

# Chapter 5

## The Curiosity of His Childhood Friends

In this way, while cooking and performing all kinds of other *sevas*, Gnajivan Swami continued his ceaseless *vicharan*.

This *mandal*, which traveled through the villages of the Amerli district, was once invited to Dhari by the town's devotees. Thus, Krishnacharandas Swami and his sadhus traveled to Kunkavav. They were to go to Dhari from there, but a sadhus' vows prohibit him from visiting his birthplace. Therefore, Gnajivandas Swami and a companion sadhu returned to Junagadh, while Krishnacharandas Swami and the other sadhus went to Dhari.

Hearing of the sadhus' arrival, Gnajivandas Swami's childhood friends who lived opposite the mandir, Popat Raychand, Mavji, and Durgashankar, came for Krishnacharandas Swami's darshan. After they introduced

themselves, Krishnacharandas Swami blessed them. Then, he said, “Your Jina Bhagat has now become a sadhu and assumed the name, Gnanjivandas. He serves us very sincerely.”

Hearing this, the friends asked, “Swami, but where is Jhino?” His new name felt odd to them.

Chaturbhuj Swami replied, “Just as a tailor does the work of sewing, and a merchant does the work of business, in the same way that Bhagat stays in Junagadh and now does the work of God.”

The friends replied, “But Swami, we don’t like it here without him.”

Krishnacharandas Swami said, “He only left us for Junagadh two days ago, but due to his affectionate nature and sentiment of service, even we feel a void without his presence.”

All his friends wanted to meet Jhina, but it was quite difficult for such young teenagers to travel from Dhari to Junagadh in those days. They would have to walk to Kunkavav and then

take the train to Junagadh. Such distances seemed insurmountable for teenagers who had never stepped foot outside their village. Thus, they decided that sometime in the future they would meet Jhina, reminisce over their childhood antics, see him in his sadhus' robes, and bow at his feet and receive his blessings.

Durgashankar said, “After becoming a sadhu, Jhino must remain aloof from the world, and so he's probably no longer the joyful person he once was. Just like in his school days when he would observe austerities and sit in dhyan underneath a banyan tree, he probably sits in dhyan all day long. So, if we went to meet him, he probably wouldn't even look at us.”

Popat Raychand said, “No, no, no. Come on, he wouldn't be like that! Why are you saying such things? Jhino was always very joyful by nature. He was always jovial and, at the smallest provocation, would jump, dance, and laugh while making everyone around him laugh as well. How could that Jhino become aloof and distant?”

Reminiscing of their fun times with their childhood friend, these teenagers stared in the direction of Junagadh with wet eyes as if at any time their Jhino would call out to them in his cheerful voice! Krishnacharandas Swami pondered over what all of these boys had seen in Jhina Bhagat that made them pine for him! It seemed that they never tired of singing Gnanjivandas Swami's praises.

After delivering spiritual discourses for two days in Dhari, Krishnacharandas Swami returned to Junagadh.