

Chapter 9

God Is My Wealth

When Shastriji Maharaj reached Sarangpur mandir, the floor of Thakorji's *pradakshina* was under construction. In those days, mandir floors were surfaced by spreading out a mixture of lime-ash slurry and having several people compact it by continuously ramming it with wooden beaters for several days. Vignandas Swami, Yogi Maharaj, Harikrishna Swami, and often, even Shastriji Maharaj would join in this *seva* of compacting the lime-ash floor surface. Because one had to walk barefoot on the lime-ash mix while compacting it, mild alkaline burns on the soles of the feet were common. Due to these and many other hardships, four young sadhus decided together to leave.

After completing *cheshta* at midnight, the sadhus went to take their small, metallic *murti* of Harikrishna Maharaj. However, in the dark, they mistakenly took the *murti* of Harikrishna

Maharaj that Yogi Maharaj kept with him and served. They threw this *murti* into a cloth bag and began to search for a gap in the cactus hedge through which they could escape. Unable to find an opening in the darkness, they finally jumped over the top of the hedge. However, one of the sadhus' cloth bags got snagged in the cacti. The sadhus yanked the bag free and went on their way.

In the morning, when the pujari swami went to wake Thakorji, he discovered that Harikrishna Maharaj was missing. When the pujari asked everyone if they knew of the whereabouts of the missing *murti*, Yogi Maharaj was stunned and felt, “Where would Thakorji go? What mistake have I made in my devotion?” Yogi Maharaj experienced unbearable anguish at the thought of separation from his beloved Harikrishna Maharaj. As soon as Shastriji Maharaj found out, he went to Yogi Maharaj, and caressing his head, said, “Don’t worry. Thakorji craves your

love and worship. So, he will certainly return from wherever he is.”

Yogi Maharaj wept in a corner while everyone else searched for Harikrishna Maharaj. Soon they realized that in addition to Harikrishna Maharaj, four sadhus were missing. Thus, Soma Bhagat mounted his horse and galloped off to scour the surrounding areas for the sadhus who had apparently taken the *murti*. With tears streaming down his cheeks, Yogi Maharaj began to do *dandvats*, *dhun*, and *mala*, praying and begging Thakorji to forgive him.

Mohan Bhagat had also been searching around the campus for Harikrishna Maharaj. Finally, finding no trace of him, he was returning to the mandir dejected when he noticed a tiny velvet pillow near the cactus hedge. He went closer to investigate and found Thakorji’s case lodged in the hedge. He carefully lifted it out and looked inside to see Thakorji smiling back at him. Everyone was overjoyed. Yogi Maharaj was ecstatic. When a

lost child is running around alone, wailing in search of his mother, and he finally finds her, the inexpressible joy the child feels... the expression of pure, unbridled joy on Yogi Maharaj's face was even greater than that.

Shyām tan, Shyām man, Shyām hai hamāro dhan.

Ātho jām Udho, hame Shyām hi so kām he!

Despite walking on the razor's edge of strict restraint of the senses, severe austerities, constant *atma*-realization, and complete observance of all the sacred vows, Jogi's devotion was not dry or hollow. Instead, his devotion bore fruit in the fertile soil of his love and filled his heart with divinity. On the one hand, his devotion reached the dizzying heights of the Himalayas, while on the other hand, his spiritual knowledge was as vast and profound as an ocean. These divine virtues found expression through his speech. He had made spiritual wisdom his life and fulfilled the meaning of his name—Gnanjivandas. Any faithful person's lifespan, no matter how long,

would be too short to understand Yogi Maharaj.