

Chapter 19

Punishment for Listening to Another’s Flaws

Around this time, Vinubhai had come for Swamishri’s darshan. Swamishri inquired about his welfare and suddenly asked, “What did you do on the train here?”

The question unsettled Vinubhai. By chance, Vinubhai had met another *satsangi* on the same train going for Swamishri’s darshan. That *satsangi* had spoken at length about the flaws of one sadhu.³ Although Vinubhai had no interest in such gossip, the *satsangi* insisted that Vinubhai must listen to him, so he was forced to hear these talks! Haltingly, Vinubhai explained what had happened. Swamishri said, “Observe two fasts. Why did you even listen?” Then Swamishri called the other devotee and told him, “You should observe one fast.”

Two fasts for just listening! What aversion Swamishri had for talks about others’ flaws!

Although they had simply discussed the dishonesty of an immoral sadhu on the train, Swamishri had given them such a heavy punishment!

Then, Swamishri traveled to Gondal to install the silver-plated *sinhasan* for Ghanshyam Maharaj that Sidibhai and his family had sponsored. More than anyone, Swamishri was excited that the divine *murti* of Ghanshyam Maharaj would today be presiding in a silver-plated *sinhasan*. It seemed that a special joy was visible on his face. Although, for someone who was forever joyous, what new joy could there be? But, just seeing the divine form of his beloved Ghanshyam Maharaj took his breath away.

Swamishri performed the *arti* with his long arms swaying with gestures of affection towards Ghanshyam Maharaj. The chimes of the gongs, ringing of the bells, and rhythmic beat of the drumsticks on the kettledrum lent an aura of divinity to the profound prayers arising from the devotees' souls. Finally, with

the *jay naad*, a sense of auspiciousness washed over the entire atmosphere, and the festival came to a beautiful conclusion.

Among the youths offering their service during such festivals, one group was washing some potatoes before slicing them. As Swamishri walked by and saw that they were using unfiltered water to wash the potatoes, he walked over and said, “Tie a cloth filter on the faucet. You should use filtered water to wash vegetables. You can’t use these potatoes like this. You will first have to scrub them clean before using them.”

Then he instructed the youths to scrub the potatoes with ash before rewashing them in filtered water. The youths were dumbfounded. They would have to scrub 40 kg of potatoes with ash before rewashing them!

Swamishri remarked, “I am coming back soon to help you scrub the potatoes. Don’t scrub them all; leave some for me.”

The youths were embarrassed by their inner resistance to Swamishri's command, and they happily accepted this disciplinary action for flouting the rule prohibiting the use of unfiltered water. Everyone joined in wholeheartedly and began to scrub each potato with ash! They learned their lesson that not even the tiniest laxity in following the vows would escape Swamishri's notice and disapproval!

³ That sadhu later left the Sanstha.