

Chapter 9

Guru's Fatherly Love

The following January, Shastriji Maharaj and Yogi Maharaj visited the village of Kosindra and stayed at the house of Ratilal Purushottamdas Patel. Despite the bone-chilling cold, Shastriji Maharaj delivered extraordinary discourses until midnight. Thereafter, everyone went to sleep ruminating over the bliss of Brahman that they had just experienced.

After a bit, Yogi Maharaj woke up to use the toilet. Then, he washed his hands with dirt and began to take a bath with the frigid water stored in the clay pots outside the house. Shastriji Maharaj hadn't yet fallen asleep. When he heard the noise, he came out to see the delicate frame of that embodiment of austerities, Yogi Maharaj, bathing with the frigid water. Overcome with love, Shastriji Maharaj said, "Jogi! You are subjecting your

body to too much hardship. Please stop enduring such suffering. Please temper your enthusiasm for austerities in order to please the devotees and fulfill their sentiments.”

Yogi Maharaj smiled in silent acquiescence of this sweet rebuke. Shastriji Maharaj woke a devotee and instructed him to light a fire in a brazier and bring it to Yogi Maharaj. Then, Shastriji Maharaj said, “Here Jogi! Sit next to the fire and let it chase the cold away!” It was a touching scene of a guru's tender, fatherly love tempering his disciple's innate zeal for austerities.

Continuing their travels, Shastriji Maharaj, Nirgundas Swami, and Yogi Maharaj came to Vartal for darshan. When they went up to the mandir for darshan, the security guard, Raju Mia, began cursing at them and told them to leave. Yogi Maharaj folded his hands and said, “We are leaving, but the sadhus' footwear is near Akshar Bhuvan. So, we will collect it and leave straightaway.”

Just then, Nirgundas Swami arrived there with Ramchandra Thakar. Nirgundas Swami had previously been the assistant *kothari* of Vartal mandir, and Raju Mia knew him well. So, Nirgundas Swami scolded him, “You are kicking us out! Have you no shame?”

Raju Mia folded his hands, bowed down, and begged for forgiveness, “Bapji, how could I fail to recognize you? But I’m just a peon following orders, so I have to say such things.”

Thereafter, the sadhus immediately left the mandir. No one felt offended because such abuses and insults had become routine throughout the Vartal and Ahmedabad Gadis, and Shastriji Maharaj had become accustomed to it. Yogi Maharaj followed in the footsteps of friendship as led by his guru. On the one hand, the affectionate devotees would organize extraordinary festivals for them to attend, and immediately following that, the “festivals” of insults and abuses remained ever ready.