

Chapter 9

Meeting Abuse with Altruism

Apakurvannapi prāyaha prāpnoti mahataha
falam,

Aurvam dahantamevāgnim santarpayanti
sāgaraha.

(Even those who harm the Satpurush receive only good from them. For example, although the lava vents on the seabed boil the ocean, still the ocean only soothes the lava.)

Once, Yogi Maharaj and Purushottamvallabh Swami had traveled from Adval to Narayan Dharo for the New Moon festival. Two sadhus from Muli, Uttamcharandas Swami and Narayanprasaddas Swami, were also at Narayan Dharo. Out of a misguided prejudice, both sadhus conspired to attack Yogi Maharaj. As soon as Yogi Maharaj entered the water, they approached the river bank with rocks in hand. However, as many

devotees were also bathing in Narayan Dharo due to the festival, the sadhus could not attack Yogi Maharaj as planned. However, when Yogi Maharaj finished his bath and came out of the river, both sadhus spewed a torrent of vile abuses down upon Yogi Maharaj. Although Yogi Maharaj left the area with a gentle smile, maligning the Satpurush always ends painfully for the maligner. Soon, Uttamcharandas Swami was assailed by so many lustful desires that despite having worn the clothes of a sadhu for twenty years, he left the monastic order, entered worldly life, and ultimately suffered great miseries.

The other sadhu, Narayanprasaddas Swami, once had his foot sliced open by a shard of glass while on a pilgrimage. Due to the monsoon rains, his wound soon got infected. He arrived at Botad Station with his companion sadhu and took a horse-drawn carriage to Sarangpur. The road forward was impassable due to mud, so the carriage driver refused to continue to Kariyani, and instead dropped them in

Sarangpur and returned to Botad. The sadhus went for darshan of the Hanuman mandir, but the gates had been shut for the night, and no one responded to their pleas to open it. Because they were sadhus of the Ahmedabad Gadi, they assumed they would be turned away from the Akshar Purushottam mandir. But stranded in a downpour with nowhere else to go, they trudged to the Akshar Purushottam mandir and knocked on the gate at 11 p.m. Narayanprasaddas's leg was inflamed and intensely painful due to the infection.

At the time, Shastriji Maharaj was in Sarangpur, and everyone had just gone to sleep following the evening discourses and *cheshta*. Only Yogi Maharaj was still awake and preparing for bed when the doorkeeper informed him that some unknown sadhus were at the gate asking to spend the night in the mandir.

Yogi Maharaj went to the gate and welcomed them to the mandir. He insisted they have dinner as they must be hungry from the day's

travels. As nothing remained from the evening meal, Yogi Maharaj served them the puri, pickle, and *magaj* laddus from Thakorji's *thal* that morning. The sadhus were famished, so they gratefully ate what was served. When they finished, Yogi Maharaj prepared their bedding and finally asked the purpose of their visit. Narayanprasaddas Swami said, "We wanted to go to Kariyani for darshan, but due to the rains and impassable roads, the carriage driver would go no further and dropped us here." Then he expressed a wish to travel to Kariyani early the following morning.

Yogi Maharaj rose early the next morning and prepared the mandir's bullock cart for them. Narayanprasaddas had immediately recognized Yogi Maharaj as the sadhu he had assailed with vile abuses when his rock pelting plan had failed at Narayan Dharo. He didn't know what to make of the kindness and loving hospitality which this great soul was showing him today. Finally, his heart knelt at Yogi Maharaj's feet in recognition of his pristine

saintliness. Narayanprasaddas Swami exclaimed, “Yogi Maharaj! You truly bear malice towards none. There is no enmity in your heart; it is filled only with love.”

Yogi Maharaj gently placed his hand over Narayanprasaddas’s mouth to stop him from singing his praises. The simple gesture revealed Yogi Maharaj’s natural humility through which he refused to hear of his own magnanimity.

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Some time later, Yogi Maharaj was again insulted at Narayan Dharo. This time, several Kathi-Garasiya devotees who were with him became enraged. Yogiji Maharaj immediately calmed them down and said, “Shriji Maharaj has instructed us to cultivate saintly virtues. Thus, we should bow down in the face of insults. However, you should not do anything that will blemish our saintliness.”

Then, Yogi Maharaj continued, “Once Shriji Maharaj had gone to Anand. The townspeople threw stones and dirt at Shriji Maharaj and his

retinue. The Kathi horsemen with Maharaj drew their swords, but Maharaj stopped them and escorted everyone out of the town without incident. About two miles from Anand, Maharaj stopped under a tree, and everyone gathered around for an impromptu assembly.

Meanwhile, some of Anand's more noble townspeople felt they had erred in allowing Bhagwan Swaminarayan to be insulted in their town. A group of twenty-five townspeople headed to Vartal to apologize to Shriji Maharaj. On the way, they saw Shriji Maharaj seated before an assembly under a tree. The townspeople begged for forgiveness for their barbaric actions. Shriji Maharaj and the sadhus were pleased. Because they maintained their saintliness, those who had insulted them felt remorse and underwent an inner transformation.”

Yogi Maharaj's talks touched the Kanthi Darbars, and they gave up their desire for revenge. Yogi Maharaj was a spiritually enlightened sadhu of the highest order. His

heart was filled with the noble sentiment to do good to even his detractors.