

# **Sai Pearls of Wisdom, Part 46-B**

## **SHIRDI EXPERIENCE July 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

**Om Sri Sai Ram  
Prasanthi Sandesh**

Om Sri Sai Ram

Prasanthi Sandesh, Sai Pearls of Wisdom welcomes you.

We have been going through the biography of our most beloved Bhagavan. It is not simply narrative and merely descriptive. This exercise is taken up with a good intention that we should draw lessons from His life and learn to improve the quality of our life. That is the purpose of *Avatar*. It is in this line, with this goal, we started the study of the biography of Bhagavan Baba.

Well, after undergoing through ordeal, torture, harassment by everybody, finally Baba seemed to have determined to be congenial and cooperative, and Eswaramma and Subbamma were allowed to feed Him with delicacies to their full delight.

One day, someone from Penukonda, probably at the insistence of the lately provoked Keshavaiah, came to the Raju home. Having heard of Raju' audacious claim that He was the Sai Baba of Shirdi, he threw out a challenge with a glaring eye. "We know who You are! You are just a small boy, the son of Venkama Raju and Eswaramma. But if You are the same Sai Baba the Sub-Registrar worships, let us have the proof now!"

Hearing the unknown voice ringing arrogantly through the house, Eswaramma emerged from the inner apartments.

"I shall give you the proof!" said Raju unruffled.

He asked that flowers be brought to Him. The man asked Eswaramma herself to bring them and she did so with trepidation.

In a quick gesture, Raju flung them on the floor. "There! That is who I am!"

They all saw the petals arranged themselves to form the Telugu words, 'Sai Baba'.

Well, the tongues stopped wagging. Keshavaiah later visited Puttaparthi, staying for 4 days and participating in *bhajans*.

Before he left he said, “You will be greater than me! Great things will happen! The whole world will come to You! You will have *Indira-Vaibhavam*. Rulers and angels will come to Your Feet!” Raju offered *vibuthi* and he accepted it.

About this time, Eswaramma chose to reveal a past vision to Subbamma. In it, Raju appeared before her as an old bearded man. Then she remembered the old times when Raju, as a little boy, spoke of an old *fakir* who used to feed Him *rotis*. Those puzzling events now took on a mysterious dimension, revealing a connection that was to clarify itself in the years to come.

Subbamma instinctively grasped the situation and told the anxious Eswaramma not to let her son’s pranks mislead her. “After all,” she counselled, “was not Krishna also equally mischievous, calling Himself ‘Hari’ at one time and ‘Gopala’ at another?”

Both women were relieved that Raju was active again, though He did not associate with His companions. He would walk to the hills alone and sit in silence on the rocks for hours at a time. Subbamma constantly scouted around for Him in His favourite spots on the banks of Chitravathi, to feed Him with her hands.

At another time, Raju would leave the house at night and wander about aimlessly. One day, when His sister Venkamma Raju called Raju to her home, His childhood friends Tunga Gangappa, Kansali Venkappa and Vasi Narayana also accompanied Him. Raju went and lay down on the bed. She asked His friends to keep an eye on Raju while she went next door.

During their brief stay, Raju suddenly started to get up on His own. When they tried to restrain Him from doing so, He threw them away. Jointly, they forced Him to be in bed. He fell asleep, and upon waking a short time later, He recognised the three friends and asked them, “When did you come?”

“We were having *bhajans*! Were we not having them? We will have *bhajans* again tomorrow! You should all come!”

While singing *bhajans*, He would leave abruptly and walk away anywhere He liked. The local villagers started calling Him a crazy boy.

Raju would say, “I am not crazy! All of you are crazy!”

The practise of Shirdi worship was becoming common in Puttaparthi. Raju’s uncle, Venkata Rama Raju, Venkata Subba Raju were worshippers of Sai Baba of Shirdi long before Raju announced Himself as being that Sai Baba.

Venkata Subba Raju brought a Shirdi Baba portrait and started offering worship before it. During the worship, Raju used to sit behind him and on many occasions would fall into a trance. Venkata Subba Raju often read aloud the biography of Sai Baba. Whenever He heard while reading, Raju would point out the mistake and explain where the mistake was - including page number, stanza or line. Raju would sit on a deer skin before Sai Baba's portrait and spend time alone without talking, eating or doing anything.

One day, many youngsters wanted to test Raju and know the reasons for His inordinate behaviour. So they went and asked Him, "What, Sathya Narayana? Why did You not eat or drink anything? What has happened to You?"

Raju told them, "You are all mad boys!"

Saying so, He moved His hand on the deer skin, materialized a four *anna* coin ('ANNA'), meaning equal to 25 paise today; four *anna* coin and gave it to them. They were surprised! They took it and brought coconut and incense sticks for two *annas*, returned to the room where Raju sat, breaking the coconut before Him.

Raju asked them, "Why have you brought all these? I gave it for your personal use. So, no, don't do that! So, you buy some eatables!"

All of them then realized that Raju had some powers which made them more curious than ever. They wanted to test Him further and decided to take Him to Chitravathi sands.

Once there Raju said, "Tell Me what you want!"

They all demanded that Raju give them sugar candy, sweets and many other things. One after the other, He gave them all that they wanted!

He circled His hand in the air and manifested for them *vibuthi*. From then onwards, they would visit Him daily. After a few days, they took Raju to the local Gangamma temple. It was the season for the mangoes and one boy in the group asked for a mango.

Raju said, "There is a mango on the tamarind tree! Go and get it!"

Raju insisted upon waiting at the Gangamma temple. The boy went up the hill and found a mango hanging to the branch of the tamarind tree! See this! He brought the mango back to Raju who cut it and distributed pieces to all.

The great power latent in Raju had finally taken over. A new persona of Raju was beginning to emerge. But the body still had to go through tremendous trauma.

Years later, when devotees would ask Him why He had to undergo so much suffering and in complete silence, Raju as Sai Baba was to say, "People then were not prepared

to know Me! Besides I want to teach humanity the noble ideals of patience, acceptance and love; and put before others a good example! I had to tell them, by and by, who I am!"

Seshama Raju, however, was very critical of Raju's utterances. One Thursday, he noticed *vibuthi* appearing mysteriously on Raju's half-brow. When a seat was provided for Raju to sit on, Seshama Raju saw that the wooden plank moved on its own settling at Raju's Feet. He saw other inexplicable happenings like a lime fruit appearing out of the blue, jasmine flowers, and *vibuthi* and a rupee note moving up the wall and disappearing.

Every Thursday, He would go into a trance. Seshama Raju carefully watched every miracle as well as every unusual occurrence. He often verified Raju's predictions. Soon, he was satisfied and thoroughly convinced that there was no pretence of any sort.

His brother most definitely had some powers, even though He had not performed any austerities, gone to a Guru or taken *Upadesha* or done any *Sadhana*. That is important! So the elder brother began to be certain that Raju was different and wondered whether the great soul of Shirdi Sai Baba had taken possession of his brother's body after the near-fatal scorpion bite.

He was no longer the same Sathyam. He continued to recite great poetry and go into trance, provide counsel or make predictions. He gave blessings to people who came to Him. Soon Seshama Raju returned to the world of mankind as he had to resume his teaching assignment at Uravakonda.

When school reopened after the summer holidays, he decided that Raju should go with him and attend school. He was worried about Raju's future, for how could Raju continue living in the village doing nothing and without an education or a job? He was also confident that Uravakonda would soon clear Raju's fanciful hallucinations. He insisted that Raju should be sent back to school and put to tasks that would be more useful.

The parents relented and Raju was sent back with His brother. Eswamma walked with them across Chitravathi and waved them off only when the village Karanatakanagepalli came into sight. Little did she know then that Raju was lost to her as her son. He now belonged to the entire world as its teacher.

That is the story of Bhagavan for today. We can certainly understand how He could reveal His identity. One – by correcting His brother who was going through Shirdi Sai *Charithra*. Wherever he committed a mistake, He could correct them! And we have also come to know how He materialized all the articles and fruits that His friends wanted from Him. It's really unbelievable and good fortune of Eswamma and also Subbamma Garu to realize that Baba is Krishna Himself, that they should not take it in a different sense.

We will meet again later.