

Chapter 18

The Great Devotee, Maganbhai

Around this time, due to the untimely demise of the great devotee, Maganbhai, a wave of sorrow spread through the entire Satsang community, especially the Africa Satsang Mandal. Swamishri sent a long, 70-word telegram as well as a letter offering solace and blessings to the African devotees.

Twenty years ago, in 1932 (V.S. 1988), Harmanbhai had introduced Maganbhai to Satsang. In short order, Maganbhai studied the Vachanamrut, Swamini Vato, the Shrimad Bhagvat, and many other Hindu and Swaminarayan scriptures. Through Nirgundas Swami's letters and Shastriji Maharaj's grace, he understood Shastriji Maharaj's limitless glory, which led to a blossoming of *jnan* and *bhakti* coupled with an understanding of God's glory in his life. Subsequently, he helped countless souls develop faith in Shastriji

Maharaj along with an understanding of his glory. Guiding many people onto the path of Satsang and inspiring them to live the ideals of dharma, righteousness, ahimsa, and *brahmacharya*, he gifted society countless virtuous lives. He liberated many people from the clutches of alcoholism and other addictions. He helped many experience the same divine bliss that he was experiencing himself. Solely due to the divine will of Shastriji Maharaj, in a very short timeframe, Maganbhai was able to cultivate a Gunatit-garden lush with true *upasana*, loyalty, *sadbhav*, and *agni* in the faraway land of East Africa.

But, unexpectedly, early on the morning of Monday, 8 September 1952 (Bhadarva vad 5, V.S. 2008), Maganbhai passed away in Tororo, leaving a huge void in the hearts of the Africa Satsang Mandal.

Maganbhai used to say, “When we had taken birth as oxen, cows, buffaloes, and goats, we had surely been sold many times. So, in this human birth, when Shastriji Maharaj has

commanded us, ‘Complete the Gadhpur mandir,’ so what if we have to sell ourselves to do it! Everyone’s goal in life is to utilize this body in the service of God. Nishkulanand Swami has said, ‘This time, our birth has been fruitful...’ According to that logic, in this birth, we have received this unattainable opportunity due to our association with Param Bhagvat Sants like Shastriji Maharaj and Yogiji Maharaj.”

Maganbhai’s love, affection, and reverence for *satsangis* were indescribable. He empathized with his fellow *satsangis* and would strive to alleviate their pain. He would chant God’s name while turning the *mala*, and by Shriji Maharaj’s grace, the devotees would be liberated from their illnesses and other miseries.

Near the end, Maganbhai had emphatically told the devotees that the entire Africa *mandal* should help complete the Mombasa mandir and every devotee should offer their service through body, mind, and wealth to please Swamishri

when he came to Africa. Remembering these expectations and Yogi Maharaj's words of consolation and blessing, the devotees continued their Satsang activities with the same enthusiasm.

At Swamishri's behest, a *parayan* was organized in Gondal in memory of Maganbhai. When the *parayan* concluded on Sharad Punam, Swamishri recounted many aspects of Maganbhai's devotion-filled life. In particular, Swamishri remembered Maganbhai's inclination for delivering discourses and the fact that from the moment he had understood Shastriji Maharaj's true glory as the Gunatit Sant through whom God is eternally manifest until the day he died, Maganbhai strove ceaselessly to ensure that countless spiritual aspirants could attain the same conviction of this supreme truth.

He organized festivals and discourses from village to village. Every month there would be at least one festival in Kampala, Jinja, Tororo, or the other surrounding villages. Maganbhai

had an extraordinary zeal for listening to and delivering spiritual discourses, particularly about the glory of God and his holy Sant. Often, if he started spiritual discourses in the afternoon, they would not conclude until early the next morning. Moreover, he would only stop in the morning to allow everyone to take a bath, do puja, and get ready for the next day.

Throughout these marathon spiritual discourse sessions, he would remain unblinkingly alert, and his talks kept his audience similarly vigilant. His ceaseless communication of Maharaj and Swami's divine incidents kept devotees continually immersed in spiritual discourses, nourishing countless people's satsang. Because he worked as a stationmaster, excepting the two or three times during the day when a train would be in the station, he spent the rest of his time in conversation over telegram with *satsangis* working at other railway stations, spending hours communicating the inexpressible glory of God and his holy Sant that we have been

fortunate enough to attain. Such was his indomitable zeal.