

Chapter 10

Inspired to Serve by Jogi's Love

The sadhus' enthusiasm for the construction of Akshar Mandir was shared by the devotees. Thus, devotees would come to help in the construction and related mandir work.

Once, following the festival of Sharad Punam, Ashabhai of Purushottampura had come to Gondal with his son Ramanbhai to serve in the mandir construction. All the devotees remained engaged in the service of the mandir to please Shastriji Maharaj. Although they would get hungry due to the strenuous work, meals were provided only twice a day, and there was, at the time, no other arrangement for food.

Yogi Maharaj would serve in the kitchen and make *rotla* for everyone. One afternoon, he was going to Thakorji to offer fruits when he saw Ramanbhai sitting sullenly under a tree. Yogi

Maharaj asked, “Ramanbhai, why are you sitting here?”

Ramanbhai scowled, “How can we be expected to serve all day long when we don't get anything to eat?”

Yogi Maharaj affectionately said, “Look, I'm serving in the kitchen. Whenever you feel hungry, just come to me.”

Ramanbhai looked at this affectionate sadhu with newfound respect. Then, whenever this sixteen-year-old devotee felt hungry, he would go to Yogi Maharaj, who would give him millet *rotla* and pickled chilis or lemons and say, “Sit under the banyan tree here and eat this.”

Due to Yogi Maharaj's affection and care, Ramanbhai continued to offer his service. Ramanbhai was so strong-willed that he would not listen to anyone. Moreover, he was unwilling to serve if that meant tolerating hunger. However, Yogi Maharaj won his heart with pure love. After that, he remained ever willing to follow Yogi Maharaj's commands and

engage in satsang activities. Similarly, Yogi Maharaj's care and consideration sustained countless devotees in their service amid hardships. Often, devotees would keep serving just to experience the pure love that Yogi Maharaj's showered upon them!

Every month on *sud* 13, the sadhus have their heads and beards shaved. Once, a barber was shaving Yogi Maharaj's head in Gondal when his son brought him a message. In an instant, the barber took his equipment and began to go, leaving Yogi Maharaj's head half-shaved. Hariswarupdas Swami and the other sadhus tried to get him to at least complete shaving Yogi Maharaj, but in vain!

So, Yogi Maharaj sat there waiting for another barber to arrive. Yogi Maharaj believed that even at such times, one should remember God. Thus, he would narrate some incident or talk about some spiritual principle while laughing and making others laugh. In this way, two hours passed before another barber arrived. The other sadhus became agitated by

the long delay, but Yogi Maharaj waited patiently with his head half-shaved. There was not even a hint of impatience on Yogi Maharaj's face. He expressed no agitation or anger towards the first barber. Truly, the principle of equanimity (*sthitapragna*) described by the Scriptures and the learned was fully lived by Yogi Maharaj.