

Chapter 8

He Whose Presence Inspires Faith

The sadhus would often travel by bullock cart to Ningala to collect alms. As Kalyanjibhai of Ningala was a *satsangi*, he would often send his son, Odhavji, to assist the sadhus in collecting alms. In those days, Mahanat Swami was usually Yogi Maharaj's companion sadhu. Together, they would also visit the villages surrounding Ningala, including Keriya, Pipaliya, and Ugamedi. They usually received flour, *khichdi*, and gur as alms from the devotees.

Both Yogi Maharaj and Mahanat Swami spent so much time begging alms with the cloth alms sack looped over their shoulders that they developed pressure sores on their shoulders, similar to how oxen develop pressure sores due to the friction of the yoke. Despite the strain both sadhus endured to collect alms for the mandir and Satsang, their faces never betrayed

even a hint of fatigue or weariness. Yogi Maharaj was forever smiling in all situations, and wherever he went, he remained engaged in service and spiritual discourses.

At that time, Odhavji was only fourteen years old. Thus, he didn't understand much of Yogi Maharaj's talks on Akshar Purushottam *upasana*. But Yogi Maharaj would feed him with great love, inquire about his welfare, and act according to his wishes. Thus, Odhavji naturally developed a deep affection for Yogi Maharaj.

Although sadhus from the Vartal Gadi occasionally visited Ningala, they tended not to deliver spiritual discourses. Thus, the villagers possessed little understanding of Satsang. However, Yogi Maharaj won Odhavji's heart with his loving care. He planted the seed of Akshar Purushottam *upasana* there, which soon blossomed and spread to his entire family.