking me for the balance.

Kakaji taught me how to take proper responsibility for things, but also tested my patience and assessed how long I could fight my mind. In various ways, Kakaji trained us and helped us transcend our crude nature.

HELP ME RELINQUISH MY EGO

Harakhchandbhai Shah, Tardev

It was afternoon teatime. We prepared a sweet pudding that Kakaji liked. When I gave Kakaji the pudding, he tasted it and asked, "Who made it? It is good." I immediately replied, "Kakaji, I made it!" To guide me, Kakaji affectionately said, "When the God-realized saint (*motaapurush*) asks like I just did, you should say, a '*sevak*' has made it."

Kakaji gave me a clear-cut understanding that went straight to my heart. How compassionate he was in guiding us to serve with humility.

OFFERING SERVICE TO GOD

Harakhchandbhai Shah, Tardev

Kakaji always gave us useful hints in small incidences as well as our daily routine. I often went shopping for food like rose apples. All the way to the market, I chanted "SwamiNarayan" and brought back the softest, biggest, and juiciest apples. It was my nature to buy the very best, and never compromise in quality.

Once I bought superior quality sweet apples and affectionately offered them to Kakaji. With appreciation, Kakaji said, "Whenever you offer something, it should be with the feeling that 'I am offering these sweet apples directly to God, and God is accepting them.' Then your sweet apples will directly reach God." In a few words, he convinced me that when offered with warmth, even the smallest offering reaches God directly. Thank you Kakaji!

WE WANT TO BLESS THEM

Ashwinbhai Patel, Tardev

Kakaji's income tax return for the year 1952 had been cleared. However, after 25 years, the case was reopened due to a complaint made at the instigation of an individual. When a case that was settled reopens after a span of 25 years, one naturally becomes alarmed and annoyed by the harassment of the Income Tax department. When Kakaji received the notice, he coolly said, "We want to bless the Income Tax Commissioner." Kakaji was assisted by Mr. Shinde, an income tax consultant, Mr. Bhadkamkar, a chartered accountant, and a devotee, Batukbhai Nathwani. Kakaji discussed the matter with them and asked to make an appointment with the tax commissioner, Mr. Gandhi. On the day of the hearing, as we drove to the Commissioner's office, three of us advised Kakaji, "Just do not say anything to the Commissioner, we shall take care." We expressed intimidation due to the Commissioner's government position. Kakaji heard our advice patiently but did not say a word.

When we entered the cabin, Kakaji began speaking with Mr. Gandhi in a fearless and straightforward manner. Respectfully, Kakaji said, "What kind of department do you have? You kill a person, bury him,

and then exhume his body – then again, you infuse life in him, kill him, and again rejuvenate him. This case was settled 25 years ago! There is no question of tax recovery. Why then did you send this notice?" Upon hearing Kakaji, the Commissioner was impressed. He understood the matter in its proper perspective and called for the Assistant Income Tax Officer to retrieve the file. He then told the Officer to close it. The Officer hesitated and so the Commissioner got up, took the file from him and remarked, "Proceedings Dropped."

Mr. Gandhi then offered a cup of tea to Kakaji and became his friend. He used to come to Tardev on occasions to seek Kakaji's blessings, feeling composed and peaceful in Kakaji's company. Kakaji even settled a marriage problem Mr. Gandhi's daughter faced. Kakaji had the innate capacity to simplify any complicated problem and most importantly, make the opposing party feel the presence of God.

GREAT COMPASSION

Ashwinbhai Patel, Tardev

Here is an incident that took place in 1980. Kakaji arranged a program to go to Ganeshpuri by car, with me as the driver. Between Malad and Kandivali, he told me, "Ashwin, I shall take you to see some ruffians - let us go to Borivali first. I would like to pay a visit to the house of a devotee who came to Tardev yesterday."

It so happened that this devotee promised a few individuals jobs in Dubai and in return charged them 300,000 to 400,000 rupees. But he took their money without following through with his promise. They were thus after him, demanding, "Either give us work in Dubai, or refund our money. Otherwise you will face disaster!" The devotee was scared and so, to save himself from them, he often came to Kakaji. At the time when Kakaji's excommunication took place, this very person strongly opposed Kakaji! But, in his time of need, the devotee approached Kakaji.

I knew this episode well. When Kakaji told me about this man who had the habit of duping others, I thought, "Why should Kakaji be involved? If these people were to misbehave, I would not be able to control my temper." Therefore I suggested that Kakaji should not visit

him, but instead go straight to Ganeshpuri. But he insisted on going. I argued with Kakaji and accelerated the car as Borivali was bypassed. Kakaji understood my intention and firmly told me, "Ashwin, reverse the car or I shall get down." Helpless, I turned the car back towards the devotee's house. As we reached, we saw the devotee waiting for Kakaji by his front door.

He had lighted lamps in his hands and was chanting. As we entered, about seven hoodlums were already seated. They had come in the morning and locked the devotee's wife and daughter-in-law in a room. They said that they would leave only after their money was returned. This was the reason why he had called Kakaji to come. Kakaji went inside and sat with the hoodlums and a Gujarati broker who accompanied them. The broker angrily said, "Return our money or make an arrangement for jobs in Dubai." Kakaji replied, "Oh, is this the matter? I can settle this within two days. I know a person there – I will speak to him and settle everything. But don't harass this man." After the discussion and compromise, the unwelcome individuals left. We then proceeded towards Ganeshpuri.

Upon reaching our destination, Kakaji went to bathe. At the time, the hoodlums from the devotee's home also arrived there. They followed us all the way to Ganeshpuri and wanted to discuss the matter further. Kakaji again met with the group and gave his assurance. He then told the Gujarati broker, "There is no need to harp on this matter. Please try to understand. I am here today - when you come again, I shall not meet you."

After two days, at seven in the morning, we went to the house of an acquaintance that ran a construction company in Dubai. He had great regard for Kakaji. Explaining the incident of the devotee and the hoodlums, Kakaji told him, "You have to help. Call these people in your office and take their interviews so that they will be satisfied." A few days later, he took the interviews and helped the unemployed ruffians.

Later, after Kakaji had passed away, the Gujarati broker had come to the Tardev temple. He had remembered Kakaji's words. "I shall not meet with you when you come again." The broker also expressed his sorrow that he had made a person of Kakaji's stature do this work.

Kakaji had put his life at stake because the person was a devotee of God. He helped the devotee even though the devotee had opposed him in the past. It was compassion at its highest peak.

BLESSINGS TO STAY

Ashwinbhai, Tardev

From 1973, I lived at Tardev and worked for Kantikaka's company, Anir Transport. Before that, I stayed in Vidyanagar where I completed my studies. While in Tardev, I often became sick. Due to this, I thought of moving back to Vidyanagar. I thought, "Because of my sickness, instead of me being able to offer my services, everyone has to take care of me. If I remain sick, I will go back to Vidyanagar." Once, Rajubhai expressed these feelings of mine to Kakaji. Kakaji then approached me and said, "From today, your sickness is gone. I have made a prayer for you to God. But do not think about going anywhere else." The very next day, to my surprise, my medical reports came out normal. The doctors were so amazed that I was asked to have a second report completed. Thus, by Kakaji's mere wish, I was cured. On the occasion, Kakaji wrote two things in my personal diary: (1) Take the strength of the saint we have met, and (2) Joyously offer service to everyone – then you will never get tired.

ANYTHING FOR SAINTS

Ashwinbhai, Tardev

Kakaji labored day and night to fulfill Yogi Bapa's vision of creating 51 qualified youths as saints. Many insulted and abused Kakaji, but Kakaji happily tolerated everything for them. Aslo, after they became saints, Kakaji took care of them with all his heart. For Kakaji, saints were dearer than his own life.

Once while traveling to Gandhinagar by car, some saints who accompanied Kakaji mentioned that they needed to go to Ahmedabad for some work. When Gandhinagar arrived, Kakaji asked me to stop the car. Kakaji stepped out of the car and insisted I take the saints further down to Ahmedabad and to wherever else they needed to go.

Kakaji explained that he would take a rickshaw back home. When the saints urged Kakaji to take the car, I could only tell them, "I have to follow Kakaji's wish. And I know that saints are his highest priority!"

JUST TO REMOVE THE ASHES

Rajubhai Thakkar, Tardev

My family has been devoted to Lord Swaminarayan and the divine fellowship since my grandfather's time. By Lord SwamiNarayan and Shastriji Maharaj's grace, I was fortunate to be born into a family dedicated to the worship of Akshar-Purushottam and blessed by Yogi Bapa. Thus from childhood, I have been a part of the divine fellowship. I loved Yogi Bapa, and I would never miss the opportunity to listen to him and see him.

When I was seven years old, Kakaji and Papaji came to Mahendrabhai Gandhi's home in Santa Cruz. My mother, Pushpaben, took me there. While I was playing, Papaji looked at me and told Kakaji, "What a loving child." Kakaji took me on his lap and told Papaji, "He is ours."

Since then I visited the Tardev temple with my parents every New Year's Day to get Kakaji's blessings. In 1967, Kakaji came to our home on the occasion of my sister Jagrutiben's birthday. He came along with Rameshbhai Soni, Rajubhai Bhatt, Ghanshyambhai Amin, Prafulbhai, and Ashwinbhai. On the way to my home, Kakaji told them, "His fire is already ignited - we are going there just to remove the ashes." Kakaji, our eternal protector, bestowed special grace on me as well as my entire family. He accepted me for the path of dedicated service to Lord SwamiNarayan, and I became a part of the Gunatit Samaj.

He envisioned my relationship with God, took full responsibility for my soul's progress, and gave me immense bliss. I pray to understand the full glory of his divinity.

EVEN THOUGH HE WAS OMNIPOTENT

Rajubhai Thakkar, Tardev

By Kakaji's pure love and grace, I got to permanently move into the Tardev temple and live as a dedicated aspirant. Kakaji gave practical training to each aspirant. He could identify their level of understanding and support them accordingly. By creating incidents, he imparted divine knowledge to us.

One evening, when I returned to the temple from work, Kakaji said, "Raju, we have to go out." We took a taxi to Paaydhuni, where it began to rain very heavily. Both of us were thoroughly drenched. There were no taxis nor any other means of transportation available to go back to Tardev. So we had no option but to wait in the torrential rain.

Finally, we found a bus that headed in our direction. After we boarded, I asked Kakaji, "Why did we face this hardship?" Kakaji replied, "God is teaching us spiritual discipline."

Kakaji was omnipotent. I knew that just by his wish, the rain could have stopped, or as many taxis or cars as we needed could have been in our service. But Kakaji lived with the wish of Lord SwamiNarayan. And as if to teach me an important lesson, he gladly accepted this inconvenience and came back to Tardev by bus. Although omnipotent, he shined with the greatest saintliness. I learned that the one who is not the slightest bit aware of his powers and does not indulge in magical displays, but is only interested in imparting divine lessons of saintliness to his disciples is the true God-realized saint (*gunatit saadhuh*). All of us aspirant brothers appreciate the simplicity and spiritual discipline with which Kakaji lived.

BY HURTING A DEVOTEE, YOU HURT GOD

Rajubhai Thakkar, Tardev

Around 1975, I suddenly fell sick. I continuously vomited, and was not getting better. Lalita-aunty gave a lot of medicine, but the vomiting continued. All of the brothers living at the temple took care of me. My bed was in the middle room, while Kakaji was in the adjoining room (the temple hall at Tardev, from where Kakaji lectured sitting on

the sofa). In spite of knowing that I was very sick, Kakaji did not come to see me even once. As each day passed, I became weaker and more tired. Although I took the necessary medications, my condition did not change. The doctor tried one last thing but said, "If he does not improve, he will have to be admitted to the hospital immediately."

At the time, Chandrakantbhai regularly attended the special morning prayers (*mahapooja*) and talked with Kakaji and Kantikaka. When he found out about my health condition, he told Kakaji in a friendly manner, "You cure everyone outside by blessing them, but do not care about our own boy. Why should he be admitted to the hospital?" Upon hearing this, Kakaji came to me for the first time and sat with me on my bed.

He asked Rameshbhai to prepare tea and made me drink it with his own hands. He then told me, "Eat *khichdi* (rice cooked with lentils) this afternoon." When I did, the vomiting stopped! Gradually, my health improved. Previously, I did not even have the strength to walk to the doctor's place. Kakaji showed happiness at my recovery.

But he later explained the reason behind the sickness. He said, "You have a habit of playing jokes on people. Because of the habit, you hurt a devotee. As a result, God created this incident. From now on, do not play any jokes that would hurt a devotee." Listening to Kakaji, I immediately recalled an incident in which I badly hurt someone. I realized my mistake and thus offered a repentance prayer.

If Kakaji did not create the incident, I probably would have continued with my bad habit, which would have been detrimental to my progress. Kakaji made me realize my mistake and demonstrated his infinite compassion.

I pray that every action, word, and thought are in accordance to his wish, and that even by mistake, we do not hurt devotees.

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF KAKAJI

Arunbhai, Tardev

Kakaji wakes up from bed between 6 and 7 in the morning and switches on the light. A devotee prepares his tea while someone enters his room to get his blessings. Kakaji speaks with the devotee there or goes to the main hall and talks with the devotee there. After tea is served, he recites the verse, "*Vaani amrutathi bhari*" (verse in remembrance of Yogi Bapa) and begins chanting. Gradually more devotees arrive and join him. During the chanting, he throws a towel at Bharatbhai, suggesting he eat breakfast and leave for work. The chanting continues for forty minutes followed by conversations with devotees. It is now between 8 and 8:30 AM, and he says, "Arun, it is time for shaving." Kakaji uses an ordinary Gillette razor, and while lathering and shaving he continues to talk.

Sometimes the water used for shaving gets cold and has to be re-filled. At other times, Kakaji is so engrossed in talking that the shaving cream on his razor dries up. Thus, it takes forty-five minutes for him to shave. Divyaben then brings breakfast. While eating, Kakaji continues on with his talks. Kakaji hardly eats his breakfast. His food remains on his spoon and plate and his tea on the saucer. By then, everyone else goes to eat breakfast or to their jobs. Next, Kakaji assigns the daily tasks and instructions to those present.

At the time, Vashibhai conducts the morning ritual prayer (*mahapooja*). After looking over the newspaper, Kakaji calls out to me loudly, "Let me take a bath." He then tells Vashibhai and the other devotees present, "Continue chanting, I will return after taking a bath." Sometimes the hot water is ready for his bath, but then he starts talking again and a half hour passes. Other times, he gets up to take a bath, goes to the rest room instead and comes out within a minute. He then goes for a bath quickly and comes out in only a few minutes. As I am waiting in Kakaji's room ready with his clothes, Vashibhai chants vigorously in the main hall. While wearing his *dhoti* (lower garment), Kakaji points towards Vashibhai and says, "See how engrossed Vashibhai is...let us also join in chanting for two minutes." While expressing his happiness for Vashibhai, Kakaji wears a half-sleeved shirt. After sipping some water, he joins Vashibhai in chanting. After some time, Kakaji gives a signal to Vashibhai to go and ask other

devotees to join him in chanting. After reciting a line from a devotional song, Kakaji meditates for a while. He ends by reciting the final verse of the *mahapooja*, "Saakshaat Akshardham Divya..." and sanctifies water by touching it with divine items of Lord Swaminarayan and Shastriji Maharaj. Kakaji distributes the holy water to the devotees present and takes his seat on the sofa to begin his discourses. At about 10:15 AM, Divyaben brings milk for him. He drinks half of it, and gives the rest to a devotee or asks them to return it.

If Kantikaka is present, Kakaji takes him into his room and talks to him. If Popatbhai, Chandrakantbhai, or other devotees are present, Kakaji conducts the meeting in the main hall. During this, I am busy with routine temple activities and Divyaben, busy with cooking. In the meantime, if a devotee comes, Kakaji calls and asks me to offer him tea and breakfast.

It is now about 11:30 AM and Kantikaka leaves. Kakaji starts a discourse in the main hall. If no one is present, Kakaji sits in the chair and reads Swami Ni Vato or another book such as 'Synthesis of Yoga' by Maharshi Aurobindo. In the meantime, Divyaben enters with lunch for Kakaji. Other devotees come and Kakaji talks to them while eating. Frugal in his eating habits, he hardly eats half a bread (*chapaati*). After lunch, he continues again with his discourses. It is now 1:30 PM as I stand near the door and signal to him. Kakaji replies, "Yes, let me take rest" and asks me to wait. After the talks, he starts chanting once again and at times, goes on for twenty minutes more. After chanting, he says, "Is there any difficulty? How much time did it take? Only so much - so cultivate the habit of remembering God." He then tells me, "Distribute sanctified food (*prasaad*) to all who have come." In a light mood, Kakaji explains, "Do you know the meaning of sanctified food? It means you should eat whatever portion of food that is served to you on your plate. No second servings." He then goes to the bathroom while humming the devotional song, "*Jivanama Jogine Laiye Samaavi...*" If during this time, he remembers a point of discussion, he comes out of the bathroom and talks to the devotees concerned for five to ten more minutes.

It is now about 2:00 PM and Kakaji leaves to take rest. I also go with him. In the meantime, if he desires to talk to someone, he calls him in his room. After completing his discussion, he calls loudly to me,

"Arun, massage my legs before I go to sleep." Now, alone with him, Kakaji asks, "Your hands may ache; just stand on my calf muscle instead." After some time, he signals and asks me to massage his other leg but I persistently massage him using my hands. At times, ten devotees vigorously massage him at once. And after twenty minutes, Kakaji asks and tells all of us, "Did you eat anything? This is just the beginning." When I am alone with him, so that I do not get tired, he tells me, "Keep it up." After some time, he puts his hands on his head and tells me to push his forehead. After a few minutes, he tells me, "That is all" and while naming all the devotees who are present at the temple, he says to me "Ensure that all of them have had their lunch."

Leaving Kakaji's room, I close the door behind me. I go to serve food to all the devotees and wash the pots, pans, and dishes. After resting, Kakaji comes out from his room. It is now about 4:00 PM. He sits on the sofa with folded legs. If someone is present, he starts chanting with him which continues for nearly an hour. In the meantime, Divyaben comes with snacks. She places the dish on the table in a manner that it draws attention. Kakaji then stops the chanting by saying "Sahajanand Swami Maharaj Ni Jay," recites two stanzas of a devotional song and asks everyone present to meditate. As the meditation continues, the snacks stay on the table. Those serving the food anxiously wait to draw Kakaji's attention. When a devotee returns to warm the snacks again, Kakaji ends by saying "Sahajanand Swami Maharaj Ni Jay."

While drinking tea and eating snacks, Kakaji asks someone sitting to read the Vachanamrut or Swami Ni Vato. Sometimes, while eating he says, "I need to have soft and boiled food, not fried food. Do you know how many items can be made from wheat?" Since a discourse for women is held from 4:00 to 6:00 PM, he then asks a lady devotee to sing a devotional song. During the discourse, as Kakaji explains the difference between universal and visible (*pratyaksh*) God, he calls out to me, "Arun... O... Arunbhai." Immediately, I rush to his side while he explains to everyone, "This is visible." At 6:00 PM, devotees think about leaving, and Kakaji starts chanting once more. After continuing for twenty minutes, he addresses everyone, "You can leave immediately" and asks Divyaben, "Give them tea and snacks."

Around 7:00 PM, the young aspirant brothers (*saadhaks*) all return to the temple and Kakaji's discourses and chanting has already started again. Sometimes chanting precedes *aarti*, followed by *svaroopyoga* (meditation on God through one's spiritual master) which continues for an hour. During the session, he asks us all, "Who are you? To whom do you belong? How is Yogi Bapa?" Kakaji continues with the "live" mantra.

In the meantime, dinner is also served. As it is now 8:30 PM, while eating, Kakaji gleefully distributes sanctified food. I give Kakaji a cup of milk and he takes a few sips. He then gives the rest of it to devotees and asks those going home to take their dinner at the temple. To those devotees living at the temple, he would give in simple terms the purpose of life.

Around 11:15 PM, he goes to the bathroom before resting. At times, he keeps talking even while getting a massage. After ten or fifteen minutes, he says, "That is all right" and when devotees know that he has gone to sleep, they will slowly come out of the room one by one. While drawing a blanket over his shoulder, Kakaji again gives instructions to someone. The last devotee leaves the room, and Kakaji goes to sleep. Around 1:00 AM at night, he gets up to go to the bathroom. He walks through the other rooms and ensures that everyone is covered with blankets. If displaced, he tidily covers them with a blanket and returns. He then sits and prays for those devotees facing problems and reads Swami Ni Vato or some other religious text. As he reads, he takes notes and later writes out his thoughts. It is now 5:00 AM. After waking up, Ashwinbhai and Harakhchandbhai go to Kakaji's room for blessings. Kakaji says, "Give me massage" or "Call Bapu to give me a massage." He then goes to sleep and comes out of his room once again between 6:00 and 7:00 AM.

KAKAJI'S DIVINE PERSONALITY

Arunbhai, Tardev

When a devotee is faced with problems, Kakaji approaches him to help him. When a new visitor or devotee from out of town visits him, Kakaji helps him according to the person's circumstances and solves their social and spiritual problems. If need be, he sits with them sepa-

rately. Whoever goes in his room depressed and weeping comes out smiling and experiencing a new found intimacy with Kakaji. Before he leaves, Kakaji makes him chant for at least 20 to 25 minutes. Kakaji tells him about the greatness of Swamiji, Papaji, Saheb, and other saints and devoted sisters; about the magnanimity of Shastriji Maharaj and Yogi Bapa; and about the supremacy of Lord SwamiNarayan. Kakaji gives the devotee a vow to pray and chant everyday. If there was an evening of devotional songs or chanting planned, Kakaji gives him a special invitation and also adds, "If your work is done, commit yourself to invite our devoted brothers for dinner." Sometimes, he gives them sanctified flowers. When a new devotee becomes emotionally charged and gives a rather large contribution, he only accepts a small amount and returns the rest.

Sometimes when he is ready to visit devotees' homes, perform *mahapooja*, visit some sick person, or visit Powai, I would want Kakaji to change his slightly crumpled upper garment (*kurta*). But he immediately tells me, "I do not want to change - it is fine with me." Even when he had to attend a wedding, and I requested him to change his lower garment, Kakaji refused my suggestion and said, "It is fine with me." And when I would insist on it, he would humorously tell me, "I am not going there to get married."

On his upper garment, he wears a saffron colored jersey and a scarf that looks like a tie. He wears this for the entire day. In winter, he wears a saffron sweater and a cap. After 10:00 AM, when it gets hot outside, I ask him to take off the sweater and cap, but he replies, "No, I will catch a cold; let it remain." Sometimes, he would take it off on his own.

In the early days, Kakaji wore white Indian shoes (*mojdi*). He always wore the saffron colored ones, and preferred them over other quality shoes. At times, he wore shoes just to make other devotees happy, but ultimately, he preferred the Indian shoes.

During his tours, he always took less clothes and luggage with him. If extra items were put in his bags by a devotee, he would take it out. He did not like to sleep on fine bedding or keep a jug of water. At times, he bluntly said no to our requests. But on occasions, he carried along water with him just to make devotees happy.

For Kakaji, it was enough to have Yogi Bapa's slightest association. Nothing else mattered. Such was his sacred vision.

He considered the problems of each member of the entire Gunatit Samaj as his own. With a firm conviction, he called upon the magnanimity of Lord SwamiNarayan. He prayed ceaselessly and made others pray. For the entire day, Kakaji spent his time talking, singing devotional songs, and chanting. Devotees would come and go, but Kakaji remained steadfast. His enthusiasm, joy and spirit remained at its highest peak. It was not necessary for him to pray, but he spent at least six to eight hours praying each day. He kept chanting and talking for up to 16 hours a day, and while at Tardev he would read and write for at least 3 hours.

Many times Kakaji said, "I do not require someone to help me. I am capable of serving myself." During his travels, he often told those helping him, "You appear tired running here and there. Who is young, you or me? Those helping him became really tired, but they were always enthusiastically ready to massage Kakaji. Kakaji allowed them to do so, but after two minutes, he would tell them to take rest. If a devotee asked to give him a massage, he would say "Yes" but within five minutes, he would get up and tell them, "I am fresh now." It was as if he agreed to their request just to bring happiness to them. Kakaji in fact served whoever accompanied him. He would make sure that the assistant had eaten and looked after where he would sleep, etc. Many times, Kakaji waited for the devotee, and even kept snacks and tea ready for him.

Kakaji adjusted himself according to the circumstances and always looked to the convenience of others.

His simple daily routine had a deep divine meaning. It is difficult to understand him from a worldly vision. But if we maintain faith in all of his actions and divine play on earth - according to the Vachanamrut - all faults of ours will be eradicated. Our crude nature will be transformed and divinized.

We feel at peace by remembering and singing about the divine play and commands of the manifest God-realized saint (*pragat brahmsva-roop*). If that divine remembrance remains etched in our memory, we will remain eternally happy.

EVERYDAY SAINTLINESS

Arunbhai, Tardev

There was a street-vendor who sold roasted chickpeas around the Sonawala Buildings area that visited the Tardev temple on a few occasions. He heard a great saint lived there, but had never got the opportunity to meet Kakaji face to face. When Kakaji saw him once, he called him upstairs. Delighted, he came with a basket of chickpeas to offer to God. I took the food and offered it to God per Kakaji's wish. When Kakaji blessed him, he said, "My son recently graduated from college. He found a job, but the employers need a reference. Considering our status in society, I do not know who can give him a worthy reference." Kakaji explained, "Do not worry at all. I'll come with you right now, and we will go meet the employers. He should definitely get this job!" At that very moment, Kakaji went to the employer and secured the son's job. The street-seller came to tears with Kakaji's generosity.

WON OVER BY HIS COMPOSURE

Ashwinbhai, Anoopam Mission

Knowing Yogi Bapa's wish, Kakaji played the role of a pathfinder and diverted me towards God. Jashbhai Saheb asked me to remain in Yogi Bapa's service. My family, however, did not approve of my decision to join the group of dedicated aspirants. One day my brother approached Yogi Bapa and took me back home. At the time, Kakaji gave permission to me to go home. He promised that he would come to my house after a week and take me back. When Kakaji came home the following week, he joined us for dinner. While serving him hot bread, my mother scolded Kakaji. Kakaji remained unperturbed and went on eating happily. She soon stopped and Kakaji sat for some time after dinner. Kakaji patiently explained to her about my chosen path, took me with him, and placed me in Yogi Bapa's service. Even today, I fondly remember the composure with which Kakaji handled the incident. I will forever remain grateful to him.

CONSTRUCTIVE EFFORTS TO GUIDE ME TOWARDS SAINTLIHOOD

Ashwinbhai, Anoopam Mission

When I lived in a college hostel, it was our great fortune that Kakaji visited us. His discourses were incessant and pleasing. One day at around 9:00 AM all of my friends went to class or to their respective work, and I was left alone with Kakaji. He began his discourses and made me read excerpts from the Vachanamrut and Swami Ni Vato. All of the talks were related to the essence of saintliness: how the happiness of this world was temporary; what would make Yogi Bapa happy; and that the purpose of life was to lead a saintly life. He talked to me until 5:00 PM making me securely believe that I was born to lead the life of a saint. I prayerfully pay my respects before Kakaji for his untiring efforts to help me progress towards God.

APPRECIATED THE GLORY OF ASSOCIATION

Dr. Sanandbhai, Anoopam Mission

Those who desire to gain God's blessings should consider Kakaji's birthday as an auspicious day. A divine being like Kakaji descended on the earth to spread divine radiance. He passed through life's phases of happiness and sadness seemingly like an ordinary human being. But in it, he gave us the glimpse of a spotless life, and brought us closer to God. With his humility, he continuously served others and made everyone who came in his contact come closer to God. He was the first to live a life totally dedicated to Yogi Bapa. Having totally surrendered himself to Yogi Bapa, he imbibed all of his qualities as well. It was my great fortune to have a glimpse of his divinity, humility, omniscience, saintliness, simplicity, his capacity to understand our innermost thoughts and feelings, and his union with Yogi Bapa.

Kakaji personified detachment. He never expected anything from anyone. I witnessed an example of this for the first time at Tardev, Mumbai.

A devotee's relative was once coming to Mumbai from abroad by sea. He brought with him lots of gold and other items, but unfortunately came across a passenger who was a swindler. Not realizing the

person's character, he told him, "I am alone and have more baggage. It will be difficult to carry it outside the terminal." The deceitful man assured him, "Do not bother. I will help you take your baggage outside." The relative was persuaded by this friendly gesture and trusted him with the baggage. But after disembarking from the steamer boat, the devious man came out of the terminal and disappeared with the baggage. The relative became distressed because he could not complain either - gold was not allowed to be transported. Ultimately, he took a cab to Tardev and informed Kakaji of everything that happened. Kakaji replied, "Do not bother. Everything will be alright."

Kakaji sent people in all directions from morning till evening. Miraculously, the thief was captured, and all of the items were recovered and returned to the relative. The relative was extremely happy because he had otherwise left all hopes of recovering his baggage.

Kakaji worked hard to ensure the baggage was recovered. The devotee's relative however did not show any appreciation - in fact, he did not even pay the taxi fare. But Kakaji was happy to help. How detached he was! One could understand having regard for Yogi Bapa's devotees - but this person was just a relative of a devotee. Yet, Kakaji only considered his association, and thus offered all he could. Kakaji was very happy serving all those who had the slightest association of Yogi Bapa and his devotees.

KAKAJI'S STERLING QUALITY

Dr. Sanandbhai, Anoopam Mission

Kakaji was extremely humble. I witnessed one such incident in Anand. While standing on the steps of the temple, a devotee who was prejudiced against Kakaji started saying horrible things to him. Though Kakaji listened to him patiently, I was enraged and decided to teach him a lesson for his rough language. So I looked at Kakaji to seek his permission. But with his eyes, Kakaji made a gesture for me to remain calm. After his outburst, the person finally went away. All of us had returned to our hostel in Vidyanagar. Kakaji sat with us as if nothing happened and began discussing other topics. In fact, he spoke highly of the devotee. I could not contain myself and was still seething with anger. Reading my thoughts, Kakaji told me, "*Raja*, we

have to eat sweet-pudding and bread (*shrikhand-puri*) at his house." At the time, sweet pudding and bread was a popular food item, but I could not understand why Kakaji mentioned it to me. How could we ever think of going to his house and eat such good food? I could not understand his reasoning.

Upon returning home, the angry devotee felt guilty for what he had done. Because he yelled at a true devotee of God, he became restless and disturbed. In this confused and low state, he went to Yogi Bapa and narrated the story. Yogi Bapa replied, "Kakaji is very humble and a beloved devotee of Shastriji Maharaj. You cannot behave in such a manner with him. Ask for forgiveness and invite him to your home for a sweet pudding-and-bread dinner." The next day, the devotee went to Kakaji, begged for forgiveness, and with folded hands invited everyone to have dinner at his home. As if nothing happened, Kakaji went to his house with all of us and had dinner with him. His friendliness brought peace to the devotee.

OMNISCIENT

Dr. Sanandbhai, Anoopam Mission

Everyone is aware of the incident at Gondal in 1952 when Kakaji attained spiritual realization (*saakshaatkaar samaadhi*) by Yogi Bapa's blessings. Sonaba very often talked to us about the spiritual realization. She explained, "After the incident, Kakaji can read our innermost feelings at every moment. He has the ability to interpret our thoughts and tell us exactly what is going on in our mind. He is omniscient."

After hearing these talks from Sonaba, I felt that because of Yogi Bapa's grace, it must have been true at the time. But just as it is cool only as long as one stays in an air-conditioned room, I wondered if Kakaji still had such great ability. But very soon, I experienced his omniscient powers.

Here is an incident from 1968. Dr. V.S. Patel and I were traveling by motorcycle from Anand to Vadodara. I was driving and Dr. V.S. Patel was sitting on the back seat. We were driving at full speed behind an Ambassador car. All of a sudden, without any warning, the car forcefully braked to take a turn. We were following the car so closely that even if

we braked, our motorcycle would have hit into the car. I thought that we were going to hit - but seeing a small ditch on our side, I turned my bike into it, and we both safely jumped off. If the timing was even just a little off, we would have got into a bad accident. I became angry at the driver of the car, but Dr. V.S. Patel told me, "Let them go, we do not want to cause any trouble." So we pulled the motorcycle out of the ditch and proceeded towards Vadodara. After finishing our work we decided to stop by at the Sankarda temple before going to Anand. Climbing the steps of the Sankarda temple, we saw Kakaji standing, as if he was waiting just for us. Right away he asked, "How did you come?" I responded, "On my motorcycle." Kakaji asked me, "Who was driving it?" I said, "I was driving it." Reprimanding us, he said, "*Raja*, we have not come on this world for this! Do not drive a motorcycle any more! God protected you." Hearing Kakaji's words, we were both stunned. We just entered the temple and Kakaji told us everything that happened on the highway. Dr. V.S. Patel and I did not tell Kakaji about the incident, and yet he knew everything. Indeed, divine spirits like Kakaji know everything. That particular day, he gave a glimpse of his omniscient powers.

Since that day, I stopped driving a motorcycle. We committed many such mistakes but Kakaji tolerated it. That was his greatness. We salute Kakaji who clearly saw everything like the palm of his hands.

GOD IS EVERYWHERE

Dr. Sanandbhai, Anoopam Mission

In 1982 I visited Chicago, USA and stayed with Dinkarbhai. Dinkarbhai's house is Kakaji's temple. In the temple, Kakaji installed the image of Lord Swaminarayan and Gunatitanand Swami. I thought that Kakaji and Yogi Bapa are one, and so the image of Lord Swaminarayan enshrined should be alive. With this thought, I resolved that as long as I stay with Dinkarbhai, I do not want to see anything about the material world. I should only visit devotees' houses. I stayed for a week in Chicago, and spent all of my time chanting and praying. I never saw anything else of this world, other than devotees. One day, we planned to go to a tourist location. But the devotee driving the car could not

find the place, and we ended up going straight to another devotee's home. In my visit to Chicago, I was blessed to remain in constant contact with a divine saint like Kakaji.

HUMILITY

Dr. V.S. Patel, Anoopam Mission

Kakaji played a supreme role in the life of us eight initiated brothers at Vidyanagar. Kakaji often told us, "The ultimate state of spirituality - where devotion is coupled with religion - is to remain in unity. All of you should live with togetherness. Success will then be yours."

Since the inception of the Akshar-Purushottam Hostel in Vidyanagar, we began living a divine life with Kakaji. Kakaji came to our hostel and taught us to serve devotees with great respect and see God in everyone. He often said, "We should not find faults with others; we should serve them humbly, and see Yogi Bapa in all of them. Our goal is to please Yogi Bapa."

During the construction work of the hostel, Kakaji lived with us like an ordinary student. He could have stayed in Anand or Vidyanagar, but he decided to stay at the hostel with us in Room Number 18. This way, he spent time with us and gave us proper guidance. We asked Kakaji to stay in Room Number 18, while all of us slept outside on the lawn under a mosquito net.

One night, we came late to the hostel. Exhausted, we forgot to put an earthen-pot filled with water in Kakaji's room, and went straight to sleep. At night, Kakaji wanted to drink water but found the jar empty. So at 2 AM, he went out to fill the pot. The room where water was kept was far away from Room Number 18. Seeing someone in the dark, I got up and shouted, "Who is it at this time?" As I turned around, I saw Kakaji standing near the door of the room with the earthen pot. I immediately got up, ran towards the room, took the pot from Kakaji's hand, and said, "Kakaji, why did you take the trouble of getting the water yourself? You could have awakened us." Kakaji replied, "I came here according to Yogi Bapa's wish. If you forgot to fill the pot, I should go and fill it myself." Kakaji was indeed the personification of humility, and his only goal was to please Yogi Bapa.

ALL DIVINE SAINTS ARE ONE

Dr. V.S. Patel, Anoopam Mission

Here is an incident from the time we first started the manufacturing company, Anoopam Adhesives. Jasubhai Bhatt of Ahmedabad came to our factory at Vidyanagar for some work. He informed Papaji that the Nasik Government Printing Press consumes a large amount of dextrin based gum. He suggested that if we contact the Nasik Press, we could procure a sizable order. And so, Papaji called Saheb and discussed the matter with him. It was decided that I should pay a visit to Mumbai and meet Kakaji to negotiate with the Nasik Press. Saheb and Papaji told me, "You can go to Mumbai, meet Kakaji and go to Nasik with him to complete this job." With these instructions, I boarded the night train and reached Mumbai the next day at 7 AM. Whenever I visited Mumbai, Kakaji asked me to stay comfortably at Tardev. When I reached there, I saw Kakaji sitting on a sofa in the hall. I was happy to see him in white clothes in the same posture as I always did when I went to Tardev for his blessings. On seeing me, Kakaji said, "V.S., you are welcome." I bowed down, wished him "Jay SwamiNarayan" and sat down. Kakaji asked me, "Why have you come to Mumbai? How many days are you planning to stay?" I informed Kakaji, "Dextrin gum is used in a substantial quantity at the Nasik Press. If we contact them, we can get a sizable order. For this, Papaji and Saheb have sent me to Mumbai. They suggested that I accompany you to Nasik and return after completing this work."

After hearing me, Kakaji thought for a while and said, "What time can you get a train going back to Vidyanagar?" I did not understand his question since I just told him about going to Nasik. Why was he asking me for the time the train leaves for Vidyanagar? I answered, "A train to Vidyanagar will only be available at night." Kakaji then said, "Return to Vidyanagar by the night train." What could I say? I came with specific instructions from Papaji and Saheb to return only after completing this work. And here Kakaji was asking me to return to Vidyanagar by the night train? I was thoroughly confused, but since it was Kakaji's wish, I returned to Vidyanagar without a single negative thought.

That same night, I returned to Vidyanagar, where Papaji and Saheb gladly accepted the decision. I realized how united all divine saints are. Kakaji often told us, "All of us are one. Do not entertain any thoughts about us - it is not your subject."

After a few days, we found out that the Nasik Press in fact does not use dextrin-based gum. They instead used the gum made from the bark of a thorny tree. If we had gone to Nasik, it would have been a futile exercise, and we would have returned empty-handed. I realized why Kakaji asked me to return to Vidyanagar instead of going to Nasik. He was indeed omniscient. Just as clearly we can see a drop of water in our palm, Kakaji saw and knew everything. He used his omniscient powers to protect us.

RELY ON THE MASTER, NOT ON THE MEANS

Ratibhai, Anoopam Mission

From around 1964, Kakaji visited Vidyanagar frequently to see the progress of the construction work of the Akshar-Purushottam Hostel. In order to collect funds, everyday he visited nearby places along with Saheb and Shantibhai. They would return to the hostel late, around 11:00 PM. After returning, he would have dinner, talk to us, and go to bed around 2:00 AM at night. All of us would be fully exhausted and half-asleep, but Kakaji continued his discourses.

Very often during the discourses, he forewarned, "We are helping to build this hostel to please Yogi Bapa. Tomorrow, if Yogi Bapa orders to vacate the hostel, even after having built it ourselves, we should do so without hesitation. That is the true meaning of dedication and service. This hostel is just an instrument; Yogi Bapa is important, not the hostel." Kakaji repeated this during his discourses. So when the time came to actually leave the hostel, no one hesitated. Because the activity of constructing the hostel was only undertaken to please Yogi Bapa, there were no qualms leaving it. We are very fortunate that Yogi Bapa brought us in the contact of a divine figure like Kakaji, so that we could try to understand the underlying meaning of Yogi Bapa's true mission and wish.

DIVINE MEMORIES

Ratibhai, Anoopam Mission

When Kakaji visited Vidyanagar to see the progress of the Akshar-Purushottam Hostel, many of us were still doing graduate work in the Science Department. We already paid our college and hostel fees, but because of the construction work, we were given accommodation in the bungalow of the registrar. During his visits, Kakaji stayed with us at the bungalow.

One day at 9:00 AM, Kakaji and I walked from the bungalow towards the hostel together. On the way, we came across a vendor selling sweets. Kakaji instructed, "Purchase some sweets. We will distribute them on the construction site as sanctified food." So I bought some and tied them in a handkerchief. On the way, Kakaji talked to me about many incidences with Yogi Bapa and Saheb. I became so engrossed in the talks, I forgot about the sweets I had in my hand. Unfortunately, the corner of the handkerchief became loose and one by one the sweets fell on the road. When we reached the hostel, I only had two left. In his inimitable style, Kakaji told me, "*Raja*, let us present the sweets to God." When I looked inside the handkerchief, I was disappointed to only find two left. Kakaji understood what happened, and so, he asked for sugar crystals from Chotukaka's home. He distributed the sugar crystals to everyone as an offering of God. Kakaji never said a single word of advice or reprimand. He only looked at my relationship with Yogi Bapa.

YOU ARE RIGHTLY PLACED

Yashodharbhai, Anoopam Mission

I was with Kakaji at the Gondal temple. From the very first time I met Kakaji I saw great divinity in him and had the highest regard for him. With Haribhai's guidance, I was very happy and excited to have the opportunity to serve Kakaji. From morning till evening, I served Kakaji in his daily routine like preparing dinner. For the whole day, I remained deeply involved in "Kaka...Kaka...Kaka." Because of this, I was supremely blissful.

One day, I had the thought, "If Kakaji has the potential to give me such happiness, how much more happiness could Yogi Bapa give me?" I therefore decided to help Yogi Bapa with his daily chores. After attending and completing my duties with Kakaji, I went to Yogi Bapa. Half-way while taking his bath, Yogi Bapa looked at me as if he was displeased, and said, "You can go. Wherever you are, you are rightly placed. Go to the temple, and take circles around the image of God 100 times." I went to the temple and took 100 rounds around the temple per Yogi Bapa's order. This made me feel calm and composed. I got my answer from within that while in Gondal, I should keep serving Kakaji.

From then onwards, I never expressed the desire to leave Kakaji and go to Yogi Bapa. But whenever I saw Yogi Bapa giving spiritual discourses or doing his prayers, he would smile at me and give me much happiness. It was as if he was telling me, "Your happiness is in serving Kakaji."

FLOWER OF HAPPINESS

Yashodharbhai, Anoopam Mission

When Yogi Bapa inaugurated the new guest house at the Gondal temple, Kakaji was given a room on the upper floor. Haribhai gave me the keys to the guest house and told me, "Take this key. You have to take care of Kakaji." Thus I began assisting Kakaji.

Kakaji would get ready early in the morning to attend Yogi Bapa's divine discourses held in the temple hall (*Akshar-ordi*). His style of walking was very unique. He would hold the loose end of his lower garment in one hand, keep a shawl on his shoulders, and wear a white cap. In this way he walked back and forth between the guest house and the temple hall. After circling around the main temple shrine of Gunatitanand Swami (*Akshar-deri*), Kakaji returned to the guest house and began his discourses. This was his daily routine.

Yogi Bapa used to send all of the senior devotees to Kakaji so that they may take advantage of his discourses which would continue till late night. I often wondered, "Where is this incessant flow of wonderful words coming from?" I never saw Kakaji reading and yet he used

new words everyday whose meanings we had never even heard of. I wondered where he got such inspiration. Besides, Kakaji would never get tired of talking. I thought about this a lot, but I could not find the answer. My mind was puzzled, but I wanted to continue enjoying the pleasure of his divine company. I wanted to remain happily serving him.

Whenever I offered water, Kakaji would say, "This boy can read my thoughts. He knew I was feeling thirsty and so gave me water on time." Thanks to Kakaji, a bond of affection between us gradually grew stronger. Once when Kakaji was going for breakfast, I thought, "Kakaji should not have to trouble himself going to the lunch room. No...No, I should bring the food for him here, and make all the arrangements." My only wish was to serve Kakaji to the best of my ability. My heart throbbed with the name "Kaka...Kaka....Kaka." And Yogi Bapa heard this inner voice of mine.

At the main temple shrine, Yogi Bapa was offering prayers, with Kakaji seated next to him. After completing my work, I went to the temple and sat down such that I could see both of them. They looked at me as if they were just waiting for me. Their divine look upon me pierced my soul. Everyone remained meditating while I witnessed this divine spectacle. Yogi Bapa took a flower, smelled it, and gave it to Kakaji who wrapped it in a piece of paper, neatly folded it, and kept it in his shirt pocket. I joined the meditation, and effortlessly I was engrossed in the memory of Yogi-Kaka.

The next day, Kakaji gave me the shirt to have washed. I took that flower from the shirt, wrapped it in a piece of paper, and kept it on the window ledge of the bathroom while washing the clothes. But my mind kept thinking about the rose wrapped in the paper. My heart told me, "Eat the petals of the flower." But my mind would say, "You cannot eat a flower!" I never ate flowers, so how could I expect my mind to allow me to eat this flower? Soon I could not even focus on washing the clothes. I heard Kakaji saying, "Eat the flower." This internal conflict resumed until my mind was defeated and Kakaji's image which prompted me, won. I swallowed the sanctified flower that was given to Kakaji by Yogi Bapa, who in turn gave it me. The commotion within me settled and after washing the clothes I returned to the temple shrine.

Kakaji looked at me as I approached him there. He called me and pointing to his shirt, asked, "What do you call it?" I said, "Shirt." Kakaji then said, "Today I gave you my shirt to wash. Inside the pocket you will find a rose flower wrapped inside a piece of paper. Bring it to me." I laughed and said, "Kakaji, I have eaten it." Hearing this, while laughing also, Kakaji patted me on the back, and said, "You really ate it!" He lovingly embraced me and said, "I wanted you to eat the flower, and you really ate it. Now you will have to become a saint because the flower represented Yogi Bapa's love. Whoever ate the flower has to become a saint. Now tell me, what would you like to do?" I said, "I have never said 'No.' If you tell me [to become a saint] now, I am prepared."

Pleased with my answer, Kakaji said, "I hope, your parents will not refuse." I said, "I want to be a saint, and you have accepted me. Who can intervene now?" Kakaji replied, "Very nice," and that moment, Devshibapa of Manavadar came to the temple shrine. Kakaji told him, "Devshibapa, this boy ate the flower sanctified by Yogi Bapa - so he will have to become a saint." Devshibapa replied, "Is he ok with it?" Kakaji then said, "Yes, but what about his parents?" Devshibapa answered, "I am his father and I give him permission." Kakaji lovingly looked at me and said, "Now, I have the permission." Thus, Kakaji was happy and for the entire day he repeated this story during his discourses.

CHANGED ME FROM WITHIN

Yashodharbhai, Anoopam Mission

Whenever Kakaji visited 'Prabhu Krupa' (the Gunatit Jyot building where Papaji resides) in Vidyanagar, I would reach there early in the morning to assist him. Once, at 9 AM, I saw Kakaji and Papaji sitting there talking. Kakaji, humorously, said to me, "*Raja*, I want to change your name. When I recollect your name, I remember another person. So, I would like to change your name." Hearing this, Papaji told Kakaji, "Kaka, why his name only - change everything." Papaji then wrote three names on a piece of paper - Yashwant, Yahshodhar, and Yashkumar.

Papaji gave the paper to Kakaji and told him, "Select his name." Kakaji read the three names, showed me the paper, and asked, "Which name would you like?" I answered, "Whatever you wish." Kakaji decided 'Yashodhar' and happily patted me on my back. Both brothers called for sanctified food, distributed it, and Kakaji declared, "From today onwards, his name is 'Yashodhar.'" He then told me, "If someone calls you by your old name, ask him to fast. Ok?"

Whenever I met Kakaji, he would try and recall my new name, and then ask Papaji, "What name have we given him?" Papaji would answer, "Yashodhar." In this way Kakaji repeated my name 'Yashodhar' around four times and would say, "Now I will not forget." Kakaji thus imprinted the name 'Yashodhar,' and gave me a new birth.

ALWAYS IMMERSSED IN DEVOTION

Yashodharbhai, Anoopam Mission

When Kakaji accepted a sickness in 1982, he rested at 'Sonamrut' (a building in the Anoopam Mission campus, named after Sonaba) in Brahmajyoti, Mogri. At the time, I joined Arunbhai of Tardev to be in Kakaji's service.

One day, when I got up at 4 AM, I saw that the light in Kakaji's room was on. So I got up, opened the door slowly, and saw that Kakaji was busy reading Swami Ni Vato. After seeing him, I went back to sleep. The next morning, I asked Arunbhai, "Does Kakaji remain awake at night? Arunbhai replied, "Yes, early in the morning he reads Swami Ni Vato." I suggested, "We have kept Kakaji here so he gets rest. Why didn't you tell me? I only found out that he does not sleep much when I saw him awake last night."

The next night, I massaged Kakaji, and left the room after putting his glasses in the drawer of the table. Kakaji as well as Arunbhai soon went to sleep. But I remained awake to witness what Kakaji did. Just an hour later, the light in Kakaji's room turned on. I got up, opened the door, and asked, "Kakaji, are you not able to sleep?" Kakaji replied, "No, my legs are aching, so I got up. Wake up Arun so that he can massage my legs." I told him, "I am here. I will massage your legs." When I started massaging Kakaji, he fell asleep in just five minutes.

In the morning, I overheard Kakaji asking Arunbhai, "I can ask you, but not Yashodhar. Where are my glasses at night?" Arunbhai replied, "Kaka, Yashodharbhai keeps your glasses in the drawer of the table. And he keeps the key with himself."

I then joined the conversation, "Yes Kakaji, I keep your glasses at night. And from today, I will keep Swami Ni Vato in the drawer as well. Why do you want to stay awake at night? You do not have to take an exam!" Hearing this, Kakaji smilingly replied, "All right then, I will not remain awake. Complete rest, ok."

TEST BY TASTING

Yashodharbhai, Anoopam Mission

While Gunatitanand Swami's bicentenary celebrations were held at Rajkot, Kakaji accepted a sickness and was thus resting at Brahmajyoti, Mogri. I served him while he stayed at 'Sonamrut.' One morning, Kakaji asked, "Has anyone arrived from Rajkot?" I said, "Yes, Kakaji." Kakaji told me, "Call him, I want to hear all the news [of the celebrations]." Natubhai had returned from Rajkot after attending the bicentenary celebrations, and so, I went to call him.

I informed Natubhai, "Kakaji is calling you." Natubhai replied, "Why?" I explained, "Kakaji wants to hear about the celebrations at Rajkot." Natubhai then said, "Why don't you find a better person to give a report? What report can I give? I sat with the driver in the bus. What happened at the festival? Who addressed the audience? How many devotees attended? What kind of decorations were there? I could only tell you everything if I were there more. Please ask someone else." I explained to him, "There is no one else at the Mission now who visited the Rajkot festival. You are the only one. Besides, you do not have to give a detailed report. Say whatever you want. And at least you will have the opportunity to be in the divine presence of Kakaji." So Natubhai came to Sonamrut to see Kakaji.

Kakaji asked Natubhai, "How did the bicentenary celebrations go?" He replied, "Kakaji, it was a grand celebration." With Kakaji's word, Natubhai was able to give details of the event. Kakaji happily told him, "How nice. Let me give you some sweets that have been offered to

God." Kakaji asked Arunbhai to bring a bowl of sweets and gave it to Natubhai. Natubhai only ate a quarter of the sweets, while Kakaji ate the remaining portion.

The following day, Dr. Neelamben and Dr. Niruben visited Sonamrut and checked Kakaji's blood. When they found an increase in his sugar level, they immediately asked us, "What did you give him to eat?" We said, "We gave Kakaji whatever was sent for him from Gunatit Jyot." Dr. Neelamben replied, "It is not possible, how could the sugar level be so high?" They tested Kakaji's blood two more times, but still found the level high. Dr. Neelamben insisted, "Although you say that you didn't give Kakaji anything, surely he must have had something." At that very moment, Kakaji came out of his room and looking at Dr. Neelamben he asked, "Doctor, how is the report?" She replied, "Kakaji, the sugar level is high." Kakaji said, "It should be - I had a bowlful of sweets." We were surprised to hear this. I asked Kakaji, "Who ate the sweets, you or Natubhai?" Kakaji replied, "*Raja*, I tried to assess how high my sugar level would go up if I ate three-fourths of the bowl of sweets. Otherwise, I would not have eaten it. It was just to test." I interrupted, "What a way to test!"

KAKAJI'S CHANTING

Yashodharbhai, Anoopam Mission

This is another incident from the period when Kakaji had accepted a sickness. Kakaji chanted "SwamiNarayan" with every single breath. His life was filled with nothing but chanting - everyone witnessed this. Kakaji chanted loudly and continuously in a single breath. His method was unique and unmatched. He spent all of his leisure time continuously chanting.

Doctors suggested that continuous chanting would put a lot of strain on his heart, and advised that Kakaji should chant (silently) in his mind. But we did not know how we could stop him from chanting out loud. We repeatedly requested him to chant in his mind. However, for a minute Kakaji would chant in his mind, but then gradually he would go into his original loud chanting. This was his style – how could we stop it?

Ultimately, God gave us a solution. All three of us – Ghanshyambhai, Arunbhai and I - jointly decided that when Kakaji starts chanting, we should join him, but once he closes his eyes, we should one-by-one get up and leave.

The next day, Kakaji was chanting while sitting alone on a swing. When he opened his eyes, he did not find anyone there, and so he stopped. I went to him and asked, "Do you want to chant, or make others chant? If you want to chant, go ahead - why did you stop? And if you want us to chant, we will loudly chant as long as you want us to. You only have to chant silently with a rosary. You do not have to chant loudly. If you agree, we will do this." Kakaji replied, "Yes, agreed." After this, whenever he wanted to chant, Kakaji began by reciting verses remembering God ("*Shrimad sadaguna...*"), and we immediately started chanting out loud. Kakaji, then, continued chanting quietly with the rosary I gave him.

REVELATION OF WHAT WAS TO HAPPEN

Yashodharbhai, Anoopam Mission

When Kakaji passed away, Papaji, Hariprasad Swamiji and Kantikaka selected Brahmajyoti as the place to have the final rites. No one could believe that in fact, Kakaji himself had selected this place. However, it is absolutely true. Ghanshyambhai Amin, Arunbhai Shah, and I are witnesses to this fact. It was not possible to have his memorial shrine anywhere else, because Kakaji had selected the location himself!

While he was unwell, Kakaji rested at Brahmajyoti. The doctor advised him to walk in the morning and evening from Sonamrut, where he stayed, to the main entrance of Brahmajyoti. We would accompany Kakaji during his regular walk. But instead of walking northward, Kakaji walked east from Sonamrut. Leaving the paved road, he walked on a grass track. Many times we told him that we were supposed to walk on a different path, but he did not listen. Kakaji kept on walking, and after a small distance, he stood at the place which is today his resting place (the place of Kakaji's *samaadhi-sthaan* or memorial shrine). There, he would remain standing on the grass with his eyes closed for a few minutes, and then return. This became a routine. How could we understand Kakaji's divine gesture? I would tell Kakaji, "You have no

intention of walking. So you come here and wait. You avoid the longer route by waiting here." Hearing this, Kakaji would simply smile. So again I would say, "Because you do not want to walk, you ignore my request and just smile." Kakaji said, "Papaji has a habit of walking. I do not like to walk." In this way, he finished his walking.

Indeed, the place where his walking ended is where his memorial shrine is today! This was the place that Kakaji's cremation rites were performed. In my heart, the image of Kakaji walking to it is firmly etched. It is as if Kakaji is telling me, "*Raja*, I was standing here because this was to be my final resting place, and it will permanently remain as my memorial."

REPENTANCE

Umeshbhai Thakkar, Anoopam Mission

After my final exams in 1970, I went to Tardev during the holidays. During the day time, most of the other brothers went to work. Just two or three of us were there to assist Kakaji and listen to his discourses. And so, I regularly visited Tardev.

Once, while Kakaji was going to visit Delhi for a week, a devotee named Vilasben Shroff was sick. She lived in Khar, Mumbai, and had no relatives. I lived in Santa Cruz, and by train, Khar was the first stop from my house. So before going to Delhi, Kakaji instructed, "Visit Vilasben every few days. Sit there, offer prayers, sing devotional songs, and talk about the glory of Yogi Bapa." I agreed, but because I was young and had the company of many school friends, I forgot the promise I made to Kakaji and did not visit Vilasben even once.

After a week, when Kakaji returned, I went to Tardev. After bowing down to him, I became busy in my work. After a little while, Kakaji asked, "Did you go to Khar?" I had no answer when Kakaji told me, "Do you know that she passed away?" I was stunned to hear the news. I had made a huge mistake. Kakaji continued, "*Guru*, I asked you to visit her every evening so that during her last moments, she would remember the glory of Yogi Bapa, and her blessed soul would be liberated." Full of remorse, I kept listening. I thought, "What have I

done?" Kakaji finally said, "It is a good thing that I told Mahendrabhai Gandhi to also regularly visit her. Before going out of town, we always take precaution and advise two people."

Kakaji knew that Vilasben was going to pass away, and he fully knew the extent that I would be of help. Had I paid less attention to outside things, and paid more attention to Kakaji's advice, he would have been very happy. Since that day, I was diligent to fulfill all of Kakaji's duties for me.

I pray that I do not make the mistake of not paying attention to his words ever again. And as Kakaji wanted, I wish to serve everyone by seeing God in all and make my life blessed.

A DEVOTEE OF YOGI BAPA REMAINS POSITIVE

Gopalbhai Saraiya, Anoopam Mission

The following incident occurred twenty years ago. I worked as a clerk for an engineering firm in Borivali, Mumbai. The company had a workers' union that did not include the office staff. At the time, the company also had problems with workers going on strike. As a result the factory was closed for a month. About a hundred employees from the office would go to the factory everyday just to clock in.

My elder brother worked in the factory and I had a friendly relationship with all of the workers as well. Moreover being a devotee, I kept a cordial relationship with everyone, whether in the office or factory. During the hot days of summer, many workers sat outside the factory and held meetings that caused problems. When staff members or the managers arrived on the company premises, they shouted angrily and showered abuses on them.

As the relationship with the workers in the company deteriorated, a manager called a staff meeting to deal with their unruly behavior. He suggested that each staff member submit a complaint against the workers. He pressured me to write a complaint, and also told me to give a verbal complaint against the workers in the Labor Court. While problems were being discussed in the meeting, I remained engrossed in prayer and chanting.

I remembered Kakaji's divine slogan that "Yogi Bapa's disciples would never take part in negative matters. If he is in trouble, a devotee should remember Yogi Bapa and take his refuge only."

So while chanting, I thought, "I do not want to participate in any negative activities conducted by the office staff, union, or management." I prayed from within for God to help me. Within just a few minutes, my manager told me, "You Gujaratis are timid. I can see you sweating already." In front of everyone, he admonished, "You can go. This is not your job. You will not be able to stand witness against the workers." I left the room with a sigh of relief, remembering Yogi Bapa and Kakaji who helped me avoid this unpleasant task. I had been in a dilemma. If I were to give testimony against the workers, they would certainly be against me; and if I were to not testify, the office staff and management would oppose me. But Kakaji taught us to remember Yogi Bapa in all circumstances, and so Lord Swaminarayan protected me. At the end of the ordeal, a pleasant agreement was reached between the staff and the laborers. Per Kakaji's advice, I did not take part in any negative politics. I was happy from within, and when I narrated the incident to Kakaji, he showed happiness as well. Kakaji's guidance helped me overcome life's disturbing problems.

I still remember Yogi Bapa's advice to me at the Borivali train station in 1966. He said, "In spite of the presence of divinity on earth, 90% of people waste their time in negativity and gossiping, instead of looking after their own liberation." Even today, I remember these words, and Yogi Bapa's smiling face remains etched in my heart.

Yogi Bapa and Kakaji's divine slogan, "Keep away from negativity and gossiping" can easily be understood. I sincerely pray that since these two great saints have descended on this earth for our liberation, we should always remain positive.

SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP

Arunbhai Patel, Anoopam Mission, Manavadar

Here is an incident that took place in 1967. A devotee gave his gold ring to Kakaji to have it sanctified. Kakaji thus sanctified it by wearing it on his finger, and then put it in the drawer of his table before going

out for some work. Ghanshyambhai Amin and I stayed at Tardev at the time. When Ghanshyambhai saw the beautiful gold ring in Kakaji's room, he put it on his finger and left.

After some time, Kakaji returned and opened his drawer to get the ring. Because it was not there, he started looking everywhere for it. When I saw Kakaji searching for something, I asked, "Kakaji what are you looking for?" Kakaji replied, "I put a ring here, but I cannot find it now." So, I started looking through the drawers in search of the ring. Kakaji however said, "Sit down, and let us start chanting." I thus left everything as it was, and started chanting with Kakaji.

Within ten minutes, hearing the chanting, Ghanshyambhai came in the room. Kakaji saw him wearing the ring on his finger, but did not say anything. After the chanting was over, Ghanshyambhai asked, "Why have you scattered everything?" I replied, "Kakaji put a ring in the drawer, but we cannot find it now." Ghanshyambhai took the ring off his finger and while giving it to Kakaji said, "Here it is." From this incident, Kakaji explained, "Ghanshyam took the ring without my permission, and only told me about it later. But it is not stealing because he is like my son. If someone else had taken it, it would be considered stealing. We should establish a similar relationship - like the affection between a father and his son - with God and His saints. Because of the special relationship, a son enjoys privileges that others do not. The difference is others have a relationship, but not the privileges."

Thus in this small incident, Kakaji explained the depth of having a divine relationship with a spiritual master.

ENGROSSED IN DEVOTEES

Arunbhai Patel, Anoopam Mission, Manavadar

Here is another incident that happened in 1967. I was in Kakaji's service at Tardev. Kakaji's regular routine was to wake up early and first go to the temple and seek God's blessings. He then continued with his regular routine of brushing, shaving, and sitting on the sofa while drinking tea.

Devotees would often come early to see Kakaji. Once, a devotee came even before Kakaji drank his tea to discuss his problems. After I gave hot tea to Kakaji, he poured it into the saucer and asked the devotee why he had come so early. As the devotee started narrating his problem, Kakaji listened to him with rapt attention. When I came from the kitchen to take the empty cup back, I saw that the tea in the saucer remained cold and untouched. I saw that Kakaji was engrossed in listening to the devotee's problems. So I took the tea back, and brought it back hot after the discussion was over. This time, Kakaji poured half of it in the saucer, and gave the other half in the cup to the devotee. For Kakaji, devotees were the number one priority.

When engaged in the welfare of devotees, he considered his routine insignificant. Because of his blessings, all devotees have blossomed and continue to spread the fragrance of divinity in our "divine garden" (the Gunatit Samaj, the four-winged spiritual establishment founded by Kakaji).

ONENESS OF DIVINE SAINTS

Himmat Swami, Anoopam Mission, London

My father, Vallabhdasbhai served Shastriji Maharaj and Yogi Bapa with great devotion and as a result, we got the opportunity to serve Kakaji, Papaji, Hariprasad Swamiji, and Saheb.

In 1978, under Saheb's instruction, a place where spiritual aspirants could live together was bought in Wembley. With expanding activities, everyone proposed that we could buy a bigger place around 1981. In 1980, while traveling by car with Sonaba, we came across an open land. Looking at the fields, Sonaba said, "This land seems to be available - why don't you find something here?" True to her words, the property was in fact placed for sale. Thus, Vinubhai, Ashwinbhai Popat, and Harish Muni went to inspect the location. The property seemed old, surrounded by weeds, and not well-maintained. And so, we remained undecided if it was the right place for us. In 1981, Kakaji was traveling via London from the United States. He did not have plans to stay in London, but he specially stopped by and stayed with us for two days. We informed Kakaji about the new place, and took him there. Kakaji stood there in the midst of two vast trees and said,

“This land needs to be sanctified. Lord SwamiNarayan wants to reside here. Go ahead and buy this place. Do not have any second thoughts. Consider that I am Saheb, I am Papaji, and I am Yogi Bapa, telling you to go ahead and buy this plot now! God talks through me and tells me that Anoopam Mission deserves this large place because Saheb has a broad vision and is here to do Yogi Bapa’s work!”

Right away, everyone agreed and the land was purchased without any difficulties. We came to live in the new temple in 1982. With Kakaji, Papaji, Hariprasad Swamiji, Sonaba, and Saheb’s visits, it has blossomed into a divine abode. As the future Kakaji foretold is taking shape, we pray that we continue to progress spiritually by his inspiration.

NOTE: Similarly, for the Shree Swaminarayan Spiritual and Cultural Center (SSSCC) inaugurated in July 2003, Kakaji divinely guided its creation. In 1978, when Surendrabhai met Kakaji at Vidyanagar, Kakaji blessed him, “Surendrabhai is going to America. A ‘Spiritual and Cultural Center’ will be established there. While in India, Saheb will receive vibrations of devotees from America [for this divine work to be fulfilled]. Yogi Bapa received the vibrations of devotees – even today, his divine spirit, in the form of present saints such as Papaji, Swamiji, and Saheb, is with us!”

SPLENDOROUS PERSONALITY

Kishorbhai Gilder, Mumbai

Oh Kakaji, we love you so much! All those who came in Kakaji’s contact, were the fortunate recipients of divinity. Foremost, they were gifted with his memory. In small and big incidents, his ways and gestures remain etched for all time. The many expressions, moods, and qualities given in scriptures, like laughter, love, compassion, bravery, etc. - Kakaji displayed all of these characteristics at one time or another, and generously gifted them to us. Not a single expression was missing in his repertoire. This was evident in an exhibition of images arranged at the King George School in Dadar for Kakaji’s 60th birthday celebrations. Kakaji’s style, gait, and his personality were incomparable! His gestures were exceptional, different from all others. Just his

entry into a place where thousands had gathered would change the entire atmosphere. Like a breeze of air that brings the scent of flowers, he brought freshness to all of life.

The image of Kakaji that I will always remember was from his 60th birthday celebration at the Sanmukhanand Hall. A beautiful temple was designed on the stage, with Kakaji at its center. A fitting devotional song, "*Aa je ahi mandir chhe*" was created to match this. When the devotional song, "*Divya dehi darbaar*" was sung Kakaji got up from his seat, and danced with cymbals in his hands!

ALL-CONTROLLER

Kishorbhai Gilder, Mumbai

Many years ago, everyone from Tardev went to Nagbapa's retreat in Mulund. Our Wednesday meeting was also arranged there. While the session was going on, Nagbapa suddenly came in with live snakes in both of his hands. Seeing this, everyone got up - but Kakaji was unruffled. Nagbapa encircled a live, green, poisonous snake around Kakaji's neck. The snake moved around his neck, but Kakaji remained unperturbed. He then sat there with his eyes closed. This was so unnerving that everyone remained stunned. After some time, Nagbapa removed the snake from Kakaji's neck. Kakaji opened his eyes and everyone heaved a sigh of relief.

DIVINE DISPLAY

Kishorbhai Gilder, Mumbai

The following events occurred before I joined the divine fellowship. My father was the only one in my family who attended discourses and prayers at the Tardev temple. At times, my younger sister also joined him. After returning from the temple, they would discuss with the rest of the family whatever took place. Through this, I learned that Kakaji was a great person residing at the Tardev temple.

We also knew about Yogi Bapa at the time. When he came to Kapolwadi, my father took us there to meet him. From these experiences, we came to know about the fellowship. Also during the time,

Jethabhai Soni often visited our house and talked about Kakaji's greatness. "Kakaji is omniscient," he would say. We listened with rapt attention when he extolled the sterling divine qualities of Kakaji and instances with him. At the time, my younger sister was in the eleventh grade. At the temple, Kakaji would affectionately call her and give her sanctified food (*prasaad*). He would go down to her level, take interest in her life, and in this way showed great friendliness. Kakaji also took interest in her studies. She thus discussed everything very freely with Kakaji. When she came home, she would tell us everything they talked about. At the time, her final exams (taken after tenth and eleventh grades) were coming closer. So Kakaji repeatedly inquired about her progress, asking which subjects she excelled in, and in which she needed to work harder. He asked her to bring her books to the temple, and Kakaji himself guided and helped her. From the beginning, she had difficulties in English and Mathematics. When she told Kakaji about this, he instructed the dedicated brothers (*Saadhaks*) in Tardev to help her with the particular subjects. As a result, she regularly came to the Tardev temple for help in her schoolwork.

As her examination days came closer, my sister told Kakaji that she was not prepared for her English test. Kakaji replied, "Don't worry. Bring your English book, and I will review with you some of the important questions." She happily brought her books the very next day. Kakaji highlighted a few chapters and important topics. For example, Kakaji gave her questions on direct and indirect speech, and about writing essays and letters. He even wrote an article for her of important points. He told her, "Prepare this much." Feeling better, my sister came home happy.

After coming home, she told me, "Kakaji gave me the important questions!" I was happy for her and said, "Since Kakaji marked these as important questions, keep everything else aside. Only learn the answers to these questions."

Studying night and day, she learned about those particular questions. Because her English was poor, I spent a lot of time helping her memorize the answers. The night before her exam, she was not even able to sleep. But she was ready with the answers. The next day she

confidently went to take the exam. I also believed that though she was weak in English, she would do okay in the exam because of the questions Kakaji gave her.

When she returned that evening, I asked how the exam went. In reply, she gave me the list of questions on the exam. As I went through it, I looked for the questions Kakaji gave. None of the questions that Kakaji had chosen appeared on the test. There wasn't even a letter or essay section. Not a single question! I was frozen. How could I ask my sister how she did? Naturally, she did not do well.

In June, the results were declared - she had failed in English. Despite this, she went to Kakaji with sweets in gratitude. Kakaji asked her, "How did you do in the exam?" She replied, "You already told me the results - because you said I would pass, I have passed. Though I have failed in the subject, I brought sweets."

Delighted, Kakaji said, "Never mind. Take the English exam again in October." My sister replied, "No Kakaji - I just do not know English well. Even after this much preparation, I failed. I don't think I can get through it. I don't want to take the exam again." Kakaji encouraged her, "You write whatever you can, but take the exam."

Without any preparation, she reluctantly took the English exam that October. However, when the results came back, she scored a passing grade!

In this incident, Kakaji first tested her faith, but then displayed his divine powers by inspiring her to succeed.

GOD'S BLESSINGS THROUGH THE SAINT

Kishorbhai Gilder, Mumbai

We all experienced that if we recited a devotional song or even if we unintentionally did something good Kakaji would invariably show appreciation of our services or call us and give sanctified food and blessings.

Once, Das Swami called me to Tardev to prepare an article. In those days, Das Swami stayed at the Tardev temple to study Sanskrit. Since I did not have a job at the time, I went to Tardev in the morning.

Das Swami gave the article for me to copy. I went to the last room and wrote for the entire day. The article was lengthy, so I kept writing late into the night.

After getting ready the following morning, I went to Kakaji to participate in the morning prayers. As if Kakaji was waiting for me, he immediately said, "Raju, I want to make a special prayer for Kishor. He must get a job within seven days." Rajubhai Thakkar was performing the morning prayers, so he gave a spoonful of water in the palm of my hand. After Kakaji placed a prayer for me, he asked me to do two things: (1) keep aside ten percent of your income for donation, and (2) pray twice a day, morning and evening.

Since Kakaji promised that I will get a job within seven days, I did not even bother to look through the classifieds, nor did I fill out any more applications. I had already sent out many applications, but I did not hear from anyone yet. But with Kakaji's prayer, I was assured a job. With this thought, I freed myself from anxiety.

As the days went on, I soon forgot about Kakaji's words. But upon returning home one day, I saw a brown envelope near the entrance. Immediately I remembered Kakaji's promise that I would get a job within seven days. This was exactly the seventh day, so I thought indeed, it must be a letter for a job. I opened the envelope and found out that it was just that - a letter for an interview.

Whatever little I had done at the request of a blessed saint, was much appreciated by Kakaji.

KAKAJI'S FORMULA

Kishorbhai Gilder, Mumbai

Kakaji continuously offered ideas to devotees to overcome their hurdles. Similarly, he gave us many formulas to simplify complex problems in our day-to-day life.

One technique was to “let go, let go, let go, and then act.” If you want to hold on to a particular idea or thought, first let go of it three times, and the fourth time, go forward if you desire. In other words, if you want to run with an idea, first pause three times: “stop, stop, stop, and then run.”

When Kakaji first gave me this formula, I had a temporary job with a small pharmaceutical company. My duties included demonstrating and selling various medicines, and I was placed in a shop in Mahim. From morning to evening, I gave demonstrations to customers and explained how the medicines were administered. I was not satisfied with the job because of the low sales. Because of this, I lost enthusiasm for the work, and felt bored. In just a few days, I thought about getting a job elsewhere. But before I decided to not work there anymore, I remembered Kakaji’s slogan, “Stop, stop, stop, and then run.” I decided to practice this technique by continuing to work for at least a few more days. I thought, “I do not have another job right now anyway - and if I still do not like working, I can always leave.” The next couple days, the same events transpired – there were no customers and minimal sales. Again, I started thinking about leaving because I thought I was just wasting my time. But again, I remembered Kakaji’s formula and forced myself to stay. As I continued working there, the owner also showed frustration with the shop’s low sales. I thought for sure I should leave the job now!

So the following day, I took all of the products and went to the head office. I met with the manager and said, “I am quitting today. I have not been able to sell many products. As a result, I do not enjoy working here.” In response however, he persuaded me to remain with the company by offering another job in the suburb of Santacruz. Without discussing it any further, I accepted the position. The next day, I started working at the new place, and again I thought to myself, “If it does not work out, I will just leave as planned earlier.”

To my great surprise, I sold forty packages that day, and at least that many each day afterwards. Thus, I became happy and satisfied with my work. Kakaji’s seemingly ordinary technique was most useful to me in my everyday life.

MIRACULOUS EPISODE

Kishorbhai Gilder, Mumbai

I still remember the Wednesday in 1975 when Kakaji was seated on the sofa in the hall of the Tardev temple, surrounded by youth during the weekly spiritual meeting. Everyone was immersed in the devotional song that Rameshbhai was singing. I also joined in the singing, when Kakaji suddenly gestured me with his hand to call me near. I thought he must be calling someone else, so I looked behind me. Kakaji said, "You, come here." As I approached him, Kakaji asked, "Did you fill out any job applications?" I said, "Not yet, but I have two ads from the newspaper." Kakaji suggested, "Submit the applications."

The following day I sent the applications, and forgot about the matter in a few days. During this time, my mother was scheduled for an operation. The day prior to the operation I received a letter for an interview for a Sales Representative position. Debating whether I should go, I finally decided to go.

The letter indicated that I go to Musjid Bunder's office in Mumbai. When I went there, I showed the receptionist my letter and sat in the waiting room. In the office, there was an interview in progress - after it ended, I was called in for my interview.

Entering the room while remembering Lord SwamiNarayan, I was surprised to see that the person taking the interview was a friend of mine from college. Equally surprised, my friend asked me to sit down and explained that he was working as the Area Manager and interviewing potential employees. I showed him the letter and expressed my interest in the position.

When he saw the letter he said, "I wrote the letter, but my boss saw your application. He mailed it through our department. I did not know that the letter was addressed to you. In any case, the job is yours! I really want someone I can count on." After discussing the salary, he even offered refreshments. What could I say? It was amazing!

Was I dreaming? Without any effort and without any experience, I got the job. It was like a ripe fruit falling on my lap! The key was that I acted as Kakaji had told me - he got the job for me.

DEDICATED SISTERS

PARAGON OF EXCELLENCE

Sonaba

I was fortunate to meet Dadubhai for the first time in 1946. Shastriji Maharaj asked Kantibhai to take care of Nirgun Swamiji in Tardev because he was sick. Shastriji Maharaj wrote, "Give Nirgun Swamiji medicine everyday. The expenses will be minimized if he stays at Tardev." Nirgun Swamiji thus stayed at Tardev while receiving treatment. I was friends with Kamlaben (Kakaji's sister) who had written to Kakaji indicating, "Nirgun Swamiji is staying with Kantibhai Amin. Please meet him and offer your help." At the time, I knew Dr. Nathabhai (Kakaji's father) as well since he came to Bochasan often, but I never had the opportunity to meet Dadubhai.

One day while I was cutting vegetables in the balcony of my home, Kakaji came to my door. He looked at me and said, "Is this Kantibhai's house?" I answered, "Yes." And he asked, "Is Nirgun Swamiji here?" I replied, "He has gone to the train station." He, then, introduced himself as Dadubhai, Kamlaben's brother. Saying this, he took a letter out from his pocket and said, "I received this letter from my sister asking me to go to Kantibhai Amin's house, where Nirgun Swamiji is staying at this time. She requested that I meet Nirgun Swamiji and offer my help. So I have come to meet him." I replied, "Nirgun Swamiji just left, but please come in and be seated." However, Kakaji then said, "I have some work to do so I will get going for now." In this manner he came and went away, but his personality was so dignified that I could not ask him to stay longer. In this first instance, he appeared as the paragon of excellence.

PURIFIED US

Sonaba

Shastriji Maharaj told Kakaji and Kantikaka to live as brothers, and gave immense blessings. Shastriji Maharaj was everything to me. In the Indian month of Vaishakh in 1951, Shastriji Maharaj went to his

heavenly abode and afterwards, I continued with the same devotion towards Yogi Bapa. On February 3, 1952, Kakaji had a three-day divine trance by the grace of Yogi Bapa - since then we also saw Kakaji as divine.

Once, when the son of a devotee from Ahmedabad passed away, Kakaji warned me, "If you consciously do not leave your attachment to Kantibhai, Yogi Bapa will forcefully detach him from your heart by taking him away in this manner." I had faith in Kakaji's advice, but I was deeply attached to Kantibhai. Thus I prayed, "Oh Yogi Bapa, Dadubhai is right, but I am attached 50% to you and 50% to Kantibhai. What should I do? Only you can separate him from my heart." I prayed in this manner.

Once, when I went to see Kakaji at 6D Tardev, he began telling me, "Your Kanti has taken away my money. He has become a loafer, and while roaming around, his car fell into a ditch and he has passed away. You may not have received this information, and therefore I am telling you."

I was stunned and lost my senses to hear the news. I could not believe what Kakaji was talking about. His words choked me and I became speechless. Dinubhai Amin was sitting there; he could not bear the news and thus left. As he was going downstairs, half-way down, he saw Kantibhai coming - he was so overwhelmed that he delightfully embraced him and ran upstairs to tell me, "Baa, Kantibhai has come." As he came in, Kakaji laughingly told me, "Kantibhai is very much in your heart. What should I say? Should I laugh or cry?" I did not know what to do. For a while, I felt, "How could Kakaji test me in this manner? Is this the way to test a person?" But by testing us in this manner, Kakaji removed all attachments from our hearts.

ATTACHING TO MANIFEST DIVINITY

Ben, Gunatit Jyot

When Kakaji came to Kampala, Africa in 1954, a religious meeting was regularly held at the temple made in the home of Khodidasbhai of Ghana. In the meeting, Kakaji extensively talked to everyone about the glory and manifest spirit of Yogi Bapa. Kakaji told us that Yogi Bapa is

not an ordinary saint, but an incarnation of Gunatitanand Swami, and he has descended on this earth in the form of a human being. These forceful talks made a deep impression on me and I came to believe that Kakaji lives beyond body consciousness.

In Jinja too, local devotees invited Kakaji for religious meetings at their residences. He happily visited their homes and talked reverentially of the glory of Yogi Bapa. Kakaji was a keen observer and his sharp eyes saw that no one, including myself, had yet placed an image of Yogi Bapa in their homes. Thus while having lunch at my home, he said, "Ben, I will give you a photo of Yogi Bapa today, and you can keep it wherever you like." Hearing this, I laughed and said, "Dadubhai, I considered Shastriji Maharaj as my manifest God; but thus far, I have not considered Yogi Bapa as such and therefore I have not put his image. But since you told me today, I will keep an image of Yogi Bapa in my house with the prayer that I become convinced of his godliness. My other prayer is that you give photos to all the devotees in our group, so that we can have one in every house." Kakaji was very happy to hear this request. By his blessings, from that very instant, I came to believe that Yogi Bapa was manifest divinity.

BELIEF IN THE MANIFEST SPIRIT

Jyotiben, Gunatit Jyot

We knew Kakaji since 1946 when he stayed at Dadar. Kakaji's sister Kamlaben lived on the fourth floor in apartment 6D at "Sonawala Buildings." I lived with my mother Sonaba in the same subdivision, in apartment 8. Kakaji frequently came to see Kamlaben, and thus we would have the opportunity to meet him as well. Kakaji considered Shastriji Maharaj as his manifest God. He created a center in Mumbai at Shastriji Maharaj's asking.

We always found Kakaji reading and taking notes of the Vachanamrut. While devotional songs were being sung, all of us would sit on the floor, but Kakaji preferred to stand. Before leaving for work, he always stood with a rosary in his hand in front of the standing image of Shastriji Maharaj. For five minutes, he chanted with his eyes open and his vision focused on the image. Once, while watching Kakaji, I wondered, "Why is Kakaji chanting with his eyes open?" Kakaji imme-

diately answered, “[Shastriji Maharaj] in this divine image is blinking his eyes and I am looking at him with reverence.” Thus Kakaji truly believed Shastriji Maharaj as manifest divinity.

TO PURGE THE DISEASES OF HUMANITY

Jyotiben, Gunatit Jyot

The following incident happened in 1948. Sonaba and Kamlaben were good friends and often visited each other. Taraben and I would go to Kamlaben’s house to read. Normally while Kamlaben cooked in the kitchen, Taraben and I read in the middle room. One day, while I was reading, Kakaji returned from work and asked me, “Where is Maniben (Kamlaben)?” And I replied, “She is in the kitchen.” Kakaji sat on the sofa, and I again became engrossed with my studies. Suddenly, Kakaji asked me, “What are you reading?” At the time, I was enrolled in Science, and I had a Chemistry book in my hand. I replied, “I am reading for science class.” To which Kakaji asked, “Why are you reading about science?” I replied, “I want to be a doctor.” Kakaji then emphatically said, “You want to become the doctor of this world, but I am a doctor who will purge the diseases of past births.” It seemed to me that he descended on this earth with the sole purpose of purging humanity of its diseases. He uttered these words with such authenticity and grace that even today his expressions remains etched in my memory.

ALWAYS READY

Jyotiben, Gunatit Jyot

In 1949, Kakaji, Kantibhai, Sonaba, Taraben, Lalitabhabhi, and I traveled by car to Atladra to attend Shastriji Maharaj’s birthday celebration. It was evening and getting darker. Proceeding on the zigzag roads of Bharuch, we lost our way. There was no one on the roads and we found it difficult to come back on the right path. We did not know whom we could ask, and so Kakaji said, “Let us start chanting. Shastriji Maharaj will help us.” Soon after, two young boys came our way, as if Shastriji Maharaj specially sent them for us. When we asked for directions, they immediately showed us the correct route.

We reached the temple safely. Kakaji and Kantibhai bowed down to Shastriji Maharaj and sat on the floor. Shastriji Maharaj asked them, "You had difficulties while coming, right?" Kakaji replied, "No Swami, you came to guide us." Upon hearing this, Shastriji Maharaj smiled. Thus from the beginning, Kakaji considered Shastriji Maharaj as his manifest God and sought inspiration from him.

Kakaji spent a lot of time singing devotional songs. For his business too, whenever he had an opportunity to get a business contract, he asked all of us to chant together. Prayer was his first priority - when he took on an assignment, he always asked us to join in chanting.

OUR DIVINE GUIDE

Hansadidi, Gunatit Jyot

After Shastriji Maharaj went to his heavenly abode, we envisioned Yogiji Maharaj as manifest divinity. In 1952, after Yogi Bapa blessed Kakaji with a three-day divine trance in Gondal, the spring festival of Fuldol or Dulheti was celebrated at Sarangpur. Yogi Bapa took Kakaji with him to the celebration. My father, Bhagvatarai Dave, received a letter from Yogi Bapa saying, "168 years ago, the festival was celebrated at the house of Rathod Dhandhal of Sarangpur; and we have celebrated the same festival here - if you want more information, go to Dadubhai's home in Tardev."

Yogi Bapa's directive made my father a regular visitor to Tardev. Yogi Bapa often wrote to him with the message to keep close contact with Kakaji and Papaji. We thus began appreciating the glory of Tardev. In fact, many devotees addressed Kakaji as "Chota Yogi" or "Junior Yogi Bapa" and experienced his divinity.

ALL DEVOTEES SEE DIVINITY

Hansadidi, Gunatit Jyot

The verse (*shlok*) "Vaani amrutathi bhari madhusami..." was written by my father Bhagvatrai Dave. There was an All Religions Conference held at the Sundarabai Hall in Mumbai - I do not remember the exact year, but it was between 1953 and 1954. Yogi Bapa was nominated

as the Akshar-Purushottam organization's representative. The Akshar-Purushottam committee in turn asked Kakaji to attend. Wearing full white clothes, Kakaji looked unique on stage in the midst of the representative saints of various religions. Kakaji began his lecture by reciting the verse on Yogi Bapa. The verse was originally written, "His eyes are filled with divinity, to see all devotees as divine." However, Kakaji corrected the verse and recited, "His eyes are filled with divinity, and all devotees see divinity."

Later, when I sat down with my father, I pointed out this change. My father immediately agreed with Kakaji's version, and since then, this devotional verse in dedication to Yogi Bapa is recited in that manner.

DIVINE EXPERIENCE

Maniben P., Gunatit Jyot

In 1953, Yogi Bapa took all of us on a pilgrimage tour by way of a special train. I too joined the special journey. Kakaji was also with us. Visiting the holy centers with Yogi Bapa was a very divine experience. After visiting a few places, we arrived at Kashi/Benaras. After seeing the image of God (called Vishvanaath), we came back to the train station, which was crowded with devotees. Kakaji planned to return to Mumbai from there. Thus I witnessed devotees coming up to his window of the train and bidding farewell. Kakaji responded by waving his hand and smiling.

At the time, according to tradition, I did not talk to male devotees - so I stood away from the window and watched Kakaji with admiration. Though Kakaji and Papaji appeared to be ordinary human beings, I believed them to be truly divine. I became frustrated with having to remain silent and not being able to talk to Kakaji. At that moment, Kakaji immediately asked me, "Sister, would you like to say something to your brother?" I was taken aback hearing these words - I experienced that Kakaji hears us on a spiritual plane. By addressing me as his sister, I was gifted with a divine life.

INTENSE YEARNING

Maniben P., Gunatit Jyot

Since my very childhood, I was devoted to God. Once at a local Swaminarayan temple, I heard that if someone reads the holy book "Satsangijivan" 108 times, Lord Swaminarayan will appear before the person. Hence, I began reading Satsangijivan from a young age. After reading it 48 times, I was fortunate to have met Kakaji who told me, "Having come in contact with a manifest saint, you have achieved your goal - now start reading Vachanamrut." Thus, he convinced me of Lord Swaminarayan's promise.

SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE

Gangaba, Gunatit Jyot

Once when Kakaji came to Nadiad for some work, I met him. All he said to me then was, "Go to Ahmedabad." Yogi Bapa was going to arrive in Shahibaug, Ahmedabad that day. At the time, I suffered from pain in my legs, and was hardly able to walk. Further, I became sick, and my doctor told me to avoid salty foods. Under these circumstances, I was not sure how I could go to Ahmedabad.

But since Kakaji said so, I went to Ahmedabad with the thought that whatever happens will be according to God's desire. Yogi Bapa arrived at the Shahibaug temple amidst a crowd of devotees. Kakaji was also there.

Right when Kakaji saw me, he said, "It is good you came. You do not eat salt, right? Wait here and I will bring food sanctified by Yogi Bapa." And so, he went to get food for me from Yogi Bapa. I wondered how he knew that I do not eat salt. As I pondered this, Kakaji came with a mixture of rice and curry along with a betel leaf on the plate. He told me, "Eat this rice and curry - it has been sanctified by Yogi Bapa. From today onwards all of your sickness will disappear. You can eat salt now too. Tie this betel leaf on your joint, all the pain in your legs will go away." I was overwhelmed. I had no words to express my feelings as I accepted the sanctified food and betel leaf from Kakaji. All I did was come to Ahmedabad on his asking, and my illness totally disappeared.

It was Kakaji's faith. It was Kakaji's word. I simply went upon his suggestion. Kakaji took care of the rest.

THE SAVIOUR

Kamuben, Gunatit Jyot

On one hand, I believed that if a soul desires salvation, God goes the extra mile to help. But I never experienced an inner yearning, nor did I have an intense desire to worship God. My goal was to "live life fully." Then, Kakaji came into my life. He fired an enthusiasm in me such that I devoted myself to God wholeheartedly. He showed me the correct direction and united me with God. Further, he prayed for me, and made the process of God-realization simple and easy.

At the time, I lived in Nadiad. Whenever Kakaji came there, I would go to see him. Once, Kakaji told me, "Even after having taken 8.4 million births in this world, you will not get the opportunity of attaining God; thus seize this chance and surrender yourself to Him."

These words of Kakaji made me think, "If I want to live a spiritual life, I should worship God with full dedication." Whenever I worried about earning a living, Kakaji would tell me, "Why do you worry about getting food? God will provide food for you from heaven." He added, "Taraben and Jyotiben in Mumbai are totally devoted - I suggest you join them, and live a spiritual life." But I told Kakaji that it would be difficult for me to pray in the company of others, and not in Nadiad. However, Kakaji again recommended, "You should go and live with the sisters. I will pray for you from here, and nothing will disturb you."

This was his one-sided promise! There was no effort on my side. Everything became easy with his prayers. And indeed, Gunatit Jyot has become my spiritual abode. I have merged in divinity with Kakaji's blessings. Today many sisters are engaged in spiritual activities there with the aim of progressing toward God. This is all due to the strength given to us by Kakaji's prayers.

SERVED WITHOUT EXPECTATION

Maniben T., Gunatit Jyot

Due to an infliction, Jethabhai Trivedi had intense pain in his legs. He suffered terribly, and could not even eat or drink due to the constant pain. His situation was getting serious - but because it was a Sunday, our family doctor's office was closed. We tried to look for a doctor in the vicinity, but no doctor was available. I did not know what to do, and was very scared. Jethabhai's pain was increasing. So I finally called Kakaji at Tardev and informed him about the situation. Kakaji replied, "Maniben, do not worry - remember Yogi Bapa. We are coming with a doctor immediately."

In a little while, Kakaji came to our house with Sonaba, Kantikaka, and a doctor. The doctor examined Jethabhai's legs and said, "He has a bad infection." The doctor gave him an injection and said, "He has to take this medication. Hopefully it will be contained by the morning but it is hard to tell because it has already spread." Hearing these words, I became very frightened, and began praying from within. Having taken the refuge of Kakaji, I had faith that the god-of-death would not come.

Standing by my side, Kakaji said, "Nothing will happen. I am giving twenty-five years of my life to Jethabhai!" This brought tears to my eyes. Jethabhai also forgot his pain for the time being, and became choked with emotions. Telling me not to be frightened, Sonaba and Kantikaka supported me. "Everything will be all right," they said.

Because of Kakaji's blessings Jethabhai was cured, and in a few days he even started walking normally. Before this incident, Jethabhai did not regularly attend spiritual activities but afterwards, he developed a great regard for Kakaji and took interest in the divine fellowship.

I thank Kakaji who made us happy, simply because we came into his company.

DIVINE VISION

Harshadaben, Gunatit Jyot

Our family was blessed by Kakaji and since my childhood, I knew him. In 1966, with Kakaji and Papaji's permission, we moved to Vidyanagar. During one vacation, Papaji sent youth to Mumbai. So, Minaben Doshi, Sumaben, Prafullaben, Panna, Sadhna, Bhavna, Smita and the rest of us prepared to go. Papaji instructed us, "When you go to Mumbai, first visit Kakaji at Tardev. Then arrange other programs." After arriving in Mumbai, we went to Tardev to seek Kakaji's blessings. I still remember being engrossed in his discourses. His speech was immaculate and very sweet. At that time, all of a sudden, Kakaji looked at me and said, "Do you know Papaji?" I nodded my head and said, "Yes." Kakaji replied, "You do not know him." I remember having numerous thoughts like, "I know Papaji well. He also knows me and calls me by my name, 'Harsha.' Why is Kakaji asking me that? I know that I know Papaji." He then explained with a smile, "You only know him physically - but who is Papaji? What is Papaji? What kind of person is he? What does Papaji like? How can we earn Papaji's favor? When we know this, then we can say that we know him." He ended, "You know him well, but only physically - you have to still understand him."

Today, when I remember these words, I can understand what Kakaji was talking about. Kakaji awakened a vision to really know and understand my spiritual master. I pray to Kakaji to give me strength to understand who Papaji really is.

REFINED TASTE

Shardaben, Gunatit Jyot

My family was going to move to London in 1973, but I wanted to remain in India and stay at Gunatit Jyot to devote my life to God. I was not happy going to London, but upon Jashuben's advice, I prepared myself to relocate. I was reluctant to go because I feared my father would not allow me to come and live at the Gunatit Jyot later. I also feared the temptations of a big city like London. Faced with this dilemma, I prayed continuously.

One day, I went to seek Kakaji's blessings while he was visiting Haribhai Saheb's house in Manavadar. Kakaji was sitting on a swing - I bowed down and said, "Jay SwamiNarayan." Kakaji said, "Be seated. Do you want to go to London?" When I said, "Yes," he told me, "Do you want to devote your life to God?" Again I said, "Yes." He immediately replied, "Do not worry. You will not be tempted by the attractions of London, and your father will gladly give you consent to go to Gunatit Jyot. Just keep remembering Jashuben - you can go to London and stay there for some time."

Thus, through his divine consciousness, Kakaji understood my intention and also removed my confusion. Instantly, I became worry-free and content. I went to London with Kakaji's blessings, and exactly like he said, I was not attracted to the worldly life there. I stayed with the Gunatit Jyot in London, and within three years, I got permission from my parents to live in Jyot permanently and devote myself to God.

With Kakaji's blessings I was able to come and live at Gunatit Jyot and devote myself to God. Today, I continue to pray to him that I remain in devotion.

THE GIFT OF GOD'S ABODE

Sakarba, Gunatit Jyot

I resided at Kandivali, Mumbai. At the time, my health was weak and I often fell ill. Once I became so sick that I was unable to move; I lost all vitality. Everyone in the house, including myself, felt my time had come. Thus my elder son requested Kakaji to visit our house.

We belonged to the old temple - so we believed in Lord Swaminarayan, but not especially the lineage of divine saints from Gunatitanand Swami. I heard about Kakaji, but did not believe in him. I did not hold the reverence that one should have for such a divine being. As these were my last moments, when Kakaji came, I welcomed him by saying, "Jay SwamiNarayan," to which Kakaji replied, "Jay SwamiNarayan."

But his arrival felt naturally auspicious – it was as if he divinely came just to inspire me. He asked, "Would you like to go to Akshardham after you pass away, or would you like to go to Akshardham before that?" I knew that after death one goes to Akshardham, but I never

knew that one could go to Akshardham before death. I answered, "Before death." Kakaji replied, "If you do as I tell you, you will go to Akshardham before death. I give you an extension to live for another five years!" I readily agreed.

He immediately began chanting and gave me sanctified water. Gradually, my whole being became rejuvenated! He did not give me special instructions, nor did he ask for any service in return. He gave me an extension on life simply by his association.

The next day, our family doctor, Joglekar, visited our home to examine me. He was surprised to see my health getting better. So I narrated the story of Kakaji's visit and how he chanted for me and gave me sanctified water. The doctor immediately responded, "This is the result of Kakaji's prayer, and not my medicine!"

Kakaji was a saintly person that was beyond any natural science. Wherever he went, whomever he met, and with whatever time he spent with them, Kakaji united them with God and gave them the gift of Akshardham.

THE WISH FULFILLING GEM

Sakarba, Gunatit Jyot

Our family belonged to the Swaminarayan religion, but we met Yogi Bapa through Kakaji. We belonged to the old temple. So when we met Kakaji, there was initially some opposition from my home. I, however, had faith in him and believed that it was by Lord Swaminarayan's grace that we came in his contact. While I was allowed to keep a photo of Lord Swaminarayan, I found it difficult to keep a picture of Yogi Bapa. I thus remained very confused, and prayed to Lord Swaminarayan to remove this conflict which was beyond my comprehension.

In the meantime, Kakaji one day called me to Tardev. It was in the morning and special prayers were being offered. Kakaji told me, "Come to the Dadar temple to seek Yogi Bapa's blessings." His request had so much strength, that I could not ignore it. I went to the Dadar temple as Yogi Bapa was delivering a nectar-filled discourse. Right

when I entered the hall, I heard the words, "Always treasure this gem which has been gifted to you in the form of the saint." Yogi Bapa kept repeating this sentence.

That was all. Yogi Bapa's apparently simple words convinced me, and from that day onwards, I kept a photo of Yogi Bapa in my house. Thus through his divine consciousness, Kakaji witnessed my thoughts - and without saying a word, he showed me the way to earn Yogi Bapa's blessings and bliss.

FREE GIFT

Kalpanaben, Gunatit Jyot

Kakaji always remained filled with God's eternal bliss. His ecstasy and divine confidence made him a unique person. Through his magnanimity and spirit of giving, he helped many, whether small or big, unite with God. I had many divine experiences with Kakaji that I still remember today.

From the beginning, we were blessed with the association of Kakaji and Papaji. In Tardev, we addressed them as Dadukaka and Babukaka. Kakaji often came to our house in Matunga, Mumbai. Once, he came at 11:00 AM in the morning on a Sunday, and so everyone was at home and we enjoyed the day in his company. He talked at length about the glory of Yogi Bapa and had lunch with us. I would say he did not eat our food, but accepted our love.

In those days, Kakaji traveled by taxi. I was happy to get the opportunity to call the taxi for him. He would tell me, "Kalpu, call a taxi. I would like to go to Aksharbhuvan at Dadar." Once, when I went downstairs, no taxis were available. Six taxis had just sped away, and just when the seventh one came, I saw Kakaji next to me. I asked the cab driver, "Would you like to go to Dadar?" The cab driver replied, "No, I do not want to go for such a short distance." Kakaji listened to our conversation, and in his own inimitable style, as if he personally knew the driver, he said, "My friend, take me the short distance and I will take you far, to Akshardham - my God-realized saint, Yogiji Maharaj is at the Dadar temple." Saying this, he opened the taxi door and sat in the front seat next to the driver. Before the driver even said anything,

Kakaji continued talking to him, and they took off towards the Dadar temple. When I went upstairs, enthusiastically, I told everyone what Kakaji had done.

The following evening, I went to Tardev and saw Kakaji seated in the hall. Yesterday's incident had been fresh in my mind and so I asked Kakaji, "Did the driver tell you anything after you sat in the taxi?" With his usual liveliness, Kakaji told me, "Oh no - I took him to the Dadar temple to get Yogi Bapa's blessings. He happily waited for me, and later even drove me back to Tardev."

Remembering the incident today, I understand that since the driver simply came into Kakaji's contact, he too was gifted Akshardham. The driver did not know anything about Akshardham, nor did he realize his good fortune when he first refused to take Kakaji for the short distance. But Kakaji gave him Yogi Bapa's blessings and even made him a friend. Kakaji gave a glimpse of Akshardham - his only aim was to make the driver happy because of their incidental contact.

LANGUAGE OF LOVE

Hemaben, Gunatit Jyot

Kakaji was the personification of friendliness. Kakaji treated those who had the slightest contact of Yogi Bapa as his dear friends. In this way, he lived with supreme devotion at every moment in life. He could not tolerate anyone being unhappy. Whether it was a physical problem, mental or monetary problem; whether it was a problem related to this world, or beyond; he solved their difficulties by any means, resting only when they were taken care of. This was his natural quality that I personally experienced.

Every spiritual aspirant faces a period of transformation in life. The period often brings struggle or upheaval from within; the smallest word brings disturbance, the mind continually ponders, and a whirlpool of negative thoughts encircle the person.

I underwent such a period. When a senior aspirant made just a small comment, I began thinking, "I do not belong to anyone and no one cares for me." I thus lived with a heavy burden, but outwardly kept serving others. I went to Tardev to serve too, but I was disoriented, and did not reveal to anyone my internal commotion.

During that time, many aspirant sisters had gone to Lonavala to attend a religious conference. Four elder sisters remained at Tardev to clean the temple - so I joined them. Kakaji could discern my confusion, as no secret remained hidden from his vision. When I passed the hall, Kakaji called me and asked me some questions: "Whom have you met? Whom do you like? Whom do you feel connected with?" I was preoccupied with my own thoughts, and therefore I said, "I do not belong to anyone, and I have no connection."

Kakaji knew exactly what was going on in my mind. He gently asked me to bring the Vachanamrut, and began reading several excerpts. He told me to connect at the soul level and become friendly. I listened to him, but with a closed mind. Kakaji kept on talking, and I went on listening without any interest, waiting for him to stop. But Kakaji was not one who just leaves such matters.

He kept explaining things to me, so ultimately I just told him, "I know everything, but nothing appears to enter my head. So please don't waste your time." I insisted he go take rest. Unwillingly, Kakaji went to his room and I continued with my work.

But Kakaji was Kakaji! How could he sleep when his devotee was so confused? After going to his room, Kakaji prepared a memo, called Jyotiben and told her, "Explain this letter to Hema." The next day, Kakaji outlined another technique that further clarified the spiritual path for me. Thus, Kakaji persevered until my dilemma was resolved. Kakaji made an extraordinary effort for an ordinary spiritual aspirant like me. It was the pinnacle of friendliness. I could only say,

To help me progress, you worked hard without letting anyone know.

Where can someone like you, who knows the real language of love, be found?

And keeps giving, and giving, and giving...

JOYOUS, DIVINE CONTACT

Kusumben, Gunatit Jyot

In 1959, my father, Manikaka, wrote a letter to Yogi Bapa asking, "What should I do about my daughter's marriage?" Yogi Bapa simply replied, "Do whatever Dadubhai says." Kakaji and my father shared a mutual respect from the time my brother entered the saintly order. When Manikaka approached him, Kakaji said, "Do not worry, I am your son and your children are my brothers and sisters. I will help in every way I can." Fulfilling Yogi Bapa's promise, Kakaji took the entire responsibility of our sister Kantaben's marriage. With Kakaji on our side, our entire family became free of worries.

Whenever Kakaji visited Gujarat, he always came to our house in Anand. Often, he brought news such as, "I won the last case" and generously gave to us whatever money he had in his shirt pocket. Kakaji had the biggest heart. He told us, "Do not worry. If you want to attend the festivals in Gondal, Gadhada, Bochasan, Atladra, etc., I will provide the money." On other occasions, he brought a bag full of saris and told us, "As you are my sisters, please accept these saris." We accepted whatever he gave us as sanctified items.

Our brother Bachubhai had to travel abroad between 1956 and 1957. Kakaji personally rendered every possible help. He made arrangements for money, procuring the passport, and even teaching him what to expect in the steamer boat. Kakaji shouldered all of the responsibility, as if Bachubhai was his own brother. In this way, Kakaji treated us like his own family members.

From early on, Kakaji also supported me in my quest to devote to God. Kakaji faced and dealt with the revolt of our conservative society, helping me such that I can never forget him, nor repay the debt I owe him.

THE POWER OF HIS WORDS

Bhartiben, Gunatit Jyot

One day, some of the elders in my family complained to Kakaji about me. They explained that despite having a new job, I did not provide any income to our home. Kakaji quietly listened to the complaint and sent a message through my elder brother Mahendra Babu, "Tell Bharti to give 100 rupees of her income." But I was not convinced and so I told my brother I would not give the money. Again, another complaint went to Kakaji and he sent another message, "Tell her to see me." And so, I went to Tardev. As I did not give any regard to Kakaji's instruction, I thought he probably would be mad at me. On the contrary, Kakaji explained everything to me very gently. I continued to argue with him and he continued to listen to me patiently. When Kakaji said, "Sister, please believe me, your salary will increase, but spare 100 rupees for the family," I finally agreed.

After giving the promise to Kakaji, I began giving money to the family. Within just ten days I saw Kakaji's promise fulfilled. Since an employee that worked in my company's Byculla, Mumbai branch went on leave, my manager asked if I would like to work from 9 AM at the Byculla branch and from 12 PM at my current location. For the adjustment, I was offered a salary increase as well. As I agreed, I remembered Kakaji's words that my salary will increase. Kakaji really had the power to actualize whatever he spoke.

DIVINE PERCEPTION

Bhartiben, Gunatit Jyot

I often went to Kakaji to seek his blessings. Kakaji incessantly talked about the glory of Yogiji Maharaj. He also had great regard for the aspirant sisters of Gunatit Jyot. He appreciated their divine tolerance and sense of service. And so, I also pondered about living a life devoted to God. I told Kakaji of my intentions. He advised, "Keep chanting and go to the Jyot whenever you have vacation. Also, connect yourself with the sisters there." Following his instructions, I decided to live a dedicated life.

But in the beginning, there was opposition from my home. Many elders and relatives went to Kakaji to complain. Kakaji welcomed them with love, offered his hospitality and comforted them. In their presence, he would advise me, "We should serve at home, and reach home on time." He politely appeased the elders' complaints. His words were filled with great gentleness and compassion. With his very large heart, he had the supernatural ability to consume unpleasantness, and display a charming parental affection.

PUNCTURED MY EGO

Ramaben, Gunatit Jyot

Once, Kakaji asked me to memorize fifty Swami Ni Vato passages. Very enthusiastically I learned them and became proud of the achievement. I thought no one could be as fluent as me, and if Kakaji asked me to repeat them, I could do it flawlessly.

During the time, we went to attend a festival in Gondal to seek Kakaji's blessings. He was doing morning prayers, and I said, "Jay SwamiNarayan." Kakaji immediately asked, "How many passages have you memorized?" I replied, "Fifty," and so he asked me to recite them. I began recite the passages, "Swaminarayan Hare, Swami..." thinking that I would be able to complete them soon. But after finishing the eighth one, though I tried hard to remember, I just could not recall the ninth one. Kakaji marked, "You said you had learned the fifty by heart?" With a profound smile, Kakaji then said, "We should never inflate our ego - any assignment done with ego does not succeed. Remember Yogi Bapa and remain humble." In such small incidences, Kakaji taught us the quality of humility.

CHANGE IN TEMPERAMENT

Ramaben, Gunatit Jyot

We came in touch with the divine fellowship because of Kakaji and Kashiba. My mother was very kind and had a lot of faith in Kakaji and Kashiba; my father, on the other hand, was not interested in spiritual matters, and had a very short temper. He would get angry over the smallest matters.

My mother told Kakaji about my father's bad temper and said, "Please bless him so that he improves; but do not tell him that I told you about his bad temper, otherwise I will be in trouble!"

Soon, Kakaji came to our house, and directly approached my father. He said, "Please come here, we will bless you. We have heard that you have a bad temper." Saying this, he gave him sanctified food. After Kakaji left, my father became very angry saying that we must have informed Kakaji about his temper.

But within just a few days, there was a change in his temperament. His anger decreased. Even if something big happened at home, he would not get angry anymore. Gradually, his anger disappeared! But the most wonderful thing that happened was he became very close to Kakaji. He too gained confidence and faith in Kakaji.

MORAL OBLIGATION AND DIVINE MEMORIES

Yoginiben, Powai

I went to seek Kakaji's blessings on the morning of March 30, 1973. It was my birthday and that day, I also had to take my B.A. final year examinations. When I went to Tardev, Kakaji told me, "Apply a devotional mark on the image of Lord Swaminarayan and Gunatitanand Swami." I did as he said and then applied a devotional mark on his forehead. I also brought a garland that I offered to God and Kakaji. Finally, I served Kakaji sweets that I had specially brought. Kakaji returned a portion of the sweets to me and said, "Go to take your examination after listening to my advice. Create a divine oneness with Divyaben to the extent that if milk were spilled by her, you would say that you did it, and if you were to break a glass, Divyaben would say

that she did it." Thus in simple terms, he explained to me the meaning of unity. He further explained, "Since you have an exam today, you continually think about it; that is your moral obligation or sense of duty. But after completing the exam, if you still keep thinking about it, then you have forgotten about divinity. If you want to achieve enlightenment, it is a sin to forget God's image." Then he asked me to memorize the events of this day - how I worshipped, garlanded, bowed down, and offered sweets in Tardev. Kakaji explained, "You have to store these events in your memory."

Thus Kakaji explained in a simple way, what to memorize, the meaning of unity, and what moral obligation is. In this, and so many other ways, he has showed me the way to remain in constant communion with God.

DIVINITY PERSONIFIED

Yoginiben, Powai

We went to Badrinath with Kakaji in 1979. Situated in the Himalayas, Badrinath is surrounded by mountains and beautiful greeneries. Because it is situated at a higher level, the air feels very cool, refreshing, and pleasant. Kakaji told us, "Because of the surrounding atmosphere, even if you do not want to mediate, it will come naturally." The earlier evening, standing in the lobby, Kakaji showed us a small temple and said, "We visited this temple with Yogi Bapa. He asked me to enshrine the image of Akshar-Purushottam there."

After lunch, another lady devotee and I went back to the lobby and sat to meditate. Remembering everything Kakaji told me, I started meditating. During the session, I envisioned Lord Swaminarayan as young Nilkanth Varni, traveling in this region. Then I thought, divinity is similarly present today in the form of Kakaji. As I had this thought, suddenly, Kakaji came out of his room and stood in front of me. When I opened my eyes, I had the good fortune of seeing Kakaji's smiling face. Thus he accepted my innermost desire and convinced me that he was divinity personified.

LIVE IN THE PRESENT

Yoginiben, Powai

In the evening time, it was very cold in Badrinath. Kakaji said, "Go into the hot water pool, and you will not feel cold." But the pool was very crowded, so Kakaji told us, "I will go on all of your behalf - then you may dip your hands and feet." Kakaji began swimming on the bank of the pool. He called all of us, gave us water in our hands, and poured several buckets of water on our feet. At the time, we did not understand the significance of what Kakaji did. After returning to Mumbai, while discussing the incident, we realized our mistake of letting Kakaji wash our feet.

On New Year's Day, with my eyes closed, I remembered the incident and begged for Kakaji's forgiveness. Kakaji threw a napkin at me, so I opened my eyes and looked at him. He said loudly, "Forget the past, live in the present, and remain joyful!" He did not let me dwell in my faults, and since that moment, all of my negative thoughts disappeared.

NEVER ALONE

Yoginiben, Powai

In 1980, from Tardev, we went to live at Powai. It was difficult to go shopping by foot for temple things in Powai, and so, I often became exhausted. Once, I started feeling sick and my body ached. I went to bed after returning from the market. While trying to sleep, I began thinking that no one is here to take care of me. If something happened, what would I do? As I began crying with these thoughts, the telephone rang. I did not get up because I thought someone else would pick up the phone. After several rings, I got up and picked up the phone. I was astonished to hear Kakaji's voice. He started asking, "What are you doing? How are you? I am sending you sweets. Make sure you eat them." Hearing Kakaji's voice, I felt peaceful and happy. I experienced that divinity is everywhere and is aware of all of our requests.

THE QUALITY HIDDEN IN OUR FAULTS

Yoginiben, Powai

One evening at Tardev, after we practiced chanting while remembering our spiritual master, Kakaji began his discourses. Focusing on a particular incident, he spoke highly of me. So I told him, "I am not what you think I am. There is a lot of anger within me." Kakaji was pleased and said, "Your anger is purged because you accepted your fault in the presence of devotees." Then he asked me to take a vow for one week, such that I was allowed to get angry only after doing eleven rosaries while chanting "SwamiNarayan." Because of this, despite a couple incidences, I could not get angry. Before the week was over, I came to Tardev and Kakaji asked me, "How do you feel?" I replied, "You know my feelings better. Please give me strength." On the eighth day, when I met Kakaji again, he told me, "99% of your anger has been dissolved. I have kept 1% within you. This way when someone else gets angry, you will not find a fault in the person since you too have not completely overcome it."

I pray to Kakaji that I never harbor ill feelings towards anyone, nor ever look at others' nature, so that Kakaji does not have to keep even that 1% anger within me.

MENTAL SERVICE

Yoginiben, Powai

I learned how to administer acupressure in 1984. One evening, I noticed Kakaji had a cold and a headache. Since 9:30 PM, he had been pressing his head with his fingers. So I told Kakaji twice, "Would you like me to try acupressure on you?" But Kakaji said, "No, I only have a slight headache." I was disturbed to see Kakaji in pain. While going home by train, I remembered Kakaji once talked about offering service mentally. Thus, I mentally remembered Kakaji's image and offered him acupressure. The next day when I went to Tardev, Kakaji showed happiness and said, "Thank you. I am alright and fresh today." I learned that even my mental service can reach Kakaji.

THE GREATNESS OF SAINTLINESS

Yoginiben, Powai

In 1985, Kakaji held a spiritual seminar in Lonavala. After he gave discourses the whole day, Mahendra Bapu massaged his feet at night. Suddenly, at that time, a bright white light emanated from Kakaji's body! His entire being was adorned with a cool and soothing light. As Bapu called all of us one by one in the room to see this, we all felt very peaceful.

The next day, some of the senior sisters told Kakaji about the incident. Kakaji casually replied, "Because of your divine relationship, you all are also enlightened. Thus do not find faults in anyone." That day when we reached Tardev, we saw Naidu Saheb there. I began telling him about the incident as well. But Kakaji entered the hall and said, "We do not attach importance to the bright light. That is always there. But we should celebrate the greatness of saintliness. And those who have the real quality of saintliness, are truly great, but they always remain hidden. Consider how Yogi Bapa lived! That is the glorious manifestation of divinity."

ANOINTED WITH HOLY WATER

Jayshriben, Powai

The incident occurred in 1980. Weekly spiritual meetings for ladies were regularly held on Saturdays at Tardev. Since there was a half-day at school, I reached home early. Maltiben came to our house and asked my father if she could take me to Tardev.

When we reached Tardev, Kakaji and Kantikaka were sitting in the hall. When I sat down, Kantikaka told Kakaji, "We want Jayu (Jayshriben) to live at Powai." Kakaji agreed and said, "Yes, let us give her holy water." He then said, "Your parents will agree. I am giving you this holy water - from now on, you shall follow the path of righteousness directly related to God. You can live in Powai. With this holy water, may you develop a spiritual relationship with your spiritual master, and ultimately, be in service of the supreme God." In this way, Kakaji gave me holy water, and my parents willingly gave me permission to live at Powai with the aspirant sisters.

ENJOYMENT IN DETACHMENT

Jayshriben, Powai

When my brother Ghanshyam was getting married, we had to buy some gold ornaments. My father, Nagardasbhai, told Kakaji about the need to buy gold jewelry for my mother, sister-in-law, and Ghanshyam. When the discussion was over, Kakaji asked my father, "Why didn't you include *Monghi* ['precious one' – Jayshriben's nickname]? Has she done anything wrong? Get four gold hand bracelets and earrings for her." My father agreed. I also told him that he could use the gold from my necklace to make the ornaments. After all of the gold ornaments were made, a few grams of gold were still left. My father decided to make a ring for me from the extra gold.

Later, I came to Tardev to show Kakaji all of the ornaments. Kakaji took the hand bracelets in his hands and removed one saying, "This bracelet is not round - it is crooked." All the bracelets were in fact round and so I could not understand what Kakaji meant. After a few days, that particular one really became crooked.

Later on, Kakaji took the ring and one-by-one tried to place it on the fingers on his right hand. The ring did not fit any of his fingers; it only went up to the upper portion of his small finger. He showed this to me and then said, "Keep these incidents in your memory." Afterwards, he gave me a gold necklace chain.

A few days later, I had to go out of town by train. And so, some of the senior sisters advised, "Jayu, remove all of the gold ornaments you are wearing – it is dangerous at night on the train." This discussion occurred at Kantikaka's home, apartment number 8 in Sonawala Buildings. Kakaji was sitting all the way in the Tardev temple. But through another devotee, he sent a message to Kantikaka's house, "Do not ask *Monghi* to remove her ornaments. Nothing will happen. The burden is on me."

After I moved to Powai as an aspirant sister, I stopped wearing gold ornaments. I now realize Kakaji's ways - he let me wear jewelry then, so that I am detached today.

EVERY MOMENT IS PRECIOUS

Jayshriben, Powai

One day when my mother went to Tardev, Kakaji told her, "Allow *Monghi* to leave now, and in exchange we will give your family a newborn baby girl." But my mother replied, "Please allow her to stay at least one more year with me because once she goes to Powai, she will not come back." Kakaji responded, "We are taking your daughter, but in exchange, you will get a newborn baby girl." Again my mother said, "At least allow her to stay six months more with us." Kakaji explained to her, "Within six months, she will spiritually progress a lot at Powai. For an aspirant, every moment is precious. Thus please let her leave." Since then, I permanently came to reside at Powai.

Whenever my mother remembered me, Kakaji would send me home. Reaching home, my mother would say, "Jayu, I was just happily thinking about you - and Kakaji has sent you." Kakaji often used to say, "Jayu is no longer *Monghi* of Nagardasbhai, she is the *Monghi* of Kakaji."

YES, KAKAJI

Jayshriben, Powai

When I was young, I always went to Tardev with my father on festival days to seek Kakaji's blessings. I still remember that every New Year, Kakaji would give me a two or five rupee bill and call me "*Monghi* of Nagardasbhai."

One day, after the bicentenary celebration of Lord Swaminarayan, Kakaji came to Powai and told me to say "Yes, Kakaji" every time he addressed me as "*Monghi*." When I agreed, Kakaji said "*Monghi*" several times, and I replied "Yes, Kakaji" every time. But after a few days, when he called me "*Monghi*," I forgot to reply "Yes Kakaji" a few of the times. So I prayed from within, "Kakaji, you have given me such a small service and yet I cannot say 'Yes, Kakaji.' I am not very intelligent, but please give me the strength to carry out your instructions." Once, as Kakaji left Powai, I said to him, "You can call me '*Monghi*' - I won't forget now." Soon after, while going down the stairs, Kakaji sud-

denly said, "*Monghi.*" I instantaneously replied, "Yes, Kakaji." He was delighted with my quick response, and walked down the stairs with a smile on his face.

THINK POSITIVE

Jayshriben, Powai

Once, when talking to another lady, Kakaji had to repeatedly tell her the same thing. But the lady held to her story. So I thought, "This lady does not understand. Kakaji explained to her several times, but she maintains her part of the story." But then I had the thought, "Why should I think about this? It is between Kakaji and the lady. What I really should be doing is chanting." At that point, Kakaji turned to me and said, "You should always think positively like this," and gave me holy water.

FREED US FROM ILLUSION

Maltiben, Powai

Normally the weekly spiritual meetings were held on Saturdays. But one week when it was arranged on a Friday, Jayu and I decided to go see a movie that Saturday night. At home, we had said we were going to attend the weekly spiritual meeting. We had plenty of time, and so we went to Tardev first. Right when we reached there, Kakaji said "Are you going to see a movie?" We said, "Yes," and Kakaji told us, "Let us chant for some time, then you can leave." After chanting, Kakaji started talking. But as it was getting late for the movie, in the middle of his discourse, he said, "You can now go to see the movie." He also asked, "Which movie are you going to watch?" We did not say anything because we had not bought the tickets yet. Kakaji told us to go by taxi and asked if we had enough money. Then, he gave us some more money to buy snacks to eat while watching the movie.

While watching the movie, we remained connected with Kakaji, and kept thinking about him. After the movie ended, we came back to Tardev. At Tardev Kakaji asked us, "Which movie did you go see?" We

answered, "Slightly Unfaithful" and Kakaji smilingly said, "You should not have even a fraction of unfaithfulness. Now, this is the last movie." After this incident, we stopped watching movies.

WE ARE DIVINE BY HIS ASSOCIATION

Maltiben, Powai

Once when Kakaji was giving a discourse to all of the dedicated sisters at the Tardev temple, he asked for a blank sheet of paper. We watched on as Kakaji folded the paper and tore it into small pieces of the same size. He then gave a piece of paper to everyone and asked us to write our names on it. We did as he said and Kakaji then told us to give the pieces back to him folded. Without understanding what he was doing, we returned all the pieces of paper. Kakaji collected them, and again distributed them to back to us. When we opened them, we saw someone else's name. Therefore, each one of us said, "This is not mine, someone else has mine." Then Kakaji explained to us, "You see how attached we are to our names? Just like this paper, our name and appearance are false. Through this divine association, you are all divine. You only have to understand this fact." He then made us read several Swami Ni Vato on this subject.

While reading Swami Ni Vato we came across the sentence, "We are going to totally liberate you - at any cost." Kakaji then said, "I want you to become totally liberated - by offering you sweets." Kakaji was always eager to see that all aspirants learn to fathom the depth of this divine knowledge in a simple way. He was here for us to happily progress on the spiritual path without any difficulties.

DEVOTEES

THE WAY I SAW KAKAJI

Gordhanbhai Merchant, Mumbai

I first met Kakaji in 1948. At the time Shastriji Maharaj had come to Mumbai. He stayed at the SuryaNarayan Hall (*vaadi*) in Bhuleshvar (a locality of Mumbai). Shastriji Maharaj accepted a sickness at the time. He rested on a bed in the hall so that devotees could meet him easily. But Shastriji Maharaj would not talk to anyone. Because of the sickness, it was visible that his body was very weak. He was only able to sit up when helped by devotees.

During this time, I went to see Shastriji Maharaj. At the time, someone gave the news that Dr. Nathabhai's son, Dadubhai (Kakaji), had just arrived. Hearing this, Shastriji Maharaj immediately got up by himself on the bed and spoke to Kakaji for over twenty minutes! I was fortunate to witness their unique relationship. It touched me deeply. I never saw Shastriji Maharaj talk in this manner with anyone else. I realized right away that their relation was from Akshardham and eternal.

Then in 1954 Yogi Bapa came to Mumbai, and stayed at Kapolwadi. At that time, I started going to see him regularly. Usually, Yogi Bapa would not keep eye contact with anyone. But on one occasion I remember him keeping eye contact with me for several seconds. With his gracious vision, I began realizing Lord Swaminarayan's manifest presence in Yogi Bapa, and started enjoying much bliss. I was given the opportunity to become closer to Yogi Bapa. He often wrote to me while he stayed at the Gondal temple. In every letter, Yogi Bapa told me to keep the continuous association of Kakaji, and never see negative in anyone at Tardev.

Yogi Bapa told me to visit Kakaji's home in Tardev with positive feelings. At the time however, I would not go there except on occasion of the Sunday meetings. One evening, Dhaneshvarbhai Vyas, a close friend of mine, visited my place. He asked me to accompany him to Kakaji's home, where there was a meeting every night at eight o'clock. I felt this was a sign from Yogi Bapa, and thus started going to Tardev

with Dhaneshvarbhai daily. When I reached Tardev, Kakaji talked to me about whatever I had thought of on the way there! In this way, I began experiencing Kakaji's divinity.

I also started getting to know Babubhai (Papaji), Sonaba, and Kantikaka by coming there. They had won my heart with their open and friendly behavior with everyone. Later I began coming to Tardev every morning also. I noticed that I was able to enter focused meditation with little effort, and felt more peaceful. Kakaji's discourses were filled with Yogi Bapa's unfathomable glory. He would never get tired of speaking about Yogi Bapa's true identity as realized in divine trance. Kakaji was passionate in his admiration toward Yogi Bapa - this was evident to all. Due to his unparalleled glory in Yogi Bapa, he considered all of Yogi Bapa's devotees as divine. The gist of Kakaji's talks was to never think ill of those who had the slightest contact of Yogi Bapa.

Kakaji always carried himself in a glorious manner, and insisted others do too. He even gave great respect to those who had insulted him without any reason. Whatever qualities are evident in Bhagatji Maharaj's life, are seen in Kakaji.

He received the full cooperation of his family and Sonaba's family. Papaji and his wife Kamlaben, Kakaji's sister Maniba, their mother Diwaliba, Sonaba, Kantikaka, Lalitaben, Jyotiben, Taraben, Rameshbhai, Prafulbhai, Vasudevabhai, Mukundbhai and all - the elder and young alike treated devotees with the belief that they descended from Akshardham with Yogi Bapa. Everyone that visited Tardev experienced that Tardev was Akshardham on earth. Peace and bliss descended on the exalted place of worship, Tardev. The inhabitants of the Tardev temple served everyone with great devotion because they loved Yogi Bapa.

My friend Nanubhai Dave had taken me to Shastriji Maharaj for the first time. Once when he came to my home, he casually passed uncharitable comments about Kakaji. I felt bad because Yogi Bapa often said not to talk or hear ill of others. In my own way, I tried to explain to him, "I visit Tardev regularly - I do not see anything improper there. In fact, whenever I have gone there, I have experienced the atmosphere of Akshardham. They do not talk about anything except the glory of Yogi Bapa." I tried to convince him - but he was stubborn. Not

only that, he quoted passages from the Vachanamrut to malign Kakaji. I felt that someone must have instigated him, so it would not be possible for me to convince him. I could not even fall asleep that night. So I lit a lamp and sat near the image of Yogi Bapa with a rosary. Until early morning I prayed with all my heart that all of my friend's ill feelings and negative thoughts be purged.

I was to witness a miracle. When Kakaji was once going out of town, many devotees came to bid him farewell at the Mumbai Central station. Nanubhai was also there. To my great surprise, in front of everyone, he prostrated to Kakaji on the platform. He accepted his mistake and begged for Kakaji's forgiveness. For Kakaji, praise and criticism were the same. He considered all of Yogi Bapa's devotees as divine, and thus there was always peace. I was convinced that Yogi Bapa was listening to my prayers and felt content.

Weekly meetings continued at different devotees' homes every week. Whenever there was a gap, the meeting was held at Tardev. Everyone benefited from the discourses. Gradually, as the number of devotees kept increasing, accommodating all of them became difficult. Due to this, I suggested to Kakaji to have the weekly meeting at my house in the Janmastami Building. He agreed and started the meetings there. As my place was situated in the middle of the city, it was convenient for all. Also, it was close to the Grant Road Station, which facilitated all those coming from the suburbs.

Soon, the monsoon season approached. On the top of the hall there was an open terrace and so water started leaking, and the hall started flooding. The building was owned by the trustees of Harkisandas Hospital, so we made a complaint there. They checked and found that by simply applying tar to the surface of the terrace would not solve the problem. The terrace has to have a slope so that the water would go out and stop leaking. Since it was not possible to do the repair during the monsoon time, they assured that the repair would occur after the monsoon season. I thought that if I informed Kakaji, he may think that I just found a convenient excuse to discontinue the meetings, as instigated by others. So I decided to let the devotees see for themselves – let them get wet, and automatically they would stop coming to the

meetings. In this way, I would not have to bring the matter to Kakaji. But there was a miracle. That year, it did not rain on any Sunday and all the meetings were conducted without difficulty.

Thus everyone had the good fortune of Kakaji's discourses. They listened to him with rapt attention, and his very presence created a sense of Akshardham. Chaganbhai, Maneklalbhai, Fadiamama, Vajubhai Sheth, Jethalal Trivedi, Ranjitsinh Jhala, Nalinkant Dave, Bhagvandas Sheth, and all the leading devotees were very happy and the divine fellowship blossomed. Yogi Bapa was also extremely pleased. By way of Kakaji's discourses, devotees appreciated the magnanimity of Yogi Bapa. The void that was created by the departure of Shastriji Maharaj was filled, and all joined in the manifest divinity of Yogi Bapa.

But there was a group of people who were jealous of Kakaji's increasing popularity. They did not like Kakaji expressing Yogi Bapa so gloriously. They still considered Shastriji Maharaj as "number one," and Yogi Bapa as "number two." They made negative remarks - because of this, many other devotees lost the enthusiasm to converse with them. Everyone enjoyed Kakaji's discourses and more and more devotees started attending the spiritual meetings at Tardev. I felt there were now two groups.

Those interested in finding faults started bringing small matters into the forefront, and waged a systematic campaign to degrade Kakaji and all those that lived at Tardev. They were afraid that if Kakaji's influence kept expanding, no one would pay attention to them. So they started an organized campaign against Kakaji and everyone in Tardev. Yogi Bapa naturally knew everything. So during his discourses, he began emphasizing unity, fraternity, and oneness. He insisted that everyone should observe this discipline. He blessed all and exhorted them to forget the past and to begin afresh.

But nobody could understand Yogi Bapa's passion. History appeared to be repeating itself. As happened in the case of Gunatitanand Swami, Bhagatji Maharaj, [and Shastriji Maharaj,] there was a group of people who had an alternate interest. The same group took rebirth and was playing its divisive role. Gunatitanand Swami's blessings were such that whether one bowed down or not, they should ultimately prosper. Therefore he made great effort to change their crude nature,

regardless of how much they improved. Just as some kept a grudge against a great saint like Bhagatji Maharaj, some opposed the group of Kakaji-Papaji.

And at last in 1966, Kakaji, Papaji, and Kantikaka with their supporters were expelled. Those opposing them did not know Kakaji and Papaji's strength. They believed that the saints who joined Yogi Bapa through Kakaji and Papaji would return home. They, however, were not aware of the tremendous strength of Kakaji, Papaji, and Hariprasad Swamiji. But when within a short time, the Sankarda temple was built, and when Yogi Bapa's devotees from Sokhada, Sankarda, and Vasana wholeheartedly supported the saints, their calculations were proved wrong. And in a short time, Kakaji and Hariprasad Swamiji built a grand temple with a spire [in Sokhada].

In 1966, Gunatit Jyot in Vidyanagar came into existence exclusively for dedicated sisters. Fifty-one dedicated sisters joined the fellowship and began living there. For a woman to live the life of a saint was against the tradition. With this excuse, the opposing group expelled Kakaji, Papaji, and their supporters. But society did not consider this improper. People realized that the times had changed, and women of today are equal to men. They are able to participate with men in every field, including spirituality. Many of them have become doctors, engineers, lawyers, judges, bank-officers, and have engaged themselves in many other occupations. When our country's prime minister was also a woman, why should there be a separate code against dedicated sisters? Why should they be denied their own organization? As they kept vehemently opposing Kakaji and Papaji, out of curiosity people took interest and started visiting the Gunatit Jyot in Vidyanagar. They went to see for themselves the progress there. Having seen the surroundings, they openly appreciated their courage and strength. The educated class now ignored the traditional and narrow-minded vision.

Kakaji, Papaji, and their supporters kept themselves away from those with a negative vision. They never criticized anyone, and carried on with their work with a positive attitude. Therefore, in a short while, their actions spoke volumes for them.

The two brothers were also instrumental in establishing a new movement of "neck-tie saints" - those who had taken vows to practice a celibate life of saintliness while working within society - under the leadership of Jashbhai Saheb. Their goal was to live a God-inspired life, away from fame, women, and wealth. They believed that the one who lives in constant communion with God is the real saint, not necessarily the one who has physically renounced material life. The saint is one whose heart is imbued with God's love, regardless of whether he wears saffron-colored robes or not. With this principle, they decided that no resolution would be made without God in the center - all their actions were God-guided.

The entire newly formed group (the Gunatit Samaj), and the old group, willingly or unwillingly, had faith in manifest divinity. Kakaji, Papaji, Hariprasad Swamiji, and Aksharvihari Swami believed in the same discipline, and so there was no reason to find faults within them either. The goal was to practice the discipline necessary to attain God, remain absorbed in constant prayer, and to act only according to God's inspiration. They felt peaceful because they devoted themselves to singing the glory of devotees - in this way they enjoyed the bliss of Akshardham.

Yogi Bapa made Kakaji his divine instrument to fulfill his missions. Accordingly, Kakaji asked Mukundjivan Swamiji to go to Delhi and rent an apartment there. Mukundjivan Swamiji thus remained in Delhi to spread the message of Lord SwamiNarayan and Yogi Bapa in Northern India. Kakaji used his powers to build up a great society in Delhi. He used his uncanny ability and surprised everyone. For example, he demonstrated his divine dexterity by locating a missing child. By doing things such as telling the exact date when one should sell his land, and at what price, he made everyone aware of his divine powers.

Mukundjivan Swamiji had full faith in Kakaji. Once he told Kakaji that people send millions of donations to a place where God is not manifest; we are in the presence of manifest God, and yet we remain short of funds. Kakaji explained to him, "You will come across a person who will give you a huge donation, and will not even allow you to put his name plate there." Today, we see a grand temple in Delhi, which is a true symbol of Kakaji's faith and blessings.

Kakaji went abroad in 1973 and inspired people who knew Yogi Bapa to become actively devotional. He made tremendous efforts, and under the guidance of Papaji, Hariprasad Swamiji, Saheb, Sonaba, and Shantaben, spiritual activities proliferated in England, America, Canada and many other countries. In the U.S., he bestowed special blessings on an exalted soul, Dinkarbai. Kakaji was very proud of him and would tell devotees very frequently, "Rather than making millions of devotees, I would be happy if there were five devotees as dedicated as Dinkarbai. I would then believe that the whole of the U.S. has spiritual attainment."

Though Yogi Bapa was not present physically, Kakaji and all of the divine saints made the whole world realize Lord Swaminarayan's manifest presence in Yogi Bapa. They spread His teachings in India and abroad. God-realized saints of the divine tradition have one goal - according to the 116th verse in the Shikshapatri, make devotees totally liberated and serve supreme God, Lord SwamiNarayan. Kakaji persevered and arranged small and big workshops in our country and abroad to spread this divine message.

KAKAJI'S SILENCE

Kantibhai Desai, Mumbai

I happened to once be with Kakaji while he was seated in the company of a couple brilliant people. They had much knowledge about the Gita, Koran, Bible, Shikshapatri, Vachanamrut, etc. and were also influenced by the thoughts of Gandhiji and Vinoba Bhave. Both of them were discussing ideas based on their respective studies and fields. They quoted many examples and scriptures during the length of their talk. All the while, Kakaji patiently and quietly sat listening to them.

A half-hour passed, and the two continued talking. I thought, "Instead of taking advantage of a person like Kakaji who is present here, they continue rambling. They are wasting Kakaji's valuable time." At last, I lost my patience and asked one of them, "Have you seen Yogiji Maharaj?" He replied, "Yes, I received his blessings." I continued, "That Yogiji Maharaj showered a unique grace on Kakaji, and he has a realization experience like what you talk about. So I urge that

we listen to him!" So they both paid attention to Kakaji. Kakaji spoke for just a few minutes, but he resolved their argument and answered all their questions.

INFINITE DIVINITY

Kantibhai Desai, Mumbai

One day, Chandrabhan Sharma called Tardev and informed us that Nandaji was going to come to Mumbai to see Yogi Bapa. At the time, Nandaji was the president of the Bharat Sadhu Samaj (Society of Indian Saints), while Sharmaji was its secretary. Yogi Bapa was at the Dadar temple, so I went there early in the morning to convey the message. When I arrived, Yogi Bapa was taking a bath. While waiting for him outside, an elderly devotee came up to me and asked, "Why have you come so early in the morning?" When I told him about Nandaji's message, he replied, "If Nandaji desires to see Yogi Bapa, let him come to the Dadar temple. Yogi Bapa is otherwise not available. Besides, you are associated with Tardev - you should not come here." I felt sorry that I could not convey the message, and was also hurt by his words of separation. But when I went to Kakaji, he explained, "Yogi Bapa is manifest divinity, and divinity is everywhere. When we say Yogi Bapa is 'manifest divinity,' it means he is omniscient. So do not have any other thoughts - let us live in Yogi Bapa's memory."

Though I accepted whatever Kakaji said, my mind was not satisfied. At the time, Dongreji Maharaj's discourse was arranged at a hall in Churchgate, Mumbai. I was supposed to tell Yogi Bapa about his participation in the occasion as well. But because I was prohibited from seeing him, I was afraid the message would not be relayed. Believing Yogi Bapa to be omniscient, I prayed, "I have not been able to arrange your visit to the discourse because I could not meet you. However, per Kakaji's teachings, I consider you are here." Right when I entered the discourse hall, I heard the words, "The physical meeting of two people is not a true meeting - the true meeting, is the meeting of minds." The experience helped me understand Kakaji's teachings.

MAGNANIMITY OF YOGI BAPA

Kantibhai Desai, Mumbai

No one understood Lord Swaminarayan and Yogi Bapa's glory as Kakaji did. Yet, Kakaji often equated himself with fellow devotees and said, "No one could understand Yogi Bapa as he was. We understood him a little, and with this small knowledge, we occupy this august position."

Often times, Kakaji would say to me, "You have no concept of what Yogi Bapa has gifted us. Do you really live life considering Yogi Bapa to be ever present? He is very much here – he has not left us. Whatever we say, he listens. You do not see it, but I can see."

In 1980, Kakaji sent seven devotees including me to Kurukshetra to look after the Shri Krishna Ayurvedic Pharmacy. He explained, "You are being sent for training to catch God's inspiration and to work together in harmony." At that time, I attended a spiritual seminar held at the Manav Dharma Mission in Kurukshetra. There I met someone who had earlier said negative comments about Kakaji.

When I met him I said, "Before you form an opinion about Kakaji, did you consider what he has done? Today you may be very dear to your guru, but if, for your spiritual advancement, or to test your devotion, your guru were to excommunicate you, would you still remain just as devoted?" He replied, "It is just not possible." I continued, "Kakaji is the only great saint that even after being excommunicated by his organization, he glorified his guru even more and told the whole world about his true magnanimity." The person was touched by this and expressed that he internally prays to Kakaji.

LESSON FROM EXPERIMENTATION

Shantibhai Sheth, Mumbai

Our family met Kakaji through Nagardasbhai Kothari of Malad. He often talked to us about Yogi Bapa and Kakaji's glory. At the time, spiritual gatherings were held in his apartment – the Hemtara Buildings in Malad, Mumbai. During the meetings he explained, "If you consider Yogi Bapa to be faultless, you will also become faultless; if you con-

sider him to be desire-less, then you too will become desire-less." This made me think! I asked Nagardasbhai, "If we consider Yogi Bapa to be a millionaire, is it possible that we will also become a millionaire?" He answered, "If you have faith in him, time will tell you." So at that very moment I decided, "Yogi Bapa is a millionaire." With this thought, I reflected, "A day will come when I will also become a millionaire."

The next day, as usual, I went to work. At work, I had earned the respect of the management and they were happy with me. I was very comfortable with the job as well. When I reached my office, I was called to my manager's office. When I went to his office, he gave me a sheet of paper and said, "From today onwards, your work will be done by Mr. Patil. Explain to him your duties." I was taken aback as to why my manager took away my responsibilities and gave it to someone else? I did not ask for an explanation, and handed over my work to the other person. I now did not have any responsibilities at the factory. Despite my asking, I was not reinstated. Three months passed and I was still without work. Soon, the rest of the staff became indifferent towards me. I was confused and did not know what to do. I also was afraid to tell anyone about my experiment of becoming a millionaire!

At last, I lost my patience and went to Tardev. There I told Kakaji, "My manager has demoted me out of jealousy. I have been without work at the factory for over three months." Thus, I lied to Kakaji and did not mention anything about my "millionaire-experiment." Kakaji comforted me and said, "Do not be alarmed. Tomorrow your manager will ask you to take your responsibilities back. But when you go to see the manager, remember Yogi Bapa and keep chanting 'SwamiNarayan.'"

The next day, my manager called me in his office and said, "Mr. Sheth, a new order has come; you can take charge of the work." I was choked with emotions and had tears in my eyes. How compassionate Kakaji was! Even if I lied, he solved my problem without considering my faults. I regained responsibilities at work, and begged for Yogi Bapa's forgiveness for my experiment to become a millionaire. I prayed, "Dear Yogi Bapa, you are totally divine, you are the supreme emperor, while I considered you only as a millionaire. To you, a million

rupees is equal to a speck of dust. You want to give me Akshardham, and I was asking for mere ashes. Compassionate one, please forgive me.”

Kakaji had instructed me, “When you enter your manager’s office remember Yogi Bapa.” So every time I entered his office, I remembered Yogi Bapa while chanting ‘SwamiNarayan.’ Soon I noticed my manager treating me with respect. After six months passed, I had another ‘experimental idea.’ I thought, “Let me go today without remembering Yogi Bapa and see what happens?” I apparently did not learn from the first experiment.

The next day I entered my manager’s office without remembering Yogi Bapa and without chanting ‘SwamiNarayan.’ Right away, my manager said, “Mr. Sheth, why didn’t you send the required material to Air India on time? Do you know we will now have to pay a very large penalty? You better have a good explanation to keep me from writing you up.” I immediately began remembering Yogi Bapa and Kakaji and started chanting ‘SwamiNarayan.’ Without saying anything, I came out of the office feeling sorry for not following Kakaji’s command. In a short time, my manager called me again. This time I went to his office while remembering Yogi Bapa and chanting. He said, “Mr. Sheth, please call the sales manager. I’m sorry - I now realize that it was his mistake that the material was not dispatched to Air India on time.” I witnessed an immediate change in my manager! In a unique way, Kakaji showed me the magnanimity of Yogi Bapa and the SwamiNarayan mantra. Since then, I have let go of my habit of experimenting.

OUR PRAYER WAS ANSWERED

Shantibhai Sheth, Mumbai

We owned a shop in Malad, Mumbai. The business was not going well - just to keep it running, we had to keep investing in it and incur a debt. My father was very stressed over the business situation. Once, when Kakaji came to our house, he prayed, “Kakaji, please release us from this shop.” After a few days, there was a disagreement with the shop, and the landlord took control of the property. When I informed Kakaji about this, he sent Mahendra Bapu to our house. We had a big

refrigerator in the shop, and outside there was a big sign that read "Patel Ice Cream & Bhel-Puri House." Mahendra Bapu took a photo of the refrigerator in our shop and the board outside the office. With the help of the photographs, we filed a lawsuit against our landlord.

Kakaji suggested the name of a lawyer who did not favor our divine fellowship. Despite this, Kakaji advised us to contact him to fight our case. We did not have the monetary resources to fight the case, and so Kakaji obtained a loan of four thousand rupees with which the matter was taken to court. After a month, our landlord agreed to a compromise of six thousand rupees. Before the incident, we explained to Kakaji that if we received twenty thousand rupees, we would be free of debt. However, when we met the landlord to settle the case, it was God's wish that the landlord again change his mind, and the case continued. It went on for a month and a half until we finally got possession of the shop by the decision of a higher court. Ultimately, we sold the shop for twenty thousand rupees and were freed from our debt. As a result of Kakaji's grace, our case was won and our problems were solved.

FREED FROM DISEASE

Mahendrabhai Gandhi, Mumbai

I came in touch with the divine fellowship when Yogi Bapa asked us to visit the Tardev temple. He insisted, "Visit Tardev and remain in the company of Dadubhai." At the time, we had no idea why we should go to Tardev, but did so per Yogi Bapa's request. As we started going there, whenever we faced any problems, we went to Kakaji. He patiently listened to us and guided us by prayers and devotional songs. In this way, Kakaji protected our family from bad times. After two years passed, I once fell very sick. Before the sickness, Yogi Bapa forewarned me, "Mahendrabhai, after going to Bombay, continuously remain in prayers for six months." I replied, "As you wish, Bapa." In spite of this warning, at first I did not believe that Yogi Bapa was actually doing everything for my soul's purification. He often wrote letters of blessings to me and sent sanctified flowers. In his letters, he instructed me to see Kakaji so that everything would be alright. Gradually, my sickness got worse and doctors believed that my chanc-

es of survival were decreasing. Everyone in my house was worried, so my wife, Vasuben, called Kakaji and informed him of the situation. Kakaji said, "Do not be alarmed. Remember Yogi Bapa. We will come to your house this evening." At eight in the evening, Kakaji came with Sonaba and Maniben. I sat with Kakaji privately in a room and informed him about the treatment given to me. I informed him that even the doctors do not seem to know what to do now. Kakaji however put his hands on my chest and said, "Do not be afraid. Yogi Bapa will make everything alright." In the meantime, Vasuben came with some snacks and a cup of tea. Kakaji lovingly accepted the food, and came to the living room. After some time, he got up and before we could understand anything, went straight to the sink and suddenly began vomiting! We became scared and screamed, "What happened?" Kakaji regained his composure in a couple of minutes. Vasuben gave him a glass of water, and Kakaji said, "If you have soda, please give me that." Kakaji sipped soda and as if nothing happened, he comfortably sat down. He then told me, "Read the Vachanamrut and Swami Ni Vato while resting on your bed. Bapa will take care of everything. Do not worry." After consoling us, Kakaji went to Tardev. On the way, Sonaba told Kakaji, "You should not have eaten the snacks." Kakaji replied, "Ba, by vomiting I removed Mahendrabhai's disease. You will see, from tomorrow onwards he will recover."

Indeed, I got better and within just a short time, I became fully recovered, as if nothing had ever happened. Kakaji accepted my sickness and threw it out by vomiting. He freed me of my disease and convinced me about his incomparable unity with Yogi Bapa.

HE IS MY SON

Mahendrabhai Gandhi, Mumbai

My son was born in 1957. Shortly after, Kakaji came to our home one evening. As if he came specially to bless our child, Kakaji went to the crib, looked at my child, and said, "He is ours. I will apply a devotional red (*kum-kum*) mark on his forehead." After applying a devotional mark (*chaandalo*) on him, Kakaji said, "Let us take him to Yogi Bapa and he will name him." In a few days time, Yogi Bapa came to Mumbai. Kakaji carried our child to Yogi Bapa, put him on his lap

and said, "He is Mahendrabhai's son. He has to be given a name." Yogi Bapa asked, "What name should we give him?" Kakaji replied, "Whatever you say." Yogi Bapa announced, "Keep his name Suresh." In this way Kakaji and Yogi Bapa blessed him and gave him the name Suresh.

Yogi Bapa stayed at Kapolwadi during his visit to Mumbai. We often took mischievous Suresh to the spiritual meetings so that he could gain divine vibrations. When he was five years old, Suresh once watched Kakaji as he prostrated in front of Yogi Bapa. When Kakaji was on the floor, Suresh ran and sat on his back. He said, "Put me on your shoulder and take me to see Yogi Bapa." Other devotees present tried taking him away, but Suresh was adamant. When some one started reprimanding him, Kakaji said, "Do not stop him, he is my son."

Today, because of Kakaji, Papaji, and Saheb's blessings, he is a dedicated aspirant (*saadhak* at Anoopam Mission). Thus Kakaji considered our family members as his own, and made all of us happy.

HIS DIVINE MEMORY

Dinubhai Amin, Mumbai

When the Akshar-Purushottam group did not have a place of their own in Mumbai to conduct religious activities, Shastriji Maharaj, Yogi Bapa, and Nirgun Swamiji stayed at Sonaba's two-room apartment. It was there that I first came to know of Kakaji. Sonaba explained, "Dinu, this is Dadubhai - he is great and truly worth knowing." Since then I believed Kakaji to be divine. My inclination was to serve - thus whenever Shastriji Maharaj and Yogi Bapa came, my only wish was to serve them. Because of this, Kakaji's grace was upon me. Once when Shastriji Maharaj accepted a sickness, he stayed at Nanda Saheb's bungalow on Napeansea Road in Mumbai. I remember Kakaji asking me to stay there and serve Shastriji Maharaj.

In the early days, Kakaji worked as a secretary in Mr. Nanavati's company. After some time, he left the company and started "Agri-Orient Industries," a similar business with Mr. Ranade. The company procured a contract with the government to clear and forward all fertilizer imported through Mumbai. They were Agri-Orient's humble be-

ginnings. Often, over four steamer boats carrying close to one million bags each had to be unloaded at separate docks. This was a lot of work – and if it was not done in time, we incurred holding expenses. Doing this within just three to four days was quite a task.

Kakaji gave me a lot of strength at such times. The more profits the business gained, the more we were able to donate to Shastriji Maharaj's cause. Because of Kakaji's faith to serve Shastriji Maharaj, I was able to do such an impossible task. Agri-Orient had 27 large warehouses (at Sewri, Reay, and Cotton-Green roads); the security staff alone comprised 30 to 35 people. Thus, the company did very well, and Kakaji and Kantikaka donated whatever they had to build Akshar-Purushottam temples.

In fact, Shastriji Maharaj was so happy with Kakaji that he embraced him with sandalwood paste on his body at Nandaji's bungalow. Kakaji gave credit to everyone in the business, and so Shastriji Maharaj also embraced me, Kantikaka, and Chaganbhai. Because of Kakaji's blessings, I was fortunate to have this divine experience. Otherwise, I was not worthy of Shastriji Maharaj's grace. I will never forget that day. At Kakaji's instance, I did whatever little I could - and as a result, I was fortunate enough to be embraced by a God-realized saint.

FEARLESS BY GRACE

Jayantibhai Soni, Mumbai

Many years ago, my uncle, Damubhai Soni was afraid that he was going to die and the fear kept him under a lot of stress. Fortunately, he spoke openly and frankly with Kakaji. Kakaji, in his unique style, made every attempt to convince and pacify his fear, but it would not go away. He remained worry free only in Kakaji's company. He was sure of one thing - that while he was with Kakaji, he would not die. So whenever Kakaji came to Mumbai, Damubhai also stayed in town. He feared that if he went out of town, he would surely die. He was obsessed with this fear of dying.

Kakaji wanted to remove his fear-complex. One day in the evening, Damubhai sat with Kakaji, and as usual started talking about his problems. Kakaji said, "Damubhai, go to Gondal by the evening train to meet Yogi Bapa. Take your mother with you, and also offer some after-mint."

When Kakaji said this, Damubhai started perspiring. He thought, "Dear God, do I have to go to Gondal now? Away from Kakaji? If I go, I am surely going to die. But I have to listen to Kakaji." There was just about one and a half hour before the train was scheduled to depart. So Damubhai thought, "I only have an hour and half to go from Tardev to my shop at Vithalwadi to get money, to pick up my mother from Old Hanuman Lane, to buy after-mint for Yogi Bapa, and finally reach the station. Due to the evening traffic, by the time I reach the station, it will be too late to catch the train, and the Gondal trip will have to be cancelled. I will have fulfilled Kakaji's instructions and at the same time not have to go to Gondal."

With this thought, he left Tardev. Kakaji had already sent two devotees to the Mumbai Central Station to reserve seats. Damubhai took a taxi to the Vithalwadi shop, got some money, and informed me about his trip to Gondal. When I asked him about the sudden trip, Damubhai explained, "It is Kakaji's wish, I have to take the next train to Gondal." I replied, "How are you going to reach the station on time? There is hardly any time left." Damubhai replied, "I only need to follow Kakaji's order. I leave the rest to God's wish."

After leaving the shop, Damubhai took a taxi to Bhuleshwar to buy after-mint, and took the same taxi to Old Hanuman Lane to pick up his mother and then proceeded to the station. Looking at his watch, Damubhai was happy to see that he was already late by thirty minutes. He figured he would have missed the train and the trip to Gondal would be cancelled.

When he reached the Mumbai Central Station with his mother, there was a devotee near the entrance who said, "Uncle, the train is still here! It is as if the train is specially waiting just for you! Please quickly take your seat." Damubhai could not say anything. He reluctantly boarded the train with his mother. Right when he entered, the train whistle blew and moved on as if it had halted per Kakaji's command.

Ultimately, Damubhai reached Gondal safely, and returned home after four days. Nothing happened to him during the trip and so his fear disappeared. The one who makes you fearless is your true guardian!

MY FATHER

Nilkanthbhai Mehta, Mumbai

When I was young, I was very mischievous and did not pay much attention to schoolwork. Once I got in so much trouble that the matter reached the principal. He asked me to call my father and ordered that until he sees my father, I could not attend school. I was scared of my father, and so, I decided not to tell anyone. The next day, during school time I went to Tardev early in the morning. When Kakaji saw me sitting in the hall, he said, "*Raja*, don't you have to go to school?" I replied, "The principal said I cannot attend school until I call my father. But if I tell my father, he will drive me out of the house." Kakaji listened to me patiently and said, "Go to your school and tell your principal that my father is on his way." At that time, Jyotiben, Taraben and others stayed at Tardev. I figured Kakaji would probably send one of them to my school. I went to school and informed the principal that my father would arrive shortly. I was allowed to sit in class. At 11 AM, I was called to the principal's office. When I entered, I saw Kakaji sitting there. I did not know what conversation took place between Kakaji and the principal, but before I could say anything, Kakaji angrily said, "I am surprised to hear what the principal told me! How could you behave in such a manner?" With these words, he slapped me hard. The principal immediately caught hold of Kakaji's hand and said, "Let him go sir, you can punish him at home. You cannot punish him in the school." Since that day, no more complaints were brought against me at school. Indeed, Kakaji loved me as his own son and protected our entire family on every occasion.

WE WERE MERE INSTRUMENTS

Nilkanthbhai Mehta, Mumbai

My family joined the divine fellowship in 1954. From the very first time we met Kakaji, we felt that he was ours. Yogi Bapa took my father, Dhanprasadbhai's hand and gave it to Kakaji saying, "Dadubhai, take care of this family. They have been with us for a long time. They are ours." Since then, Kakaji took great care of our family and protected us.

Kakaji had his own company, Agri-Orient Industries. In around 1956-1957, Kakaji graciously kept an unintelligent person like me as his personal assistant. He sent me many places for the company's work. Kakaji was once summoned for an income-tax case and I accompanied him a few times to the Income Tax Office. Later on Kakaji told me, "I do not need to come now. Appear in court for me along with our company lawyer." Before sending me alone, Kakaji advised me, "Do not try to be clever. When the Officer questions you, give only these four answers: (1) the company is under liquidation, (2) the liquidator has been appointed, (3) there are no funds, and (4) there are no assets."

When I accompanied the lawyer to the Income Tax Office, at the last moment, the lawyer would light up a cigarette as an excuse to stay behind. Kakaji talked very highly of the lawyer, and so, I figured that he must have a reason for taking the liberty to smoke in the presence of the Officer. I, therefore, did not say anything. Every time we approached the Officer's office, the lawyer would ask me to go ahead and enter. After I went in, he would shut the door and wait outside and smoke. In this way, he would not join me. And when he did come into the office, I could not say anything or do anything – I just sat in a nearby chair. The Officer questioned me whether I was a lawyer or a chartered accountant. Hardly knowing any English, I decided to reply "Yes." After a while, the Officer asked me, "Should we start the deliberation?" I again simply answered, "Yes." The Officer opened the file and asked me, "What about this particular matter?" Remembering Kakaji's instructions, I repeated the four sentences and then kept quiet. The Officer was not satisfied with my answer, and so again said, "I need an answer for the question I have just asked!" Again I started my 'tape.' This happened eight to ten times! Ultimately the Officer made an as-

assessment that was in our favor, and asked me to leave. After coming out of the office, I asked the lawyer, "Why didn't you come inside?" He replied, "If I were to come inside, our case would be ruined." I went to Tardev afterwards. Kakaji and Papaji were sitting in the hall in their respective chairs. I bowed down to them and had a seat. Kakaji looked at Papaji and said, "Papaji, our case has been solved by the lawyer." I was enraged to hear this. It was me who represented the company and the credit was now going to the lawyer.

Kakaji repeated this a few times. I was so angry that I decided that next time Kakaji compliments the lawyer, I will tell him, "I will not accompany the lawyer ever again. You compliment him, but he does not even enter the Officer's office. I am the one who has to face the awkward situation." But before I could say anything, all of a sudden, Kakaji said, "Nilkanth, this lawyer is no good for us in the case. Next time we will send another better lawyer."

In this way Kakaji read my inner feelings and gave me the opportunity to progress. He knew everything and accepted my argument. The lawyer and I were mere instruments. In fact, everything happened favorably due to Yogi Bapa and Kakaji's grace.

RESPECT FOR ALL

Nilkanthbhai Mehta, Mumbai

In the smallest of incidences, Kakaji taught us the true meaning of courteousness. If we unknowingly did not act properly, he scolded us and helped us progress.

One day when I was sitting with Kakaji, he asked me to call Rameshbhai Soni. I shouted, "Ramesh, Kakaji is calling you." Rameshbhai was just about to leave the house, but he came back and waited near the window. Kakaji heard me calling Rameshbhai, and so he asked me, "Who is elder, you or Ramesh?" In fact, I am four years older than Rameshbhai, and because he is my brother-in-law, I always addressed him as just 'Ramesh.' Therefore I replied, "I am four years older than him." Upon hearing this, Kakaji angrily told me, "Rameshbhai is living the life of a spiritual aspirant – thus he is in fact four times older than you. You should call him Rameshbhai, and treat him with respect." In

this way, he scolded me for about an hour. I accepted my mistake and was sorry for being discourteous. Since that day, I decided that everyone in the divine fellowship is senior to me, and I should call everyone with the respectful title of 'brother' (*bhai*). Ghanshyambhai Amin's son was not even a year old, but him too, I decided to call with respect. In this way, Kakaji made sure I matured in the divine fellowship.

MY SAVIOR

Ghanshyambhai Amin, Mumbai

I got my driving license in 1968. I was young and loved driving. When a few brothers came from Vidyanagar, it was decided that we take them to Lonavala in a jeep and an Ambassador car. In the jeep, I sat with Shantibhai, Harshadbhai, Gopalbhai, Kaushikbhai and others. Before leaving, I went to ask for Kakaji's permission. Kakaji said, "You do not have to drive the car." After pausing for a while, he said, "If at all you want to drive, you should not go more than sixty kilometers per hour; and if you do go faster, keep chanting."

With Kakaji's permission we started the road trip. Kantikaka and Saheb were also with us until we reached Thana. After some time, I asked Gopalbhai, "Can I drive the car?" Excited to be behind the wheel, I forgot about Kakaji's warning. I gradually accelerated, going past sixty, and even reaching 120 kilometers per hour. On the way, we saw a car overturned because of an accident, and Shantibhai started chanting. Our car was going at full speed as we approached Panvel. Suddenly I saw a big stone, and our jeep completely flipped over three times! Miraculously we were all saved. I was hurt on my eyes, but my vision was okay. I immediately was taken to the nearest hospital and after stitches were applied, I returned to Mumbai.

Despite my not paying attention to Kakaji's warning, his compassion knew no bounds. Later on, I learned that from the time we had left for Lonavala, Kakaji and a few devotees at Tardev continually chanted for our well-being! Until I returned safely from the hospital, they continued to chant. Thus, Kakaji protected me and changed the course of my destiny. The mistake was mine, the destiny was also mine – but it was he who chanted and protected me.

PROPER GUIDANCE

Ghanshyambhai Amin, Mumbai

This happened in 1972. One afternoon, Kakaji was seated in the hall at Tardev. I was going to leave the next day by car to show the Vasana Farm (land donated by the Munshi family that Kakaji asked to be used as an ayurvedic farm for Haridham) to Lilavatiben Munshi. I informed Kakaji, "I will take the car and Rameshbhai will accompany me." Kakaji asked me to call Rameshbhai. He gave him some instructions and a letter as well. In this way, our plan for the next day was finalized.

When Kantikaka (Ghanshyambhai's father) came home in the evening, I told him, "Tomorrow I will take the car to the Vasana Farm and Rameshbhai will come with me." Kantikaka immediately said, "Do not take Ramesh - take Suresh with you." I did not say anything, but went back to Kakaji and told him, "Kantikaka told me to take Suresh instead. What should I do?" Kakaji promptly said, "Yes, take Suresh with you. When would he get an opportunity like this?"

I was amazed that when I asked Kakaji in the afternoon, he agreed that Rameshbhai should accompany me. But now he said it would be better to take Sureshbhai? I wondered, "Why didn't Kakaji say 'No' in the first place." Thinking about this, I went upstairs and asked Kakaji, "You should have told me earlier that I did not have to ask Ramesh. I am like your son and a devotee. I would have obeyed instantly." Kakaji replied, "*Raja*, you never asked whom you should take. You just informed me that 'Ramesh is accompanying me.' So I agreed. If you asked me whom you should take, then I probably would have suggested you to ask Kantikaka, and you wouldn't have become confused." Kakaji talked to me a half an hour more and taught me the correct way to be open with the spiritual master.

THE MOST PRECIOUS GIFT OF LIFE

Ghanshyambhai Amin, Mumbai

I treasure the last memories Kakaji gave me at Vidyanagar in 1986. Even today, I cannot forget the happy and everlasting moments with him. After celebrating Aksharvihar Swamiji's birthday at Sankarda,

Kakaji returned to Vidyanagar to meet Jethabhai Patel in regards to some work at Gunatit Jyot. He came to the Jyot and had dinner with us. Afterwards, he told me, "We will have a joyous time with Nirmal Swamiji and the saints at Napa. But before that, we will visit Babubhai Soni who is hospitalized at Kothiala Hospital in Anand. We will also ask Radheshyambhai to join us at Napa to attend the saints' seminar and have dinner with us."

We started from Vidyanagar, picked up Radheshyambhai to join us, and went to meet Babubhai Soni in the hospital. Before Kakaji reached the hospital, Babubhai had already told his wife Manjulaben, "Kakaji gave me a promise that I will live for five more years. That time is over today and so I will not survive this heart attack."

When Kakaji arrived, Babubhai arose from his bed. In his distinctive style, Kakaji said, "*Raja*, how are you? We remember you everyday. You gave us a great gift. How can we forget you? Today the five years of life that I promised you are complete. But today I renew my gift - I give you an additional five years to live!" Hearing this, Babubhai was overwhelmed and had tears flowing from his eyes. Kakaji's blessings ruled over time. Exactly five years later, he passed away.

A MIRACLE

Hemantbhai Merchant, Mumbai

My elder sister Dr. Minakshiben had a baby girl on May 4, 1976. Being a pediatrician, she took great care to make sure the baby was born healthy. Yet the baby was born with critical health. While only 10 days old, she had several tests done, and the doctors grew weary of her survival.

My sister called me to pray to Kakaji. She exclaimed, "When all our attempts fail, we remember God." When I informed Kakaji about the baby's condition, Kakaji said, "Ask your sister, what does she want?" When I asked her, she replied, "As a doctor, seeing a 10-day old baby suffering, I feel it may be better to let her go. But as a mother, how can I stand seeing my child die?" Kakaji began chanting and gave me sanctified water to give to the baby at the hospital. He said, "When she comes home, I will come see her!"

With Kakaji's blessings, the baby improved and within ten days my sister came home with her. In some time, she again became sick and we thought about taking her back to the hospital. But before that, Kakaji came to my sister's home in Worli. He gave the baby sanctified water and while keeping his hand on her head, chanted 'SwamiNarayan.' Kakaji advised my sister to continue chanting in this manner for ten days and continue to give her the sanctified water. Gradually her health improved and since then she has never become sick! All of the doctors were amazed that she got a new life. Because of Kakaji's miracle, the baby was named 'Karishma.'

END OF CONFUSION AND QUESTIONS

Hemantbhai Merchant, Mumbai

I asked Kakaji to visit my elder sister when she was sick. While walking up to the fourth floor of her apartment, I asked, "By me telling you about my sister's sickness, am I wrongly compelling you to do me a favor?" Kakaji gave me a brief reply, "You never asked me to go to her house. I have come on my own, because she is your sister." I was not satisfied with this answer and remained confused.

Kakaji, knowing everyone's inner thoughts, brought my question up in the youth meeting. He said, "Merchantbhai has a question. How do you know if you are compelling a saint to behave according to your desires, instead of his divine plan?" Kakaji talked on this subject for over forty-five minutes. Additionally, for three days he called and talked to me about incidents related to my question. Finally, he asked me to prepare an article on the subject. From within, I became overwhelmed. I wondered why Kakaji emphasized my question so strongly. I prayed, "Lord SwamiNarayan, please help me understand what Kakaji wants me to learn."

After a few days, I found the answer to my question from Kakaji's discourse. "As long as there is confusion in the mind, questions will remain." Hearing these words, I realized how Kakaji was serving me all these days. By having me prepare the article and talking to me at length, Kakaji worked to rid my mind's duality such that questions

would never come to me in the future. Although I was not mature at the time, Kakaji made great efforts to give me proper understanding in the best possible manner.

Kakaji often said, "I do not consider you as my disciple, but as my friend. Come on, let's shake hands!" He would then take my hand and shake hands with me. At the time, I was not competent to understand the significance of his generosity. But today, I know that I was unable to behave with 100% humility – yet he accepted me however I was. Despite being the greatest of the great, he came down to my level to help me.

I WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER

Hemantbhai Merchant, Mumbai

During Premswaroop Swamiji's birthday, a three-day youth seminar was held at Ubhrat. Kakaji could not grace the occasion, and I could not attend because of quarter-end work at the bank where I worked.

Premswaroop Swamiji was very dear to Kakaji. He thus arranged a special prayer at Tardev. He asked Harakhchandbhai to call me and tell me to come by 5 PM. I explained to Harakhchandbhai that it would be hard for me to get out so soon because of all the work I had left. I then asked if it would be alright if I came at 8 PM.

Hearing this, Kakaji asked Harakhchandbhai to call me again and in an angry tone, sarcastically told me to continue with my work. I thus talked to my boss and colleagues and left early to reach Tardev at 6 PM.

Kakaji was very pleased to see me. The devotional songs, chanting, and discourses continued as usual for a couple of hours. But I did not notice any special program! So I asked Kakaji, "What about the special program?" He replied, "Your presence itself is the special program. Today is December 27, Premswaroop Swamiji's birthday. So I am very happy that a devotee like you can come to celebrate the occasion."

Though the entire program happened as usual, Kakaji gave me a special gift to remember this occasion. By mere compassion, he created this incident. With total humility, Kakaji pretended to be angry

and absorbed my negative attitude. His calling it a 'special program' made me participate and experience his love and devotion towards Premswaroop Swamiji and saints. I attended many seminars to celebrate Premswaroop Swamiji's birthday, in Ubhrat and Haridham, but this incident in Tardev will always remain etched in my memory.

DIVINE ENERGY

Hemantbhai Merchant, Mumbai

On November 25, 1983 our son Shreyas who was only 15 months old accidentally fell from the third floor of our building. He sustained severe injury to his head. He was immediately admitted and operated on at the nearby Harkisandas Hospital. But the chances of his survival were thin – unfortunately, part of his brain was almost completely destroyed. Because of the injury, the right side of his body was paralyzed. On the midnight of the 30th, the situation worsened. When I called Kakaji, he said, "Rest your hands on his head and chant for ten minutes. Lord SwamiNarayan will take care of him." Chanting had continued for the past five days, but because of Kakaji's instructions, he miraculously showed signs of improvement. After being kept in the hospital for twenty-five days, he was finally brought home. Within six months, he started recovering back to normal. But because of the injury, he lost 90% of his vision.

Since that time, Kakaji kept saying, "Lord SwamiNarayan will give him vision." For this, Kakaji intensely prayed. He asked all devotees to pray for Shreyas. He even prayed for Shreyas during seminars and *mahapooja* (ritual prayer to God and His devotees). Everyone in our home may not have prayed for Shreyas's well-being as much as Kakaji did!

Kakaji continually asked me about Shreyas's health. After some months when I showed Kakaji the medical reports, Kakaji repeated, "Keep your hand on his head and chant to give him divine energy." I felt, "How is this child, who is not even 2-years old, supposed to understand anything about 'a divine force?' Besides, he is helpless." But I did not reveal these feelings to Kakaji.

After a few days I went to Mr. Soni's home to invite him to Swamiji's birthday celebration. Mr. Soni gave me a book titled, 'The Miracle of Metaphysical Healing,' and advised me to read it. The author of the book was 90% blind, and doctors gave no hopes of regaining her vision. But by 'auto-suggestion' and 'self-hypnotism' she regained all of her vision. The book also indicated that this can be transmitted by friends and relatives.

After reading the book, I was able to understand the reason behind Kakaji's suggestion of giving him 'divine force.' Kakaji's blessings alone would have worked, but Kakaji wanted to mature my understanding and also make me experience divine energy myself. Kakaji's teachings enlightened devotees at all levels, from the psychological to the spiritual. Kakaji was always enthusiastic to help devotees progress on the spiritual path!

FROM A HOUSE TO A PALACE

Girishbhai Patel, Mumbai

In 1970, I lived in a two-room apartment at the Ganjawala Buildings in Tardev with my parents, Gordhanbhai and Kamlaben, and my younger brother Kaushik. The apartment included a kitchen and a front room that was used as a living room and bedroom. The rooms were very small, the toilet was outside, and we had to get water from an outside tap. Right next to the entrance, there was a place with a ground faucet used to wash utensils (*chokadi*). It, however, did not give a drop of water. So we got water from a public water tap every-day at 4 AM. Since tenants from all twelve rooms from each floor got water from the same source, we even had to stand in line to get the water. Unfortunately, we were not financially well-to-do and could not afford to move to a better place. Whenever Kakaji visited our home, he first went to the ground-faucet, lovingly pampered it, saying, "Dear god-of-faucet, why are you harassing our Gordhanbhai? Why don't you give us water in our room? Gordhanbhai is a great devotee of God. Please give us water." In this way, Kakaji pleaded to our water-faucet for several minutes and then sat down on the bed. He would tell our mother, "Kamlaben, I will get you a four bedroom apartment that supplies water twenty-four hours a day. You will also receive a

daughter-in-law that will not only serve you, but the divine fellowship as well." At the time, I thought Kakaji would say this just to enliven our jaded spirits. It was hard to accept this promise when we hardly had any money.

Indeed, despite our situation, in 1975, by his sheer grace, Kakaji gave us a four-room apartment in the same place with water available twenty-four hours. Today when we hear others talk about their difficulties in getting water, we remember Kakaji's infinite grace upon us with gratitude and reverence.

LOVE FOR DEVOTEES

Girishbhai Patel, Mumbai

The following incident occurred in 1972. My cousin, Jayantibhai, came to Mumbai from Secundrabad, Andhra Pradesh to arrange my engagement with the daughter of an acquaintance. We went to see the girl at Sunav, and everyone thought she was very nice. We invited the girl and her family to our home in Naar the following day. Jayantibhai however had a misunderstanding with the family and recommended that the relationship not advance any further.

The next day, while returning from Vadodara to Mumbai, we found out that Kakaji was going to be on the same train as ours. I went to meet him, informed him about what happened, and went back to my compartment. At the next station, Kakaji came to our compartment, and said, "Kamlaben, after four days, the girl's relatives will contact us. We do not have to think further." Exactly after four days they called and requested to meet at our home the following day. Everything worked out perfectly, and my engagement was planned.

Kakaji asked one of the elders in the family, "Chinubhai, do you know me? I came to your hometown of Pij with Yogiji Maharaj. I still remember that your house is situated near a well. You and your brothers carried buckets of water to bathe Yogiji Maharaj, and he blessed you." Chinubhai was amazed that Kakaji could remember the smallest service anyone offered to Yogiji Maharaj.

Kakaji came to Ahmedabad along with devotees to grace my marriage as well. He stayed until the end and even came into the *mandap* (tent under which the marriage rites are carried out) to bless both of us. In this way, Kakaji considered our family as his own and shouldered all of our troubles. Kakaji truly loved and took care of his devotees.

THIS HOUSE IS A TEMPLE

Girishbhai Patel, Mumbai

In 1975 my family started looking for a better place to stay. Rameshbhai Soni also helped us look for an affordable place. After considering over a hundred different options, we finally decided on the place we presently live. We however decided not to move in until October because the water connection to the building was not completed yet.

Early one morning, Kakaji all of a sudden called my father and asked him to leave our present place and immediately go live at the new home. My father came home and said, "Get ready, we have to leave this place right away. Tomorrow we will go to the new place." My mother and I insisted, "It is not possible to move in one day. We haven't sold this place, there is no water at the new home, and we have not even packed!" My father replied, "But Kakaji said to move immediately. We must do as he says." My mother and I were still against the move, and thus continued arguing with my father.

While the discussion went on, a man came to our house to discuss about moving into our old place. He immediately decided to move in. That same evening he talked to the landlord and completed all the paperwork. He even agreed to buy our old boiler. The atmosphere completely changed – my mother happily began packing. The next morning, we put our things in a truck and by the evening we moved into our new home.

The very next morning, the localities announced an emergency freeze on buying and selling homes. We right away realized the importance of following every command of the great saint. Kakaji's only aim was to make us happy. The experience taught me to follow the saint's instructions with undoubting faith.

Before passing away, Kakaji said, "In this house arrange five Sunday meetings. I will attend every one of them." Kakaji attended every meeting and putting his hand on my chest, said, "Girishbhai, this house has become a temple!"

ALL FOR ME

Kirtibhai Vajor, Mumbai

In 1978, when I went to see Kakaji at Tardev, he was seated on a sofa in the hall. Many devotees were present, and as usual, Kakaji was in a cheerful mood. I told Kakaji, "I got a promotion at the bank where I work – but I have to transfer from Mumbai to Shrirampur." Kakaji asked, "Do you want to go?" I replied, "If I accept the promotion I would have to leave Mumbai for three to five years." In his unique way, Kakaji said, "Whose father controls the universe?" I simply remarked, "I will have to go." Kakaji repeated, "Whose father controls the universe?" I could not understand what Kakaji meant.

When I received notice of the transfer, I collected all my belongings and went to Shrirampur alone. I figured, "After I get a house, I will call my wife, Usha." After going there, I found out it was difficult to find a house. My branch manager also lived as a paying guest with someone else. I wondered, "What should I do now?" Further, within a couple days, I fell ill. By the fourth day, I sent a telegram to Kakaji informing him I was returning to Mumbai.

When I returned on the fifth day, I immediately went to Tardev. Kakaji was out of town, but Kantikaka greeted me with a smile. Two days later, when Kakaji returned, Usha and I went to Tardev to see him. I told Kakaji, "It would not be possible for me to stay there, but I no longer have the Mumbai job either." Kakaji told both of us to chant the rosary 500 times.

After two days I came to Tardev to attend the Wednesday meeting. I was still sick so Kakaji told me to see a doctor. I continued taking medicine for a couple days and also obtained a medical certificate from the doctor. Kakaji then said, "We will get the Mumbai job for you. Prepare a file explaining your medical situation." Kakaji continued, "What is the phone number of your bank's Human Resources

Department? I will talk to them, and then both of us will visit your company." Despite being busy, every time he saw me, Kakaji asked me, "Is the file prepared with all the relevant papers?"

Kakaji found out that he knew a relative of someone in the Human Resources Department that lived on Marine Drive in Mumbai. Kakaji called me and told me to reach the person's home at 10 AM. Because it was the monsoon season, I reached there 15 minutes late. Kakaji however was right on time. For me, Kakaji took much trouble, and by his grace, I got my job back in Mumbai.

Two years later, all of a sudden, Kakaji said, "Didn't I tell you, whose father controls the universe?" It was such a long time, but Kakaji still did not forget this small incident. He patiently waited for me to mature and explained to me the relevance of the statement.

ENTHUSIASM FOR SATSANG

Anoopambhai Purohit, Mumbai

In 1968, because of Batukbhai Parmar, I got to meet Yogi Bapa. At the time, I had faith in the Gayatri mantra, but was uncomfortable chanting 'SwamiNarayan.' But after seeing Yogi Bapa and meeting Kakaji, I was filled with so much happiness, that I cannot even express it in words. My quest for a guru ended when I saw Kakaji, and he took a permanent place in the core of my heart. At the time, I worked the night shift in a mill for one month. Thus I was able to see and listen to Kakaji during the day. In order to continue attending Kakaji's discourses, I asked at my work if I could extend the night shift for one more month. After a few days, Kakaji asked, "Is your night shift schedule over yet?" I replied, "I extended it so that I could take advantage of your discourses." Kakaji was pleased with me and said, "You are the first one eager to take advantage of the discourses. We are really happy with you." Even today when I remember this incident, my eyes become filled with tears.

REMEMBERED ME

Anoopambhai Purohit, Mumbai

After that incident, Kakaji asked me to attend a tour of pilgrimage places. At every place, Kakaji explained the glory of the SwamiNarayan mantra. We visited Manavadar, Ajab, Vanthli, Junagadh, Piplana, and Rajkot. I still remember the happy times spent with Kakaji. A little while after returning, I lost my job and also had a hernia operation. I was sad and thought, "Who would come to the hospital to see a poor person like me?" Beyond my imagination, before I was taken in to be operated, Kakaji came and blessed me. He stayed with me and talked to me for 20 minutes. I will never forget what he told me – even today, the talks give me strength to always remain positive.

EXTRAORDINARY FIRST MEETING

Lakshmanbhai Viharia, Mumbai

I met Kakaji for the first time in 1973 at the Tardev temple. Prior to this meeting, I was not devoted to Lord Swaminarayan. When I visited the Tardev temple, I was neither enthusiastic nor did I have any religious knowledge. The regular Wednesday meeting was going on and I sat along with other devotees in the hall. I listened to Kakaji with rapt attention and experienced peace and bliss.

After the meeting was over, Kakaji asked me, "Do you know anything about Lord Swaminarayan?" I told him that Lord Swaminarayan visited our town of Vihar seven times and our whole town is dedicated." Hearing this Kakaji was very happy, and said, "Regularly attend the Wednesday meetings." Since that day, Kakaji is with me in my memories. He was the first and last guide in a previously dark and non-spiritual life.

WON THEM OVER

Lakshmanbhai Viharia, Mumbai

This happened in 1977. After my marriage, I went to live in Bhainder (a suburb of Mumbai), and asked Kakaji to visit my house. Within a week, he came along with the aspirant brothers of Tardev. I arranged a small gathering on the terrace of my building. Rameshbhai Soni and all helped arrange everything. I also invited other devotees of Bhainder that were also active at the Dadar temple.

At the meeting, they asked questions that were very offensive and disrespectful. Kakaji's attitude remained extremely friendly. But they were prejudiced and were not prepared to listen to Kakaji at all. The atmosphere was tense. I was sad that they insulted Kakaji during his first visit to my home. Kakaji finally asked them, "Who do you respect at the Dadar temple?" They gave the name of a senior saint. Kakaji replied, "Then why don't you ask him about me, and about the answers I gave you. When I return to Bhainder, please see me again."

The next time Kakaji visited Bhainder, he asked me to call those devotees. The senior saint at the Dadar temple had helped them gain proper understanding. Thus, they felt sorry for everything they had said last time, and asked for Kakaji's forgiveness. Kakaji treated them with the same respect and divinity – how grand Kakaji was!

GIFTED ME WITH A NEW LIFE

Lakshmanbhai Viharia, Mumbai

In 1980 our neighbors called the head of a black magic group that promised they could give a childless mother a son.

At the time, we were married for many years, but did not have any children. My wife did not know the people were actually unscrupulous and accidentally took a vow under them. In a hysterical state, she soon stopped talking to me or doing any housework. She did not cook, so I had to eat out all the time. She also stopped attending Wednesday meetings at Tardev. With the support of the neighbors, she asked to divorce me and said I should leave the home at once.

At the Wednesday meeting, during the usual chanting, I remained confused and could not concentrate. In the middle of the chanting, Kakaji looked at me and said, "See me after the meeting is over." I replied, "Yes, Kakaji. I want to discuss an important matter with you." After the meeting, I privately met with Kakaji and told him everything that had happened. Kakaji advised, "You do not have to divorce your wife. She has simply been misguided by the other group. Do not worry - take this apple as sanctified food, give it to her, and ask her to come to Tardev tomorrow."

My wife originally said she would not come to Tardev, but she took the apple. After eating the divinized apple, I saw a miraculous change in her. She even agreed to join me at Tardev the following day. On entering the temple, it appeared that she was overcome by a fresh energy. Kakaji asked her why she no longer attended the Wednesday meetings. She did not reply but started weeping. Kakaji consoled her and purged her of all of her fears. Being omniscient, Kakaji said, "Dear, our God is very powerful - you can ask Him for whatever you want." He blessed us and we happily went home.

Kakaji then arranged for us to get married again - he asked Rajubhai Bhatt to prepare a Marriage Deed for us, and blessed us with a new life. Today, we have two children, and are prosperous - all thanks to Kakaji.

GAVE US A CHILD

Ghanshyambhai Kothari, Mumbai

On Diwali, November 17, 1980, Kakaji gave a flower to my mother and blessed her, "You have sent Jayshri (my younger sister) to Powai to devote her life to God. But your attachment impedes her progress on the spiritual path. So we will give you a child such that your attachment to Jayshri lessens." Afterwards whenever Kakaji met my wife, Vanita, he would say, "I will pray to God that you get a *kaniyo* (baby Lord Krishna). Do not worry." In 1981, before Kakaji was going to visit the US, he came to our house for lunch. Kakaji stood before his own photo and said, "Dadubhai, a child has to come to this house - otherwise I will kill you and tear your photograph. Listen carefully. A child has to come to this house!" After giving us this pleasant memory

Kakaji left for the US. While there, he sent us a letter saying, "A devotee from Akshardham must have arrived." And indeed on August 21, 1981, my son Arpit was born. Thus Kakaji gave us blessings in advance and made us happy.

When Arpit was four years old, he still did not eat much and would not drink milk by himself. When we consulted a pediatrician, all test reports came out normal. We tried many things, but his eating habits did not change. Surprisingly though, he would eat anything that Kakaji gave him. One day, during the ladies' meeting at Powai, a senior devotee asked Kakaji, "Baby Lord Krishna ate so much, but Arpit does not eat anything!" Kakaji replied, "This child was a saint in his last birth. He has brought his self-control with him. In this birth, we will see he continues his spiritual progress."

GREAT COMPASSION

Ghanshyambhai Kothari, Mumbai

In the Saurashtra region of Gujarat, we did not have property of our own for a long time. While looking for a home, I came across a beautiful bungalow in Jamnagar. It was a little expensive, but I thought I could get some financial help from a friend. With this idea, I negotiated the original cost of 150 thousand rupees with the owner. I was happy with the offer, and the bargaining got the cost down as low as 111 thousand rupees. I was so happy with the deal that I immediately gave 1 thousand down as a deposit. I promised to give the balance after returning to Mumbai.

I told my father, Nagardasbhai, about the home, expressing my happiness with this deal. He immediately called Kakaji at Tardev and gave him all the information. Kakaji replied, "I am going to Goregaon in the evening. Both of you please see me there."

That evening we met Kakaji at Vimlaben's home in Goregaon. I enthusiastically showed Kakaji the bungalow plan. After listening to me patiently however, Kakaji asked my father to send a telegram to Jamnagar to immediately cancel the deal. We were surprised, but because of Kakaji's advice, we decided to not buy the place after all.

Some days later we learned about land problems with the Jamnagar home. If we bought the home, we would have been involved in a massive legal problem. But Kakaji's compassion saved us.

TAKE ME TO AKSHARDHAM

Ghanshyambhai Kothari, Mumbai

At the age of 82, my grandfather suffered a stroke, paralyzing the right side of his body. When we called Kakaji he said, "Do not worry at all. Your grandfather will not have any physical pain. God will take him." It was hard for my grandfather to be admitted to the hospital because he was attached to everyone in the home. Therefore in order to detach him from this world, Kakaji created several incidents.

While my father had to go to Napa for business work, Kakaji asked my mother, Kantaben, to go to Delhi to attend a celebration. We were hesitant at first to send her to Delhi because our grandfather would be left unattended at the hospital. Even my sister would not be able to stay at the hospital because of her final exams. When we decided that my mother would not go to Delhi, Kakaji sent another message repeating, "Kantaben should go to Delhi." After considering all our options, we stuck to our own thinking and decided my mother should not go to Delhi. But Kakaji called for the fifth time saying, "I have arranged for Kantaben to go to Delhi with Mansukhbhai in his jeep." My father instructed everyone in the house, "No one should make any other decisions. Kakaji asked Kantaben to go to Delhi, and we must do exactly as he says." Before leaving, my father made arrangements with relatives to take care of my grandfather at the hospital during the night time. All of a sudden I had a toothache, and our relatives also expressed not being able to stay at the hospital overnight.

All the while, my grandfather's condition became more and more serious. But because no one was able to be with him, his attachments lessened and he instead focused on prayers. When everyone returned to Mumbai, his health improved, and he was brought back home. Whenever I went to Kakaji and talked about my grandfather's illness, Kakaji said, "Your grandfather still wants to live a little longer. He wants to attend his second son's daughter's wedding. So how can I take him to Akshardham?"

Finally, my grandfather asked Kakaji to meet him. On May 23, Kakaji came to our home. My grandfather told Kakaji, "My children are happy. I am now ready to go to Akshardham. Please take me. If you can take me in 5 minutes, I do not want to wait for even the 6th minute." Kakaji replied, "Fine, but tell me, what is your final desire?" My grandfather said, "Now, my only desire is after I pass away, please explain the 116th verse in the Shikshapatri that talks about attaching to God after going beyond all worldly qualities." Kakaji chanted, gave him sanctified water, and said, "Now we will take you to Akshardham." Kakaji left our home at 10 pm. The next day, May 24, exactly at 10 pm, my grandfather passed away. In this way, Kakaji first detached him from the world and focused him on the devotional path.

YOU KNOW WHAT IS GOOD FOR US

Ghanshyambhai Kothari, Mumbai

During the period my grandfather was admitted to the hospital, my father got into an accident while driving his scooter. He was also admitted to the hospital with a large fracture on his knees. When he returned home after a couple days, Kantikaka frequently visited us and gave him encouragement. Kantikaka would tell him, "Now that your leg has improved, start running like a horse. We have a lot of work to do in Powai." Although the fracture was healed, he continued to have pain in his leg. And on November 4, 1985, my father suddenly passed away.

Thus, within not even 6 months, both my grandfather and father passed away. The next day, when Kakaji visited our house, I asked him, "You used to say, 'Nagardas is my right hand. He can take care of the Powai work very nicely.' He was also taking care of poor devotees. Then why did you take him to Akshardham now?" With his infinite mercy, Kakaji replied, "God never takes a devotee without our consultation. But as for Nagardasbhai, it was God's wish because Nagardasbhai accepted the past deeds of three devotees. The mountain of past deeds were impeding his progress from reaching the fully liberated state. In order for him, as well as all of you, to progress more quickly, God took him. But wherever he goes, he is going to do our Powai work."

Then giving us a glimpse of the infinite capacity of divine saints, Kakaji explained, "Divine saints can shoulder the past deeds of the masses. I openly do that. Then, whenever I go to Powai, I purge all the deeds in the sacrifice."

FACE TO FACE WITH DIVINITY

Ulhasbhai Vadalkar, Mumbai

Sharmaji of Ulhasnagar and I worked together at Amulakh Amichand High School in Mumbai. Once, in 1978 Sharmaji came to my home and said, "I will take you to a place that you will always remember. We have to prepare drawings for a Swaminarayan temple." In those days, we heard about the Swaminarayan temple at Dadar – they had plenty of painting work to give to artists. I thought, "This was a golden opportunity to earn some money." Thus, when I heard the name 'Swaminarayan,' I promptly agreed to go to Tardev. There I got to meet Kakaji for the first time. At first sight, I felt I met Divinity, face to face.

At the time, Kakaji was writing a book titled "The Real Essence of Tantra." He asked me to prepare a drawing for the front page, as well as some inside-page drawings. I followed Kakaji's instructions and was given a generous remuneration for the work.

During the time, preparations for Kakaji's Diamond Jubilee Celebration were going on in full swing. Guruji and Das Swamiji were busy with these preparations. Day and night, chanting, prayers, scriptural readings, etc. continued. I was surprised to see how enthusiastically all the activities were carried out, and how dedicated the devotees were. For the first time in my life, I witnessed how magnificently God was worshipped. I really experienced that Lord SwamiNarayan resided at the temple.

Since my childhood, I read scriptures and desired to meet a true saint. When I saw Kakaji, my wishes were fulfilled. I was convinced that this was my door to liberation – under no circumstances would I ever leave this association. And a new life was thus charted.

Immediately after the Golden Jubilee Celebrations, preparations were being made for Lord Swaminarayan's Centenary Celebrations. For the occasion, Kakaji asked me to prepare incidents from Lord Swaminarayan's life to prepare a short film. This time, when Kakaji asked me about payment, I immediately replied, "I do not need money. I am honored to offer my services." But Kakaji kept insisting to pay me, and I kept saying, "No." I felt no need for monetary gain - I cannot describe the real happiness that Kakaji gave me in spiritual progress.

FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT

Ulhasbhai Vadalkar, Mumbai

Some time after the celebrations, my son Rohit was born. Within five days of his birth, Rohit contracted a serious form of neonatal jaundice, and was thus admitted to Borivali Hospital. During the time, I was also sick, with a temperature of up to 105 degrees. I became so weak that I could not even get up from my bed. Scared for my son, I mustered enough strength to get up and take the taxi straight to the hospital. From there, we rushed with my son to Dr. M.D. Shah, a child specialist at the Nanavati Hospital. Because I was sick, my blood could not be taken. When I got a blood sample from my wife at Borivali we found out that she could not donate the blood either. Rohit had blood group O/Rh- (and thus could only get blood from an O/Rh- group person). So at about midnight, I immediately went to Tardev, where Kakaji was awake, as if waiting just for me. When I informed Kakaji about what happened, he woke up all the dedicated brothers and sent them to different places to inquire about getting the required blood. At about 2 AM everyone returned with the news that the blood was not immediately available. When I called Bharat Laboratories, we finally found that the blood would be available at 7 AM. By 7:30 AM I reached Nanavati Hospital with the blood. My son underwent the transfusion and by 10 AM, he started recovering. As Rohit's health improved over the next couple days, I kept informing Kakaji about his progress.

One day, however, an error by the nurses at the hospital caused a change in Rohit's condition. (He was given a double dose of Ampicillin.) Dr. M.D. Shah noted that the percentage of Billirubin suddenly went

up. It would take fifteen to twenty days to come back to normal, and thus Rohit's chances of survival were slim. I again immediately called Kakaji. Kakaji told me, "God will save him, do not worry at all. We are continuously chanting here." He asked me to chant, and also asked all of the saints from Sokhada that were at Tardev to chant. The next day, when Dr. M.D. Shah examined the child, his condition had miraculously turned around. Everyone rejoiced, "It is a miracle!" Kakaji used to say, "The whole world may not believe." But I had experienced the truth - and I do believe!

FEARLESS BLESSINGS

Premjibhai, Mumbai

When Sharmaji donated his land in Powai in 1978, it was literally a dense jungle. There were no basic facilities available, nor was there even a small hut to sleep in. But once, Kakaji asked me to go to Powai as a caretaker and stay there for one year. The next day I packed my bags and left for Powai along with Ravibhai, who could help clear the land and gardens. The very first night, we slept in jute bags, and had only one lantern between the two of us. When I turned over while sleeping I felt something large and slippery in my hand! When I opened my eyes, I was taken back to find that a 6-foot snake had crawled into my jute bag! I jumped up and awoke Ravibhai. Both of us were not able to go to back to sleep that entire night. While chanting, we thought, "If we cannot even stay here one night, how can we stay here for one whole year?" The following day, when Kakaji and Kantikaka came to see the land, a 12-foot snake crossed their path! When this happened, I narrated our night to Kakaji and said, "We could have died!" Kakaji however replied, "The snake has seen you, so it is liberated. Now, in its next life it will be a human being." He then blessed me, "A snake will never bite you. Even if you hold a snake in your hand, it will not bite you!" After that, similar incidents happened, but I was never bitten. With Kakaji's blessings I became fearless and took upon the service of taking care of the Powai land where the beautiful ISRC temple is situated today.

VISION OF DIVINITY

Dasbhai Patel, Vidyanagar

On December 8, 1963, Yogi Bapa was explaining the Vachanamrut at the Nainpur temple with Kakaji seated in the front row. I asked, "Bapa, you often talk to us about having a constant vision of divinity (*nirdoshbuddhi*). I make every effort to achieve this state, but do not succeed." In his characteristic style, Yogi Bapa said, "Dadubhai Saheb, please explain to everyone how to keep a constant vision of divinity. Your talks and analysis are very enlightening. You have succeeded and inspire others as well. Nothing is impossible for you." Then Atmaramkaka of Nainpur said, "Bapa, when I receive Swaminarayan Prakash (monthly magazine of the divine fellowship), the first thing I read is Dadukaka's article." Yogi Bapa replied, "He is a great devotee and is indeed worth knowing." Dadubhai explained, "We do not find faults with those related to us. If there is a disagreement, we compromise and tolerate. Similarly, we have to tolerate all those who have Yogi Bapa's association. If we do not see divinity in every devotee, then in fact we do not see total divinity in Lord SwamiNarayan. This quality is attained by the association of saints." Then Jagjivanbhai of Ahmedabad asked, "Bapa, can you tell us where we can find such a saint?" Yogi Bapa humorously replied, "You do not come across a bridegroom in every street-corner! Such saints are rare. Start by keeping a vision of divinity in the saint. Dadubhai is such a saint that cannot be found anywhere." Thus Yogi Bapa himself explained to us the greatness and glory of Kakaji.

THE SEAT OF AKSHARDHAM

Dasbhai Patel, Vidyanagar

Yogi Bapa once came to the Swaminarayan temple in Anand to collect grains. Those days, instead of money, crops were collected from farmers to prepare food at the temple. Kakaji accompanied Yogi Bapa. Yogi Bapa asked Kakaji, "Shall we collect grains?" Kakaji replied, "The time is favorable." A devotee interjected, "Yogi Bapa, the price of grains is very high right now." Yogi Bapa replied, "Just like grains are expensive, our God is very expensive. He is not easy to come by!"

In the morning, before going out to collect grains, Yogi Bapa said, "We are going out to collect grains – therefore we give our seat, the seat of Akshardham, to Dadubhai. Dadubhai, please talk to everyone. No one should get up because Dadubhai is discoursing on how to realize Akshardham." At the time, Gordhanbhai Contractor brought a garland of roses to offer to Yogi Bapa. He said, "Dadubhai, since Yogi Bapa has bequeathed to you the throne of Akshardham, please offer the garland to him." Kakaji offered the garland to Yogi Bapa, and Yogi Bapa returned the sanctified garland to Kakaji. What a marvelous relationship between master and disciple.

ENTHUSIASM TO SERVE

Vithalbhai Patel, Anand

I first met Kakaji in 1964. Yogi Bapa asked Kakaji and Jashbhai Saheb to build a hostel in Vidyanagar (a college-town in Gujarat near Anand). In order to construct the hostel, Kakaji wanted to print a brochure that would help in collecting funds. At the time, I had just started a new Printing Press. Kakaji approached me one Saturday with the printing matter. Because it was a lot, I told him, "It will take us four, maybe five days. You can come back then." But Kakaji had another idea. The next day was a Sunday – if they were ready by then, he could conveniently pass them out at a meeting. I told him, "Tomorrow is just not possible." But Kakaji explained, "A most wondrous characteristic of our divine fellowship is that whatever work would normally take four days, can be completed in just one day!" I replied that it would only be possible if we worked overnight. Kakaji agreed with my idea and left. Sunday morning, he personally came back to the press. Only a part of the pamphlet was printed, but Kakaji said it would do since it was the most important part of the brochure. Kakaji sat there as the copies were finished. But they still needed to be creased. Kakaji said, "It is ok. I will take care of it in the car." I was amazed to see his unbounded enthusiasm to ensure that Yogi Bapa's wishes were carried out.

FARSIGHTEDNESS

Vithalbhai Patel, Anand

I owned one Printing Press at the time, but decided to start another one about 60 kilometers away from Anand. It was my wish to have it opened by Yogi Bapa. When I informed Yogi Bapa about my desire, he replied, "Tell Jashubhai to inform Dadubhai to inaugurate the Press. You should believe that if the opening ceremony is done by Dadukaka, it is in fact done by us." Saheb conveyed the message, and Kakaji inaugurated the new Press. But at the time, Kakaji said, "This place is not right. Try to find another good location. We will pray for you so that you get a better place." To my great surprise, within only six months, I found another place for a Press. I was amazed at Kakaji's farsightedness.

SELFLESS GRACE

Radheshyambhai Agarwal, Anand

I first met Kakaji in Vidyanagar. He was kind enough to visit my shop with Bapu and Rameshbhai Soni. Whenever I visited Mumbai, Kakaji said, "Tell me if you have any work." I wondered why Kakaji asked me this - I was the one who should offer him service.

Once I came to Mumbai to see my brother-in-law. When I arrived, I found out that he was hospitalized and in a very serious condition. I immediately remembered Kakaji's words and thought, "I should go to Kakaji and talk to him about my brother-in-law's illness."

When I went to Tardev, Kakaji prayed for him and said he would come with me to the hospital. Kakaji went to the hospital with me, chanted God's name, offered water from *mahapooja* (ritual prayer to God and His devotees), and said he would be alright. My brother-in-law recovered from that illness and lived another 12 years before passing away in Mathura. This was all due to Kakaji's blessings.

AT FIRST CONTACT

Kishor Masters, London

In August 1985, the BAPS organization celebrated Gunatitanand Swami's bicentenary by way of the Cultural Festival of India (CFI), a grand exhibition of the Hindu religion. I attended the event with Rajubhai and Kiranben, but we were not able to meet Pramukh Swamiji in person because some lady devotees also accompanied us. Disheartened, we prayed to God that we find a guru that is right for us. I believe that prayer brought me in touch with Kakaji.

My friend Ashwinbhai Popat once asked me to attend a spiritual meeting [at the Anoopam Mission/Gunatit Jyot] where many divine saints were present. Also, my wife, Sushila, was a devotee and often went there. But I would just drop her off and leave, and never come inside. However, since I was personally invited I went to the next gathering. After the meeting, devotees got in line to meet Kakaji, whom I did not know at the time. I remained seated all the way in the back. To my surprise Kakaji waved his hand and called me forward. So I went to meet him. He said, "The guru you are looking for is here." I was awestruck! After asking me some questions, he asked if I could meet him the following day. At the time, not knowing how precious time with Kakaji was, I said I would have to get permission from my work first. Thus, I informed Kakaji the earliest I would be able to see him again would probably be Tuesday. Kakaji humbly agreed and said to be at the Anoopam Mission at 10 AM. Before leaving, I told him about my friends who also wanted to meet him.

With Kakaji's consent, I called Rajubhai and Kiranben and we reached Anoopam Mission at 10 AM on Tuesday. Kakaji was waiting for us. And when I saw him, my only thought was to do exactly what he says. After giving us initiation (*varnamaan* or accepting religious vows), Kakaji talked to us for a long time, and changed Kiranben's name to Sita. Kakaji then asked me to take another day off from work to take him to the CFI at Alexandra Palace. I told Kakaji I already had taken Thursday and Friday off and I will come. I was a novice in the divine fellowship, but saying 'yes' to the divine master helped me progress quickly. Kakaji then asked me to take Malvina, an Italian devotee, to

the CFI on Thursday morning. Kakaji said he would have lunch at my place, and then we all could go back to the CFI in the afternoon. Everything was arranged as planned.

On Thursday, I told Kakaji I only have a simple car, and was unable to offer a comfortable ride. Kakaji responded, "As long as it takes us from point A to point B, it is more than a Rolls Royce for me!" I witnessed Kakaji's simplicity and ability to live in an extremely low profile.

By serving him, I was happily being drawn to the divine fellowship. Right when we left the Mission campus, Kakaji started chanting 'SwamiNarayan.' He continuously chanted, while I silently recited a prayer to Hanuman (prayer to Hanuman). On the way home, I do not know what happened, but I automatically started chanting 'SwamiNarayan.' Without saying anything, Kakaji instilled the great SwamiNarayan mantra in my heart forever. This was the power of Kakaji's chanting.

When we reached home at about 11 AM, my mother and devotees were present. At the time, my mother had severe throat pain. Doctors had taken various scans and tests, but could not pinpoint a solution. My mother could not eat, drink, nor talk. Kakaji looked at my mother and said, "How are you, *maaji* (mother)?" So I informed Kakaji about her throat problem. Kakaji suggested, "She should eat *tulsi* (holy basil) leaves for ten days. She will then be alright." She did exactly as Kakaji said, and she was miraculously cured! All her pain was gone, and she could eat and drink normally again.

While driving, I also told Kakaji about my brother's drinking problem. At first I thought Kakaji would use some magic on him and stop his drinking. Instead, Kakaji said, "Let him carry on. Even if we try, he is not going to stop in this life. He is going to live for another 5 years. But in his next life, he will be born a devotee." Over the years, I forgot about Kakaji's words. But in December 1990, when my brother passed away, I recollected Kakaji's blessings.

During those days I was involved in some yoga practices which restricted me from eating any salty foods. I used to eat everything boiled, and without any salt or spices. I had done this for many years now. But that day, I sat besides Kakaji for lunch. As usual, my food

was prepared separately. While serving Kakaji, he noticed that I did not take the common food. Kakaji questioned, "Do you have any medical problems?" I said, "No" and narrated my yoga practices. After listening to me for 5 minutes, Kakaji took my plate in his hand, and served some of the common food, and mixed everything together! My mother and wife thought I would get angry at Kakaji; but I actually had a pleasant reaction. Kakaji said, "From today, your yoga methods end. I take the responsibility for your spiritual upliftment." I was again awestruck – only Kakaji could make such an authentic promise and gift the life of Akshardham! I was convinced of his divine powers and was able to instantaneously drop my habits. Earlier, even my wife could not tell me anything out of fear of me becoming angry.

After lunch, we went to Alexandra Palace. Kakaji expressed, "It will be wonderful if we get to meet Mahant Swamiji or Dr. Swamiji. We will express our willingness to celebrate Yogiji Maharaj's centenary together!" But, we were not able to meet Mahant Swamiji or Dr. Swamiji as Kakaji wished. But Kakaji remained unperturbed – for him, everything was God's will. Kakaji told me they are very pious saints, and I should seize the opportunity to meet them.

On Friday, I took Kakaji to devotees' homes. All along the way I was silent – a new conviction entered my heart. Kakaji talked, and I just listened. He explained to me how to remain in this material world, and yet be non-attached; how to live as a householder, and yet remain in a witnessing spirit. With Kakaji's company, I experienced a divine trance (*samaadhi*) all through the day. I felt I belonged to Kakaji, and in this way, I gained a new life.

I did not imagine this would be my last time meeting Kakaji. Friday evening, Kakaji said, "I will not come here any more." I did not realize what Kakaji meant at the time.

During that last meeting, Kakaji's last sermon was about having the same divine, loving attachment (*aatmaabuddhi* and *preeti*) with all divine saints as I had with him. He repeated, "There is no difference between us saints. The differences that may be seen are only due to the mind's limitations." To please Kakaji, with all my heart, I attend all of the various spiritual meetings and I love all devotees of all Swaminarayan branches. For this, Dinkar Uncle continues to give me a lot of strength.

Today I feel that Kakaji is not away from me, but he lives through Papaji, Swamiji, Saheb, Dinkar Uncle, Babu, Bharatbhai, Vashibhai, Guruji and all devotees that came in his contact. With Babu's grace, I have the opportunity to travel and meet devotees in three continents, Europe, North America, and Asia. In fact, Babu has called me "Junior International Traveler!"

ENJOYING KAKAJI'S REMINISCENCES

Ashwinbhai Popat, London

From the very first time I met Kakaji in 1977 at Natubhai's home in Wembley, I was taken aback by his dynamic and authentic personality. All of his sentences included "My guru Yogiji Maharaj!"

Kakaji invited all the youth and explained the Vachanamrut to us. On the heading alone, he would spend an hour – such was his expansive knowledge. His was a unique personality, and yet he behaved as an ordinary person. His majestic saintliness will forever be in my memories.

Kakaji was fond of chanting (*dhun*). At first, he asked us to chant for five minutes, but gradually it would go on for an hour. Once I lost my patience and asked, "Kakaji, you promised to chant for five minutes, but you continued for an hour!" He replied with a striking answer, "Though you mechanically chanted for an hour, you were with God for only five minutes." Whenever anyone faced any difficulties, he insisted on the "master key" of chanting. He then would say, "Who rules this universe? My father, Yogiji Maharaj rules the universe!" Afterwards, he would give a promise, such as "*Raja*, you will indeed get the job." And of course, exactly what he said would come true!

Though he was the greatest, he was full of humility. At night, after sleeping for just one hour, he routinely got up at about 2 AM to read. Afterwards, he would go back to bed, but wake up again at 5:30 AM. He was always the first one to get ready; and while sitting on his bed, he would meditate for more than an hour and would write letters. He did not waste a single minute. After getting ready, he gently wakes up his assistant saying, "*Raja*, please get up. We have to go out." So remarkable was his friendliness!

His faith in Yogi Bapa was unique. As a pioneer in the Akshar-Purshottam doctrine, he worked from 1954 onwards to spread Yogi Bapa's glory in Africa, particularly in Kenya and Uganda. He came before Yogi Bapa and spent hours talking about his glory. He gathered new devotees and made all the arrangements for Yogi Bapa's stay and visits to devotees' homes. He arranged public meetings, trained devotees to hold celebrations, and taught everyone how to do proper *pooja* (ritual prayer), *thaal* (offering food to God), *aarti* (ritual where lighted lamps are circled around God's image), etc. On foreign land, he made the impossible, possible! Kakaji was similarly the first to start centers in the U.K., Europe, and U.S. But his specialty was the personal care he took toward individual devotees. For example, he would visit the town of New Castle, over a hundred miles away from London, just to please a single Punjabi devotee. Then in spiritual meetings, Kakaji would make sure he spoke in Hindi.

By holding spiritual seminars for the youth in London, Kakaji gave us a new direction in life. During his talks, he would interrupt and say, "Yes, where was I - what was I telling you?" In this way, he kept us alert throughout the discourse.

Knowing the wishes of Yogi Bapa, Kakaji even flourished centers in Delhi and Punjab. He created centers in Paris and Italy as well. Devotees from Italy came especially to London to meet Kakaji.

He stayed with us at our homes and taught us proper yoga and meditation. He would exclaim, "If you are prepared, you will enter divine-consciousness by Yogi Bapa's grace within just seven days. I give you this guarantee." I remember his words today. "Become like a small child. Just as a child calls 'mummy, mummy,' keep chanting the SwamiNarayan mantra while remembering Yogi Bapa. He will come down to your level and lift you to the highest state. The only condition is to remain with childlike innocence (*bhulku*)."

Whenever donations came, he divided them into four parts and sent it to centers like Sokhada, Sankarda, and Vidyanagar (Gunatit Jyot and Anoopam Mission). He supported every center, and helped them progress.

Kakaji often told us, "Swamiji and Saheb are fully prepared to undertake your responsibility, as we have. They will run our enterprise of Yogiji Maharaj." His memory will always be a part of us. We are indebted to him. Because of him, we were able to mature and make Saheb and Hariprasad Swamiji happy, and are today enjoying the bliss of devotion.

I STILL REMEMBER

Bhagwanjibhai Rughani, London

One day, Kakaji, along with Bapu, Rajubhai Thakkar, and Sureshbhai, graced my home during his visit to devotees of Walthamstow. After devotional songs and discourses, we all sat for lunch. We prepared green chili *pakodas* (fried vegetables). I selected a big green vegetable, thinking it would be less spicy, and offered it to Kakaji. He asked me, "Is it spicy?" I replied, "Because it is big, it will not be hot." Kakaji accepted it, but it turned out to be extremely hot. Tears welled up in Kakaji's eyes and he started hiccupping. As he turned red, he opened his hands and started laughing, "Oh my God, do you want to kill me?"

This simple incident is etched in my heart. Whenever I meet the aspirant brothers of Tardev, I mention this incident. In the most down-to-earth way, Kakaji gave us the most pleasant memories.

THE BEGINNINGS

Vinubhai Nakarja, London

I met Kakaji for the first time in 1973 at Natubhai's home in Wembley. When my mother and I reached there, Kakaji was giving a discourse. After the meeting ended, Kakaji, who used to call my mother 'Captain' said, "Captain, how many kids do you have, and how many of them attend the spiritual meetings?" We were eight brothers, but none of us ever attended the meetings. However, when Kakaji asked, all of a sudden I got up and told him, "Kakaji, I will attend the

meetings." Since then, the Sunday Youth Meetings came into being, and Kakaji and Saheb established the "Akshar-Purushottam Cultural Center." From this, Anoopam Mission came into existence in London.

HIS EVERY WORD

Vinubhai Nakarja, London

Once when Kakaji came to London, he told me, "Vinubhai, we want to contact the High Commissioner of the Indian Embassy. H. M. Patel, the Finance Minister of India, has come here, and we would like to meet him. He has Yogi Bapa's blessings, and has helped us a lot."

I contacted the Indian Embassy and was informed that H. M. Patel was too busy to get an appointment. I informed Kakaji that it was not possible to meet him. Kakaji then tried contacting the office of the Indian High Commissioner himself, but was also declined an appointment.

Kakaji then asked me if anyone was available to take him to meet H. M. Patel without an appointment! I felt that it was not proper, but since it was Kakaji's wish, I reluctantly took him. All the while, I thought, "H. M. Patel will definitely not meet us without an appointment."

To my surprise, when we reached the embassy, we met H. M. Patel right outside! He immediately bowed down to Kakaji, took us inside, and talked with us at length. He enthusiastically welcomed us, and everything was beautifully arranged.

THE UNIVERSE BELONGS TO HIM

Vinubhai Nakarja, London

In 1979, Kakaji came to the United States with Rameshbhai Soni. While returning to India from U.S., he met us at the London Heathrow Airport. As a rule, transit passengers are not allowed to come outside. However, Saheb called us from India and advised us to meet Kakaji at the airport and bring him an Indian breakfast and tea. We had his name announced at the terminal and spoke with him on the

phone. After two hours, his flight was scheduled to leave to India. Nevertheless, Kakaji informed us on the phone that he would come out to see us. We waited there for some time. Finally when Kakaji came out, I asked him, "Did you take permission? Transit passengers are not allowed to come out." Kakaji simply replied, "Do not worry." After having breakfast, Kakaji tried to enter from the same exit that he came out from. The security guard immediately stopped him. When Kakaji showed him his boarding pass, the guard became enraged and angrily told Kakaji, "You cannot go in from here. Why did you come out? You are not allowed to do this."

In a tension-free manner Kakaji said a few words to the guard. All of a sudden, the guard was convinced, and he happily allowed Kakaji to enter. The guard even accompanied him inside! Nothing was impossible for Kakaji, for the universe belonged to him!

TRUE VISION

Pravinbhai Lad, Paris

I first met Kakaji in 1983 during his visit to Paris. He came to the home of Ashokbhai, a friend of mine, at the last stop of his European travels. Kakaji was accompanied by Mahendra Babu, Vinukaka (Kakaji's nephew), and Vinukaka's son, Ashwinbhai. The hotel where they stayed was right across my studio apartment. As a result, we had the great opportunity to meet Kakaji all three days he was in town. My brother Thakorbhai and I took off from work and enjoyed Kakaji's divine company.

At the time, I did not have a legal status yet, and my wife and son were still back home in India. Hearing this Kakaji promised, "The next time I come here, I will make sure your wife is also here!" I wrote to my family in India and told them to meet Kakaji at Tardev. By Kakaji's grace my wife got a visa to Belgium shortly thereafter. In 1984, Kakaji returned to Paris with Bharatbhai. Kakaji knew when my wife was going to arrive at Paris. Though he arrived the previous day, without telling anyone, he stayed at a nearby motel. In the meantime, without a visa, my wife miraculously reached Paris. That same day, Kakaji called

me and said I have come to fulfill my promise. He had thus stayed one day at a hotel, just so he could arrive at my home after my wife came!

The next morning I talked to Kakaji about my devotion towards Lord Krishna. I explained, "I am a great devotee of Lord Krishna. In fact, I can see his image immediately when I close my eyes. That is my love for God." Kakaji gracefully lowered his spectacles and looking at me straight in the eyes, he asked, "Is that right? Then what side does Lord Krishna hold his flute – on the right or left?" My answer was wrong. Kakaji then asked, "Is Lord Krishna's right ankle on top of his left leg, or is his left ankle on top of his right leg?" Again I answered incorrectly. Kakaji laughingly said, "I have the true realization of God's image, and yet I do not boast like you! Your devotion is flawed!" The matter did not end there. Everywhere we went that day, Kakaji repeated what happened. Finally at night, I folded my hands and prayed, "Kakaji, please teach me how to grasp God's image for real." Pleased, Kakaji replied, "We will conduct a 3-day seminar in which I will teach you this on the basis of the Vachanamrut and Swami Ni Vato." By reprimanding me, Kakaji penetrated deep into my heart.

At the time, a friend of mine suddenly said, "My bungalow is empty, and it would be perfect to hold the seminar sessions there." Kakaji agreed and showered his infinite grace such that until today I enjoy his omniscient presence and feel I have been graced with true liberation.

REMOVED MY CONFUSION

Shankerbhai Patel, Chicago

When Kakaji visited my house in 1985, I was in a state of confusion. I was in the pharmacy business at the time. The government however filed a case against me, and my pharmacist license was revoked. Every year, I filed my Income Tax Returns through a Tax Consultant. This year however the case demanded I owe nine thousand dollars to the government, and so he did not want to help me. I approached another Tax Consultant, but he too refused to help me.

While discussing the matter with Kakaji, he asked, "What other business would you like to do?" My wife advised me to tell Kakaji that I would like to remain in the pharmacy business. Despite her advice, I told Kakaji, "I will do whatever business you suggest." I then explained to him the details about the Income Tax Return problem, and how no one would help me. Kakaji said, "I understand your lawyer advised you to pay \$9,000.00. But we do not want to pay a single penny." I had faith in Kakaji's words.

After some time, I approached a Korean Tax Consultant and told him, "The consultant who earlier filed my return has gone out of town. Would you file the return for me?" He accepted my case and filed the return.

With Kakaji's blessings, I even got my license back. Soon, I got a good job in a large American pharmacy company. Indeed, Kakaji was with me during my times of turmoil. And today too, Kakaji's successor, Dinkar Uncle is always here to give me strength.

INNER CONTROLLER

Manekben Darbar, Mumbai

My parents and in-laws were devotees of Lord Swaminarayan, but we did not know much about the worship of Akshar-Purushottam. My brother-in-law, Babubhai Darbar, however, was fortunate and had been blessed by Yogi Bapa. He began visiting Kakaji at Tardev. One day, Babubhai took his brother Amubhai (my husband) to get Yogi Bapa's blessings in Kapolwadi. Yogi Bapa told him, "You should go to Tardev, where you will have the benefit of listening to discourses." Both brothers thus began going to Tardev regularly at night. Sometimes, my daughter Indu and I also attended the discourses. We enjoyed being with Kakaji, who eloquently talked about the glory of Yogi Bapa. We also liked the devotional songs.

One day, at about 9 in the evening, after Amubhai came home from work, he told me to get ready immediately so that we could go to Tardev. Indu and I got ready quickly but we forgot to take our purses. While on the way, I remembered, but I thought since Amubhai is with me, it would be alright.

During those days, there were no double-decker buses in town. There were only trams that ran on electricity. As Indu and I boarded the busy tram, due to the crowds, we did not notice that Amubhai was left behind. We went inside and took our seats, and soon the conductor asked for our tickets. I told him, "My husband is with us at the back, and will buy the tickets for us." The conductor kept asking everyone, "Is this lady with you?" We also looked front and back, but could not find Amubhai. We became very scared. The conductor told us, "If you do not have any money, please get down." It was night time, and we did not know where to go. While we looked at each other, all of a sudden, a gentlemen appeared and asked, "How many are you?" When I replied that it was the two of us, he bought tickets for us.

When we reached Tardev, the discourses had already begun. As we sat in front of Kakaji, he immediately said, "Ladies should not leave the house without their purses. This is Mumbai - you never know when you will need money. Then God has to run to protect you." He repeated this sentence three times! I understood my mistake and realized that Kakaji is my inner-controller.

WHATEVER THE SAINT SAYS IS BEST

Pratimaben Parikh, Mumbai

I worked at Nair Hospital near Mumbai Central Station. After leaving my office in the evening, I would go to the Tardev temple everyday. I was prepared to sit there until about 5:30 to 5:45 PM. But whenever I asked Kakaji for permission to leave, he would tell me to wait for five minutes, then another five minutes, until it was about 6:00 to 6:15 PM. This became a routine, and everyday I got home later than I had planned. Finally, I asked Kakaji, "Everyday you tell me to wait for 'five minutes,' and so I am delayed everyday. Could you please tell me exactly how long I have to wait every evening so that I can make arrangements before-hand?"

Kakaji replied, "That is according to your planning. But if I delay you for a few minutes more than you have decided, it means you have waited because of my word. Consequently, the dormant crude nature of your subconscious will be refined. Whatever crude nature you are consciously aware of is hardly 10% - you cannot even see the rest, or 90% of your dormant crude nature. How can you refine it, if you are not even aware of its presence?" In this way, Kakaji was ready to help every soul progress.

RECEIVED YOUR GIFT

Pratimaben Parikh, Mumbai

When my son Vishal was young, I wanted to buy new clothes for him for the Diwali festival. But I could not find time to go shopping since I was delayed at Tardev everyday. So one Saturday I left work early, and went to Tardev, where Kakaji was giving discourses. In the middle of his discourse, Kakaji asked me, "How much money do you have?" I murmured, "I have no idea, but tell me if you need any." I did not speak loudly, so Kakaji again asked, "How much money do you have?" Again, I murmured, "I do not know." After the discourse was over, when I was about to leave to buy the clothes, Divyaben asked me, "Where are you going?" I answered, "I am going to buy clothes for Vishal." Divyaben then suggested, "Why don't you take someone with you." To which I replied, "No one has time to join me," and left.

On the bus, I became engrossed in pleasant memories and devotional songs. When the stop came, I got off the bus and finally realized that I did not even bring my purse! I realized then that Kakaji had tried to make me aware of that fact. Nonetheless, I felt mad at Kakaji - and so I decided that I would not give a gift to Kakaji during the festival prayers that year. On the day of Diwali, when I went to seek Kakaji's blessings, he immediately looked at Kantikaka and said, "We do not have to accept a gift from her. She has already given me a gift."

Thus, in a single incident, I was fortunate to see Kakaji's supremacy. In spite of my childishness, he treated me with generosity and kept a positive attitude towards me. The happiness he gave me with his big heart was unparalleled.

MASTER'S APPROVAL

Pratimaben Parikh, Mumbai

Annoyed on one occasion, I asked Kakaji, "What have you done for me?" Kakaji casually replied, "Start counting. Number 1, even though you do not deserve to be in this college of spiritual knowledge, I gave you admission. Do you agree? Number 2, you are not allowed to see others' faults in this college, but you do. Yet I do not ask you to 'get out.' Do you agree? Number 3, because of your habit of fault finding, I do repentance prayer for you so that you do not suffer." I thought, Kakaji would keep going, but he said, "That is all. Now be grateful to God." I was not happy with the conversation and thought in my mind, "I will not come to Tardev henceforth, and instead offer prayers from home. Immediately, Kakaji said, "Our approval is required if you even want to remember God's name."

Thus, he explained in a straightforward manner the hidden force of divine saints in our life. Without them, we are not even able to pray!

HAPPIEST DAY

Pratimaben Parikh, Mumbai

This incident took place in 1986, when Bharatbhai's birthday was celebrated in Powai in Kakaji's presence.

Kakaji asked me, "What is your happiest day?" Before I said anything, he immediately said, "Shastriji Maharaj embraced me with sandalwood paste – that was my first happiest day. The day was then changed to February 3, 1952, when Yogi Bapa blessed me with a 3-day divine trance in which I got the total realization of God. It was again changed to the day when Yogi Bapa excommunicated us." I interrupted and asked, "How could the day you were excommunicated be your happiest day?" Kakaji replied, "Yogi Bapa had so much faith in us that he knew that we would never have hard feelings for him or the divine fellowship. Furthermore, he knew we would never allow all those joining us to have any hard feelings either."

He ended by saying, "And now my happiest day is, with our blessings, seeing a spiritual aspirant like Bharatbhai ready to do our divine work."

KEEP A SMILE ON YOUR FACE AND IN YOUR HEART

Ilaben Amin, Mumbai

One afternoon in Tardev during lunch, Divyaben placed a sweet that she specially prepared for Kakaji on his plate. Kakaji took half of it and returned the other half. When I saw him finish half of the sweet, I requested, "Kakaji this is a small sweet, please accept it." Kakaji was the smartest salesperson of God. He thus seized the opportunity by asking, "Iladevi, give me one promise, and I shall eat another whole sweet." I figured there was no harm in accepting what he says. When I agreed, he told me, "Always keep a smile on your face and in your heart." When I replied, "I will," he said, "Alright, I will eat one more."

Kakaji asked me to always keep a smile on my face, and stay happy from within. Any person could smile externally – if the circumstances seem gloomy, I could keep a mechanical smile. But what about internally? How could I keep my heart smiling? Such a thing is only possible by the grace of a divine person like Kakaji, who brings a fountain of joy and cheerfulness. I pray that with his blessings, I am able to fulfill his promise.

ACCEPTED MY PRAYER

Ilaben Amin, Mumbai

Kakaji graced Aksharvihari Swamiji's birthday celebration in Sankarda on February 17, 1986. From there, after visiting Vidyanagar and Anand, he traveled to Napa. In Napa, there was a seminar for saints with Nirmal Swamiji, Gnyansvaroop Swamiji, Madhav Swamiji, and others. Kakaji gave a three-hour discourse based on the Vachanamrut and Swami Ni Vato. When it was time to offer prayers to God, Kakaji said, "I will offer prayers with these lighted lamps (*deevo*)."

Because saints were in the room with God's image, I stayed near the other side of the kitchen door. While Kakaji offered prayers, I also prayed from within, "Oh Kakaji, if I ever did not act properly, or did not follow your instructions, or did not serve you with proper devotion, please accept my prayers along with the lighted lamps that you are offering to God."

After the prayer, Kakaji came to me and said, "Yes, we have accepted everything. You are forgiven." He repeated these words several times and again entered the room that had the image of God. He then prostrated in front of God's image three times. In this way, Kakaji accepted my prayer and asked God for forgiveness on my behalf.

Similarly, many times, Kakaji picked up my inner dialogue and talked to me, fulfilled my thoughts, and gave me the correct insight. His method of helping every soul establish a permanent relationship with divinity and progress on the spiritual path was indeed, incomparable. The incident remains instrumental, but the impression in our memories gives us an eternal bond with Kakaji.

COMPASSIONATE KAKAJI

Hemlataben Purohit, Mumbai

Kakaji played an important role in my life. My nature was very crude, and I could not live in harmony with my sister-in-law, Neelabhabhi. Kakaji would advise me to live with her like a sister. Once when I attended a seminar at Munshiji's bungalow in Juhu, again, Kakaji persuaded me to treat her like a sister. I would say "Yes," but after some time, revert to my original nature.

After a few years, I gave birth to a baby girl. On the sixth day after she was born, she fell sick and started turning yellow. I had earlier lost two in this manner. The doctor diagnosed the problem as jaundice. I chanted while remembering Kakaji and prayed, "I do not want to lose this child - please cure this baby."

That night, Kakaji appeared to me in the hospital in a divine form. So I told him, "Kakaji, I just delivered a child. Why are you here?" Kakaji smiled and said, "Do not worry. Where is your baby?" When I showed him my baby, Kakaji picked her up, pampered her, and said, "Okay, nothing will happen to your baby, but you have to accept one advice." I replied, "I will do whatever you say." Kakaji asked me, "Neela and you will have to work together as sisters. If Neela gets angry with you, consider her as your elder sister, and never feel hurt." I agreed and said, "Yes, Kakaji." My baby was cured the very next morning. Her name is Daksha, and it was Kakaji who named her.

Since then, by the grace of Kakaji, my sister-in-law and I live like sisters. Whenever I remember Kakaji, he appears and solves my problems - how compassionate he is!

INDISCRIMINATE GRACE

Ushaben Vajor, Mumbai

Since I was young, I knew Kakaji. My father, Nagardasbhai Chouhan, frequently visited Kakaji and sang devotional songs for religious programs. I visited Taraben at Khetwadi and Hansadidi at Vidyanagar, and only came to Tardev occasionally.

After my engagement, I visited Tardev with my fiancé, Kirtibhai. He liked Tardev, and therefore began attending the regular spiritual meetings. Since then, whenever we went out, we first visited Tardev. I was married two years later. Just to attend our marriage, Kakaji cancelled an out-of-town visit. We were fortunate to be blessed by Kakaji.

One day, my elder son, Nirbhik, who was three years old at that time, fell sick and was admitted to Harkishan Hospital. When I called Kakaji, he immediately sent Divyaben with holy water that was sanctified during the special prayer. Kakaji later visited the hospital, chanted there, and helped Nirbhik drink the holy water.

At the time, a child from a Marwari family was also very sick and in the children's ward. Kakaji looked at him lovingly and asked, "What is the problem?" and prayed for him. In just three days, Nirbhik's health improved. And soon, he and the other child both got permission to go home.

How graceful Kakaji is. The incident gave me the understanding that any soul that comes in contact with a divine being like Kakaji, and receives his blessings, will have the good fortune to accomplish anything.

LEARN TO CALL GOD DIRECTLY

Ushaben Vajor, Mumbai

One day Kakaji told me, "Why don't you learn to call God directly, instead of calling me." Furthermore, he said, "You have seen Yogi Bapa. If you have any problems, light a lamp (*devo*) and chant for fifteen minutes while remembering him, and your problem will be solved."

After Kakaji passed away, my son Chirag fell sick and had a very high fever. At 12:30 AM we gave him some medicine and started applying a cold-pack on his forehead. We continued doing this until 2:30 AM. Kirtibhai and I were both sleepy, but we were concerned about our child's health. We would typically call Kakaji, and thought, who else could we call at this time of the night? Then I remembered Kakaji's words, "Learn to call God." So at 2:30 in the morning, I lighted a lamp and began chanting. While chanting, we fell asleep within a few minutes.

When we woke up at 7:00 AM, Chirag was also awake and his fever was miraculously gone. He was absolutely fine, as if nothing had happened that night!

Kakaji often said, "Yogi Bapa has not left us. He is still with us, he is still with us, he is still with us." From this incident, I was convinced that Kakaji also has not left us. He is here, he is here, he is here. Even now, whenever I remember Kakaji, he always comes to my aid. I have had many experiences of his divinity.

There is no limit to his grace, kindness, and compassion. It is indescribable! For me Kakaji has not left. For all of time to come, he is here, he is here, he is here!

ACCEPTED MY DEVOTION

Shardaben Unadkat, London

In 1977 Kakaji visited Leicester, U.K. along with Mahendra Bapu and Rajubhai Thakkar. I heard Bapu ask Meenaben Vithalani to get a knitted hat (*topi*) for Kakaji. Since I was fond of knitting and had saffron colored yarn, overnight I made a hat while chanting 'SwamiNarayan.' I was excited that the hat was a perfect fit for Kakaji! He blessed me, "You will receive the realization of Akshardham." Since that day, Kakaji accepted my devotion by wearing the saffron colored knitted hat.

HIS MANY FORMS

Shardaben Unadkat, London

In 1985 Kakaji visited London for the last time. I made a special garland just for Kakaji with the thought that I would lovingly offer it when he came to my home. But when my husband, Liladharbhai, went to garland Kakaji, Kakaji held his hands and said, "Please pack the garland in a box. I will take it with me to the U.S. Hariprasad Swamiji is coming to the U.S. this year for the very first time. I would like to garland him – in the future, he will do much work for Lord SwamiNarayan."

Kakaji used to lovingly call me 'Ladkiba' (Laduba, Dada Khachar's sister who devoted her life to serving Lord Swaminarayan) and say, "One day I will take you to the U.S. and show you the Niagara Falls. Yogi Bapa's grace was unceasing like the Niagara Falls!" When Jashbhai Saheb took me there in 2003, I remembered Kakaji's words.

I am prosperous today because of the realization I received by Kakaji and Deviben's blessings. I pray to Kakaji, who is still with us in many divine forms, to take me to the next spiritual step. Though Papaji is unable to directly talk to us, I pray that I understand him and can do divine work.

KAKAJI IS HERE

Kiranben, California

Five days before Kakaji was to leave for his heavenly abode, I experienced an uneasy feeling and pain. The day he passed away, I had a premonition of his departure to God's abode and spoke to Kishorbhai that Kakaji was no more. He was surprised and asked me how I got the news. I only had my experience to tell him. In utter disbelief, he went to Anoopam Mission to inquire about Kakaji's well being. He was told that they had no news but later on the same day, they got the news of his passing away.

It may sound strange, but I had a feeling that I was with him, talking to him. I asked him, "What will happen to me when you are gone?" He assured me that he would be with me whenever I would need him. Since then, on a number of occasions, he has always answered my call. For me, even now, he is here, he is here, he is here.

Life of Divinity



Yogiji Maharaj had written four special incidents with Shastriji Maharaj and blessed that those that read the experiences with faith will find happiness and liberation. During the publication of the book 'Gunatit Svaroop Darshan' in 1985 (an abridged version of the book Sahradayi), Mahendra Babu approached Kakaji and requested that he similarly relate his own life experiences. These incidents shed light on the amazing events of Kakaji's life. If we read them with an open mind and heart, the blessings of manifest divinity will take shape in our lives and we will reach the highest pure liberated state.

NOTE: When Kakaji was asked to give his most important life events, he included experiences with his spiritual partners: Papaji, Swamiji, Saheb, Aksharvihari Swami, Ba, Ben, etc. This depicted that unity, oneness and spiritual harmony were Kakaji's life breath and his natural quality.

KAKAJI'S DIVINE EXPERIENCE

Upon Yogiji Maharaj's request, Kakaji sacrificed the things that were dearest to him and joined the election campaign for Gulzharilal Nanda. He withstood great mental and physical hardships, and for a month-and-a-half, he worked 18 hours a day solely to please his Guru Yogiji Maharaj and fulfill Shastriji Maharaj's blessings to Nandaji. To complete this mission, he employed all that he possessed, including his closest friends and relatives (such as Jyotiben, Taraben, and sisters of Jyotisangh, Ahmedabad), vehicles, company staff, and his personal savings. He left the reins of his lucrative corporation in the hands of Divinity and traveled from village to village campaigning and gaining support. Against insurmountable opposition and hardships, Kakaji used the power of his faith and conviction to overcome all obstacles, and win the election for Nandaji.

Yogiji Maharaj was immensely pleased and calling Kakaji to Gondal, he asked him to fast for one day and took him in front of Ghanshyam Maharaj's idol. Immersing Kakaji's mental faculties into God and manifest saints, Yogiji Maharaj gave him the divine realization that, just as Gunatitanand Swami has said in Swami Ni Vato Chapter 1, Number 1: God has incarnated on earth with His Divine Abode and liberated enti-

ties and will forever be present through the divine lineage of saints. By recognizing, associating with and serving these saints, souls can travel on the roadway to total realization and liberation.

Kakaji's soul separated from his body and he traveled to various heavens, culminating in a divine vision of the oneness of Shastriji Maharaj and Yogiji Maharaj with Lord Swaminarayan. This experience lasted for 72 hours, during which Kakaji's body was medically dead. Kakaji himself has stated that when he returned to consciousness, he experienced a state of *upsham* (overflowing devotional excitement that accompanies the realization of God) like the one described in Vachanamrut Ahmedabad 3. He had control over *ashta-siddhi* and *nav-nidhi* (the eight supernatural powers and nine treasures) and though he attempted to hide them, sometimes the limitless powers manifested themselves. Yet, even when crossing this hazardous, yet enticing plane, Kakaji only used these powers to establish faith and devotion to Yogiji Maharaj in people's hearts. He never attached anyone to himself, but acted as the transparent medium to join people to his master.

Yogiji Maharaj had given a special shawl to Kakaji with the blessings that he would be protected from all egoism, subtle attachments, and desires and live solely to please God and manifest saints and fulfill their mission.

Looking back at Kakaji's life, we pray to gain the inspiration and strength to similarly surrender our hearts and minds with full faith to manifest God and live according to His divine plan.

PAPAJI'S DIVINE EXPERIENCE

When Kakaji experienced this divine realization, Papaji lived in Africa as a teacher, and spent the majority of his time reading Shree Aurobindo's philosophy. Soon word reached him that Kakaji had been entranced by saints in India and was acting insane. Papaji was very fond of his younger brother and so, he hurriedly returned to India to find out the truth.

But once he saw the real situation and felt Yogiji Maharaj's divinity, Papaji resolved to stay in India and join Kakaji's business. Papaji began to develop more and more faith in Yogiji Maharaj as well as in the divinity of the divine fellowship. Soon, he made the wish that he wanted to know Yogiji Maharaj's true form as it really is.

In response to this prayer, Yogiji Maharaj created an experience to solidify Papaji's conviction. Once, Yogiji Maharaj was performing the ritual morning prayer, during which a flower was placed next to each picture of God and saints. When Papaji arrived, he made the following wish, "Yogiji Maharaj, give me the flower next to the image of whom you are an embodiment." Picking up this wish, Yogiji Maharaj completed the prayer and taking the flowers, he distributed them amongst all devotees. However, he kept the flower of Lord Swaminarayan and tied it into a fold in his saffron robes. When he saw Papaji, he opened up the fold and handed him the flower with a knowing smile. Immediately, Papaji's inner conviction was awakened and he achieved the realization that Yogiji Maharaj was not an ordinary saint, but manifest divinity.

This momentous event occurred on June 1, and since then Papaji joined Kakaji and Sonaba in living according to Yogiji Maharaj's mission. The efforts of this trio, along with the help and sacrifice of Kantikaka and his entire family, formed the basis of the incredible progress of the four-winged Gunatit Samaj with branches for dedicated saints, brothers, sisters, and householders.

Guru Shastriji Maharaj and Guru Yogiji Maharaj have left us with the unforgettable legacy that God and His saints have never left, but are forever guiding us. If we imbibe this understanding in our hearts and pray with sincerity, we will also achieve this vision.

FIFTY-ONE SAINTS

In 1961, prior to the celebration of Yogiji Maharaj's 70th birthday and the initiation of 51 saints, in the presence of many devotees, Yogiji Maharaj made the statement, "Dadubhai, you take care of this celebration. I will accept a sickness and not actively participate." Kakaji replied, "Bapa, please do not accept a sickness. We will take care of everything." Yogiji Maharaj cautioned, "Dadubhai, the enemies

of renunciants are renunciants themselves, so don't say a word. We definitely want to initiate 51 saints against all obstacles and God will help us, so remember Shastriji Maharaj and circle around the temple 200 times. I trust you will take care of everything."

During the celebration, Yogiji Maharaj did become ill. The combined efforts of Kakaji, Balubhai T.T., Haribhai Saheb, Jashbhai Jarolavala, Mahant Swamiji, and Prabhudasbhai (Hariprasad Swamiji) resulted in a grand success. They prepared 700 volunteers from Manavadar and stayed awake for five days straight to fulfill Yogiji Maharaj's goal. The negative energy of opposition did manifest itself, though. Its influence resulted in inclement weather and an accident in the kitchen that resulted in the death of a volunteer. Around the time, three people drowned in the Ghela River as well.

However, even against these circumstances and withstanding all the negative energy, Kakaji and his companions saw the working of God and never allowed their harmony, unity and saintliness to falter.

It was not that Yogiji Maharaj was unable to protect devotees from the influence of negativity. But Kakaji explained that the group of the time equated pure entities like Yogiji Maharaj with the rest of the mundane population. Body consciousness, stubbornness, ego, and jealousy caused people to exploit Yogiji Maharaj. If we tie the hands of the saint, who is the only person that can uplift us from crude nature, then it is obvious that the nature will affect us and cause problems. We pray that like Kakaji, we are able to transcend our nature, destroy our self-awareness, and lose ourselves in the will of manifest God.

THE GLORY OF HARIPRASAD SWAMIJI, AKSHARVIHARI SWAMIJI, AND SAHEB

In 1965, on the auspicious occasion of Sharad Purnima, Hariprasad Swamiji was initiated as a saint in the Aksharderi at Gondal temple. At that time, Yogiji Maharaj exclaimed, "When Prabhudasbhai [Hariprasad Swamiji] becomes a saint, he will convince 51 others to walk the path as well. Just like Lord Swaminarayan had initiated Gunatitanand Swami in Dabhan, we are performing a similar celebration for Prabhudasbhai. Dadubhai, for this occasion, you perform the [ritual] opening ceremony, and the recitation of God's different names."

Kakaji replied, "Bapa, the recitation of the various names is for old-fashioned society. We are devotees with total faith in Akshar-Purushottam. We would like to instead complete the ceremony with the recitation of the great SwamiNarayan mantra and devotional verses of praise about manifest saints." Yogiji Maharaj laughed and remarked, "That is the way it should be, however, it will not sit well with old-fashioned people. That is why we do it the old way." In the end, Yogiji Maharaj happily consented to Kakaji's request and showed the assembled devotees the extent of true understanding. Kakaji performed the opening ceremony (which includes breaking a coconut and spreading flowers). Yogiji Maharaj himself kept the divine images of ideal householder devotees such as Vajinathbhai (Krishnaji Ada's son). Yogiji Maharaj had made 14 gurus, and to each of them, he displayed the utmost sincerity as a disciple. Just like Swami Ni Vato, chapter 11, number 166, he showed that by serving manifest God one gains the highest qualities. Though he constantly lived in the ultimate bliss consciousness of the soul, he always taught to sing the glory of fellow devotees. We pray that we also can imbibe Yogiji Maharaj's divine qualities of humility, open-mindedness, universality, unity, divine harmony, and heartfelt oneness, make the mark of liberated consciousness, and spread the glory of manifest divinity.

In letters to Aksharvihar Swami and Gunatit Swami, Yogiji Maharaj has blessed that he wishes to make all like Bhagatji Maharaj, Jaga Swami and Shastriji Maharaj.

In 1962, Yogiji Maharaj sent Kakaji to Vidyanagar multiple times to impart the divine knowledge to Jashbhai Saheb and youths there. Kakaji even stayed at the youth hostel for one month to prepare them and give them the understanding of unflinching faith in the spiritual master. As a result of this, today, 80 aspirants who are on the path to transcendental knowledge, including leaders such as Jashbhai Saheb, Shantibhai, who spreads "pills of peace," Ashwinbhai, who forever remains in spiritual equanimity and witnessing spirit, and Dr. Sanandbhai, who is an embodiment of divine selfless love, were prepared through the untiring efforts and blessings of Kakaji, Papaji and Sonaba. Thus, out of unbelievable compassion and grace, Yogiji Maharaj has made the strength and bliss of divinity available to all.

WOMEN SAINTHOOD

The opening ceremony of Gunatit Jyot was publicly performed by Yogiji Maharaj himself. After the Gunatit Jyot building was established, in the presence of Mahant Swamiji and saints, Yogiji Maharaj visited twice. With Mota Swami and other saints, he spread flowers in all the rooms. In front of Dr. Sanandbhai and Jashbhai Saheb, Yogiji Maharaj asked Kakaji, "Doesn't this kitchen seem too small?" Kakaji replied, "It is sufficient for 51 woman saints." Bapa quickly responded, "Then this is definitely too small. You will have to make a bigger one soon."

And by Yogiji Maharaj's blessings and divine plan, that is exactly what happened. In a short time, a much bigger kitchen had to be constructed to support the 400 female saints who live there and dedicate their lives, devoted to God.

In the 200 year-old history of the Swaminarayan faith, Yogiji Maharaj made the first steps to awaken the spiritual potential of women. He gave strength to his courageous disciples Kakaji and Papaji and through his divine wish, he inspired them to give women an avenue to fulfill their devotional capability. Today, the success of the Gunatit Jyot and the extraordinary devotion and spiritual progress of its members stand testament to the divine unity of Kakaji, Papaji and Swamiji.

GUNATIT SAMAJ

Thus, the Gunatit Samaj grew rapidly and provided a platform for dedicated brothers and sisters toward the highest spiritual state of devotion (*ekaantik dharma*). Kakaji has outlined the following Swami Ni Vato: chapter 1, numbers 1, 343; chapter 14, numbers 206, 207, 91, 230; chapter 4, numbers 29, 140; chapter 5, numbers 29, 286; chapter 11, numbers 172, 185.

By remembering and contemplating on these experiences, we will be able to achieve our desired goal. If there is any confusion in understanding them, Kakaji, Papaji, Swamiji, Aksharvihari Swamiji, Bhai, Ba, Ben, Jyotiben, and other divine saints can help resolve it. Then without fail, we will develop unflinching faith in manifest saints and divine friendliness with their close disciples. With this, we will attain the state as described in Vachanamrut Loya 10, in which the forces

of illusion (*maya*) transform into sources of bliss. Without this understanding, there remains a gap in total faith, and God seems distant from us. Thus the matter of highest significance is to develop a close friendliness with the true disciples.



Humble Prayer

- Dinkar Uncle



O! Divine Master His Holiness Dadu Kakaji:

We are your dear followers.

You visited the USA in 1973 with P.P. Jashbhai Saheb and P.P. Harshadbhai Bhatt with a divine message. July 7, 1973 was a most happiest day of our life, when You blessed us in Chicago at P.P. Hasubhai's home with our newly born son Roopit, who was born on June 21, 1973. We still remember Your divine gesture of holding a nice big red apple in Your right hand, throwing it up in the air and catching it. When Sir Isaac Newton saw the apple falling, the laws of gravity came forth clearly and Your gesture of throwing the apple in the air gave the clear vision of the anti-gravity laws for worldly souls to be released from illusion and reach the highest abode of the Supreme Godhead: Lord SwamiNarayan!

O our master Kakaji, remain forever - remain in our heart forever. Like the sweet fragrance of a flower, Your divinity spreads - Your saintliness is like a clear sky and yet full of courage. You are the true king of faultless intellect – giving constant vibrations of spiritual harmony and service. You remain without an identity and with God as Your only support – splendor and humility constantly remain in You. Yogi Bapa has awakened an heir – He has given His inner light to His rare inner diamond. Yogi Bapa's divinity spilled in the perfect vessel - the special legacy was passed on. Many thanks to Lord Swaminarayan and Gunatitanand Swami - the *gunatit* tradition is kept alit from one lamp to another. Many hearts became happy and got a divine life after they received Your grace. Lands that were dry of devotees became fertile by Your sacrifices and efforts. You became a guide for those who had forgotten the path - everyone remains protected by Your association. We have not done anything, You have done it all - You established a relationship with us, and kept us smiling. You won our hearts by giving unconditional love and without any expectations – this is a special quality of Yours. You engrossed everyone and gave firm belief – those that gave their life became divine. You are the master sculptor of this *gunatit* family - Your grace is constant and continuous. Please give us power, inspiration, and all - so that we may take part in Your ideal divinity. May we sacrifice for Your priceless divine love - we surrender at Your feet.

You are all-powerful. After entering within us, You have enlivened all our sleeping senses - our hands, legs, ears, touch sensation, life force and especially our power of speech. Let us offer our respectful obeisance unto You. By Your different energies You appear differently in the spiritual and material worlds. You create the total energy of the material world by Your external potency, and after creation You enter within the material world. You create varieties of manifestation, just as fire, entering into wood of different shapes, burns brilliantly in different varieties. You are the only shelter of all persons who desire liberation, and You are the friend of all who are distressed. How, therefore, can a learned person who has perfect knowledge ever forget You? Persons who like You simply for the sense gratification of this bag of skin are certainly influenced by Your illusory energy. In spite of having You, who are like a desire tree and are the cause of liberation from birth and death, foolish persons desire benedictions from You for sense gratification, which is available even for those who live in hellish conditions. The transcendental bliss derived from meditating upon You or hearing about Your glories from pure devotees is so unlimited that it is far beyond the stage of the *brahmananda*, wherein one thinks himself merged in the impersonal Brahman as one with the Supreme. Since the *brahmananda* is also defeated by the transcendental bliss derived from devotional service, then what to speak of the temporary blissfulness of elevating oneself to the heavenly planets, which is ended by the separating sword of time? Although one may be elevated to the heavenly planets, he falls down in due course of time. Kindly bless us so that we may associate with great devotees who engage in Your transcendental loving service constantly, as the waves of a river constantly flow. Such transcendental devotees are completely situated in an uncontaminated state of life. By the process of devotional service we shall surely be able to cross the Nescient Ocean of material existence, which is filled with the waves of blazing, fire-like dangers. It will be very easy for us, for we are becoming mad to hear about Your transcendental qualities and pastimes, which are eternally existent.

Your big smile and divine speech is spreading the divine message of His Divinity Yogiji Maharaj and Shastriji Maharaj about Akshar-Purushottam worship, which is for Supreme Godhead (Lord SwamiNarayan) and His choicest humble of the humblest Devotee (the abode of God: Gunatitanand Swamiji).

If a person happens to associate with a devotee whose heart always hankers after You, seeking always their fragrance, he is never attached to the material body or, in a bodily relationship, to offspring, friends, home, wealth and wife, which are very, very dear to materialistic persons. Indeed, he does not care for them. We know that the different varieties of living entities, such as animals, trees, birds, reptiles, demigods and human beings, are spread throughout the universe, which is caused by the total material energy, and we know that they are sometimes manifest and sometimes un-manifest; but we have never experienced the form we behold as we have seen You. Now all kinds of methods of theorizing have come to an end. By Your unbroken transcendental glance You are the supreme witness of all stages of intellectual activities. You are eternally liberated, Your existence is situated in pure goodness, and You are existent in the Supersoul without change. You are full with the six types of opulence, and You are eternally the master of the three modes of material nature. Thus, You are always different from ordinary living entities. You maintain all the affairs of the entire universe, and yet You stand aloof and are the enjoyer of the results of all sacrifices. In Your impersonal manifestation of Brahman there are always two opposing elements--knowledge and ignorance. Your multi-energies are continually manifest, but the impersonal Brahman, which is undivided, original, changeless, unlimited and blissful, is the cause of the material manifestation. Because You are the same impersonal Brahman, we offer our respectful obeisance unto You. For one who abides in Your devotional service with no other desire, worshiping You is better than becoming a king and lording over a kingdom. That is the benediction of worshiping You. To ignorant devotees like us, You are the causelessly merciful maintainer, just like a cow, who takes care of the newly born calf by supplying milk and giving it protection from attack.

You have placed Your lotus hand upon our heads because Your hand is always ready to create fearlessness in all of Your devotees. By the touch of Your hand on our heads, we were completely freed of all material contaminations and desires, as if we had been thoroughly cleansed. Therefore we at once became transcendently situated, and all the symptoms of ecstasy became manifest in our body. Our hearts filled with love, and eyes with tears, and thus we were able to completely capture You within the core of our hearts. We fixed our

mind and sight upon You with full attention in complete trance. With a fixed mind, we offer prayers in love. How is it possible for us, to offer suitable prayers to satisfy You? Even until now, all the devotees could not satisfy You by streams of excellent words, although such persons are very qualified, being in the mode of goodness. Then what is to be said of us? We are not at all qualified. One may possess wealth, an aristocratic family, beauty, austerity, education, sensory expertise, luster, influence, physical strength, diligence, intelligence and mystic yogic power, but we think that even by all of these qualifications one cannot satisfy You. However, one can satisfy You by devotional service.

You are always fully satisfied in Yourself. Therefore when something is offered to You, the offering, by Your mercy, is for the benefit of devotees, for You do not need service from anyone. To give an example, if one's face is decorated, the reflection of one's face in a mirror is also seen to be decorated. Therefore, without a doubt we offer prayers to You with full endeavor, as far as our intelligence allows. Anyone who has been forced by ignorance to enter the material world may be purified of material life if he offers prayers to You and hears Your glories. Your incarnation is always meant for the protection and improvement of the universe. You are kind to fallen souls. Because of the combination of pleasing and displeasing circumstances and because of separation from them, one is placed in a most regrettable position, within heavenly or hellish planets, as if burning in a fire of lamentation. Although there are many remedies by which to get out of miserable life, any such remedies in the material world are more miserable than the miseries themselves. Therefore we think that the only remedy is to engage in Your service. Kindly instruct us in such service.

By engaging in Your transcendental loving service in the association of devotees who are liberated souls, we shall become completely uncontaminated by the association of the three modes of material nature and be able to chant the glories of Your Divinity, who are so dear to us. We shall chant Your glories, following exactly in the footsteps of Your spiritual disciplic succession. In this way we shall undoubtedly be able to cross the ocean of nescience [ignorance]. Because of a bodily conception of life, embodied souls neglected and did not care for You so You cannot do anything for their betterment. Whatever remedies

they accept, although perhaps temporarily beneficial, are certainly impermanent. For example, a father and mother cannot protect their child, a physician and medicine cannot relieve a suffering patient, and a boat on the ocean cannot protect a drowning man. Our dear Master, everyone in this material world is under the modes of material nature, being influenced by goodness, passion and ignorance. Everyone, from the greatest personality, Lord Brahma, down to a small ant, works under the influence of these modes. Therefore everyone in this material world is influenced by this energy. The cause for which they work, the place where they work, the time when they work, the matter due to which they work, the goal of life they have considered final, and the process for obtaining this goal - all are nothing but manifestations of this energy. Indeed, the energy and energetic are identical. You have created the subtle bodies of the living entities through the agency of Your external energy, which is agitated by time. Thus the mind entraps the living entity in unlimited varieties of desires to be fulfilled by fruitive activity. Who can get free from this entanglement unless he takes shelter at Your lotus feet?

My dear Lord, O supremely great, You have created this material world of sixteen constituents, but You are transcendental to their material qualities. In other words, these material qualities are under Your full control, and You are never conquered by them. Therefore the time element is Your representation. The worldly opulence, mystic power, longevity and other material pleasures enjoyed by all living entities, from Lord Brahma down to the ant, we do not wish to possess them. We request You to place us in touch with Your pure devotees and let us serve them as sincere servants. In this material world, every living entity desires some future happiness, which is exactly like a mirage in the desert. Where is water in the desert, or, in other words, where is happiness in this material world? As for this body, what is its value? It is merely a source of various diseases. The so-called philosophers, scientists and politicians know this very well, but nonetheless they aspire for temporary happiness. Happiness is very difficult to obtain, but because they are unable to control their senses, they run after the so-called happiness of the material world and never come to the right conclusion.

Our Master, You do not discriminate between friends and enemies, the favorable and the unfavorable, because for You there is no conception of higher and lower. Nonetheless, You offer Your benedictions according to the level of one's service, exactly as a desire tree delivers fruits according to one's desires and makes no distinction between the lower and the higher. Because of the association with material desires, one after another, one gradually falls into a blind well full of snakes, following the general populace. But You have accepted us and instructed us how to achieve this transcendental position. Therefore, our first duty is to serve You and Your devotees. You existed before creation, You exist after annihilation, and You are the maintainer between the beginning and the end. All this is done by Your external energy through actions and reactions of the three modes of material nature. Therefore whatever exists, externally and internally, is You alone.

Although the entire cosmos is but You alone, You keep Yourself aloof from it. The conception of "mine and yours," is certainly a type of illusion [*maya*] because everything is an emanation from You and is therefore not different from You. Indeed, the cosmic manifestation is non-different from You, and annihilation is also caused by You. This relationship between You and the cosmos is illustrated by the example of the seed and the tree, or the subtle cause and the gross manifestation. After annihilation the creative energy is kept in You, for You are always in a transcendental stage, beyond the creation of the material world, and You always feel transcendental bliss. You thus remain in Your transcendental status, not touching material objects. This cosmic manifestation, the material world, is also Your body. This total lump of matter is agitated by Your potent energy.

Now kindly look upon us and by Your causeless mercy and compassion, deliver us and maintain us. What is the difficulty for You, who manages the affairs of the universe, in delivering the fallen souls engaged in Your devotional service? You are the friend of all suffering humanity, and for great personalities it is necessary to show mercy to the foolish. Therefore we think that You will show Your causeless mercy to persons like us, who engage in Your service. We are not at all afraid of material existence, for wherever we stay we are fully absorbed in thoughts of Your glories and activities. We see that there are many saintly persons indeed, but they are interested only in their

own deliverance. Not caring for the big cities and towns, they go to the Himalayas or the forest to meditate with vows of silence [*mauna-vrata*]. They are not interested in delivering others. As for us, however, we do not wish to be liberated alone, leaving aside all these. We know that without taking shelter of Your lotus feet, one cannot be happy. Therefore we wish to bring them back to shelter at Your lotus feet.

There are ten prescribed methods on the path to liberation: to remain silent, not to speak to anyone, to observe vows, to amass all kinds of Vedic knowledge, to undergo austerities, to study the Vedas and other Vedic literatures, to execute the duties of *varnaashramadharma*, to explain the *shastra*, to stay in a solitary place, to chant mantras silently, and to be absorbed in trance. These different methods for liberation are generally only a professional practice and means of livelihood for those who have not conquered their senses. Because such persons are falsely proud, these procedures may not be successful. By authorized Vedic knowledge one can see that the forms of cause and effect in the cosmic manifestation belong to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, for the cosmic manifestation is His energy. Both cause and effect are nothing but energies of the Lord. Therefore, just as a wise man, by considering cause and effect, can see how fire pervades wood, those engaged in devotional service understand how You are both the cause and effect.

You are actually the air, the earth, fire, sky and water. You are the objects of sense perception, the life airs, the five senses, the mind, consciousness and false ego. Indeed, You are everything, subtle and gross. The material elements and anything expressed, either by the words or by the mind, are nothing but You. Neither the three modes of material nature [*sattvaguna*, *rajoguna* and *tamoguna*], nor the predominating deities controlling these three modes, nor the five gross elements, nor the mind, nor the demigods nor the human beings can understand You, for they are all subjected to birth and annihilation. Considering this, the spiritually advanced have taken to devotional service. Such wise men engage themselves in practical devotional service.

O Divine Master, the best of all persons to whom prayers are offered, we offer our respectful obeisance unto You. We desire to be liberated from materialistic life. It is for this reason that we have taken

shelter of Your lotus feet. The seed of lusty desires, which is the root cause of material existence, is within the core of everyone's heart, You have sent me to this material world to exhibit the symptoms of a pure devotee. You are so kind to Your devotees that You could not induce them to do something unbeneficial for them. On the other hand, one who desires some material benefit in exchange for devotional service cannot be Your pure devotee. Indeed, he is no better than a merchant who wants profit in exchange for service. A devotee who desires material profits from his Master is certainly not a pure devotee. We are Your devotees without impure motivations, and You are our eternal Master. There is no need of our being anything other than Master and devotees. You are naturally our Master, and we are naturally Your devotees. We have no other relationship.

O, best of the givers of benediction, if You at all want to bestow a desirable benediction upon us, then we pray from Your Mastership that within the core of our hearts there be no material desires. Because of lusty desires from the very beginning of one's birth, the functions of one's senses, mind, life, body, religion, patience, intelligence, shyness, opulence, strength, memory and truthfulness are vanquished. When a human being is able to give up all the material desires in his mind, he becomes eligible to possess wealth and opulence like Yours. Let us offer our respectful obeisance unto You.

O colorful one Kakaji, remain ever-fresh in the sky of our hearts.

You usually wear a saffron jersey, and on Your head is a saffron hat with a saffron cloth on Your lower-body, and saffron sandals. A saffron tie graces Your neck, with the Yogi Divine Society symbol in the center. You carry eyeglasses in Your hand, and Yogi Bapa in Your heart. You wear a cream-colored top, and a lower-body cloth is worn in Surat-style. By Your gaze, You stick in our conscious.

There is a birthmark on the right side of Your head and it is most attractive to our minds.

As Your dearest, You constantly glorify Yogi Bapa. At Tardev, You have constantly chanted and sung Yogi Bapa's praises, keeping Yogi Bapa in Your heart and give the bliss of Yogi Bapa to all. You made saints for Yogi Bapa, and awakened the divine strength in women.

When You closed Your eyes, You remained through us, please, reside in our hearts. You made the brothers at Tardev divine - may they stay in our hearts. By Your hard work, we too are divine.



