

SAI PEARLS OF WISDOM, PART 30 - B

SRI N. KASTURI

Om Sri Sai Ram

SPENDING TIME WITH SRI KASTURI IS EDUCATION

“Hello! Please come. Is this your first visit? As I see you all, I understand that you have come here with your family. I can also understand that you must have had a very long journey. Please take rest here. Do you need water? Take some water there and give it your children too. Please take some rest for some time. Swami will be giving His *Darshan* at 4:00 o'clock this evening. It is enough if you sit there by that time.” These are the words spoken to me by a very senior elderly gentleman, the most respected, popular person by name, Sri N. Kasturi.

I was really fortunate to have met him for the first time. I would rather say that he is the first man whom I met here in Prasanthi Nilayam, during my first visit to this place. Accordingly I had *Darshan*, and after two days, I came to know that the person whom I met was Kasturiji himself. Well, I must have thanked my stars and I was feeling very much blessed indeed. In the later years, I used to visit Sri. N. Kasturi every time, every time and spend some time with him, because spending some time with him is education.

THE DISCIPLE OF KASTURI

I was quite new at that time, not known to many people. I'd come here, stay in verandah or in some shed, attend Swami's discourses, spend some time with Kasturi and return home. That was the schedule in those days! Then it so happened I was just going on the road after *bhajan* session and I noticed Swami is coming in His car and I also saw Kasturi over there.

Later, Kasturi sent me a word to meet him. I went to him and he said, “Anil Kumar! Swami wanted me to give this badge to you. Do you know what He said in the car? He noticed you walking along the road, and told me, “See Kasturi, your *Sishya*, your disciple is going that way. Poor fellow! Give him this badge. He will attend the entire session and he will share what all that he has heard here. Give him the badge!”

This I am telling because I feel proud of myself to have been called by Bhagavan as the disciple of Kasturi! Very good! What more do I want? I was very proud of it. Even now, because I don't find any parallel to Sri. Kasturi.

THE THREE STAGES OF MAN'S EVOLUTION

Let me recall some of the incidents that I witnessed and experienced. Once, Kasturi was asked to speak in the Poornachandra auditorium. I will tell you the summary of his

speech. He said, "Three names are important: one - *Chatterjee*, second - *Banerjee* and third - *Mukherjee*."

The first - *Chatterjee* means chattering, go on speaking. All devotees in the beginning stages - they go on speaking, narrating how they came to Swami, how He appeared in their dream, how He performed a number of miracles that they experienced. Chattering, continuously speaking - *Chatterjee state*!

And then Swami said, this chattering stops after some time and this man becomes a member of Sai Organisation, wears a badge and then starts working for the Organisation, and the badge is the banner for his identity, that is '*Banerjee state*'. So, from chattering to carrying the banner - '*Banerjee state*.'

The third state is, after having participated in so many service activities for a considerable number of years, this man becomes silent all of a sudden because he takes to meditation, he turns inward – '*mooka*' meaning silent, that is *Mukherjee*. So Kasturiji says these are the three stages of evolution - *Chatterjee* evolving into *Banerjee*, *Banerjee* leading to the state of *Mukherjee*. Everybody laughed and there is thunderous applause in the auditorium.

SWAMI'S APPLICATION FORM

On another occasion, Kasturi mentioned in his own inimitable style; Swami was sitting there, with a huge audience in front. Any student, at the time of admission, has to fill the application form and submit and later that he would be admitted to the school or college whatever it is. So application must be filled and submitted. Kasturi says here: Supposing we give an application to Swami, to fill up the application. What does He write? Swami was sitting there. He was laughing!

In the application form, first column: Name of the applicant. Can he write Sathya Sai Baba? No! He is Sathya Sai Baba now. Earlier Krishna, prior to that Rama, and moreover He said, "All names are mine! All forms are mine!" What name does He write there? So, first column: name – blank.

Second column: Name of the father. Can he write Venkama Raju? No! Because that time Dasaratha was the father when he was Rama, and Vasudeva was the father when he was Krishna. So he had like that in different incarnations. So, how do you say this is the name of His father? Blank!

Third column: Annual income. What does He write there? In fact He is the very wealth, the very Lakshmi, the very wealth; the whole of affluence belongs to Him. All the richness! Yes! So, what income does He state there, because everything belongs to Him? Lakshmi Vallabha! Goddess Lakshmi presses His Feet, sitting there near the Feet. Lakshmi Narayana! So Lakshmi, the Goddess of wealth serves Him. Therefore what does He write annual income? Blank!

And then, hobbies! What hobbies? What does He write? Blank! Why because, there is nothing like hobbies. Everything is His Divine plan; everything is the programme of Avatar. So what hobby there? There is no hobby there. Blank! Like this if the application form is given to Swami, it will be full of blanks; not even one column is to be filled. Everybody laughs! Swami enjoyed the whole session.

VIBUTHI RELIEVES BONDAGE OF LIFE AND BIRTH

I also remember another joke. When Kasturi was coming, Swami pointed out to him and said, "What Kasturi? You have smeared Vibuthi on the forehead. It is all white, from that end to this end; you have smeared Vibuthi on the forehead, it looks like a bandage from a distance!" Kasturi laughed and said, "Swami, it is not bandage! It will relieve me from the bondage of life and birth!" That is poetic style; that is the humour of Sri. Kasturi! Nobody could be like that!

TWINKLE TWINKLE LITTLE STAR

I also remember another incident. There was a *Vidwan Mahasabha* or I should say, a poetic rendition or assembly of poets was arranged there in Poornachandra Auditorium. Kasturi was one among them. While coming there, Swami looked at Kasturi and said, "What poetry do you write? Nothing! It is only "Twinkle Twinkle little star..." Is that all?" Kasturi laughed! When he came onto the dais and it was his turn to speak, he made that "Twinkle Twinkle little star..." as the theme for his rendition.

He did like that, "Twinkle twinkle little star, have you wondered what you are? It only means, "Oh man! You are the star – twinkling, shining in your lifetime. Have you wondered what you are, that you are Divine? Have you wondered about yourself any time, thinking that you are Divine? That way he spoke and Swami liked it very much. That's what Kasturiji is! He narrates a number of miracles; a number of miracles. Not one or two, not one or two!

HUMAN BODY IS A TOY THAT MAKES NOISE DUE TO THE KEY GIVEN BY BABA

I also remember Kasturi telling one incident that had happened. It seems he had one toy at his residence. And that toy goes on moving all over, making some sound 'Quack, quack quack...' and then Swami looked at it and laughed. Kasturi said, "Swami, because You gave the key, winding to that toy, it is moving and making sound. When once that key or winding is exhausted, it stops. It stops to move, it cannot make any sound!" That evening Swami asked him to speak and Kasturi made this as the theme and explained to the entire gathering. This body is a toy; this body is just a doll that makes noise; that speaks because of the key, the winding of the key given by Baba. When once it stops, the body cannot speak anymore! Everybody liked it. That's how Kasturi speaks, full of humour, full of fun!

KASTURI ENJOYED SWAMI'S COMPANY

Everybody would like to meet him and converse with him. For your information, Kasturi hails from Kerala, later spent long time in Karnataka. He served at "All India Radio", he

was associated with the “Ramakrishna Mission” for a long time and then he ended up his career here in Prasanthi Nilayam as a Sai devotee. He speaks all the languages in a most interesting way and particularly when he speaks a little mix of the two languages. When he speaks in Telugu, you will find some Kannada, Kannada accent there and that makes his talk sweeter than otherwise. And same Kasturi used to joke with Swami, and enjoyed His company. He is the first man to go to His room every day and join Him at the dining table, and then join Swami in the night. Such a man he was!

KASTURI, A POWERFUL INSTRUMENT IN THE DIVINE HANDS

I think it was in the year 1977. Suddenly I was asked to sit in the front row; I sat. My friends expected that Swami will ask me to speak, because that was Dasara season. The venue happened to be, what you call Poornachandra Auditorium. I sat in the front but someone spoke. I was not called; of course I was not disappointed. Why, because Swami did not tell me. Only some people said that Swami wanted me to sit there and I obeyed their command. That’s all! But there was some little, little frustration in me. “Swami, Why I got this message that I should be seated there? Why have You not called me?” Just like a flash that idea came to me.

Then I immediately rushed to Kasturiji. I said, “Sorry Sir! I am very sorry! I was asked to sit there. Swami didn’t call me. Sir, what to do! I am a very unlucky man,” I said.

Kasturi immediately remarked, “Anil Kumar, why do you say like that? You know what happened at the dining table?”

Swami asked me, “Kasturi, did you hear Anil Kumar anytime speak?”

“Yes Swami! I heard his speech.”

“Oh, I see! Where did you hear?”

“Swami, in Madanapalli”

“OK! Come on, show me how he speaks!”

Kasturi started imitating me. Swami laughed and said, “Oh! Does he move his hands like that? He seems to be a dancer! Oh!” And He laughed!

All this Kasturi told me, “Anil Kumar, why do you feel you are unlucky? There is no need to feel disappointed because the Lord inquired about you! I imitated you and Swami enjoyed!”

These things I recall, what wonderful days they are, right from that year, and Swami wanted me to speak in the year 1978. From that year, Bhagavan blessed me with an opportunity every year. Every year, on certain occasions, He used to call me to speak. Well, I think He has specially blessed me with a number of opportunities to speak in the

Divine presence. I tell you, I cannot express my gratitude even if I make my skin into a pair of sandals, footwear for Him to walk. This gratitude cannot be expressed in full!

I am reminded of what William Shakespeare said. "Some are born great, some achieve greatness and some have greatness thrust upon them." I think I belong to the third category. All this achievement is just Swami's gift, that's all thrust upon me.

Therefore, Kasturiji is a very powerful instrument in the Divine hands of Bhagavan for my entry, for that proximity I enjoyed, for imitating me in the Divine presence. Somehow I thought of recalling those days, and share with you my association with Kasturi.

Thank you for your time. We will meet later. Sai Ram!
