

Chapter 13

A Play of Love and Realization of the Atma

In mid-January 1944, Yogi Maharaj traveled from Sarangpur to Gondal. On 25 January 1944 (Posh *vad* 30, V.S. 2000), Shastriji Maharaj arrived in Gondal. From here, he took Yogi Maharaj with him to Jamnagar. As Shastriji Maharaj's eightieth birthday celebrations were going to be held in Bochasan on Vasant Panchami, they took the train from Jamnagar and arrived in Anand on 28 January 1944 (Maha *sud* 3, V.S. 2000).

While in Anand, Shastriji Maharaj usually stayed at the house of Motibhai Bhagwandas. On this occasion, the entire area was in the grip of a severe cold spell. So at night, after listening to spiritual discourses and singing *cheshta*, everyone went to sleep. As was his custom, Yogi Maharaj lay down on a thin reed mat and used only a single sheet to cover himself.

After a short time, Shastriji Maharaj awoke. After checking that Yogi Maharaj had fallen asleep, Shastriji Maharaj took a blanket and very slowly covered Yogi Maharaj with it before going back to sleep. Yogi Maharaj was actually awake, but he didn't respond at the time. After some time, Shastriji Maharaj woke again. He turned to see that Yogi Maharaj was again not covered by the blanket. Again, he slowly got up and gently covered Yogi Maharaj with the blanket before going to sleep again. But, once again, after Shastriji Maharaj had gone to sleep, Yogi Maharaj took off the blanket and put it to one side. In this way, the Guru's fatherly love and the disciple's Jadbharat-like conviction of his Self as the *atma* led them to play this touching midnight game.

The great devotees Manibhai and Motibhai were deeply touched to witness this divine play between guru and disciple, and they became lost in thought about the greatness of both.

Yogi Maharaj disciplined his body through severe austerities like *chandrayan* while

keeping it forever engaged in service. He did not pay the slightest attention to his bodily needs and comforts. In Vachanamrut Sarangpur 2, Shriji Maharaj states, “If God or a senior *sādhū* takes care of one’s body, it is well and good, but one should not knowingly take care of one’s own body...when God or that great *sādhū* notice a person behaving in this manner physically, they develop affection for him, and that devotee also develops affection for God.”

Everyone sat in bullock carts from Anand and headed to Vartal for darshan. Together with Shastriji Maharaj and Yogi Maharaj were Motibhai Bhagwandas and Manibhai Naranbhai. On the way, the conversation veered towards Yogi Maharaj’s affectionate nature. Shastriji Maharaj said, “There is not an iota of difference between Jogi and me. So, understanding his greatness, you should please him. You should associate with him by thought, word, and deed. You may have recognized me, but if some deficiency remains in you still, Jogi Maharaj will remove it.” Thus, as Shastriji

Maharaj described Yogi Maharaj's divine greatness, both devotees experienced great joy