

Chapter 8

The Highest Form of Loving Devotion

Once, Yogi Maharaj was traveling with Nirgundas Swami from Sarangpur to Gadhada. It was around four in the afternoon and time to offer water to Thakorji. However, they encountered no rivers or wells along the road. Yogi Maharaj began to feel uncomfortable, thinking that Thakorji must be feeling thirsty, but we cannot offer him any water.

After some time, they came across a river. Yogi Maharaj halted the bullock cart and climbed off. He woke Thakorji and bathed him in the clear water of the river. He used a cloth to filter the water and offered it to Thakorji. Then, he began to do *dandvats*. While doing *dandvats*, he prayed, “Maharaj! Please forgive me. Please pardon my error.” He repeated this prayer of forgiveness several times.

When he returned to the bullock cart, Nirgundas Swami, who had been watching this devotional *lila*, smiled and asked, “What was your error?”

Yogiji Maharaj replied, “That I was unable to offer Thakorji water despite it being time to do so was a transgression on my part!”

Nirgundas Swami countered, “How was it your fault that we could not find any water to offer?”

And yet, Nirgundas Swami realized that only if one could develop such loving devotion would Maharaj be truly pleased.

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After celebrating the Annakut festival of V.S. 1970, Shastriji Maharaj commanded Yogi Maharaj and his group of sadhus to remain in Sarangpur and serve in the mandir. So, the sadhus regularly visited nearby villages to collect alms and donations and delivered discourses at the devotees’ invitation. Otherwise, they remained engaged in mandir

construction efforts. Several sadhus were constructing a compound wall around the large campus while others helped dig the mandir foundations or engaged in other construction work. Together, the sadhus gave a strong boost to the mandir construction work.

Shastriji Maharaj was well aware of these sadhus' competence and commitment to service. Thus, he shifted the responsibility of the briskly progressing construction work to Vignandas Swami and Yogi Maharaj's capable shoulders. As these sadhus accepted this significant responsibility, Shastriji Maharaj remained free to continue his ceaseless, meandering travels. Thus, Shastriji Maharaj was very pleased with this *mandal*. Even during his constant travels, Shastriji Maharaj continued to check in on his beloved Yogi Maharaj and other sadhus serving in Sarangpur. He would periodically find some excuse to come to Sarangpur and shower the sadhus with love. He would give the other sadhus instructions to follow, but he would

never have to say anything to ‘Jogi Maharaj.’ There was no service activity in the mandir into which Yogiji Maharaj had not poured his heart and soul! Shastriji Maharaj was aware that Jogi was so engrossed in *seva* he would neglect to care for his body. In order to personally look after him, Shastriji Maharaj often took Yogi Maharaj along on his visits to villages surrounding Sarangpur.