

Chapter 5

All-Rounder

Shortly thereafter, Krishnacharandas Swami's *mandal* received an invitation to visit Kunkavav, so he traveled there along with the newly initiated Gnanjivan Swami and other sadhus.

In those days, brass pots and pans were commonly used for cooking. Gnanjivandas Swami was adept at tinning these brass utensils.² Shamjibhai's son, Bhagwanjibhai, supplied the necessary ingredients and equipment and manned the bellows required to heat the flame to 450°F while Gnanjivan Swami would apply the tin coating and chant the name of God. After he tinned each utensil, Gnanjivan Swami would show Bhagwanjibhai and ask, "How has it been tinned? Swami will be happy, won't he?"

In Gnanjivan Swami's heart, there existed a singular longing to please his guru.

Consequently, his every action was transformed into devotion. Krishnacharandas Swami would take each vessel in his hand and turn it around, closely inspecting it and showing it to Chaturbhuj Swami and the other sadhus of the *mandal*. Then he would praise Gnanjivan Swami saying, “Gnanji is an all-rounder. He learns how to do everything. He is not deterred by any challenge. He knows very well how to please God and his holy sadhu.”

Gnanjivan Swami would also teach Bhagwanjibhai how to wash the utensils. To wash utensils is a form of devotion, and consequently, it is also an art. It requires cleanliness and a pure heart. Thus, in all types of service Gnanjivan Swami was ever-ready, with no thought for fatigue. Moreover, the constant innocent laughter spilling over from Gnanjivan Swami’s lips conveyed his pure sentiments.

After dinner, Gnanjivan Swami would say, “Come on, Bhagwanjibhai! Let’s quickly wash all the utensils. Then we can reach in time for

the evening discourses and *cheshta*, and Swami will be pleased with us.”

Bhagwanjibhai truly enjoyed Gnanjivan Swami’s company. Both of them would wash the dirty utensils with water and stack them up. Then, they would quickly scrub the utensils with ash. Finally, Bhagwanjibhai would rinse the utensils with clean, filtered water and lay them upside down on a clean surface.

After completing *cheshta*, Gnanjivan Swami would put the dried utensils back in their place and then go to sleep.

Bhagwanjibhai used to bring provisions for the sadhus from the homes of different devotees. Gnanjivandas Swami would first serve food to Krishnacharandas Swami and the other swamis. Then, he would serve the guest devotees. After everyone had eaten, he would serve Bhagwandas, and only then would he take some food and eat it together with him. While he was eating, Gnanjivan Swami would lovingly insist upon serving Bhagwanjibhai more food. “Take some more *kadhi*. It is out of this world.

It has been made finger-licking good. Today, Chaturbhuji Swami has prepared the seasoning.” With such urging, he would fill Bhagwanjibhai’s bowl with *kadhi* and serve him *rotla* and *khichdi*. If there was any pickle or chilis, he would also serve them to Bhagwanjibhai.

If Bhagwanjibhai mentioned that he would eat at home, Gnanjivan Swami would affectionately say, “Please eat here, my dear man. Where else will you get Swami’s consecrated food? You eat at home every day, don’t you?”

Experiencing such pure affection from Gnanjivan Swami, Bhagwanjibhai would forget all about his home. Gnanjivan Swami’s affection was greater than that of a loving mother.

In this way, wherever this group of sadhus traveled, Gnanjivan Swami’s service, devotion, and pure love spread its fragrance everywhere. This *mandal*, which usually traveled through the villages, would occasionally go to Gondal

for darshan of Akshar Deri. On the way, they would stop for a day or two at Ramod.

² Tinning is a process in which a thin layer of tin is applied to the inside of cooking vessels to prevent harmful copper ions from leaching into acidic foods.