

Chapter 9

A Gem Wrapped in Rags

In 1917 (V.S. 1973), Vignandas Swami's *mandal* stayed in Rajkot for four months. Upon receiving news that Krishnacharandas Swami had come to Rajkot from Junagadh, Bhagwatswarupdas Swami and Yogi Maharaj went to Rajkot mandir for his darshan. Krishnacharandas Swami was delivering discourses in the assembly hall when they arrived in the mandir. Krishnacharandas Swami was so delighted to see Bhagwatswarupdas Swami, he stopped his discourses, went to Bhagwatswarupdas Swami, and embraced him. Yogi Maharaj began to do *dandvats* to Krishnacharandas Swami, but Krishnacharandas Swami lifted him up and placed both hands on his head in blessing. They had met after a gap of five years.

An awed hush fell over the assembly hall as the devotees marveled at the pure love between

the sadhus. Then Bhagwatswarupdas Swami said, “Because of this Gnanji Swami, I am able to get around. He is like my hands and feet. Although he doesn’t get a second of respite from the constant service in the mandir, he never fails to take care of me. Moreover, he learns the ragas and style of the verses of the Bhaktachintamani, Harililamrut, and other texts and then sings the verses in his melodious voice. He has cultivated many virtues in his life, but please bless him so that he may possess all the saintly virtues to their fullest.”

Krishnacharandas Swami exclaimed, “Gnanji is a gem, I tell you, a gem! Who would not develop affection for him!”

An elderly, learned sadhu sitting beside them laughed and said, “He looks as meek as a cow but don’t be misled; he is a gem wrapped in rags!”

During this conversation, Yogi Maharaj sat staring at the ground.

Krishnacharandas Swami said, “Please convey my ‘Jay Swaminarayan’ to Shastri Yagnapurushdas. Although we may be considered separate from a worldly perspective, we are all of the same lineage of Gunatit *jnan*. From that perspective, Junagadh and Bochasan are not separate. Please also convey my ‘Jay Swaminarayan’ to Vignandas Swami and the other sadhus.”

After this occasion, Bhagwatswarupdas Swami and Yogi Maharaj never saw Krishnacharandas Swami again. This was their final meeting.

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While they were in Rajkot, Vignandas Swami, who had an explosive nature, became incensed at some small mistake made by Yogi Maharaj and forced him to get up from his barely started meal. Hargovinddas Mehta observed this, and after everyone else went to sleep, he asked Yogi Maharaj, “Gnanji! Why do you tolerate so much? Don’t you ever feel like escaping from all of this?”

Yogi Maharaj laughed and said, “When the guru scolds us, it is for our own good. Without someone to discipline us, we would not remain conscientious.”

Yogi Maharaj’s words left Hargovindbhai in stunned silence.