

Sai Pearls of Wisdom, Part 45-B

COMPOSITIONS TO REFORM, NATIONALISM May 22nd, 2023

**Om Sri Sai Ram
Prasanthi Sandesh**

Om Sri Sai Ram

Prasanthi Sandesh, Sai Pearls of Wisdom welcomes you.

We have been thinking of Baba's childhood days and the values that He has shown by way of His behaviour towards the teachers, His obligations towards the school administration, His simplicity and humility before teachers, and so on. The sole intention of this series is to highlight the values from Bhagavan's biography.

Bhagavan composed certain songs clearly, clearly criticising the village heads who were put to bad vices or bad habits. And in His composition, Swami has shown clearly the evil effects of their bad behaviour. And thus through His writings, He wanted to reform the community. This reformation started from His childhood. Then it leads naturally to transformation.

I will give you one example. The village head had fallen into certain immoral ways and thus (was) wasting his time. And all the children wanted to correct his behaviour. Yes, because he cannot be the head of the village and still continue to be a victim of these vices.

One such song that Swami composed and sang in front of that village head's house, along with friends, I will give you (the) English version of his original composition in Telugu.

*"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, this is the meaning of the song. Having heard this song, the village head boiled with fury. He had loud habits and he wore a wristwatch on his left hand.

In those days, having a watch in a small village was a big thing. In fact, very few villagers had ever seen a watch! He also wore costly clothes. Even the ladies in that house had peculiar dress habits. Instead of wearing a big 'bottu' on the forehead – the vermillion, they wore a small 'bottu' BOTTU! Instead of adorning themselves with traditional ornaments like the chain and other ornaments, they would wear thin and delicate fashionable necklaces.

Seeing the fall of cultural values in the ladies of the house, Swami taught the following song to the children, and they all sang this song.

The English version is this:

*“How changed the time is, O people!
What times have come!
Delicate chains have replaced ‘kaasu danda’
(a kind of chain that they wore in those days)
What times have come!
The large ‘bottu’ (the vermillion as I had said) has vanished
What times have come for these people!
The left wrist is tied a leather belt, seven inches long!
What times have come!
O sister, what fashions are these!
The long moustache is cut,
And the natural moustache is grown!
What times have come! What fashions are these?”*

In those days, it was a habit to replace a long moustache with a short and small one. The Karnam (head of the village) paraded his short moustache with pride. He used to sit with pride!

To correct the follies of the ultra-modern habits of the people, Swami wrote a song about the erring ones, and taught them to youngsters who sang the musical pieces before the houses of persons meriting the ridicule. And Swami's songs were very popular in those days.

*“What sort of age is this?
When people who were wearing these moustaches,
Sitting like insects under their noses!*

Then the children would break out into a chorus of 'Hitler moustache.'

On third day after this song was sung, the head of the village removed the moustache!

Gradually the entire town of Bukkapatnam became aware of Swami's songs and poems.

The struggle for Independence was on then. The British would beat up people wherever they could catch them. People were being jailed! As they were all children too small (to understand), they were not aware of these things. Swami knew only to speak truth, as I see it. That has been His habit right from the beginning.

Then two Congressmen came from Bukkapatnam and implored Him to write a good song on India. They further dressed Him like a girl and covered His head with a wig and made Him wear a *pavita* or half-saree over *lunga* or skirt – SKIRT. They arranged a small cradle on a high platform and kept a rubber doll, belonging to the issueless Karnam family, in it. Swami was to sing a lullaby for the baby in the cradle, wearing the dress of a lady.

The small baby would be crying for independence. As all people were fighting for independence, the song would persuade the baby not to cry. This is a lullaby composed by Him. Now I will give the English version.

*“Do not cry, My child! Do not cry!
If you cry, no one will say you are an Indian soldier.
No, no! Jo, Jo! Go to sleep!
Are you crying for fear that Hitler is invading Russia? No!
The Red Army will kill Hitler! You will be a hero!
Don't cry! Why fear and cry, My boy!
Is it that our people have no unity?
Surely they will unite and fight and get independence!
Do not cry!”*

This lullaby made the child in the cradle to go to sleep.

While Swami was thus singing for half an hour about Hitler and the British, the police arrived on the scene. They did not know Telugu and could not have understood the song, but they seemed to have liked the music and the melody of it. They sat down silently along with others. When the people clapped their hands, the police too joined in the clapping. By the time the song was over, the people sitting there had gathered around Bhagavan.

As Swami was a small boy, the police could not arrest Him for inciting nationalistic sentiments. That's what Swami was!

So, His compositions in the form of songs, be that lullaby, are meant to reform people, to transform people and to show clearly the ways of the modern times, the way how the modernity changed the way of lifestyle in that village. And the lullaby is composed with the spirit of nationalism!

So, Raju composed a ten-line lampoon about the ingratitude meted out to the men who toiled in sun and rain in order to grow food for the rich, who revelled in luxury. This is to show to the public openly how the poor people are exploited.

The poems denounced the caste system as it had degenerated into a medium of agony for the workers. Not only they extract work from workers, but they kept them away from the village, which was a very bad practise indeed!

The urchins sang the lines as they followed the cattle to the pastures. The rich felt flustered, wondering how Raju could host this spark of revolution in His young head. They suspected that some sinister force was working through Him, but Raju could not be silenced. He had decided to condemn and correct.

Eswaramma and Subbamma wrung their hands helplessly and prayed for the well-being of Swami. How long could Raju continue to suppress the truth? Living the truth was His nature! Through these songs, He proved to others that tell He would! Besides, something else about Him was slowly finding expression through His excessive creative zeal. The spiritual ties with the Shirdi aspect were beginning to show up. How long could He hide them? Raju had controlled Himself by sharing His secret only with His trusted classmates whom He so much loved.

The young boy had become someone who was admired, feared, loved and even respected. Eswaramma, the mother too was caught in the strange whirlpool of feelings towards her son. She longed to have Raju behave like a normal boy, but was repeatedly enchanted by the spiritual prowess of this young prodigy. She would watch Him sing and act in plays and weep to see Him tortured. His performance was so convincing. When Seshama Raju discovered the problem caused by Raju's exploits, he came to Puttapparthi and chided Him, persuading Raju to accompany him to Uravakonda.

Raju's father, however, felt differently. He simmered in silent helplessness over the phenomenon of his son. Adversaries had taught him to be cautious and therefore he would not interfere with Raju's nature to reject anything improper or wrong. He silently allowed Raju's spirit to break new grounds at Bukkapatnam.

These are the expressions of Bhagavan's spirit of nationalism, the spirit of (which was meant) to bring in a kind of transformation in the community. So everything had a meaning and got a message behind it. It's not just written like that! Whatever He did, whatever He spoke, whatever is written carried a message for everybody, for the entire community!

And then, Swami shifts from this Bukkapatnam to Uravakonda and let's learn what had happened there in Uravakonda; and the messages that we can draw, the lessons that we can learn from His words, from His action there in Uravakonda, where He had the later part of His study there.

Thank you. We will meet again.