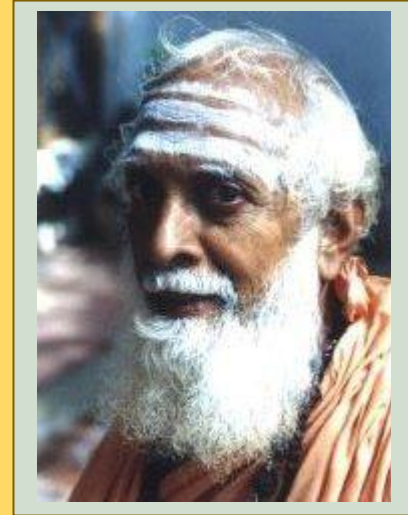


The Unexpected Donation

Source: Source: Stories for Inspiration, by Swami Shantananda Puri Maharaj

Message from the Master:
God may delay answering the prayers of his devotees but never denies.



The Unexpected Donation

Swami 'X' was an internationally known Sannyasi who was having a moderately big Ashram in Rishikesh.

He was a great saint who had done continuous Sadhana for a number of years. He was also a prolific author of several spiritual books in various languages.

One day his personal secretary Swami 'S' sought an urgent audience privately with his Gurudev (Swami X). He told the Gurudev "Swamiji, we have a lot of debts to clear and the creditors are pressing for their money in the most aggressive way by coming and shouting at us in the office. We are having a bad reputation as we owe Rs. 20,000 to the grocery shop, Rs. 20,000 to the printers, Rs. 30,000 to the stationery shop etc. and the debt goes on increasing. The donations we get fall far short of our needs. Something has to be done urgently. The Gurudev replied: "I am sure you have some proposal up your sleeve to redress the situation." sheepishly Swami 'S' said: "Gurudev, we have nearly one hundred swamijis and brahmacharis living permanently in this Ashram who are a drain on our slender economic resources and they are all non-productive in that this Ashram does not benefit in anyway by their presence. I feel that some of the juniors may be retrenched and sent away so that our burden will be lessened."

Gurudev: "I do appreciate your wonderful proposal. In your pre-monk days you must have been a government officer. Tell me where the Sannyasis retrenched from here will go and seek shelter."

Swami 'S' – "Your Holiness, when people renounced their home and hearth, they only depended on God and were never given a guarantee that they will be looked after till death in anybody's Ashram. There are so many Ashrams in Rishikesh and Haridwar and these Sannyasis and brahmacharis may seek refuge in them. Even otherwise there are so many Annakshetras where all of them can get their food daily. I have been praying to God in the last few months devoutly to save the Ashram from such a crisis and no response has come. In sheer desperation I had finally to approach Gurudev with my problem."

Gurudev sighed deeply and said, "this Ashram does not run on my sweet will and pleasure. It runs on the collective Prarabdha (result of actions of past birth) of all the people who form an integral part of the Ashram. We are doing only God's work and it is He who controls the destiny of this Ashram. This is not a Private Limited Company. It is a Public Unlimited Company. Remember, God is not a bell boy or a servant to come running to you on your pressing a bell. He is the Master and He certainly responds to prayers but in His own time. Continue your prayers to God and let us wait for some six months more. If no solution to the problem dawns on us and the situation deteriorates further we shall close the Ashram. Let us all take our kamandalu and go to other Ashrams or Anna Kshetras where they dole out free bhiksha. Be patient."

Three months passed and there was no change in the situation. One day when Gurudev came to his office at 9 in the morning, an old gentleman with an unshaven face and wearing a tattered dhoti came and prostrated before him. He told the Swamiji, "your Holiness, I am in dire distress. I want to talk to you privately in confidence for a few minutes. Please grant me this favour", Swamiji said with all compassion – "You see me this evening at 4 p.m., when I come back here."

The gentleman went away and was waiting at the door when Gurudev returned at 4 p.m. and saluted him. Gurudev asked his secretary – "Oh Swamiji, this person wants to talk privately. Where can we have privacy?" The secretary pointed out a bench lying on the terrace of the next building. As soon as Gurudev sat on the bench, the gentleman began to weep and tell the former, "Swamiji, I am a great sinner. There is no sin that I have not committed in my life. Please take pity on me and guide me to reach the Lord."

Gurudev immediately called for a tulsi mala and a spiritual diary and gave them to him. He immediately gave him the Mantra of Sri Krishna – the favourite God of that gentleman. Then he said – "Now forget the past. Your slate is clean and you are under my protection. Do the Japa of this mantra sincerely – minimum 10 malas each day. HARI OM."

Gurudev got up from his seat but the gentleman requested him to wait for 5 more minutes. He signalled to someone who was standing below with a suitcase to come up. He opened

the suitcase, took out bundles of currency notes and placing them at the feet of Gurudev said – “Gurudev, here is Rs. 5 lakhs and it is my dakshina.” Then, Gurudev asked him who he was and what he was doing. The gentleman replied, “Swamiji I am a rich man and belong to Andhra State. My wife died long back and I have given the shares from my property to my two sons. I have earned this money in my business and I entreat you to accept it and bless me.” With a broad smile Gurudev called his secretary and told him: “Your prayers have now been answered by God. Here is Rupees five lakhs. You may pay all the dues of grocery shop, printing press etc. and in addition give them an advance of Rs. 50,000 against future services. Let them know that Gurudev not only takes supplies and services on credit but he is capable of giving them amounts in advance also.”

The gentleman from Andhra walked out in silence.

It is said that he was never again seen in that Ashram in any of the subsequent years. Was it perhaps the Leela of God Himself ? Who can say ?

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