

In the 34th of the verses titled “Fruit Gathering”, published in 1916, we listen to Rabindranath Tagore:

‘Sire,’ announced the servant to the King, ‘the saint Narottam has never deigned to enter your royal temple.’

‘He is singing God’s praise under the trees by the open road. The temple is empty of worshippers.’

‘They flock round him like bees round the white lotus, leaving the golden jar of honey unheeded.’

The King, vexed at heart, went to the spot where Narottam sat on the grass.

He asked him, ‘Father, why leave my temple of the golden dome and sit on the dust outside to preach God’s love?’

‘Because God is not there in your temple,’ said Narottam.

The King frowned and said, ‘Do you know, twenty millions of gold went to the making of that marvel of art, and it was consecrated to God with costly rites?’

‘Yes, I know it,’ answered Narottam. It was in that year when thousands of your people whose houses had been burned stood vainly asking for help at your door.

‘And God said, “The poor creature who can give no shelter to his brothers would build my house!”

‘And he took his place with the shelterless under the trees by the road.

‘And that golden bubble is empty of all but hot vapour of pride.’

The King cried in anger, ‘Leave my land.’

Calmly said the saint, ‘Yes, banish me where you have banished my God.’

In the December 2020 edition of the **Vedanta Kesari**, we read Sri. Ajoy Dutta recall Swami Ranganathananda’s visit to Guwahati “to lay the foundation stone for” a “new temple for Sri Ramakrishna”. The current temple was in “a make-shift structure” and a group of people had raised some funds to construct a proper Temple. Swami Ranganathananda “came and

saw the current temple, the home for the poor and orphan students, and the bathroom and kitchen of the Asrama. He was saddened to see the very poor plight of these facilities. He....was not at all happy about the idea of constructing a new temple. To everyone’s surprise he said the temple should not be built now. He advised the Committee members that the first thing they ought to construct was a toilet; second drinking water facility and bathroom; third, a good kitchen; fourth, a students’ home; and if, money permitted, a dispensary should also be built. Only after all these were ready, they should think about constructing a new temple!”



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In “**My Spiritual Autobiography**”, we read the Dalai Lama: *“I believe the purpose of all the major religious traditions is not to construct big temples on the outside, but to create*

temples of goodness and compassion inside, in our hearts.”

Peace ☐

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