

Chapter 3

The Child Devotee’s Divine Enchantment

Jhinabhai’s distant paternal aunt, Manekba, was a staunch *satsangi* who lived in Kunkavav. She resembled Jhinabhai in both appearance and temperament. Seeing the pure devotion to God overflowing from Jhinabhai’s heart, she began to love him like a son. While immersed in worldly life, she remained firm in her observance of *niyams* and fasts. Her husband, Jadavjibhai, was also spiritually inclined. He would offer service in the mandir with great devotion and was known as the ‘light’ of Kunkavav. His older brother, Sundarji Gila, owned a cotton gin in Kunkavav.

Sometimes, on his way to Junagadh, Jhinabhai would stop at Jadavjibhai’s house. Manekba would be delighted to witness the purity and conscientiousness of Jhinabhai’s every action. When Jhinabhai went for a bath,

he would first wash the wooden stool with water and then sit on it to bathe. Before every action, he would say, “Swaminarayan!” Marveling at how such a small child could live a life of such spiritual profundity, Manekba would feel a sense of divinity illuminating her heart with the conviction that Jhinabhai was a spiritually enlightened soul. Manekba would plead with Jhinabhai to stay longer, but he would head off to Junagadh to participate in the festival there.