

# Chapter 3

## Jhinabhai Absorbed in Meditation

While childhood is generally a time of frolic and mischief, young Jhinabhai was cut from a different cloth. He rarely spoke—not out of shyness or slow-wittedness—but his silence welled forth from a profound serenity of the soul. The full pot, as the saying goes, is quiet and grave. Similarly, this child yogi's mind remained forever at rest in an ineffable world of eternal peace.

Yet, no one, young or old, could temper their enthusiasm to listen to his sweet, lisping speech. Just two sweet words from this beautiful child's mouth would bring joy to all. Everyone watched his every action with absolute fascination. The young devotee Jhinabhai was everyone's most beloved child, not just at home but amongst the entire village.

As he was like a manifestation of Paramatma, his birth and actions were clearly

distinct from those of ordinary souls. As he was constantly immersed in thoughts of God, one could see the divinity within him at every moment. This serene child remained deeply absorbed in meditation. He was naturally inclined towards devotion and service. In school, he would talk to his classmates about devotion to God and take them for darshan at the Swaminarayan mandir. His extraordinary devotion and tenderheartedness attracted everyone.

From his childhood, people saw in him the radiant luster of *atma*-realization that could only have been derived from his divine, otherworldly bhakti of Paramatma Sahajanand Swami coupled with a complete realization of his glory.

On the outskirts of Dhari, the Shetrunji River splits into three streams. One of these small streams zigzags across the landscape, tumbling through the rocky soil and under a bridge, where it is known as the Pataliyo Stream. Every morning at the crack of dawn,

Jhinabhai would have his morning bath here. Then, he would sit on the riverbank in a lotus position, close his eyes, and lose himself in the meditation of the *murti* of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. His face would shine with the brilliance of a great child rishi in the pristine forests of the Vedic age. When Jhinabhai's young friends accompanied him on his morning bath, they wondered about what he did in his meditation. They would gather around him and gaze upon his small seated form with joyous expectation that he would soon arise out of his samadhi. Discerning that Jhinabhai's heart was always focused inward, his young friends would pepper him with questions. On those occasions, Jhinabhai would gently smile and encourage his young friends to think about God and sing his glory because what else could such insignificant *jivas* bound by this world understand of his unbroken and divine association with God?

And yet, observing Jhinabhai's behavior, his interactions with others, and his spiritual

attitude, those with an incisive spiritual discernment could not help but realize a unique divinity in him. Even as a toddler, the emotional peaks and valleys of that age remained entirely under his control. Soon, he reached the age where he would begin his formal education, and he turned his mind to his studies. However, even before he had entered his mother's womb, like Shukdevji, he had mastered the basis of all knowledge, *brahmavidya*. Consequently, the knowledge of this world was self-evident for him. Moreover, with his razor-sharp memory and towering intelligence, Jhinabhai would always come first in his studies.

According to a famous Sanskrit proverb:

Bālasyāpi ravehe pādāhā patantyupari  
bhubhrutām,

Tejasā saha jātānām vayaha kutropayujyate.

(Even the feet (rays) of a young sun can fall on the top of mountains.

For those born with brilliance, of what matter is age?)

So it was that in 1899 (V.S. 1955), seven-year-old Jhinabhai was enrolled in the government school of Dhari, thus beginning the next stage of his illustrious and inspiring life.