

Chapter 25

In the Villages Surrounding Kampala

On 7 July, Swamishri was explaining Vachanamrut Gadhada I 30, when he provided the example of the elephant and the rabbit and asked, “What do the rabbit’s somersaults represent? Abiding by his will. Serving him. Following his commands implicitly.”

After the discourses and *artī*, Swamishri and the sadhus departed at 8:30 a.m. Swamishri visited devotees in the villages of Mityana, Kasanda, and Bukoyo before returning to Kampala at night.

On 9 July 1955, after performing the *artī*, Swamishri and the sadhus left at 8:30 a.m. and traveled to the villages of Bombo, Kalule, Bowa, Wobulenzi, Luwero, and others where he visited devotees’ homes, presided in Satsang assemblies, and blessed everyone before returning to Kampala at night.

At 10:10 p.m., Swamishri was addressing the spiritual assembly in Kampala when he said, “You should remain enthusiastic about how to please Swamishri. Run your business to enable your financial donations for three years. Do whatever it takes to contribute your pledged amount as early as possible. Now that you have had a taste of liberation, you should grasp it with both hands. May Shastriji Maharaj be pleased with you and grant you strength. In purchasing oxen, in getting married, and in paying government fees, one has to provide the funds promptly.” With this example, Swamishri emphasized the principle of following the commands of God and the Sant with faith.

On 10 July, after visiting devotees’ homes in the morning, Swamishri returned to the assembly area at 12:30 p.m. Today the devotees had organized a feast in which Swamishri himself served food to all the devotees. Many of the local dignitaries had also been invited to the event. Swamishri had lunch together with them. After the spiritual discourses and a

question-and-answer session, Swamishri rested in the afternoon. After waking and freshening up, Swamishri went to the Luhana Club for a spiritual assembly. In blessing the assembly, Swamishri sang the kirtan, “*Hāji bhalā sādhu...*” (Yes, sir! Good sadhu...) and Narsinh Mehta’s kirtan, “*Prāna thaki mune Vaishnav vahālā...*” (I love Vaishnavs more than life itself...) in his distinctive style and narrated the story of King Ambrish.

After the morning *arti* on 11 July, Swamishri visited Ranchhodhbhai’s coffee plantation. Here, he sat near the coffee plants and chanted the *dhun* in prayer. Swamishri returned to Kampala at 12:35 p.m. In the evening, Swamishri visited the Koja Camp about 30 miles from the city, did *arti* at 8:45 p.m., and returned to Kampala.

Today, one of the city’s respected advocates, A.C. Patel had passed away. He had just accepted *vartman* initiation into Satsang a couple of days ago. Saddened by this news, Swamishri said, “Vakil Saheb had imbibed

Vachanamrut Sarangpur 11 in his life. If one comes into contact with the Sant at the end of his life, one achieves liberation. This life is ephemeral. He made it his final birth. Great yogis might suffer terribly at the time of their death, but he passed painlessly. His *jiva* was very strong. Maharaj took him to Akshardham. Faith bears fruit. The auspicious merits of his past life led him to come into contact with Satsang. Otherwise, what is there here? One should hear his story. He was meritorious from his past lives. Everyone feels this as well. One should keep intense love for the Sant and serve him. Thus, we attain ultimate liberation.”

This became a notable event during Swamishri's stay in Kampala. Ambalal C. Patel was a native of the village of Palana. He was a well-respected advocate and a civic leader in Kampala. Due to his modern education and upbringing, he did not believe in rebirth. However, one day he sat with Swamishri for three hours, and all his doubts dissolved. Gradually, he began to come every day for

Swamishri's darshan. Although his thoughts were initially diametrically opposed to Satsang, through his contact with Swamishri, his mindset changed completely. He would come every morning at 7 a.m. and sit with the sadhus for an hour or two to hear their spiritual discourses.

When it was time for Swamishri to visit devotees' homes in the city, Swamishri would call him near and hold his wrist for support as he sat in the car. Many other devotees would try to have Swamishri hold their arm for support, but Swamishri would insist on taking Ambalalbhai's hand. In this way, Ambalalbhai offered his services for about fifteen days. No one understood how it happened, but in just a few days, Ambalalbhai began to feel that my ultimate liberation is in Swamishri's hands. With this conviction, he accepted *vartman* initiation and a *kanthi* at Swamishri's hands and became his disciple.

On the days that Swamishri had planned to go out of town, he would come especially early

to have darshan before Swamishri left. On 12 July, Swamishri was scheduled to leave for Ranchhodbhai's plantation at 10 a.m. Thus on that day, Ambalalbhai arrived at 7:30 a.m. to have Swamishri's darshan and stayed to listen to Swamishri's discourses until 9:30 a.m. When Ambalalbhai got up to go, Swamishri himself saw him to the door. Swamishri asked Ambalalbhai, "Will you not be late to the office today?"

Ambalalbhai replied, "Swami, the office is there every day. When will I get such an opportunity for your company again!"

Swamishri patted Ambalalbhai's chest and said, "Good bye. Maintain such affection and remain happy."

Thus, taking Swamishri's leave, Ambalalbhai traveled to the office. At 4:30 p.m., he left his office and arrived at home. Without removing his suit and shoes, he drank some water and said, "Make some tea for me. Then, I want to go for Swamishri's darshan."

As his wife brewed tea for him, Ambalalbhai left his body. In a span of just a few days, Ambalalbhai attached his soul to Swamishri and fulfilled the purpose of his human birth.

On 12 July, after performing *arti* and delivering discourses on the Vachanamrut and Bhaktachintamani, Swamishri left at 9:30 a.m. to visit devotees' homes.

In the evening spiritual assembly, Swamishri sang and expound on the kirtan, “*Hari gun gātā, durijaniyāno dhadak na manmā dhārie...*” (In extolling God’s glory, we should not bear in mind the intimidation of evildoers...). He told the story of how every night for seven years, Mulji Sharma and Lalji Suthar met halfway between Shekhpur and Bhadra and engaged in spiritual discussions. Relating this incident, Swamishri explained, “Neither of them ever slept. To him who finds such flavor in God’s *murti*, this entire world would become worthless.”

On the morning of 13 July, Swamishri traveled to Nakawuka and Kasanje to visit

devotees' homes. He returned to Kampala at 12:45 p.m. In the evening, Swamishri addressed the assembly and said, "This darshan is difficult to attain. In India, because the rains haven't fallen, we are receiving messages to chant the *dhun* that the rains may come. When the Satpurush leaves, you will have to cry. Those who earned the favor and remained in the company of Shastriji Maharaj when he was alive attained peace."

At night in his accommodations, Swamishri spoke to the *yuvak mandal*, attended to his correspondence, and, at 10 p.m., had Vachanamruts Gadhada I 67 and 68 read aloud. Then he did *dhun* that all of Africa may become *satsangi*.

For all things large and small, Swamishri always made use of the invincible prayer of chanting the Swaminarayan mantra. On every occasion, whenever he got the chance, he would lead everyone in the chanting of the *dhun* to fulfill auspicious wishes. He would chant the *dhun* with such singular concentration that

everyone around him would have no choice but to join in as well. Seeing Swamishri's absorption in the *dhun*, everyone accompanying him became more inclined to engage in satsang and bhajan. This was a benefit that everyone received.

On 15 July, Swamishri left from Kampala and traveled to Kalagala Falls. Swamishri bathed here and did *dhun* for the fulfillment of many auspicious wishes. Then he traveled to Kakakala, Kayunga, Kasawo, and Nakasajja. He had lunch at 2 p.m. at a devotee's ginnery in Kakakala. After visiting the devotees' homes, factories and shops in these various villages, Swamishri arrived back in Kampala at 8:30 p.m.

On Ekadashi, Saturday, 16 July, Swamishri left Kampala in the afternoon to go to Masaka. En route, Swamishri stopped at Ranchhodhbhai's plantation at 4 p.m. Swamishri observed his tea plantation and sanctified his tea production factory, delighting all who were present. By 6 p.m., Swamishri reached Masaka

together with his entourage of sixty-four cars. Swamishri presided in a spiritual assembly at the Hindu Union.

On 17 July, a spiritual assembly was held at 8:30 a.m. in the Hindu Union. Swamishri sang and expounded upon the kirtan, “*Prāna thaki mune Vaishnav vahālā...*” (I love Vaishnavs more than life itself...). With a number of vivid examples, Swamishri explained, “This human birth is very valuable, thus we should use it to engage in devotion to God. The Satpurush cries out to us, ‘Brothers! Introspect, engage in devotion to God and attain liberation.’ To which we reply, ‘Maharaj, you don’t understand. What we are doing is just fine.’ But you should not do that. Submit before them.”

The next day, Swamishri offered his blessings at a local school, visited several devotees’ homes and arrived in Kalisizo via Kiziba at 10:30 a.m. In both places, he had visited devotees’ homes. In Kalisizo, Swamishri had lunch at 2 p.m. and took his afternoon rest in a coffee factory. In the evening, a spiritual

assembly was organized in the coffee factory. Then Swamishri did *arti* and arrived back in Masaka at 8 p.m.