

Chapter 3

A Remarkable Childhood

Many years later, Jhinabhai's brother, Kamalshibhai, shared his childhood memories of his younger sibling.

“When Jhinabhai was small, I didn't understand his true glory. He would often speak from his transcendent state. But in those days, I had little insight into such matters, and I couldn't grasp what he was saying.

“Truly! I am deeply moved just by recalling Jhinabhai's pure devotion. Even his play consisted of offering devotion to God in his makeshift mandir. He would memorize Swamini Vato and recite various passages from the Bhaktachintamani. Everyone would be mesmerized by his beautiful, melodious voice. Our paternal aunt, Manekba, would take Jhinabhai to Kunkavav just to hear his beautiful kirtans.

“When sadhus came to the mandir, he would lovingly serve them. He would also help take care of the mandir and the mandir’s pujari, Mohankaka. He preferred the company of sadhus. He was always first in his studies. He had a prodigious memory, and everything was on the tip of his tongue. Even when he didn’t get proper food, he never complained but would eat whatever was available. Our mother would say, ‘Jhina, tell me what you want to eat. I will make it for you.’ Jhina would respond only with a smile, but he would never ask for anything. In his entire life, he has never experienced discontentment. He has never asked for anything. He had immense love for all his brothers and his friends! He had love for all, harboring no distinctions of ‘us’ and ‘them’. He would look after everyone, even from his childhood...”

Remembering Jhinabhai’s childhood many years later, tears of fulfillment ran down Kamalshibhai’s face. He was unable to speak further. It is impossible to describe the qualities

of Brahman through mere words. One can only experience its bliss through memories and the devotion of one's heart.

Around 1906 (V.S. 1962), a small expansion of the *hari mandir* in Dhari was undertaken.⁵ Several sadhus from Krishnacharandas Swami's *mandal*, including Chaturbhujdas Swami, Bhagwatswarupdas Swami, Bhaktitannaydas Swami, Jadav Bhagat, and Haridas Swami, along with several others, stayed in Dhari to help with the construction work. The *sinhasan* and *murtis* were kept the same, and when the construction was completed, the *murtis* were reinstalled by Krishnacharandas Swami. During the construction process, the children of the *satsangi* families in the village would run to find stones to fill the mandir foundations. Pleased with the service and devotion of these *satsangi* children, the sadhus would give them *magaj* laddus as prasad.

5 During the mandir renovation, the sadhus offered to buy the house of a Muslim carder adjoining the mandir. Several opponents of Satsang instigated the carder to hold out for more money, but the carder's wife insisted that she wanted to sell the house to the Swaminarayan sadhus. The carder objected, "The Swaminarayan sadhus are greedy. They are offering us a sum below market value, whereas others are offering us more money. So, you are wrong to insist." The carder's wife responded, "You fool! The Swaminarayan sadhus offer worship! If we sell to them, Khuda will shower his grace upon us. What better than to have the name of Khuda reverberating on this land of ours?" The carder was convinced and sold his land to the mandir. The carder and his wife moved to another house adjacent to the mandir, and as long as they lived, they made and supplied beautiful cotton wicks for the mandir's use.