

Chapter 25

The Bitterness Was Removed through His Association with the Sant

A neem tree stood in the courtyard of C.T. Patel's house where Swamishri was staying. When Swamishri did his puja in the courtyard, one branch of that tree would shade Swamishri from the direct sun. To everyone's astonishment, only that single branch lost its bitterness and became sweet! The rest of the tree remained bitter to the taste. As news of this miracle spread, countless citizens of Mombasa came to taste the leaves of that branch themselves. Upon experiencing this miracle firsthand, they were astonished. Truly, through the association of the Sant, even trees were relieved of their base natures!

During this time, Shriji Maharaj and Swamishri had graced the house of Mombasa's Sheth Hirji Karamshi in divine forms and left

footprints and sprinklings of sandalwood paste. The whole of Mombasa had flocked to have darshan of those footprints, and everyone was convinced that Maharaj and Swami had granted this type of divine darshan because Yogiji Maharaj had performed the *murti-pratishtha* of Akshar and Purushottam in the Mombasa mandir. Countless such miracles provided everyone a personal experience of Swamishri's spiritual prowess.

On 17 May 1955, Swamishri departed from Mombasa by train to travel to Nairobi. Soon after the train left the station, they passed over Tudor Creek in the Shimanzi region. Swamishri looked over the waterbody, folded his hands, bowed his head, and exclaimed, "Jay Sea!"

The devotees began talking about how Swamishri's time in Mombasa had been spiritually beneficial for so many of the residents there. Then, as evening fell, Swamishri led everyone in singing *godi*, *arti*, and *ashtak*.

The following morning when Swamishri awoke, he was handed a *datan* to brush his teeth.

Swamishri said, “Mash the tip a bit and bring it back to me.” When the train stopped at Kiu Station, Swamishri brushed his teeth on the platform and then returned to his seat on the train.

Then, Mota Swami began to sing, “*Madhukar vāt Mohan var keri...*” Then the sadhus sang the stanzas of “*Dhiradhurandharā...*” Swamishri also sang along. Wearing a warm woolen cap on his head, with a warm saffron blanket draped around him, Swamishri was turning the *mala* in one hand and singing while swaying from side to side with joy. Then, as Swamishri had the sadhus sing the stanzas of “*Dhyān dhar...*,” the train arrived in Nairobi.

The Executive Officer of the Gandhi Memorial Academy in Nairobi, Dr. Ramanlal Yagnik, had just recently arrived in Nairobi from Rajkot. Through C.T. Patel, he had

understood Swamishri's greatness and wished to have his darshan. He told C.T. Patel, "I will come for Swamishri's darshan, but I will only believe in him if I experience a divine peace in his presence."

When Swamishri arrived in Nairobi, C.T. Patel sent him a message inviting him to come for Swamishri's darshan. Before coming for darshan, Dr. Yagnik decided that if Swamishri fulfilled three of his wishes, he would believe him to be a truly divine personality. First, that Swamiji lays out a seat for me to sit. Second, he offers me a flower garland. Third, he informs me that I will be traveling by plane to Dar es Salaam at 10 o'clock. Moreover, he should give me prasad and instruct me to share it with my friends.

When Dr. Yagnik reached the mandir, C.T. Patel brought him to Swamishri. Upon seeing him, Swamishri instantly got up, laid a cushion on the ground for him to sit, and said, "Welcome, Yagnik Saheb! We are happy to have your darshan in this faraway land."

Then, as Swamishri inquired about his welfare, he told C.T. Patel, “Go bring the garland from the pujari. I want to garland the Saheb.” With that, Swamishri placed a flower garland around his neck. Dr. Yagnik marveled at what had just occurred, thinking that two of my wishes were fulfilled in a matter of minutes! Then, Swamishri offered him prasad, saying, “Here. As you are going to Dar es Salaam today, take some prasad for your friends!”

Seeing Swamishri’s unfathomable powers, he was profoundly impressed and became a lifelong well-wisher of Satsang.

Countless Vaishnav devotees began to gain the conviction that their choicest deity was manifest within Swamishri. Everyone’s faith was consolidated, and Satsang began to grow in this foreign land.

Premji Savji Patel had darshan of Swamishri for the first time in Nairobi. He was a staunch Vaishnav and had stayed in Gokul, Mathura, Vrundavan, and Giriraj for eighteen months. Fully immersed in the practices of Vaishnav

bhakti, he had the darshan of Balmukund within Swamishri. He accepted initiation into Satsang at Swamishri's hands and thanked God that he had come into contact with Satsang from 1953 through his association with Ambalalbhai. He became a staunch *satsangi* and, after some time, returned to India and served in the Junagadh mandir for many years.

From Nairobi, Swamishri traveled by car via Naivasha to Nakuru, where he blessed Hirjibapa. Then, at 7 a.m. on 17 May 1955, Swamishri reached Tororo, known as the Gateway to Uganda.

Here he was given a loving welcome by the Ugandan devotees. Many devotees from all around Uganda, including the cities and towns of Kampala, Jinja, Nagongera, Bujuta, Bukedea, Kidongole, Kakoro, Mbale, Busolwe, Majanji, and Busia had gathered at the station to receive Swamishri. The devotees welcomed Swamishri with flower garlands. Then, in a thirty-car motorcade, they brought Swamishri from the station in a procession through the

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entire town before arriving at C.M. Patel's house, where Swamishri would be staying.