

Been to a pilgrimage lately?

By *Indroneil Mukerjee*



There cannot be a better getaway than a pilgrimage. You will not go anywhere, you will come home to yourself

In the humdrum of life that most of us are living today, much as we would like, we are not in touch with ourselves. One way to renew this touch and relive our faith more consciously would be to go on a pilgrimage if not once a year, at least once in two years. Pilgrimages get you to experience a person or a place, which you revere as the quintessential expression of your faith and thereby brings it alive for yourself.

For example, if you have faith in the marvels of scientific discoveries, I am sure Da Vinci's museum would be a shrine of choice for your pilgrimage. For someone who passionately values the education he or she has received, a journey to the childhood school could also serve as a pilgrimage. Again, if it is the rich culture and heritage of this country that you have faith in, a visit to a place of historical significance may serve as a pilgrimage.

Right from my childhood, I have nurtured a passion for and an undeterred faith in the sublimity of Indian classical music. In the initial days, it was primarily because of my dad's influence and initiative that I would find myself often in the throes of ecstasy, experiencing the doyens of classical music performing at their rapturous best. Today, despite all the commitments that I have chosen to make, personally and professionally, I make it a point to set aside a week every year to go on a pilgrimage and experience a unique musical conference, which combines and intensifies the humility and dedication of performing artists with the spiritual energy of the ambience. These five whole-night sessions featuring artists from all over the country making musical offerings to the

Universe in an environment of inter-relatedness with the audience is not only a humbling experience but also awakening of my faith in humanness and the manifestation of divinity in the human.

Is pilgrimage only about a certain place or a person or is it also the journey?

To me, the voyage is or sometimes more meaningful than the destination. While one could fly down to the destination of the pilgrimage, it is always recommended to adopt a mode of transport that gives you maximum experience of the path to pilgrimage.

The discomfort and the suffering may actually add on to the resolve and reverence that you have for your faith and added advantage would be, given the sense of focus that you will be going with, the insights that you may gather for yourself in course of going through the discomfort. A close understanding of the expanded reality, compassion for ones' own self as well as other fellow beings and acceptance of life the way it is are some of the possible takeaways from such a pilgrimage.

Going on a pilgrimage, ironically, is a very intense and yet joyful way of coming Home. The Home where the true self, the shrine of supreme consciousness, dwells. There cannot be anything more meditative and yet engaging than a pilgrimage of your choice which can get you in touch with your center. You will see for yourself how magically it will bring a sense of dance and a sense of detached playfulness.

If you have not done a pilgrimage yet, pack your bags and come Home.

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