

Chapter 4

On the Gunatit Path

On the night of 31 October 1908 (Kartik sud 6, V.S. 1965), Kamalshibhai went to the Dhari mandir and brought Jhinabhai home. Puriba embraced Jhinabhai and served him dinner with love. At Puriba's insistence, on this last day, Jhinabhai spent the night at home for the first time in years.

Night slowly cast its shadow across the earth. Under the regency of the goddess of slumber, a stillness spread over the surroundings, but Puriba was unable to sleep. As she gazed tenderly upon her sleeping son, whose face was gently illumined by the wavering light of a single candle, she began to take stock of the sixteen years of her son's life with her.

As the night progressed, her anguish continued its ascent. When Ram Bhagwan was exiled to the jungle by his parents for fourteen

years, the description of his parents' lamentations at this tragedy is heart-rending. But in Jhinabhai's case, this repository of all virtues and the apple of his mother's eye was going to an exile from which he would never return! This thought unleashed a torrent of tears from his mother's eyes, and her heart cried, "Oh dear night, adorned by the light of the moon and stars! Stay with me forever. Let me never see the dawn that will follow your demise."

However, her maternal agony was unable to impede Jhinabhai's great renunciation, and Sunday, 1 November 1908 (Kartik *sud* 7, V.S. 1965) dawned all too soon for Puriba.

Puriba made Jhinabhai *kansar* for the final time. Jhinabhai's sister-in-law, Nanduba, served the *kansar* in Jhinabhai's plate, and Puriba lovingly fed him with her own hand.

After eating a little, Jhinabhai washed his hands. It was time to go. With heavy hearts and bittersweet smiles on their faces, Jhinabhai's mother and sister-in-law bade him farewell.

Puriba sent Kamalshibhai to escort Jhinabhai to Kunkavav. Kamalshibhai consoled his mother, “Don’t worry about anything. Be strong. Whatever Maharaj does is for the best.”

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Kamalshibhai first took Jhinabhai to the Dhari mandir for darshan. At the time, the devout, learned, and highly intelligent Brahmin, Naranji Maharaj of Dadma was in the mandir. Both brothers did darshan of Thakorji, and then sat with Naranji Maharaj. Kamalshibhai told Naranji Maharaj, “Krishnacharandas Swami had asked our family for Jhinabhai. So, I persuaded my mother and secured her permission for Jhina to become a sadhu, and we are now on our way to Junagadh to drop him off. Please give us your blessing!”

Naranji Maharaj was very pleased. He gave Jhinabhai some prasad and said, “Here, have this laddu sanctified by Bhagwan Swaminarayan.”

Jhinabhai reverentially took the sanctified laddu in both hands, and Naranji Maharaj exclaimed, “Sahajanand Swami Maharaj ni Jay!” Then Naranji Maharaj recited a mantra of blessings and placed both hands on Jhinabhai’s head.

Kamalshibhai escorted Jhinabhai to Kunkavav, where both brothers renounced their fraternal ties forever.

From their childhood, Kamalshibhai and Jhinabhai had shared similar temperaments, but due to fate, Kamalshibhai had gotten married. Before his marriage, he had stayed in Vartal for four months, hoping to become a sadhu. When that didn’t work out, he entered family life while staying largely aloof from worldly ties.

As he gazed upon his younger brother, Kamalshibhai’s heart swelled to see Jhinabhai resplendent with the light of *brahmacharya* on his face. He discerned in Jhinabhai the profundity of an ocean, a strength of faith as

unshakable as the Himalayas, and a *brahmic* state reminiscent of Shukdevji.

But now, it was time to say goodbye. As it hit Kamalshibhai that this was their final meeting, his eyes began to fill with tears. However, as Kamalshibhai was spiritually mature, he hid his pain and told Jhinabhai, “Brother, behave in such a way that enhances the glory of our family and does justice to your sacrifice. Shriji Maharaj will protect you.”

Jhinabhai looked affectionately into his older brother’s eyes one last time and then looked down.

When they reached Kunkavav mandir, Kamalshibhai entrusted Jhinabhai to Krishnacharandas Swami and felt content that he had been able to keep his word. Jhinabhai traveled with Krishnacharandas Swami’s *mandal* to Junagadh. In just six days, Krishnacharandas Swami gave him *parshadi diksha*, and Jhinabhai entered the holy ranks of the *parshad mandal* of Junagadh as Jhina Bhagat.

1 Some time after Jhinabhai became a sadhu, Puriba began to suffer from glaucoma. This condition severely limited her vision and activity, and she would spend most of her time seated deep in thought. Upon remembering Jhinabhai, she would often burst into tears and tell Kamalshibhai's wife, Nanduba, "Oh, how virtuous was my Jhino! He never cried. Whenever I went to pick cotton, I would lay little Jhino to the side on a small cloth. Jhino would laugh and take the big toe of his right foot into his mouth and suck on it. The babies of other women would cry, but my Jhino was so well-behaved, I never had to hear any complaints from anyone."