

Chapter 25

“We Want to Build a Mandir Here”

After *artī* on 26 July, Swamishri resolved that the Kampala Satsang Mandal should dig the mandir’s foundations by hand. Then he said, “Ranchhodhbhai! Do not fear in the slightest. People will come of their own accord to give you money, saying, ‘Here Ranchhodhbhai, take this money. Build a mandir.’”

After visiting devotees’ homes, Swamishri traveled to Manibhai’s plantation and toured it in its entirety, sanctifying it. An excellent spiritual assembly was held here in Swamishri’s presence. While delivering discourses, Swamishri recited the Swamini Vat, “These workshops will continue as long as this universe remains...’ In India, we had gone on a pilgrimage on a special train, but we made sure to have two hours of spiritual discourses every day. As soon as the train stopped at the final

station for the day, we would hold a spiritual assembly. Spiritual discourses are God’s *murti*. Listening to them strengthens our spiritual inclination.

“One should understand the glory of God and God’s devotee. If he scolds us, understand that he is saying it for our benefit, either for now or for the future, thereby serving Shastriji Maharaj. ‘You should do as Swami wishes, but you should not force Swami to do as you wish.’ Bapu Ratanji had told this to Jaga Swami. Practice satsang such that its foundations are firmly planted at the root of our *jīva*. Maintain *suhradbhav* and unity and abide by the wishes of the seniors. If everyone becomes senior, we could not manage our affairs...”

From here, Swamishri traveled to the adjacent neighborhood of Kakira and granted everyone the benefit of his company.

Swamishri traveled by plane from Kampala to Arua and then Gulu. From Gulu, Swamishri visited many towns and villages including Lira, Hoima, Mbarara, Kaliro, and Fort Portal.

Granting many well-wishers the benefit of his darshan and *samagam*, Swamishri offered *vartman* initiation to many new spiritual aspirants, and inspired them to forsake their addictions and become *satsangis*.

In this way, Swamishri stayed in Kampala and the surrounding areas for one month and seven days and inspired significant growth in the Satsang community. In Kampala, Ashabhai was overseeing the responsibility of cooking meals for everyone. For the duration of Swamishri’s stay, he had not left the kitchen and gone elsewhere for even a minute. Thus, Swamishri was very pleased with him and called him specially to bless him.

During his final days in Kampala, Swamishri had started a custom of doing *dhun*. Every day, he would have everyone do 51 *malas* of *dhun* or 125 *malas* of *dhun*, or similar quantities of *dhun*. When the spiritual assembly at night concluded, and Swamishri went to bed, it would be midnight. Swamishri would wake up very early in the morning. Swamishri had not

merely neglected his bodily needs, but he had subjected his body to extreme hardship to please all the devotees. He had inspired countless well-wishers to forsake their addictions and tread the path of dharma.

According to Swamishri’s instructions, the devotees were also searching for an appropriate plot of land to build a mandir in Kampala. Once, as Swamishri was visiting devotees’ homes in the city, he suddenly stopped at the place where the mandir stands today, sprinkled flower petals onto the ground and declared, “We want to build a mandir at this spot, so make efforts accordingly.”

The spot at which Swamishri had stopped was a large pit where standing water would collect. There were swarms of mosquitoes. Yet, the devotees put forth a proposal to the government to purchase that land. Unfortunately, it was rejected. Swamishri advised, “Submit another proposal.” Ultimately, the land was acquired. When the architectural plans of the mandir were drawn

up and sent to Swamishri after he had returned to India, Swamishri said, “We want to build a large mandir.” But because the economic situation in Kampala was deteriorating, the devotees asked Swamishri again. Swamishri replied, “We want to build a series of mandirs that will be satellites to this one. Countless youths will become *satsangis*.” Thus, according to Swamishri’s guidance, construction for a large mandir commenced.

Swamishri had said, “I wish to have the youth here engage in the mandir construction themselves. They will gain great enthusiasm. Swami used to have the devotees dig the foundations. Those who serve receive sweet fruits.”