

## **Sai Pearls of Wisdom, Part 45-A**

### **CULTURE, EXAMINATIONS, RAIN STOPPED May 20th, 2023**

**Om Sri Sai Ram  
Prasanthi Sandesh**

Om Sri Sai Ram

Prasanthi Sandesh, Sai Pearls of Wisdom welcomes you.

We are really amazed, thrilled and excited to come to know of Swami's histrionic talents revealed right from His childhood, and He encouraged them in the later period – fine arts among students. That's what we have been coming to know in the recent episodes.

I may draw your attention (to) Swami's talent displayed at Bukkapatnam. A dance troupe happened to visit that area and the centre of attraction happened to be a dancing girl. Years hence, she would still be remembered, but there would be differences of opinion regarding her name.

She was adept in a particular dance in which with a bottle balanced on her head, she would pick up a handkerchief from the floor with her teeth, as a finale. Sathya proved that He could not only do the same dance number, but also improve upon it. Instead of picking up a handkerchief from the floor with His teeth, He picked up a needle with His eyelids, all the while balancing a bottle on His head.

Another incident occurred at the school annual day function which displays Sathya's versatile talents. A famous actress and dancer, Rishyendra by name, was invited to perform for the fund-raising function. All arrangements were made, tickets were sold, people were gathering, and a large crowd was expected. At the last moment, the dancer sent a word that, due to her ill health, she was unable to come to perform. Her name is Rishyendra Mani. That Rishyendra Mani would not appear, could create trouble from the disappointed crowds.

Sathya offered to save the situation, suggesting that He would be happy to dance in Rishyendra Mani's place. The desperate school administration, with no other alternative, immediately agreed. The spectacular thing about the actress' dance was that she could balance a plate with a lighted lamp on top of a bottle on her head perfectly, while keeping lighted lamps on the plate!

When Sathya performed the dance number, the audience roared in applause. According to standard biographical accounts, the District Collector, a British Officer, merrily walked up to the stage to present the dancer with a medal, anxious to put it around her neck. As no Indian lady would ever allow a strange man to touch her person, the actress insisted that the medal be given in her hand. The poor Collector walked away disappointed, not recognizing that the lady hands were those of a small boy.

Ramasubbamma, the District Education Board President, presented the prizes for the 2<sup>nd</sup> day function. She spoke in appreciation of the actress who had performed the previous day, and acknowledged that the school building fund had been substantially increased with the young dancer's help.

Wanting to honour her, she announced that she would present to the actress a silk saree. The actress' name was announced with a request that she appear on stage. The audience waited expectantly to see her emerge. In the midst of the excited crowd, Sathya, walking towards the stage, was stopped by the police who had no idea of the role He had enacted.

The headmaster rescued Him, took Him to the stage and proudly announced that it was He who had saved the day by performing in the guise of the actress. See that! Ramasubbamma complimented Sathya for His performance and so developed great affection and regard for Him. Because Sathya did not consider His school to be different from His own family, even at that young age, He took it upon Himself to save the honour of His school and His teachers.

When the time came, Sathya did not have the minimum attendance for eligibility to take the qualifying examination from the Bukkapatnam School. However, He appeared for the examination the following year to take this Elementary School Leaving Certificate (ESLC) examination.

Students had to go all the way to Penukonda since it was the only centre in that area to offer the examination. Sathya was no exception. In years to come, He would recall this incident.

"These examinations were held at Penukonda. In those days, going to Penukonda was like going to America or Russia. It caused fear and anxiety. There were no roads or buses for going to Bukkapatnam."

"Penukonda, however, was connected with important places through a railway line that had then been laid. People talked with strange fears about the railway train. They used to come in bullock carts from the villages to see it. They said it only one eye. It would run like a long cylinder and would appear and disappear on its own."

"The mother who gave birth to this body was worried (that is, Swami's mother), about sending her son every day to far off Bukkapatnam from Puttaparthi. She packed some

food and gave the packet to Him. There were no metal lunch boxes in those days and taking such food packets was the back practise.

“The mother would prepare ragi balls with groundnut chutney. She would tie them up in old cloth and put them in My bag. When the lunch break was announced, the children would run to the water tank. The food in the cloth would be stuck to it and I would immerse the whole thing in water so that the food and the cloth would get separated. By the time the exercise was done, the lunch break would be over.”

“As the time for going to Penukonda approached, the family was in tears. Venkamma, Parvathamma and the others were worried that Penukonda may be too far. Such were the conditions in those days. To send Me to Penukonda was like sending Me to a foreign country!” That’s what Baba said.

“Preparations began for the journey to Penukonda. Eight of us planned to go from Bukkapatnam to Penukonda by bullock cart. One teacher also agreed to come with us. The road was so bad that we would travel by cart for a mile and then walk five miles. Most of our time was spent in getting into the cart and out of it again. Perhaps, it would have been better to walk the entire distance.

As our teacher was good, he helped each student to get down from the cart when the road was bad. Likewise, he lifted each boy into the cart when the road was in better condition! In this way, he underwent a lot of trouble.”

“You see my height now!” Baba says. “I was even smaller and shorter then. Others who came with Me were also small. They were also small! We started 5’o clock in the morning and travelling like this all through the long day, reached Penukonda at 9’o clock at night. There were no facilities there – neither a bus stand nor a place to rest!

There was a mango grove outside Penukonda and we camped there. We slept under the bullock cart during the night. We had brought rice, chillie powder and some spices with us. We cooked rice, mixed it with the powders and ate it. We spent two days this way, took the examination and returned home!”

Meanwhile Seshama Raju, His brother, qualified himself as a Telugu scholar, both in language and in literature. He had obtained a teaching position at Bukkapatnam and was living there. Sathya, now called ‘Raju’ by His school friends, stayed in Puttaparthi, (and) would often visit His brother’s residence.

As you know, He was called Sathya earlier and from now on, Raju. As VIII Standard was the highest class at the Bukkapatnam School, Seshama Raju decided to take Raju to Uravakonda, 139 kilometres away from Puttaparthi, once he had obtained a teaching assignment there. In addition, the family thought the shift to Uravakonda would likely bring to rest the extraordinary powers that Sathya, called Raju, was demonstrating at Puttaparthi.

One of the reported incidents occurred during northern monsoon season. Raju's sister, Venkamma was building a house and there was still a large wall to be made and bricks were wet, waiting to be baked. The sky grew dark and menacing. A downpour would surely reduce all the bricks to a huge mound of clay.

A helpful neighbour told Venkamma to cover the bricks with a bundle of dried sugarcane leaves and recommended that a friend living on the outside of Chitravathi be asked to provide them. A long line of men, women and children ran over the sands in a desperate hurry, with Raju joining them at the last moment. But when they got to the middle of the riverbed, He suddenly called out to everyone to stop.

He called His sister, "Venkamma!" He said, "*Vaana Raadhu!* It will not rain!"

A few quiet words from Raju with His small palms raised against the dark sky for a moment, and up above the wind, the clouds and rain obeyed! The astonished group watched as the clouds scattered. The day brightened and threat was over. Everyone returned home with no bundles of leaves.

Raju's artistic talents were not limited to commercial advertisements and the school stage but went far beyond these. Even as a small boy, He was audacious enough to write lampoons, lamenting the changes that had come about from abandoning the traditional style of dress.

Speaking about these times, Baba would say later. Yes, see that what Swami says! It seems the village head was full of vices in those days and he followed immoral ways, thus wasting time. Swami wrote a song pointing out his mistakes and sang in front of his house and everybody heard it and that man could be reformed.

The song says, "Shun the company of women of bad character or you are bound to degrade yourself! Your caste will not condone you. Your relatives will drive you out! Your friends will slipper you!" Well, that was the meaning of the song.

Thank you for your time! We will meet later!