When Shiva Lost His Home - The Legend of Badrinath

Sadhguru looks at the legend of Badrinath temple and how Vishnu tricked Shiva and Parvati, and its history of how Adi Shankaracharya established the temple over a thousand years ago.

Sadhguru: There is a legend about Badrinath. This is where Shiva and Parvati lived. It is a magnificent place at around 10,000 feet in the Himalayas. One day, Narada went to Narayana or Vishnu and said, “You are a bad example for humanity. All the time you are just lying around on Adishesha, and your wife, Lakshmi, is constantly serving you and spoiling you silly. You are not a good example for other creatures on the planet. For all the other beings in the creation, you must do something more purposeful.”

To escape this criticism and also work for his own upliftment, Vishnu came down to the Himalayas looking for the right kind of place to do his sadhana. He found Badrinath, a nice little home, with everything just the way he thought it should be – an ideal place for his sadhana.

He found a house there and went into it. But then he realized this is Shiva’s abode – and that man is dangerous. If he gets angry, he is the kind who can cut off his own throat, not just yours. The man is very dangerous.

So, Narayana transformed himself into a little child and sat in front of the house. Shiva and Parvati, who had gone out for a walk, returned home. When they came back, at the entrance of their home a little baby was crying. Looking at this child crying his heart out, Parvati’s maternal instincts came up and she wanted to go pick up the child. Shiva stopped her and said, “Don’t touch that child.” Parvati replied, “How cruel. How can you say that?”

Shiva said, “This is not a good baby. Why does he land up at our doorstep by himself? There is no one around, no footprints of parents in the snow. This is not a child.” But Parvati said, “Nothing doing! The mother in me will not allow me to let the child be like this,” and she took the baby into the house. The child was very comfortable, sitting on her lap, looking very gleefully at Shiva. Shiva knew the consequence of this but he said, “Okay, let’s see what happens.”

Parvati comforted and fed the child, left him at home and went with Shiva for a bath in the nearby hot water springs. When they came back, they found the doors were locked from the inside. Parvati was aghast. “Who has closed the door?” Shiva said, “I told you, don’t pick up this child. You brought the child into the house and now he has locked the door.”

Parvati said, “What shall we do?”

Shiva had two options: one was to burn up everything in front of him. Another was to just find another way and go. So he said, “Let’s go somewhere else. Because it’s your beloved baby, I cannot touch it.”

This is how Shiva lost his own home and Shiva and Parvati became “illegal aliens!” They walked around, looking for an ideal place to live and finally settled down in Kedarnath. Did he not know, you may ask. You know many things, but you still allow them to happen.