

Chapter 9

Tolerance

After celebrating the festival of Vasant Panchami in Bochasan, Shastriji Maharaj continued his travels through the villages. Vignandas Swami and his group of sadhus went to Anjesar.

At that time, several new spiritual aspirants, including Ambalal Amthalal, Ranchhod Bhuva Patel, Harmanbhai Dhoribhai, Jethabhai Ambalal, Narsinhbhai Shanabhai, Jethabhai Bapubhai, Jivabhai Bapubhai, and others came into contact with Satsang. They were deeply impressed by Vignandas Swami's discourses and Yogi Maharaj's saintliness. However, due to Vignandas Swami's hot temper, everyone was scared of him and preferred to spend more time with Yogi Maharaj.

One day, Yogi Maharaj and Matam Swami prepared lunch, offered *thal* to Thakorji, and served everyone food. Only after everyone had

eaten did Yogi Maharaj and Matam Swami take out their bowls and sit down to eat. For some time now, Vignandas Swami had been brooding that “wherever Yogi goes, he wins over the devotees, thus reducing their reverence for me.” Just then, this thought led him to erupt in a jealous rage, and before Yogi Maharaj could begin eating, he roared, “Jogi, fast today!” He snatched the bowl of food away from Yogi Maharaj. Yogi Maharaj quietly got up and left. The devotees pleaded with Vignandas Swami to let Yogi Maharaj eat, but he refused to listen. The devotees were deeply pained at this turn of events.

At 5 p.m., Yogi Maharaj was having a bath at the well on the outskirts of the village when Narsinhbhai and Jethabhai, who had accompanied him, asked, “Swami, when your guru punishes you for no fault of your own, why don’t you object? You should not stay with him anymore.”

Yogi Maharaj instantly grasped their hands and said, “Please don’t say such things. When

the guru scolds us, it is for our own good. So please don't tell anyone this.”

Then he said, “Please also don't tell Matam Swami.” He began to look around, but Matam Swami had gone to the toilet. The devotees did not understand Yogi Maharaj's request, but Yogi Maharaj knew that if Matam Swami found out, he would tell Vignandas, and then the guru would fly into a rage and would not be satisfied until he had beat Yogi Maharaj black and blue. If the devotees saw this happening repeatedly, they would develop an aversion for Vignandas Swami. Witnessing this climax of Yogi Maharaj's saintliness, the devotees were left speechless.

During the month of Ashadh this year, there had been enough rains for the rice seedlings to sprout, but thereafter, a month and a half passed without a single drop of rain. Consequently, the devotees remarked to Vignandas Swami and the sadhus, “Hopefully, the rains come soon. Otherwise, we will have to start begging for food.”

Vignandas Swami said, “We could make it rain tomorrow, but then you would stop attending our discourses.”⁴

The devotees promised that if the rains fell, they would attend Vignandas Swami’s discourses twice a day. So, Vignandas looked to Yogi Maharaj and said, “Jogi! Do *dhun* and pray to Maharaj to make it rain.”

Yogi Maharaj immediately began to sing the *dhun*. All the sadhus and devotees also joined in. In his typical style, Yogi Maharaj would close his eyes, clap his hands loudly, and chant the *dhun* with great fervor. Everyone was fully absorbed in chanting the Swaminarayan *dhun*, and the atmosphere was suffused with devotion. After some time, they concluded the *dhun*. Everyone had faith that because Jogi had led the *dhun*, it was sure to rain.

The following day, there were such heavy rains that the farmers were assured of a bumper crop the likes of which they had not seen in the last ten years. Everyone realized

Yogi Maharaj's glory and that Maharaj would never reject a request from him.

In this way, with great affection for the devotees, the sadhus continued their constant travels through the villages according to the maxim, “*Sādhu to chaltā bhalā*” (For sadhus, it is good to be on the move). Those who had seen Yogi Maharaj traveling from one village to the next on foot or by bullock cart; those who had seen him walking at night with a lantern in one hand and a cloth bag with twenty kilograms of millet hanging from his shoulder, having earlier gone house to house singing kirtans, delivering discourses, and begging for two pounds or five pounds of millet; or those who had just heard descriptions of Yogi Maharaj's efforts—they could not help but perceive his enthusiasm for service and his heart-rending tolerance of pain and hardships!

Balmukunddas Swami of Napad had great reverence for Yogi Maharaj. He would often tell the devotees who had affection for him about Yogi Maharaj's glory. As Nadiad's Ramchandra

Mayaram Thakar's younger brother, Bhailalbhai Thakar, had great affection for Balmukund Swami, Balmukund Swami often would tell him, "Yogi Maharaj is an embodiment of service. He has a profound inclination for devotion coupled with an understanding of God's glory. He is such a great sadhu that just doing darshan of his loving face is enough to alleviate anyone's pain and suffering."

Whenever Vignandas Swami, Yogi Maharaj, and the other sadhus visited Bhailalbhai's farm in Bhaliyapara, he would stay with them with this understanding of Yogi Maharaj's glory.

In the early morning and late afternoon, when Yogi Maharaj would go to the well on Bhailalbhai's farm for a bath, Yogi Maharaj would roast some fresh chickpeas, offer them to Thakorji, and bring them back for the devotees. He would also bring some unpeeled chickpeas to make *shak* to lovingly offer for Thakorji's dinner. Seeing this sadhu's selfless affection, loving devotion to God, saintliness, and

constant engagement in service, Ramchandrabhai, Bhailalbhai, and others would reverently think, “How blessed would we be if we could stay with this sadhu forever!” Thus, they would come for the darshan of this *sant mandal* on every full moon, *ekadashi*, Vasant Panchami, and similar festival days and stay in their company, realizing it to be their great fortune.

4 Because they would be too busy with their farm work.