



DR SHOBHA RAJU

GANESHA

...removes hurdles

As a team we failed to get visa to U.S. more than thrice in eighties. My popularity made the organisers to think that I must have had the knowledge of necessary procedures of American Embassy whereas I remained a novice.

I had no resolve either to go or not to go. I was concerned only about my team, who were very much interested to go. I need their cooperation to perform at home and was inclined to see a smile on their face if we got a visa.

We were gearing up for another trial to get American visa. There was a fear in me as to how will I face another failure. How will I keep my team happy?

With many prayers, I went to American Consulate with my team for Visa interview. Those were the days...people used to make big queues before American Consulate in Madras, right from the the previous night of the day of interview.



I followed the “tradition”, much against to my conscience.

The time came. We were called for the interview. It was decided that I would only answer the questions as I was considered good in speaking English and wise with experience of previous failures. After a few tricky questions, the officer

asked us to come in the afternoon and collect the visas.

I felt that God has heard our prayers. All the team were happy. I gave lunch to everyone in celebration.

We all went very jubilantly to The Consulate in the afternoon to collect our visas. The officer asked casually, “By the way, are you earning any money?”. One of the senior persons said, “No no. Not much”. The officer looked at us sharply and said, “I am sorry. We can’t give you visas”.

It felt as if a surging ocean was suppressed.

On reviewing the interview, we could understand that the answer of the senior person in our team, “....not much” effected the decision of the consular. We are not supposed to earn any money on visitors’ visa. We were not assured of any money actually. Excitement causes havoc certain times.

We all returned to Hyderabad from then Madras in very low spirits.

That was 1989. A memorable year in my life. I lost my six and half months pregnancy and took a very hard decision of not having any children (I will write about it in another article). This incident coupled with financial stress, family instability, certain selfish people cheating me, trying to knock off my life's mission of "Annamacharya Bhavana Vahini"... etcetera caused a standstill in my thinking and activity temporarily. I remained silent witness to happenings.

My refuge is always at His

Feet. I was more drawn to Sai Baba then though my first love is Venkateswara. I used to worship Puttaparthi Baba as an Avatar of Shiridi Baba.

God saw me that I continue to sing irrespective of the turbulence. In 1989 I received invitation from Telugu Association of North America once again. "Swami! (my address to God) do You want me to face failure once again?", I thought.

The same night, I had a dream, in which Satya Sai Baba appeared and gave me a small clay idol of Ganesha. As I was carrying it, that grew huge and heavy.

In a few days, we had to go to The U.S. Consulate for visa once again. My mind was calm... ready

to take any outcome.

But the symbolic gesture of Swamy handing over Ganesha to me proved right. It removed the hurdle in getting the visa. 1989 is the year, I landed in U.S. for the first time and did an extensive tour for three months, giving concerts in different places. I gathered memorable experiences. That was when Telugu Association of North America honored me with the title, "Annamayya Pada Kokila".

May Lord Ganesha remove all the obstacles in your noble endeavors friends!

(Author is a well-known musician, Devotional singer, writer and composer.) 

