

11. With The Concrete To The Abstract

You are all waiting to hear from Me about the journey to Badri and what happened there. These people went to Badri and returned safely! That is the story in a nutshell.

For danger lurked all the time from fire, water, wind, sky, and earth — all five elements in fact. Every moment these people felt the Lord's Grace — for about 150 persons, mostly old and in indifferent health, to accomplish this pilgrimage without a single moment of even headache was due to Swami. Swami also went to Badri because the *Nethralingam* (egg-shaped stone, representation of Siva, with the eye of wisdom in it), which is the central source of holiness there, had to be revived with spiritual efficacy. Sankaracharya brought five *lingams* from Kailas and installed one each at Dwaraka, Sringeri, Badri, and Puri, and the fifth he placed at Chidambaram. Of these, the one at Badri has the Narayana orientation, and that had to be consecrated afresh. That was My task, and these people who came with Me saw Me doing it.

Atheism is not rampant in this land

I had to accomplish it this year, for this is the 35th year after this *Avatar* took birth and also the year when the 35th successor to the Sankaracharya Peetha (a *Peetha* is a spiritual center) is at Shringeri. This year is therefore important for charging this battery of spiritual wealth, known as Badarikashrama (the *ashram* in Badri). The *Nethralingam* that was laid by Sankaracharya underneath the idol there, was “taken” out by Me, and consecration by pouring holy water (*abhisheka*) was done with Gangothri water, which I fetched by a wave of the hand. It was worshipped with golden Bilva leaves and Thumme flowers, both created by Me on the spot, and sent back to its original place. The *Lingam* was placed on a Golden Lotus, with three layers of petals, each having two smaller layers of 16 smaller petals — the entire lotus representing the heart where the *Lingam* has to be installed for worship.

When you see the enthusiasm of the pilgrims who trudged along the Badri Road in thousands, you will be silenced with wonder; you will no more lament that atheism has become rampant in this land. With faith as their only support, people from all parts of India, men, women, and children, old and young, stalwarts and decrepits, rich and poor, move on toward Badri. You can learn many things from their steady march toward the goal; that is the advantage in going on pilgrimage. You can develop your devotion, your faith, and your spiritual discipline when you are surrounded by kindred aspirants. That is the greatness of that Narayana idol at Badri.

Yes, the spiritual change must come about. That is the reason for the belief, “A mere sight of the pilgrim who has returned from Badri gives much merit.” Of course, for undergoing that change, you need not go so far; you have Badri Narayana here itself! Badri is the place where the *nara-Narayana* (human-God) bond is established and commemorated. That you can establish here itself. If you get rid of delusion, you become Narayana (God); if you are sunk in delusion, you continue to be *nara* (human); that is all.

There is no place to which I have not gone; there is no place without Me therein. So, the devotees who came with Me were journeying with the Concrete to the Abstract, with the *Pratyaksha* to the *Paroksha*! That was their good fortune.

Pilgrims, should maintain silence during a pilgrimage

Those of you who were here and could not join need not feel sorry, for all these days you were thinking of Swami and Swami alone, so your spiritual discipline was greater. After all, a pilgrimage is for softening the heart, widening the outlook, expanding the circle of sympathy, and not for collecting curios or pictures or prasadam packets or idols and images. It is more a matter for the eye (*nethra*) than for the vessel (*pathra*). Pilgrimages should be as silent as the eyelids dropping on the eye. Why should people wag their tongues and shout and wrangle when they are Godward bound? Truly, all places of pilgrimage and all pilgrimages are in yourself. You are ever on a pilgrimage, though you might not have taken a step forward toward Badri or Kasi (Benaras). Do not feel sad that you did not get the holy water from Gangothri that was used for consecrating the idol, for the *Nethralingam*. I can see that all of you are desirous of getting it ever since you heard from others about the event at Badri. I shall get you the holy water from Gangothri here itself and give you, do not worry.

People may say that pilgrimages are a waste of time and money, but let Me tell you that it is the best way to spend time and money, provided one has real devotion. Devotion is no sign of weakness; it is a sign of courage, of wisdom, of discrimination; it alone can give happiness and peace. Everyone has one day or other to fall in line with you, for everyone is terribly anxious to get these two. They try various other remedies, in their ignorance or excitement, but this remedy alone can cure them.

Prasanthi Nilayam, 1961-07-04

Your consciousness is a lamp. Pour into it the oil of Grace; trim the wick of self-control. Keep in position the chimney of repetition of God's name, so that the gusts of joy and grief may not put out the flame.

Light the lamp with a *Vedic* dictum like "I am the Absolute Reality (*Aham Brahmasmi*)."
Then you will see Light and you will shed Light.

Sathya Sai Baba