

PART 31- A, Sri Rama Sharan

Om Sri Sai Ram

Prasanthi Sandesh welcomes you!

“Dear Sir, Sitting by the side of Swami on the dais, in Poornachandra hall, before my speech, I saw Swami transforming Himself into Lord Sri Ramachandra, very tall in height with *Kodanda*. *Kodandam* is the name of His bow. With a crown. Such a short Swami, transforming Himself into Ramachandra, surprised me, surprised me.” These are the words of Sri Rama Sharan, who lived 95 years or so.

Sri Rama Sharan is a very, very reputed man. He has a very big following in Andhra and in some of other states also. Sri Rama Sharan composed, I would say, written about 100 books on Sri Ramachandra and among them there are 60 volumes on Bhagavatham, Krishna. Basically Sri Rama Sharan is Ramachandra’s devotee and he has built an ashram in Guntur district, now divided into Bapatla district. There’s a small village, by name Buddam, B U D D A M, where he built an ashram. Sri Rama Sharan is such an ardent devotee of Rama that he wears clothes with Rama, Rama’s name - ‘Sri Rama Jaya Rama Jaya Jaya Rama’ name, written or printed on that.

He cooks his own food. While preparing food, he will pick up every piece, every grain uttering the name of ‘Sri Rama Jaya Rama Jaya Jaya Rama’; cuts the vegetable, ‘Sri Rama Jaya Rama Jaya Jaya Rama’. Therefore even food is made as he chants Ramachandra’s name. Such a man he is!

I know him personally. I also saw him visiting Prasanthi Nilayam many times, and he has written a book on Bhagavan Baba also. And Sri Rama Sharan was one of the founder members of ‘*Rama Nama Kshetram*’ at Guntur, which is more than 100 year old. He visits that annually and conducts some Sadhana camps. Sri Rama Sharan has no earnings or income on his own. Only his followers pay charges for him to travel from place to place. That’s all!

I can also tell you one of my experiences with him. There is one place called ‘*Venkateswara Vignana Mandir*’ at Guntur, Andhra Pradesh. He was lecturing, sitting on the dais and finding me one among the audience, towards the end of his talk, he called me, “Anil Kumar, come here!” I immediately went to him. He said, “Pick up currency in my left side, on my left side out of the pocket. Pick up currency notes out of the pocket towards my left side of the shirt.” I picked up the currency notes. In public it happened.

“You count, Anil Kumar and donate this amount to these organisers of this meeting. I don’t need any money. My followers will bear all my travel expenses. I don’t need any money.” He donated that amount and just left with empty pocket. That is Sri Rama Sharan! That is Sri Rama Sharan! .In huge gatherings, finding me sitting somewhere in the corner, he loudly declares, “Oh! I am glad Anil Kumar is here.” If he listens, he will

share this with everybody, all over the state of Andhra Pradesh. That's in brief I can say about Sri Rama Sharan.

During one of his visits to Prasanthi Nilayam, I went and asked him, "Sir, would you tell me your first experience with Swami?" He started narrating, narrating this way.

"Anil Kumar, I am not a devotee of Baba. I am a devotee of Lord Sri Ramachandra. I spent all of my life spreading for His name, His message and writing books on Sadhana, the spiritual practise."

Then I asked, "Sir, how is that you have come to Bhagavan?"

Then Rama Sharan replied, "Long back, I was giving talks at a place by name Nagayalanka, Nagayalanka in Krishna district, Andhra Pradesh. Sri Rama Sharan was giving number of discourses over there, spread over couple of months.

It seems some of his followers met him and said, "Sir, why do you still hang on to Rama? Don't you know Rama is reborn, reincarnated in the form of Sri Sathya Sai Baba in Puttaparthi? Why don't you go to Him? Why don't you meet Him, because He is same Rama. You worship Him. Why don't you see Him there?" That's what his followers said.

The immediate reaction of Sri Rama Sharan was, "Stop that nonsense! What nonsense you speak! You mean to say my Rama is born again? Don't say that!"

Because of reverence and respect for him, they all kept quiet. They shut their mouths. And then what happened? That very evening, he had high temperature. Body started shivering. He was doubting whether he would be able to give talks for a couple of days to come, because temperature was very high. What to do? Then immediately the thought came to him: 'According to my followers, if my Lord Ramachandra is reincarnated as Sathya Sai Baba, my present fever should subside.' Strangely enough, his temperature turned to normal temperature, 98.4.

But he took it (as) a challenge. He could not accept this. 'Let me see what would happen.' He went to a lake there, nearby lake, and had cold water bath. A challenge to God! 'If my fever has really subsided, by this bath, the temperature should go up.' The temperature has not gone up. He returned home and he went, had his dinner, regular dinner – with curry, chutneys, sambar, everything. Only to see if his temperature goes up! Temperature has not gone up. Normal! He could continue his talks, and then he decided to come to Prasanthi Nilayam.

But being very weak, he was not prepared to undertake the travel, because in those days, one has to travel for 19 hours, 19 hours! By train, come to Guntakal, change the train and then reach Dharmavaram, catch a bus and reach Puttaparthi. Very tedious, long journey! He was very weak, you see! Therefore, he wanted to cancel his trip, thinking that he could go later.

Unexpectedly, at the railway station, one or two of his followers came to him and said, "Sir, we are going to Puttaparthi. We will escort you."

With their help Rama Sharan reached Prasanthi Nilayam for the first time around 1.30 after noon. As you know, Swami retires in the morning by 9.30 and evening *Darshan* at 5. This man came at 1 'o clock or 1.30 afternoon.

Standing at the gate, Rama Sharan said, "If my Ramachandra has reincarnated in the form of Sathya Sai Baba, O Sathya Sai Baba, if You are my Rama, I wish You should come down and give me *Darshan*."

An open challenge, with the followers around! And luckily enough, as per Divine plan, Swami walked down, which will never happen usually, opened the door and shouted, "Rama Sharan, come here!"

"Oh! He knows me by name!" He was surprised. He went close to Swami.

Swami said, "Oh! You have come! How is your fever? You wanted to avoid your trip. Your followers brought you. You had your bath, you had dinner, thinking that your fever will rise, will increase. It has not happened. I know that you don't accept any canteen food or anything, that you cook your own meal. I know that! Therefore I reserved one room for you. You go, all provisions are there. You can cook in your own way and come in the evening by 5'o clock to Poornachandra Auditorium. This being Dasara season, you come there!" And Swami left.

Rama Sharan was surprised. How is it that He knows my name? How is it He knows that I got fever? How is it He knows that I had a cold water bath and had my regular meal but yet the fever has not gone up? How is it that He reserved a room for me, with all supplies? He could not believe. Somehow, he had his lunch and then came to Poornachandra Auditorium at 5'0 clock in the evening, sitting in 50th row or 60th row.

Who will make a person who came there for the first time, a very ordinary man, though a saint, to sit in the front row? He was occupying somehow the last rows. Swami's style is He will go around the whole of the auditorium twice or thrice so that everyone will have the advantage of the Divine Darshan. He walked that long distance.

Seeing Ramachandra, this Sri Rama Sharan. "Rama Sharan, get up!" He caught hold of him with His hand and took him to the dais. Both of them went to the dais and Swami made Rama Sharan to sit by His side on the chair. Well, he was happy. It was at that time Rama Sharan saw Swami transforming into Sri Ramachandra. That is a confirmation that Baba is Rama only, none else! And then Swami asked him to speak. Then he started wondering, 'How does He know that I speak?' But anyway immediately Swami said, "You speak on, you speak on devotion. He wanted to speak on something else. Swami said, "No, no, no! These are general audience, speak on..."

"How does He know the topic I wanted to speak on?"

Alright! He gave a lecture and at the end of the lecture, well, he has gone back to his room; and that being the last day, Swami was honouring all priests of yagnam, and Rama Sharan was not called. All disciples were feeling very sorry but suddenly Swami opened the door and called Sri Rama Sharan and hugged him, hugged him and said, "You and I are one" and materialised him a chain with Lakshmi locket. Lakshmi is the Goddess of wealth.

Rama Sharan said, "Swami, why wealth now? All my wealth is spent in spreading Your name and publishing books. I don't need."

And then Swami said, "There is one book in print. You have to pay to those printers. You will get money. Take this chain."

He had his chain and went back. And then what happened? He could clear all the loans or what you call debts or the bills, pending bills. And one day, it so happened that, while taking bath, he lost the chain. Very much worried, in deep agony, immediately He rushed to Prasanthi Nilayam and cried, "Swami, the chain is gone!"

Swami said, "You cleared all the bills. Why do you need Lakshmi, Goddess of wealth? She returned back to Me!" That Swami said.

This is the story of Sri Rama Sharan. Sai Ram!