

Chapter 12

Discerning Virtue in Card Players

Yogi Maharaj traveled from Bhadran to Ahmedabad, Shrijipura, and Pragjipura before boarding a train to Sarangpur. Until they reached Vadhwan, Yogi Maharaj recited and provided commentary on the Swamini Vato and Vachanamrut, delighting everyone traveling with him.

From Vadhwan, several youths boarded the train. As soon as the train left the station, the youths began to play a card game called ganjipo. Meanwhile, Yogi Maharaj began singing kirtans in a state of spiritual ecstacy. However, the card-playing youths found Yogi Maharaj's kirtans annoying. One of them barked, "Hey, Sadhu Maharaj! Stop your singing. Can't you see we are trying to play cards here, and your useless howling is disturbing us!"

Yogi Maharaj immediately stopped singing kirtans. Soon, the card players became so engrossed in their game that they forgot to get off at Ranpur station, and before they knew it, the train had reached Botad. It was already 2 a.m., and without any way to get to Ranpur until the morning, they would be forced to spend the night at the train station. Moreover, they would have to pay an extra fare to go from Botad back to Ranpur. A sadhu remarked, “See what happened to them for stopping us from singing kirtans.”

Immediately, Yogi Maharaj told that sadhu, “Guru! We can’t say that. We should see their virtues. Did you see the zeal with which they played ganjipo? We should maintain the same zeal to worship God.”

Yogi Maharaj’s unwavering resolve to see only the good in others left that sadhu astounded!

Like Dattatreya, Yogi Maharaj could effortlessly discern virtues where none seemingly existed.

From 14 September 1942 (Bhadarva *sud* 4, V.S. 1998), Dhanjibhai Ravjibhai had sponsored a *parayan* in Sarangpur. Devotees from all over had arrived to celebrate the festival of Jaljilni Ekadashi.

On 19 September 1942, Kuberbhai, Odhavjibhai of Botad, and others were discussing Swaminarayan philosophy. When the group came to an impasse on a particular point, they decided to go to Yogi Maharaj for a solution to their question. Yogi Maharaj answered their complicated question with ease. Doubtless, one who embodies the principles of the scriptures, who has realized the deepest mysteries of Vedanta, and who can see them like a drop of water in the palm of his hand can surely answer any philosophical question in a fraction of a second.

Yet, everyone was surprised by Yogi Maharaj's answer because, when he had previously been asked such philosophically complicated questions, he usually ignored them. If someone insisted that he answer, he

would often reply, “Worship God,” or “Associate with the Sant, and you will understand everything.” Giving such answers, Yogi Maharaj would guide people away from useless mental gymnastics and encourage them to focus on living spiritual ideals in one’s daily life.

On Wednesday, 30 September 1942 (Bhadharva *vad* 5, V.S. 1998), Shastriji Maharaj arrived in Gondal. After staying for two days and giving everyone the bliss of his company, he took Yogi Maharaj to visit Kalyanji Sheth’s house in Diu. Then, he went to Junagadh and Veraval before returning to Gondal to celebrate the Sharad Punam festival.