

Chapter 3

Fulfilling a Wish to Have Acharya Maharaj Visit Their Home

When Jhinabhai was thirteen, Acharya Shripatiprasadji Maharaj had decided to visit Dhari. At the time, Devchandbhai had only `40 to his name. He worried about making the necessary arrangements for the Acharya Maharaj's visit with so little cash. The young Jhinabhai discerned his elders' concern and said, "Don't worry. Let's welcome Acharya Maharaj to our village with great enthusiasm and fanfare. Maharaj and Swami will take care of the funds."

The entire family saw in Jhinabhai the loving devotion of great devotees like Mirabai and Narsinh Mehta, so they had absolute faith in his words. Thus, Devchandbhai sent a message to Junagadh mandir requesting Acharya Maharaj to grace their home.

Devchandbhai spent all `40 procuring provisions for the *acharya* and his accompanying sadhus and devotees. But now, Devchandbhai began to worry about how he would offer the traditional monetary gift to Acharya Maharaj upon his visit? Preoccupied with this concern, Devchandbhai arrived home in the afternoon and went to fetch something from his storage chest, only to see his `40 still there! Devchandbhai and the rest of the family were astonished. They looked towards Jhinabhai and saw a gentle smile on his face. Jhinabhai asked, “Father, all the preparations have been made, haven’t they? Acharya Maharaj will surely be very pleased.”

Devchandbhai looked upon his son in wonderment. Seeing Jhinabhai’s innocent, devotion-filled face, Devchandbhai’s eyes filled with tears of joy. He was convinced that his son would become a spiritual luminary in the future.

On the appointed day, Acharya Maharaj arrived in Dhari with his entourage of sadhus

and devotees. Devchandbhai and the devotees of Dhari received the group in a joyous procession. They organized an assembly for Acharya Maharaj in the mandir. At noon, they served everyone lunch. At four in the afternoon, Acharya Maharaj visited Devchandbhai's house. Young Jhinabhai was so thrilled by this visit that he expressed his devotion by clapping his hands and dancing and performing *dandvats* to Acharya Maharaj and the sadhus. Everyone could not help but be drawn to the pure devotion etched on this innocent child's face.

After performing the ritual puja, Devchandbhai offered a gift of `21 to Acharya Maharaj, who returned seven rupees to Devchandbhai as prasad.⁴ Following this miraculous incident, everyone began to look upon Jhinabhai with even greater reverence.

⁴ These sanctified rupees along with other sanctified objects have been preserved in the Junagadh Swaminarayan mandir.