

Chapter 9

Accepted as Guru by Darbars

Bapubha of Adval had first met Shastriji Maharaj through Jhaverbhai Diwan of Limbdi. Then, when he attended the Sarangpur mandir *murti-pratishtha* in 1916 (V.S. 1972), he had met and developed a deep affection for Yogi Maharaj. He had previously been closer to the sadhus of Muli, but after witnessing the virtues and faith of Shastriji Maharaj and his sadhus, and particularly after coming into contact with Yogi Maharaj, he had become a staunch disciple of Shastriji Maharaj. The Satsang community of Adval had blossomed through Yogi Maharaj's contact.

Once, Bapubha had reverently told Shastriji Maharaj, “I wish to make Yogi Maharaj my guru, so please happily assent to this.”

Shastriji Maharaj was very pleased and said, “Jogi is said to be the guru of the Garasiyas. No

one can win over the Kathi Garasiyas. Only Jogi Maharaj can do that.”

A senior devotee sitting nearby remarked, “You have selected your guru well. His nature is such that you will never hear a word of rebuke from him.”

When Bapubha Bapu accepted Yogi Maharaj as his guru, Yogi Maharaj was half his age. Bapubha had also described the glory of Yogi Maharaj to Dadubha Bapu and brought him along. When Agarsang Bapu and others came into closer contact with Yogi Maharaj in 1924 (V.S. 1980), they also developed a deep affection for him. After that, Yogi Maharaj’s travels in the Jhalavad region increased.

Once, Bapubha Bapu told Shastriji Maharaj, “As Yogi Maharaj is a sadhu of the highest order, I request you to relieve him from his menial responsibilities in the kitchen.”

Someone remarked, “If Yogi Maharaj is relieved of his responsibilities in the kitchen,

who will feed all you Darbars the piping hot *rotlis* that you so enjoy?”

Yogi Maharaj had a particular penchant for cooking and serving food to others, and he could not do without it.

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Yogi Maharaj practiced such intense *vairagya* that he would never consume milk or dairy products. Once Bapubha complained to Shastriji Maharaj that Yogi Maharaj’s constant fasts and austerities had weakened his digestive system and left him prone to constipation. To remedy this, Bapubha asked Shastriji Maharaj to command Yogi Maharaj to add ghee to *ukalo* (hot, spiced milk) and drink it every morning to alleviate his constipation and improve his overall health.

At Shastriji Maharaj’s command, Yogi Maharaj began to drink *ukalo* with ghee every morning to please his guru. However, after a few days, he stopped adding ghee but continued to drink *ukalo*.

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Vignandas Swami, Yogi Maharaj, Bhagwatswarupdas Swami, and other sadhus would often travel to the village of Gariya, near Morbi. Several villagers here, including Khodabhai, Kalidasbhai, Amrutbhai, Arjanbhai, and Tulsibhai, had become *satsangis*. A Brahmin by the name of Manishankar Mayaram had developed goodwill for the sadhus, inspiring him to offer a room in his house for the village mandir. Vignandas Swami and Yogi Maharaj performed the *murti-pratishtha* ceremony in that room and established a *hari mandir*. Moreover, Yogi Maharaj's pure and selfless love won the heart of the landowner, Jasubha Ramdasbhai. Thus, he pledged to donate a sizable plot of land for the construction of a large mandir.

Through their month-long stay, this *sant mandal* sparked an abiding enthusiasm for satsang amongst the entire village. Shamjibhai and his father, Kalidasbhai, had developed a deep reverence for Vignandas Swami and Yogi

Maharaj. Kalidasbhai had put the hands of both of his sons, Shamji and Velji, into Yogi Maharaj’s hands and said, “Please consider these two as your servants. I am entrusting them to you so that they may remain in Satsang. Please honor this one request of mine.” Yogi Maharaj accepted his prayers and looked after the spiritual welfare of his sons.

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The sadhus also traveled extensively around Jhalavad. Among the many villages in Jhalavad, the main centers were Chachana, Kanthariya, Limbdi, Mojidad, and Navagam. Once, Merubha Bapu fell ill in Chachana. Vignandas Swami and his *mandal* went to Chachana to inquire about his health. Merubha Bapu was enamored of Yogi Maharaj’s sweet speech, and thus, he expressed a wish to hear Yogi Maharaj deliver discourses on the Bhaktachintamani. Yogi Maharaj often delivered discourses on the Bhaktachintamani to the sadhus and devotees who routinely visited Merubha Bapu’s house. Merubha Bapu

had developed intense affection for Yogi Maharaj.

Pujaji Bapu of Dangara also had immense affection for Yogi Maharaj. At night, after *cheshta*, Yogi Maharaj regularly sat to listen to his talks. Pujaji Bapu's talks were very interesting. He expertly narrated the lives of spiritual luminaries of the past. Sometimes, exhausted from the day's work, Yogi Maharaj would doze off during the discourses. On these occasions, Pujaji Bapu would affectionately send him to bed saying, “Gnanji! Go to sleep. You seem very tired. No one can serve and offer devotion like you. That is a fact.”

Ranchhod Bhakta was also deeply impressed by Yogi Maharaj's austerities, renunciation, and *vairagya*.

Just to the south of the Sarangpur mandir there used to be a large, old stone residential hall for sadhus. Once, following the afternoon discourses on a festival day, Shastriji Maharaj, Pujaji Bapu, Ranchhod Bhakta, Vignandas Swami, Bhagwatswarupdas Swami, Guru

Ganesh Bhakta, Kuberbhai, Odhavjibhai, Chhaganbhai, and others were seated there. Upon seeing the embodiment of love and service that was Yogi Maharaj, Pujaji Bapu quipped, “If between seven brothers, there was only one son, he would be considered the heir of all seven of them. Similarly, Gnanji, amongst all of us, we see only you as our heir. Thus, you will inherit everything from all of us.”

Shastriji Maharaj chuckled to hear this praise for his future successor as Pujaji Bapu’s words gave a glimpse of the future.