

Sai Pearls of Wisdom Part 49-D

OPEN JEEP PROCESSION December 1st, 2023

**Om Sri Sai Ram
Prasanthi Sandesh**

Om Sri Sai Ram

Prasanthi Sandesh, Sai Pearls of Wisdom, welcomes you.

At that time, Bhagavan was in Pamidi, a place in this district. Baba suddenly left for Anantapur all alone one day, followed close on His heels by members of the Karnam family, protesting vehemently against His announced decision to go back. Baba was unmoved and went on. At Anantapur however, He agreed to stay with one of the Karnam's relatives.

To allay the fear of Karnam's family that His sudden departure spelt some calamity, Baba returned to Illur before coming back to Anantapur, where He again stayed for a few days.

On the way, Baba had the horse – drawn carriage abruptly stopped before a studio. He instructed His host to arrange for a photograph to be taken in his house by engaging the services of that studio owner, K H Rayudu, a renowned photographer of the town.

Rao writes that the photo session itself became a very elaborate affair. Baba was decked with garlands and made to sit on a chair covered with a tiger skin, which He used to carry with Him those days. Large size lamps and items for worship like broken coconuts and fruits were kept on the floor in plates beside Bhagavan, to create an appropriate ambience.

Rayudu used a large format portrait camera but could not focus on Baba, for he could not get Baba on the viewfinder, but only portraits of Shirdi Sai Baba. All the objects of the setting had turned into the portraits, big or small in proportional size of the objects. The photographer, for all his dexterity and experience, was bewildered.

Rayudu, (who) had been pointlessly disparaging of Baba during that time, must have been graced with this special vision to make him understand the error of his ways. Finally Rayudu managed to take Baba's photograph and this portrait is still a precious possession of Rao's family.

Well, this is a miracle where Baba consented to have a photograph session, abruptly stopping in front of his studio. Secondly, how He helped the photographer Rayudu, who could not click the camera properly; and he had to set it right. These are the two miracles that we come across during this trip.

According to Viswanatha Rao, Baba also had lunch at the house of Mr Narayana Rao, fulfilling an earlier promise to have lunch with him. Rao's mother was disappointed that Baba had not kept His word, denying her the wonderful opportunity of feeding Him. Rao would tell what happened further when he returned after lunch.

My mother accosted Baba, "You promised to come for lunch to our house! But You went to somebody else's home!"

Baba said, "I don't get (go) back on My promise! Let us go and have lunch!"

Thus Baba had lunch twice that day. This is again very strange. To please and to bless the devotee, He agreed to have the second lunch. See this!

A similar thing had happened, I remember, in Delhi. He had lunch at several places. Of course, He might not have eaten. Just 6 lunches, 8 breakfasts, like that! Because He wanted to bless all the devotees in Delhi, which He visited long back. So this is a miracle that happened in the earlier stage.

Well, a very interesting thing is this! The food habits of Baba were very frugal. He consumed very little food during lunch or dinner. He would usually mix up all the items – spicy, sweet, sour, solid or liquid -- into one single mass before consuming them. Before He ate anything Himself, He would usually distribute morsels of it as *Prasadam* to all those around Him.

I hope you would recall what Shirdi Bhagavan did! He did a similar thing – mixing up all food items, making them into morsels and distribute to the devotees around Him. Then, coming back to Bhagavan, after the second lunch, Baba immediately decided to proceed to Pamidi where He had not been before.

Why? Because Pamidi is a commercial centre, fully crowded. He wanted to avoid them. Therefore, He stayed in Illur – ILLUR. He asked Rao and Rao's aunt Lalithamma to accompany Him. The three of them went by bus. On the way, Baba got down at Kallur, an earlier stop, to avoid the large crowd at Pamidi bus station. Rao and his aunt however, proceeded by bus to announce Baba's arrival. Baba arrived at Pamidi in a horse – drawn carriage accompanied by some local merchants. He stayed in the house of Subba Rangaiah, a merchant of Pamidi.

During the visit, Baba cured Rao's cousin of typhoid by asking him to eat a guava, most inappropriate for a fever. Baba doesn't go by the norms of medicine or dietary habits.

When He asked him to eat guava, which is inappropriate, that turned to be a medicine for that typhoid patient!

The next morning when Baba was giving interviews to the members of the family of another merchant, Rama Tulasi, many people went for His *darshans*. Some asked for *Prasadam*, some for worldly things, wealth and eatables and others for cures for complex diseases. Rao's uncle, Rasakonda Venkataramaiah, a learned scholar himself chastised the waiting crowd for asking petty things of Baba and not spiritual wisdom.

Even as he was engaged, Baba sent for him and asked him to repeat what he had been speaking. When the gentleman humbly repeated that he would prefer a spiritual discourse to personal interviews, Baba promised that He would give a spiritual discourse after lunch that day.

As promised, Baba did give an informal talk after lunch, in which He narrated the early life history of Shirdi Sai Baba. Therefore, even in those days, we have most of the devotees gathering around Him, surrounding Him for petty things, for material things, for physical needs! However, there was an exception, a scholar who wanted a spiritual discourse! That's the purpose of the *Avatar*, to elevate our spiritual level!

Baba stayed at Pamidi for two days. He found time to take His devotees to the Pennar riverbed and materialize idols from the sand there. It only means that He repeated what He did here in Chitravathi. He returned to Anantapur by the evening train from Kallur Railway Station. In Anantapur, as there were no crowds, Baba sat on a lounge chair, relaxing in the garden of Chidambariah's house. Yes!

Rao and others were instructed to pick flowers for worship. However, there were no flowers, to which Baba was informed. He then instructed the family to go and look again, but once again Chidambariah's daughter returned empty-handed. Baba then climbed a tree. See the wonder! Baba then climbed a tree and pulled down one of the branches. It was laden with flowers, and Chidambariah's family enjoyed plucking them!

During His stay, Baba described the various attributes of Divinity, in verses composed by Himself. The following night, Baba left for Bangalore accompanied by Tirumal Rao, who hailed from the same city.

Tirumal Rao was a reputed honest landlord who held title to a lot of property in the city. At one time, he was considered one of Bangalore's best horticulturists and was associated with Lal Bagh, the famed garden. His fame made Queen Elizabeth curious enough to come and see the garden. In later years, Tirumal Rao became one of the close devotees of Baba and was a very important instrument in His mission.

Tirumal Rao and his wife Pushpa Kanti had a son Nagendra Prasad, born to them. The child had one leg shorter than the other. "We heard of this wonderful boy in Puttaparthi, named Sathya Sai Baba who was reputed to cure difficult maladies with His divine powers." So, they visited Baba in 1944.

Pushpa Kanti would say, “Baba materialized a talisman for my son’s cure and though he did not recover completely, he was able to walk properly. He still has the talisman!”

So, Swami’s ability to cure ailments has been well recognized by the family. The couple had their first *darshan* of Baba in Bangalore during the second visit to the house of Narasimha Rao Naidu at Chamarajpet. Accompanied by Narasimha Rao Naidu, Baba visited Tirumal Rao’s house on St. John’s Road in September, staying there intermittently for a few months.

Hundreds of people went to have His *darshan*. They were offered food, which as in Anantapur earlier, would miraculously grow, to cater to all, irrespective of its initial quantity or the number of people present! This kind of miracle we heard before where food got multiplied sufficient to the number of people that specially came for Baba’s *darshan*. A similar thing I saw there in Kodaikanal also. Therefore, food multiplication by Baba’s divine touch had been there even in the earlier period.

Baba gave interviews to visitors late at night. Sometimes, however, the crowd swelled to such an extent that Baba was obliged to go to another devotee’s house by the back door. What to do? Devotees did not leave Him. The crowd has been increasing. But there was a demand from another devotee asking Him to visit them. So Baba had to escape through the back door!

Organized *bhajan* singing evolved in a big way in Bangalore in 1944. Seshagiri Rao, with the blessings of Baba, organized *bhajans* in various houses every Thursday, and Baba even materialized 5 photographs of Shirdi Baba and gave them to the 5 initial *bhajan* groups. By the next year, the number of *bhajan* singing families had doubled and the *Bhajan Mandali* was formally established.

In those days, there was a military recruiting officer, Ramachandran by name, in Hindupur. Baba appeared in his dream and solved a problem that was troubling him and told him to come to Puttaparthi. Ramachandran did not understand the message properly. Baba again appeared at 4 am in Ramachandran’s dream and reminded him to come to His place.

The officer left in the early morning in his jeep and went to another Puttaparthi located in Bagepalli. None of the people there knew about Sai Baba and the Puttaparthi He lived in. At last someone suggested that there was a Sai Baba at the Puttaparthi near Bukkapatnam. Baba was then in Subbamma’s house. I was also there along with some others.”

Muntimaduvu Chinna Babaiah recollects those days and narrates this way. “Baba said, “At 12 noon, an officer will come from Hindupur!” Sometime after Baba told us that officer had reached Karnatakanagepalli. Within ten minutes, Ramachandran came and prostrated before Baba. At that time, Baba was a small boy wearing shorts and a shirt. Ramachandran took Baba in the jeep around Puttaparthi. This was the first ever

motorised vehicle to move in the village. All were surprised at the special spectacle. The driver had removed the top and Ramachandran requested that Baba get up into the jeep.

As the procession moved around the village, the officer was very happy that he did not have to keep the vehicle engine running throughout the procession. Why? The villagers pushed the vehicle all the way! All the way, like they pushed the chariot! Ramachandran also took Baba to Hindupur in his jeep.

In addition, he arranged for a procession accompanied by a florally decorated vehicle to honour Baba. Most of the businessmen at Hindupur criticized Ramachandran for doing so, remarking that he was arranging a procession for a mere boy.

The recruiting officer had a driver by name Prahlada Rao. He was very lazy but whenever he had to go to Puttaparthi, he was very enthusiastic. So Swami, being taken in a procession in a motor vehicle, took place for the first time there.”

T Rama Sharma, a classmate of Baba at Bukkapatnam would narrate an interesting experience. After obtaining ESLC, meaning after graduation at the high school level, they get this ESLC Certificate. He joined Hindupur in June 1943.

“In 1944, I heard that Baba Bat-Raju from Puttaparthi had become Sai Baba and He had once studied in Bukkapatnam. I was curious to see the boy! I took my books and did not go to school. Instead, I went to Hindupur Railway Station and surprisingly, I saw Sai Baba there! I recognized Him as our Sathya (because He happened to be his classmate earlier.) I greeted Him, “Hey, You...” without respect. Immediately, I recalled my mistake and was embarrassed.

I apologetically told people around Him, “I am sorry! We are childhood friends. Please don’t mistake me!”

But Sathya did not mind at all. Instead He patted me and enquired about the welfare of each one of our classmates, when we were there, then studying. The military recruitment officer had brought Him to Hindupur to honour Him. They took Baba in a procession in a floral decorated open vehicle, accompanied by a musical band from the railway station gate to the officer’s house.

Baba asked me to accompany Him in the procession, along with the band. He gave me a lot of attention and fed me sumptuously. He came to Hindupur in the morning and went back to Puttaparthi by evening!”

This was the narration of T Rama Sharma, His classmate at Bukkapatnam. This clearly shows how He cares for people and that He never forgets anybody, His then classmates long back and extended all love towards them, making them very happy!

We will meet in the next session. Sai Ram!