

Anecdotes on Swami Brahmananda

Anecdotes narrated by Swami Shantananda Puri Maharaj

The one who is completely absorbed in the Supreme can never think of any worldly duties and it becomes impossible to involve him in worldly affairs.



Swami Brahmananda – Anecdote 1 [with Swami Vivekananda]

Swami Brahmananda was the first President of Ramakrishna Math. Besides being a monk of the highest level, as an administrator too he had excellent qualities. However much somebody might have erred, he would never let him down before others. When the Belur math was to be built, he requested the engineer monk [Swami Vijnanananda] to prepare a budget so that he can pass it on to Swamiji (Swami Vivekananda) then in America, who wanted to collect the money and send for building the temple of Thakur. The engineer monk gave a budget of Rs. 9 lakhs for the entire temple.

Vivekananda collected and sent the amount to them and later on when he came back to India inquired with Swami Brahmananda whether the work was completed. Brahmananda in all innocence told him that the amount of Rs. 9 lakhs he sent was just sufficient to lay the foundation while another Rs. 18 lakhs were required for finishing the building. Vivekananda was furious. He lashed at Brahmandanda for his lack of efficiency and asked him, “How can it be that you gave me an estimate of Rs. 9 lakhs and now you say another Rs. 18 lakhs are required?” Brahmananda left the room without any reply. He went back to his room and shut himself inside. When Vivekananda calmed down he was told that Rakhhal Maharaj [Brahmananda] did not take his meals and nor did he come of the room at all. Vivekananda went to his room and pounded on the door, “Dada Dada open the door.” There was no reply. Vivekananda began to dash his head once or twice against the door and told, “Dada, if

you don't open the door within another 2 minutes, I shall dash my head against this door and shall leave my body in your presence."

Immediately the door was opened and both of them embraced each other with profuse tears in their eyes.

Vivekananda profusely apologised to him for his conduct and begged pardon. He assured him that he would go back to the States and try his best to get the balance money required. After a couple of days, Rakhai Maharaj called Vijnanananda and told him, "How have you let me down? You are an engineer and not a layman. How could it be that your budget could vary about 300%?" Vijnanananda calmly replied, "if only I had given the true budget at the beginning itself, Swamiji (Vivekananda) would have refused to go ahead with his work and such a nice temple will not be raised for the Thakur and hence intentionally I understated the budget because I knew that when once the foundation is laid, he cannot but bring the balance money to finish the work. I can show you my original budget sheet with me where I have worked out the expenditure at Rs. 27 lakhs."

Where could one witness such an intense devotion to Gurudev as these people had to Thakur? May the Lord grant us all a small percentage of this devotion so that we could reach our goal.

Swami Brahmananda – Anecdote 2 [intense devotion]

Swami Brahmananda was the first pontiff of the well known Ramakrishna Mutt and Mission. He was always deeply engrossed in the Samadhi state while walking, while eating, etc. the trustees wanted to have a meeting which was a statutory requirement. They used to approach him and ask him, "Maharaj, it is time we have had a trustees meeting. When will it suit you to have it."

Raja Maharaj [Brahmananda] used to reply, "what date do you suggest?" The other Trustees asked him, "Maharaj, Shall we have it tomorrow morning at 10.00 O'Clock?"

Maharaj agreed.

The next day, the other trustees came one hour earlier, say by 9.00AM to the room of Raja Maharaj(Swami Brahmananda). The latter was in absolute Samadhi state. They waited for 3 hours. Raja Maharaj did not move an inch. They went back in dismay and met Maharaj again the next day. They appraised him of what happened the previous day and suggested whether they can have the meeting the very next day at 3.00pm. Maharaj warmly agreed to it.

Next day they came at 1.00pm to his room and again found to their dismay that Maharaj was in Samadhi state. They waited for 3 hours and it was of no avail.

The next day again they came to him. Maharaj inquired of them, “Kal ker meetinger ki holo”. They again informed him of what happened. Then he asked them, what can be done. They asked him, “what about having the meeting today?” Maharaj agreed and asked them when shall we have it.

They replied, let us have it now. The one who is completely absorbed in the Supreme can never think of any worldly duties and it becomes impossible to involve him in worldly affairs.

May God give us a little of the intensity of devotion of such souls.

**** Hari Om ****

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