

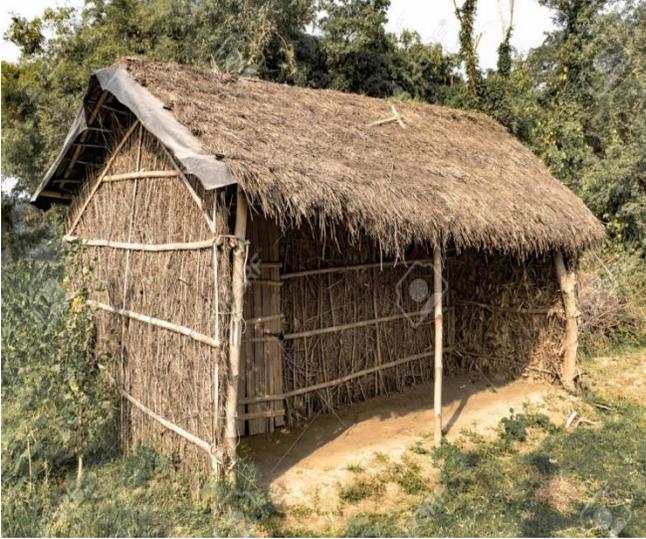
The Prayer

The king and his top ministers had gone on a hunting expedition into a forest. Deep inside and after a lot of successful hunting they were resting under the shade of a huge tree. They had their lunch and were relaxing little knowing that a lion was on the prowl and it was hungry. The roar of the lion took the king and his ministers up on to their heels and they started moving in a frightful frenzy. Each one of them ran at their top speed but was no match for the lion which closed in on them. The lion was at jumping distance of about 36' and was about to pounce on the king who was a little behind his ministers. The king closed his eyes, said his final prayer knowing fully well that this could well be his last moment of his assignment in this life-time.

Moments later there was a rustling sound, an agonizing roar from the lion and when the king turned behind he could not believe his eyes. A hunter who was returning home saw the lion attacking the king and released the poisoned arrow from his bow and the arrow pierced into the lion's body bringing it to the ground instantaneously. The king recovered from his near death experience hugged the hunter and thanked him profusely. The king was over joyous and asked the hunter what he wanted. The king was prepared to give the hunter gold, precious stones, silver, property and anything the hunter wanted. The hunter calmly said, "thank you very much king for your offer but I have only request to make to you."

I would request your Majesty to visit my house one day. The king thought about the trivial offer which was not commensurate with the service he had received – saving the king from the jaws of death was not a small thing. His birthday was approaching soon, he recollected. He told the hunter that he would celebrate his birthday in the hunter's house, hugged him again and left with his ministers back to the palace.

The ministers gathered together the following day and decided to go to the hunter's house in the forest to see what needs to be done before the king's visit that was not far away. They were appalled to see the house was thatched and made from bamboo straw and sticks and was temporary. The ministers felt that



the king, the ruler of the land had to visit only places that are permanent in nature. So the ministers built a big solid house with high ceiling, large doors and windows. They thought the house would look good with nice furniture. So, they got them. The ministers thought that all the utensils, plates, jars, were to be silver and so those were got besides, nice pottery. Precious stones were kept in a bowl to add to the opulence and abundance to receive the king !!

The hunter was dazed and perplexed by the turn of things. The king came on his birthday to the hunter's house along with his entire courtiers, and after exchanging pleasantries gifted to the hunter gold, precious stones, and a large property near the forest area. He also gifted spears, maces, swords, and spikes besides some good horses. Thanking the hunter once again and telling him to come to his palace sometime he left back with all his people.

The hunter expected only the King's visit to his house. He did not want property, gold or anything from the king in return for his service rendered in saving the king from the claws of the lion. Look at what had materialized !! He got much more than what he could have asked for and it is going to be a long term relationship with the king. There is a lesson to be learnt here for all of us. Instead of asking God for each and everything that we require from time to time, as if he doesn't know that he would give only what we deserve and not what we desire; alternately if we just thank him for all that he has done for us with enormous humility and gratitude and request him to live in our hearts will

he not equip us the necessary software and hardware to run this wonderful life of ours !!

A prayer is raising one's mind and heart to God. Prayer is not asking. It is a longing of the soul. As M.K Gandhi said, "It is better in prayer to have a heart without words than words without a heart."

Ramkumar