

## 6. Home Or Cave?

**D**eekshith spoke about the glory of the Lord, and the other pandits gave you detailed accounts of the experiences of ideal men who struggled to arrive at the Truth. Everyone must be interested in knowing about these, for all should have an ideal to strive for, a goal to be reached. Otherwise, life is reduced to aimless wandering. For saplings to grow, soil is essential; for ideals to get implanted, knowledge of the struggles and successes of saints and sages is essential.

These experiences are not uniform; each spiritual aspirant has a different story to tell, depending upon their equipment and enthusiasm. So the vision and the glory are different, though all are divine. The mansion of India's glory is built of charming stones, each block being the hardy penance of some sage or other. No one sage can be neglected, for if their attainment is ignored, the wall of the mansion would be so much the weaker.

Take the case of Agastya, for example. I mention him because someone gave out his name while addressing you. He is called "potborn", but remember that he and Vasishta were both children of Mitra-Varuna and were both born from the same pot! He put an end to the evil deeds of the ferocious giants, Ilvala and Vathapi, by just three words, "*Vathapi jeerno bhava* (Vathapi is becoming ruined, wasted)." He made the high-peaked Vindhya mountain bow his head and become low; that is why he is known by the name Agastya! That is to say, he taught humility to the proudest in the land.

### **The home must resound to the name of God**

Agastya is also reported to have drunk off the ocean all in one sip. That is to say, he dried up the ocean of the objective world (*samsara*), with its waves of grief and joy, prosperity and adversity, success and failure. It is not any special power, this feat; it is a parable explaining that though he was a married man with a son who recited the *Vedas* as soon as he saw light, he had conquered all attachments of the world. Be attached only to the ideal—that is the sign of a sage.

Kabir was weaving a yellow silk garment for the Lord, for his Rama. He had to work the loom alone, by hand. He recited "Rama Rama Rama" and went on weaving ceaselessly. The cloth became twenty yards long, but Kabir did not stop. His penance continued unabated, and the garment was becoming longer. The bliss (*ananda*) of the craft, devotion to his Lord, was enough food and drink for his sustenance. When he gave it to the temple priest for clothing the idol of Rama, the garment was just the right length and breadth, not a finger breadth more! Such men are the mainsprings of the joy that spiritual persons fill themselves with in India.

The home (*griha*) must resound to the name of Govinda; otherwise, it is just a cave (*guha*), where wild animals dwell. The body needs a house, but the body is itself a house. In that house, too, the name of Govinda must be heard, or else it is a mud pot (*ghata*), not a man's body.

### **Offer God the fragrant leaf of devotion**

An insidious disease is now rampant among most people, namely, unbelief. It sets fire to the tiny shoots of faith and reduces life into cinders and ashes. You have no criterion to judge, yet you pretend to judge. Doubt, anger, poison, illness—all these have to be scotched before they grow. Repeat Rama's name (do *Ramanama*)

whether you have faith or not. That will itself induce faith; that will itself create the evidence on which faith can be built.

A fisherman once spread his net over a lake and sat watching for robbers, who might drag away his catch. He sat on a tree, and to get a clearer vision all round, he plucked leaves and pulled off branches. It was a bilva tree! The day was Magha Krishna Chathurdhasi, Sivarathri day. Mahasivarathri (the great night of emergence of Siva's radiant form), in fact. And, right under the tree where bilva leaves fell, there was a *sivalinga* (egg-shaped stone)! For want of food, he starved the night, so he got the merit of a vigil and a fast!

His wife ardently waited for him in his hut. Just when she was about to eat her supper, a dog peeped in. She felt it was very hungry, so she followed it with the plate of food and fed it, in a spirit of worship. She also kept vigil. In the morning, he went to the temple and prayed that he may merge in God; his wife prayed that he may be spared for her sake. But God had both of them merged in Him.

You attach importance to quantity, but the Lord considers only quality. He does not calculate how many measures of "sweet rice" you offered but how many sweet words you uttered, how much sweetness you added in your thoughts. Offer Him the fragrant leaf of devotion, the flowers of your emotions and impulses, freed from the pests of lust, anger, etc. Give Him fruits grown in the orchard of your mind, sour or sweet, juicy or dry, bitter or sugary.

### **Your homes must be immersed in highest peace.**

Once you decide that the orchard in your mind is His, all fruits will be sweet; your seeking refuge for protection (*saranagathi*) will render all fruits acceptable to the Lord, so they cannot be bitter. And, for water, what can be purer and more precious than your tears —shed not in grief, mind, you but in rapture at the chance to serve the Lord and to walk along the path that leads to Him!

All who aspire to be devotees must eschew attachment and aversion. You need not be proud if you are able to sing better or if your worship room is better decorated. There must be a steady improvement in your habits and attitudes; otherwise, spiritual discipline is a vain pastime.

This place as well as your homes when you return must be immersed in the highest peace (*santhi*) —undisturbed by any streak of hatred or malice, pride, or envy. No worship or penance, no oath can equal the efficacy of obedience, obedience to the command given for your liberation.

Prasanthi Nilayam, 1963-02-08

**I**ndividual reconstruction is much more important than construction of temples. Multiply virtues, not buildings. Practise what you preach, that is the real pilgrimage. Cleanse your minds of envy and malice, that is the real bath in holy waters. Of what avail is the name of the Lord on the tongue if the heart within is impure?

**I**njustice and discontent are spreading everywhere due to this one fault in man: saying one thing and doing the opposite, the tongue and the hand going in different directions. One has to set oneself right and correct one's food, recreation, and method of spending leisure as well as habits of thought.

**Sathya Sai Baba**