

The Sai Pearls Talk Given by Anil Kumar

"Sai Pearls of Wisdom"

Part 22

November 11th, 2003

OM... OM... OM...

Sai Ram

**With Pranams at the Lotus Feet of Bhagavan,
Dear Brothers and Sisters,**

Welcome back to Sai Pearls of Wisdom session. After a gap of about six months, we are meeting here for the first time. I am extremely happy and grateful to Swami for having made the Sai Pearls quite popular. People have been browsing their computers and they have been expressing their satisfaction about it. As the matter is not accessible to everybody and as everyone is quite anxious to know what is being transacted there on the veranda between Swami and the students, we are catching up with this information day-by-day. I thank all of you for the keen interest you have been showing, and for the encouragement that you have been giving me from time-to-time to continue this project.

We commence from the month of August 2003. Swami returned here in the month of July, around the 9th. The sessions started only in the month of August, because in earlier periods, as you know, it was not possible for us to interact with Him. It was not until the month of August that He preferred to spend some time with us. I want to bring to your attention a few of the important points that happened on 11th of August 2003.

SYMPOSIUM FOR SCHOOL TEACHERS

Around that time, under the auspices of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, we had a symposium for school teachers. As you know, Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning has been judged the best in the country, and the University Grants Commission requested Sri Sathya Sai University to conduct some orientation courses for school teachers, so that they will apply values in their teaching, as well as in practice. So, we had a symposium for teachers from different schools, and around 50 of them were selected for the first batch. Professors from Sathya Sai University were given topics, and each one was to deal with a particular topic. I should say without the least bit

of exaggeration that the entire symposium went on very, very well, much to the satisfaction of the organisers and also the participants.

It is in that connection that a conversation took place that evening, on 11th of August 2003. As it was a long time since we had Bhagavan in our midst, naturally we were thrilled. We were very much excited to find Him sitting on the chair and talking to every one of us, because for a couple of months we were away from Him physically. Bhagavan was equally happy to talk to us that day, and He exceeded even *bhajan* time, which rarely happens. As *bhajan* time is nearing, He usually winds up the talk, and proceeds towards the *bhajan* hall. But this time, the conversation went on, meaning we also took some *bhajan* session time. It speaks of the eagerness of the students and the Love of Bhagavan.

UNITY OF RELIGIONS

Bhagavan started asking us some questions. He looked straight at me and said, "What was your topic? On what topic did you speak to those teachers?"

I said, "Bhagavan, I spoke on the unity of religions."

"Oh, I see." Then Swami put a question "How did you explain this unity? What are the examples that you have given in support of your topic?"

I answered this way: "Bhagavan, Your discourses come to my rescue every time. All the valuable things that I hear and the pearls that I collect from Your Lotus Feet are of immense value to me. I make use of that literature."

And then I started to tell Swami like this: "Bhagavan, I explained the six major religions on the basis of values, not on the basis of rituals. Religions differ so far as rituals are concerned. But religions are united and religions are in harmony when we take spirituality into consideration. If you go by rituals, we are divided. If you think of spirituality, we stand united." That's what I said.

"For instance, Swami, Truth, Righteousness, Peace, Love, Non-violence -- all the values that You talk to us about are common to all religions. Therefore, when we are value-based, we will be able to arrive at unity". That is what I said. "Swami, I recalled what You said in this line, and I shared it with those teachers on that day."

Swami did not leave me at that stage.

Further He said, "What are the religions that you spoke on?"

"Swami, the six major religions."

"What are they?"

“Yes, these are the following six major religions followed in this country: Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Christianity, Islam and Sikhism.”

“GOLD IS SAME BUT JEWELS ARE MANY”

Then Swami said, “OK, how did you proceed?”

Then I said, “Swami, I made three points: first, the important points of each of these six religions. Second point was about the basic values like Truth, Righteousness, Non-violence, Peace and Love, and what each religion has got to say on these values. Third, I told of Bhagavan’s views on each of these religions. I made in a tabular form, Swami, with the principles first. Next, I talked about these values and what they tell, and finally Swami’s views on these religions.”

Well, I could find an expression of satisfaction on His face. (*Laughter*)

Then, however, Bhagavan asked, “What are the examples you have given to tell them that unity of religions is necessary? How could you prove that there is unity?”

I said, “Swami, I’ve taken an example from Your literature. Gold is same, but jewels are many. Flowers are many, but worship is same. Out of the same clay, so many pots are made. Goal is one, though paths are many. Sky is one, though stars are many. You have given a number of examples, Swami, and I cited all of them. They seem to have been convinced.”

Then Swami put a very pertinent question. “Where have you learned this unity of religions?”

“Swami, I must admit I have learned this unity after coming to You.”

“Oh, how could you learn?” (*Laughter*) “You say you have learned unity of religions after coming to Me. How did you learn?”

“I HAVE LEARNED IT HERE”

I said, “Swami, the place itself conveys sufficient message. As we come to this place, we come across Sri Sathya Sai Hill View Stadium, where we have statues of Krishna, Lord Shiva, Jesus Christ, Guru Nanak, Lord Buddha. All these statues, each 20 to 30 feet high, speak of the unity of religions.

Passing by, we come across *Chaithanya Jyothi* Museum, which speaks of the unity of religions through charts and computer presentations. And then we go into Prashanthi Nilayam. There is the *Sarva Dharma Stupa*, which is a symbol of unity of all religions. You must have seen it behind the Poornachandra Auditorium. That pillar with a lotus flower is a symbol of the unity of religions. Important points of all the religions are carved on each side of its foundation wall.

As we go into Poornachandra Auditorium, we find all these things embossed on the wall: There is Christ surrounded by sheep, the Guru Granth, the Holy Book of Sikhism, the Holy Fire of Zoroastra, and Lord Krishna talking to Arjuna. The Poornachandra Auditorium also speaks of unity of religions. This place itself has got a message based on the unity of religions. I have learned it here only, Swami.” That’s what I said.

“HOW DIVERSITY HAS COME OUT OF THIS”

And then, Swami said, “All right, you say unity is there. Explain how diversity has come out of this.” Well, all the answers were exhausted. I had to lift both of my hands in helplessness. Then, there was no other alternative than to surrender to the Lotus Feet.

Then Swami started speaking on this topic: “Look, you have eyes, ears, hands and legs. All these limbs of the body belong to you only. Limbs and organs are many, but they belong to you, is it not? Similarly, all these religions are like limbs. They all speak about the same God. That is unity.” That’s what Bhagavan has said.

“And further, if you know one person clearly, you will be able to know everybody else. Here is a simple example. Every medical student studies the parts of a single person. The same parts are present everywhere. The eye structure of Me is same as the eye structure of you. The ear structure of Me is same as the ear structure of you as well. Similarly, if you know one, you will know everyone. That is what unity is.” That is what Bhagavan has said.

Therefore, though there are so many bulbs illumining and shedding light, the brilliant current behind is one and the same. That’s how you can certainly establish unity, as Bhagavan has said.

“HOW TO ACHIEVE UNITY?”

“Swami, all right! A simple question.”

Swami said, “What is it?”

“Swami, how do we achieve unity? I have known unity theoretically. Diversity is what I see. But, how do we *achieve* unity? How do we *attain* unity? That’s my question.”

And Bhagavan said, “That principle which is not seen is responsible for the functioning of the whole of the body that you see. The hands that you see work because of Divinity. The legs walk because of Divinity. Eyes see because of Divinity. So, these limbs are seen, but the Divinity is unseen. When you think of that unseen, single principle of Divinity, naturally you can attain unity.”

We are not able to understand unity because our vision, our understanding, is divided so we don’t think of the main source. If we think of the main source, naturally we’ll be able to attain unity. That’s what Bhagavan has said.

Then I made one comment, because on every occasion we want to exhibit our scholarship or knowledge in a foolish way, and get into a problem. That's what happens, particularly with Swami. One has to be very careful. But I am known for these things, putting questions every time so I can extract some information from Swami that will be useful to everybody. At times, the questions may look quite silly, out of context and irrelevant. But the matter that I get from Swami thereafter will be of immense value to everybody.

THE SECRET OF EDUCATION

Now I said, "There is one character in *Bhagavatha* by name Prahlada. This boy Prahlada said to his father, "Oh father, I could know the *marma* (Sanskrit word meaning 'secret' or 'mystery') of the whole knowledge."

Baba caught hold of my neck now! Then He said, "What is the meaning of *marma*?"

I said, "Swami, 'essence'." Prahlada said he could know the *marma* of education, meaning he could know the essence of education.

Baba said, "No. It is not essence. It is a secret. *Marma* means the *secret* of education." And then He asked me, "Oh I see, now tell me the secret of education." (*Laughter*)

What shall I say? "Swami, I don't know anything else other than what I remember. I don't know anything else other than what You said, which I happened to hear and translate. What can I do, Swami?"

He said, "Nothing wrong. Tell what you know. Come on!"

He insisted that I should say. "All right Swami, I will quote Your own poem. One time You said: 'The essence of all sacred texts all over the world can be summarised in a single sentence. This is the secret of education. What is that? ***The same Self is present in everybody. The Self in you is the same as the Self in everyone.*** That is the secret of education.' O Swami, so simple!"

Then further Swami commented, "Correct! Why do you hesitate to tell what you know? Why are you afraid to tell that which you feel correct? You have given the correct answer."

"PATH TO UNITY IS SELF-ENQUIRY"

Then Swami said, "What did you have in the college?"

"Swami, we had a symposium in the college."

Now He started asking questions. "What is a symposium?"

“Swami, a symposium is a process, a phenomenon, where different perspectives, different viewpoints on a single topic are projected by different participants. The theme is only one. On a single theme, people present different viewpoints, different aspects.”

Swami said, “No, you are wrong. Yes, good, good.” (*Laughter*)

“Then Swami, what else is symposium?”

Then Swami said, “You are wrong. Symposium is not division. You said there are different points on the same topic. You are wrong. Division is not symposium. Union is symposium. S-y-m means ‘union’. ‘Symposium’ means where people unite. It is not, as you said, where they divide. (*Laughter*) So, you are wrong. They unite.”

“Oh I see, Swami, all right.” That’s what Bhagavan said.

“SELF-ENQUIRY IS THE ONLY WAY TO ATTAIN UNITY”

“Swami, what should I do? What practice should I follow to experience this spirit of unity?” Then I just gave some more points for Swami to speak on, to provoke Him, (*Laughter*) and to get some ‘bangings’ in turn.

“Swami, people say that *japa* or penance, *dhyana* or meditation, *puja* or worship, and prayer are different paths, different spiritual exercises, done to attain unity. Which one should I follow? “

Swami said “None of them.” (*Laughter*)

“None of them?”

“Yes.”

“Swami, so what should I do now?” (*Laughter*)

Baba said, “Enquiry, the path of enquiry: Put to your self the question, ‘Who am I?’ I am not the body, I am not the mind, and I am not the intellect. I am the Self.’ Self-enquiry is the only path to attain unity.” That’s what Baba said.

But I didn’t want to keep quiet at that stage. “So, Swami, do You mean to say that meditation is useless? Do You mean to say that worship is a fit-for-nothing process? So, shall I stop all these things?”

Then Baba said, “No. These are all the processes that will make you fit enough to enquire within yourself.”

I think I am clear. By meditation, your mind will develop concentration, which will help you to make Self-enquiry. By worship, your mind becomes pure, fit enough for Self-enquiry. So all the paths we are adopting make the ground ready, make the mind ready,

to turn inward and proceed along the path of enquiry. You see that is the uniqueness of Baba. He says one thing; at the same time, he does not reject the other thing. They are also necessary to have bliss. That is Bhagavan Baba. I think I am clear.

So, this Self-enquiry is very necessary. But for that, meditation and *bhajan* are all necessary. It makes you fit enough, and it equips you. That's what Bhagavan said.

"BHAKTI AND KARMA ARE PRESENT IN THE PATH OF WISDOM"

"Swami, excellent!" And then, "Swami, I have got one more question."

"What is it?"

"Swami, people say that the path of enquiry is the path of wisdom, *jnana*, which is superior or most high. It is the highest level of spirituality. So, is it enough if I proceed in that direction, because it is the highest level? It's a non-stop air flight. Why change over in Bombay or Frankfurt? It's not necessary. Go straight! So, Swami shall I proceed along the path of enquiry, which is the path of *jnana yoga*, straightaway? People say that it is most superior."

Baba said, "No, you are wrong again. Even in the path of wisdom, action or *karma* is present. There is also present *bhakti* or devotion. Even in the path of wisdom, these two are there."

Mere wisdom is only the collection of facts, knowledge, if there is no action. Mere wisdom makes you arrogant if there is no devotion. So, wisdom will find its fulfillment, wisdom will find its fructification, only if coupled with action and devotion. That's what Bhagavan has said.

"THERE IS NOTHING LIKE A HIGHER OR LOWER LEVEL IN SPIRITUALITY"

Anyway, I wanted to put another question. "Swami, excuse me for putting this question. Would You please let me know what is the best method in spiritual practice or *sadhana*? What is the most suitable way? Which is higher than the others?" (Because we want to be high in life, you know, so I asked, "Which is superior? Please let me know.")

Baba said, "Remember always that there is nothing like one being superior or the other being inferior in spirituality. There is nothing like a higher level and a lower level. The higher and lower are only competitive, comparative words used in worldly parlance or in a worldly sense. But in spirituality, there is nothing like superior or inferior. There is nothing like higher level and lower level. Everything is the same. That's what you have to understand."

"Swami, how am I to know? I think I am a bit higher than others (*Laughter*) because I am sitting on a chair." (*Laughter*)

Now Baba said, “If you stand in water knee-deep, you can see and talk to everybody. If you are in water neck-deep, you can still talk to everybody. If you drown yourself totally, you cannot communicate anything to anybody. (*Laughter*) Similarly, the ultimate experience is silence. So long as you speak of superior and inferior, you have not got anything. When you remain silent, when you remain speechless, that is the attainment of unity, harmony, oneness, without any kind of comparison.” That’s what Bhagavan has said.

“AFTER SELF-ENQUIRY, WHAT AM I GOING TO BECOME?”

“Then another question, Swami.”

“Yes, what is it?”

“Swami, it’s very good. After Self-enquiry, after realising the Self, what is going to happen to me? (*Laughter*) After getting M.Sc., what will happen? You’ll become a lecturer. After getting Ph.D., what will happen? You’ll become a professor. So similarly, after Self-enquiry, what is going to happen to me? What am I going to become after this?”

Baba laughed and said, “You are not going to become anything. (*Laughter*) There is nothing to become also.” (*Laughter*)

“Oh I see. Swami, how?”

Baba said, “It seems that a parrot made up of sugar candy wanted to know the depth of the ocean. So, this parrot, which was made up of sugar, went close to the ocean and dove into the ocean to search how deep it was. In the meantime, while searching, it got dissolved. Similarly, in the process of Self-enquiry, you are lost; you are gone. You become one with the vast universe. You are one with the infinite. You are one with the cosmos. You are not separate anymore to say that, ‘I got this, I got that; I became this, I became that.’ So, those who say, ‘I got this, I became that’ have not got anything other than ignorance.” We have got to understand that very clearly.

“HOW CAN THE FINITE KNOW THE INFINITE?”

And then I asked, “Swami, one question please. Pardon me, Swami. I know that *bhajan* time is fast approaching, but I don’t know whether I would get a chance to put this question again. So let me seize this opportunity.”

“Swami, the Self is infinite. I am finite. Divinity is so vast, unlimited. I am limited. How can the limited know the unlimited? How can the finite know the infinite? Is that possible, Swami? How?”

Baba said, “It is only the limited that can know the limitless. It is only the finite that can know the infinite, because there is no question of the infinite knowing the infinite. Infinity is one. Therefore, your mind is finite, while Self is infinite. With the help of the mind which is finite or limited, you should be able to know the infinite and limitless.”

So with the help of the limited, you can know the unlimited. The mind, which is limited, should make you experience the Self, which is infinite. That's what Bhagavan said.

"VIBRATION AND INNER VOICE"

"Swami, these days many people are using two important words, which I don't understand, nor find any sense in it. But I cannot dismiss those two words openly because I don't want them to think that I am ignorant of these things. At least I should pretend that I am a wise man, though it may not be so in reality. The meaning and experience of these words I don't have. Would you please explain what they are, Swami?"

Swami said, "What are those two words? Tell me."

"One is 'vibration'. The second is 'inner voice'. People speak of these two words, vibration and inner voice. I want to know, Swami, is this inner voice present in everybody, or is it the sole property of a few people?"

Some people say, "Swami told me this by an inner voice."

"Why does He not tell me? Why should He tell you? Do you think that you only have inner voice and I have no inner voice, only outer noise? What do you mean?" Is inner voice common to everybody or the monopoly of a few?

And we find people changing their places. Why? "I am not getting good vibrations."
(*Laughter*)

"Oh I see. When you are feeling those vibrations, how is it that I don't feel? So, you have vibrations and I am vibration-less. So, you are a master of inner voice and I have much less inner voice. What is all this, Swami? I don't understand. Please kindly explain what it meant."

Swami explained in a simple way. I want you to really understand and appreciate it because nobody has ever given this kind of answer.

He said that the body has senses. This is the first level, and what we call 'conscious'. 'Conscious' means the body with senses. There is Divinity in every one of us. The individual soul is what you call 'conscience'. Now Baba says the connecting link between 'conscious' and 'conscience' is vibration. So, vibration arises at the meeting point between 'conscious' and 'conscience', meaning between the body and the individual soul. There you have this vibration.

"Then, inner voice, Swami?"

"Wait, first you understand this."

“Swami, I understand. Then, what is inner voice?”

“The individual soul is conscience, OK? While the cosmic soul, the universal soul is ‘Consciousness’. The connecting link between ‘conscience’ and ‘Consciousness’ is the inner voice.”

“Oh, then why is there no inner voice in my case? How shall I understand that?”

Bhagavan said, “You have not connected the individual soul with the universal Soul.”

“How, Swami?”

“You have a tumbler full of water. All right. Throw it out! Pour the tumbler full of water into the ocean. What will happen? This water and the ocean water will become one. So similarly, when the individual soul, the conscience, is one with the universal Soul, Consciousness, in that unity, you hear the inner voice. Because you have limited yourself, like the water in the tumbler, you have remained at the conscience level. You have not gone to the Consciousness level. Therefore, you are not able to listen to the inner voice. Am I clear? You don’t feel the vibration because you have not connected the conscious, the body, with the conscience, the individual self.”

“THERE IS NOTHING LIKE GOOD AND BAD.”

“Swami, fantastic! Nobody gave this kind of interpretation till now. Then Swami, what about certain things being branded good and other things being branded bad? People say that this is bad, while that is good. But what is good at one time is bad later. *(Laughter)* What is bad now is good later. What am I to do? Good and bad are relative. You cannot say that this is totally bad, and that is totally good. Who am I to say that?”

Then Swami said, “There is nothing like good and bad. Why? Good and bad are the factors that are decided or judged by the mind. It is the mind that decides; it is the mind that distinguishes; it is the mind that differentiates; and it is the mind that divides the good and the bad. But spirituality is *beyond* the mind. It is transcendental. At that stage, there is nothing like good and bad.”

“So, Swami, can we have a free life now? *(Laughter)* There’s nothing like good and bad now. *(Laughter)* So, we can have a free, jolly life.”

“No.” *(Laughter)*

“Why?”

“Because you have not transcended your mind. You have not gone beyond the mind. Your mind is full of desires, enough for ten lives to come! And you are so egoistic because of your mind; you are so proud because of your mind; you are so possessive because of your mind; you are so attached because of your mind. Lust, love, greed, ego, anger -- these are all the qualities of the mind. So, you operate at the level of the

mind. When you operate at the level of the mind, you've got good and bad. You must follow that. When you have transcended mind, this does not apply."

"How, Swami?"

"Jesus Christ spoke to good people and sinners also. So, to Jesus Christ, there is nothing like a saint and a sinner. Both are the same, because he has gone beyond the state of the mind." So, that's the example Bhagavan has given.

"DO UNTO OTHERS AS YOU WOULD LIKE THEM TO DO UNTO YOU"

Further, Swami said, "Whatever may be the vibration, whatever may be the inner voice, I want you all to remember one point: That which hurts you will hurt anybody. That which makes you happy will make everybody equally happy."

So considering that which is painful, I must know that it is equally painful to everybody. That which gives me pleasure and bliss will make anybody blissful and happy. Therefore, do unto others as you would like them to do unto you. Therefore, I should treat others in the same way as I would like to be treated. With that, that day's session concluded, which happened to be the 11th of August.

"OUR ALL-KNOWING GOD"

Now, this conversation refers to the 12th of August. Swami came that evening and sat on the chair and started enquiring, "How are you?" And then, suddenly, Swami looked at a boy and said, "How is your mother?"

The boy said, "Swami, she is undergoing treatment."

Baba immediately remarked, "That treatment is not correct. She is suffering from a kidney problem, which is not diagnosed by the doctors. I will give you *vibhuthi prasadam* now. Send her, and that solves the problem."

My friends, this is a miracle that I want to share with you because of the omniscience of our Bhagavan, though the boy never said that his mother was sick. Swami looked at him, saying, "Come here. How is your mother?"

The boy did not have a seat in the front row. He was far behind. That is our all-knowing God. We are in the company of the all-knowing, all-powerful God. Further, Baba said, "Take this *vibhuthi* with you. She will be cured." What does it mean? He knows the cause and the cure. He knows the diagnosis and the treatment. That's why He could tell the boy the treatment was wrong. The treatment that the boy's mother was undergoing at that time was not right. Therefore, this was a revelation for everybody.

"BHAGAVAN IS THE SINGER IN EVERY ONE OF US"

Then, there were a few boys sitting in the front row belonging to the Music College. The boys started singing. *Sruthi* is pitch. One has to adjust the voice and all those things. Any instrument that you play must be in accordance to our tone, right? *Sruthi*.

Before the boy started singing, He said the exact meter and told that fellow who plays on the harmonium, "That is his wavelength. That is the wavelength of his voice. Come on, adjust to that." The boy was surprised. He didn't start singing.

Bhagavan told the fellows, "Adjust. This is his tone. Adjust to that." Bhagavan is the singer within every one of us. Bhagavan is the song of life. Bhagavan is the voice of everyone, so He could say that. I was very much surprised by that point.

"HE IS THE DIVINE DOCTOR"

This happened on 13th of August 2003. He asked the music boys to sing. They were singing, and then, from among the four of them, He asked one boy to come close to Him.

He said, "Your voice is not proper. You are suffering from cough, is it not?"

"Yes Swami. Cough, Swami... problem."

"I see. Don't worry."

By the wave of His hand, Bhagavan materialised tablets. All of us saw it. Not only me, but also a few hundred boys saw it there, on the dais.

"Take these tablets for two days, thrice a day. You will be free from all the problems of the throat."

By the third day, that boy's voice not only had a total cure, but the voice improved. It is a metallic voice. So, Swami's curative measure is not simply a cure, but an improvement over the past, because He is the Divine Doctor Himself. That's what we have seen.

"WHY DO YOU SHOUT LIKE THAT?"

This refers to the 5th of August. (Of course, as per the date, I should have told it earlier. But the content is important.) Swami was coming along the verandah, before occupying His chair. He looked at me and said, "Why did you speak loudly there?"

"Swami? Where, Swami?"

"In the lecture this morning -- what a loud voice it is! Do you think all the people are deaf? Why do you shout like that?" (*Laughter*)

Then I said, "Swami, I know my weakness. *(Laughter)* I am trying to bring down my voice all these years unsuccessfully. *(Laughter)* Before it was very horrible. But now *(Laughter)* I think it is sufficiently moderate."

"No, no, no. It is still loud." That's what Bhagavan said. *(Laughter)*

But that made me happy. Swami said, "Why are you looking like that?"

I said, "Swami, my voice may be loud and disturbing, but I am happy that You heard my talk." *(Laughter)*

"RELIGION IS LOVE"

And then Swami started speaking again: "You spoke on the unity of religions, I understand. What is religion? Do you know that?"

"Swami, religion is a path to reach God."

He said, "You are wrong, you are wrong!"

"So Swami, what is religion now?" *(Laughter)*

"Religion is Love. Religion is Love."

"Oh Swami, is religion Love?"

"Yes. Religion is also called realisation. What have you to realise? That religion is Love. That's what you should have said to those teachers." Bhagavan said.

"Swami, all right, religion is Love. Then, why are there so many religions? So many religions are there: Islam, Hinduism, and all that. If there is only one religion of Love, then why so many? "

Then Baba said, "If you stop arguing, you will experience unity." *(Laughter)* The unity of religion can be experienced by stopping argumentation. That is the only way. That's what Bhagavan has said.

And then I said, "Swami, another question. Why different interpretations? There are Catholics, Protestants, Hindus, Shaivites, and Vaishnavites. Why are there so many interpretations?"

Then Swami said, "It is only for arguments. So long as you go by interpretations, so long you go by these narrow paths, you can never experience unity."

"DRAW THE BEST OUT OF THE WORLD"

"Swami, I have one doubt."

“What is it?”

“Swami, people say that Buddhism is atheistic, that Buddhists do not believe in God. Am I right?”

Swami said, “No. (*Laughter*) No. What Buddha says is this: You get a message through the senses. You get a message of the scenario through your eyes. You get the message of sounds through your ears. So, you get messages from the outer world through the senses. Is it not right? Therefore, Buddha says, only see what is good. *Samyak drushti*. Have good vision. So, let the eyes be windows so that all good will be taken in. And all that you hear, hear what is good. *Samyak Sravanam*. Good listening. So, what Buddhism tells you is to draw the best out of this world through these senses. It is not that they are non-believers. Don’t say that they are atheists, no.”

That’s what Bhagavan said, commenting on Buddhism. Actually speaking, we’ll be very much surprised while listening to Swami from time-to-time because we’ll be under the impression that we know things. But as we hear Him, we will know that we do not know. So, my friends, it is absolutely necessary to hear Swami so that we know what it is.

“ADI SHANKARA INTEGRATED BUDDHISM AND HINDUISM”

Then, I would like to draw your attention to certain other important points that He said. “Swami, history says that Adi Sankara contradicted and condemned Buddhism. Is that right?”

Those of you who are students of comparative religions must have come to know and would definitely agree with me, that what Adi Sankara says is just the opposite of what Buddha said. And some of us are also under the impression that Sankaracharya condemned outright Buddhism. So that is the question I have put.

Swami said, “No. He has not contradicted him. He has not condemned him.”

“Swami, do You mean to say that he has supported him?”

“No. I did not say that.”

“So, Swami what do You say now?”

Baba says, “He could integrate Hinduism and Buddhism. It is a question of integration. It is not a question of contradiction. Adi Sankara could take the spirit of Buddha. Buddha is better explained now. So, it is a question of integration; it is not a question of contradiction.” That’s what Bhagavan has said.

Look here, the point is this. We will never find Bhagavan condemning any religion. We will never find Bhagavan denying any religion. We will never find Bhagavan speaking low of any religion. On the other hand, He will take them to heights, to exalted heights! That is something great.

“ADI SANKARA FOLLOWED THE PATH OF DEVOTION ALSO”

“Swami, about Adi Sankara, I have got one question.”

Swami said, “What is it?”

“Adi Sankara stands for non-dualism. Non-dualism is a school of philosophy that believes in the ancient wisdom, *jnana marga*, the path of wisdom. Is that true, Swami?”

Bhagavan immediately said, “The same Adi Sankara wrote a number of songs and hymns in praise of the Goddess. It means what? He followed the path of devotion also. So, never say that Adi Sankara supported only wisdom. No. He followed the path of devotion also. And he has composed the beautiful verse, *Bhaja Govindam*, which is based on the principles of devotion.”

And finally He said, “Why do you argue like that? Understand that one is a corollary of the other. They are all sequential. A tender fruit gradually develops into unripe fruit. The unripe fruit slowly turns into a ripe fruit. So, the ripe fruit of today was unripe yesterday. The unripe fruit yesterday was a tender fruit earlier. So, one leads to the other. That’s not contradictory. That you should understand.” That’s what Bhagavan has said.

“THYAGARAJA HAD NO RAGA”

And then slowly, students of the Music College started moving to the front. You know little boys. People fight there to occupy front rows. So, the boys are jumping to take the front row. I got a feeling, ‘Why not ask some questions on music?’

Slowly I said, “Swami, *raga* or tune is very important for music. And there are two very popular musicians in Andhra Pradesh. One is Thyagaraja. The other composer happened to be Annamacharya. These are two great singers from this place. Swami, of the two, who is greater?” (*Laughter*) Mind...what to do? (*Laughter*) Mind does not want to accept things as they are. It wants to judge. It wants to estimate. It wants to rate. So, my mind is no exception.

Baba said, “Thyagaraja is certainly greater than Annamacharya.”

“Why Swami?”

Please follow me. ‘Tune’ in Sanskrit is called *raga*. But this Sanskrit word *raga* has another meaning also, ‘attachment’. So, *raga* has two meanings. One is ‘tune’, another ‘attachment’.

Baba said, “Thyagaraja had no *raga*, no attachment, but only the tune *raga*, the music part of it. He is a *vairagi*, meaning detached. Whereas Annamacharya, the other popular composer, has got some *raga*, the attachment with him, although his *ragas*, tunes, are quite popular.”

“Swami, what a game You have played with this single word, *raga*! (*Laughter*) Making use of the tune, and also the attachment at the same time! You only can do it. All cannot do it. “

“Swami, is it that Thyagaraja is great because of his *vairagya*, detachment?”

Swami said, “Not only that. All his compositions are based on his personal experience. Each one of his experiences made him compose a song. Therefore, they have become a legend, epoch-making. That’s why Thyagaraja is so great.” That’s what Bhagavan said.

“ALL ARE ONE”

“I know that time is up, Swami. I’ve got one more question. People speak of so many things like mind, intellect, ego, inner sense, and so on. Where are they? If you cut the body, where is ego? You don’t see it in the laboratory. In the operation theatre, if you cut the body, where is intellect? You cannot show it. Where is the mind? Where is the ego? You cannot show them. Where are they? What are they?”

Baba said, “All are one, actually. When you think, you call it the mind. When you decide, it is called intellect. When you feel, it is called *chittha*. When you say, ‘this is mine’, when you introduce yourself as ‘I’, it is ego, *ahamkara*. So, *ahamkara* is ego, I-ness. *Chittha* is feeling, passion. *Manas* is mind, thinking. *Buddhi* is intellect, decision-making. All are same. Depending upon the roles they perform, they are given different names.”

“KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS IN OUR HEART”

Now I take you to the 15th of August 2003. It happened to be the Independence Day of India, which is followed all over the country.

There at the college, we had our own function, hoisted the flag, received sweets and started running to have Bhagavan’s *darshan*. We came, and the people said that *darshan* was over. That happens even now. What shall I do? But somehow I am sure that Swami will not disappoint us. “All right, please be seated. Let us see. Until *arathi*, let us wait to see whether God is going to come or not.” Please believe me, Swami came!

To the best of my knowledge and experience, Swami never speaks politics. He never supports any single political party because all party leaders come to Him. All need His blessings; all are His children. So there is nothing Republican Party or Democratic Party. Both are His children. So there is nothing like supporting one political party against the other. Swami never speaks about politics to the best of my knowledge.

But on a personal note, I can tell you that I begin my day by reading the daily newspaper. My head is full of politics. I am in the habit of reading the paper. Yes, I read it thoroughly so I know what’s happening everywhere. However, I am trying to corner Bhagavan, and a number of times I made an attempt to make Him speak on politics, make Him comment on politics. Well, I failed utterly.

He just said, “Hmmm...I see. Hmmm...good, I see.” That’s all. No comment.

“Swami, in that State, this is happening?”

“Uh huh...good.”

“Swami here is that...”

“Hmm huh...good.”

My idea is to corner Him somehow or other, and see what He has to say on this point. No. Why? Bhagavan speaks of democracy in a different sense. Equality is not in terms of the exercise of franchise or voting. It is equality of humanity. It is equanimity of the mind. Bhagavan speaks of democracy in terms of sentiments and feelings and ideology. Bhagavan refers to the ‘kingdom of heaven’. Where is the kingdom of heaven? It is in our heart.

“Seek ye the kingdom of heaven and everything shall be added unto you,” says the Holy Bible. Where is the ‘kingdom of heaven’? It is in our heart. Bhagavan wants you to be the ‘king of your own kingdom’. But we are slaves. We want to be democratic, but we don’t have equal-mindedness. We don’t have the spirit of equality. All this is only for political purposes. So, it is my foolishness to put questions on politics. Well, I could not do it.

“BE INDEPENDENT TO BE A MASTER”

Anyhow I said, “Swami, do You like political leaders like Tilak and Bose, freedom fighters who struggled for the independence of this country?”

Now He could not control Himself. “Yes. Why, Anil Kumar, I know what you want!”
(*Laughter*)

“Now I will tell you in a simple sentence: Split the word ‘independence’: in – dependence. When you are ‘in dependence’, you are a slave. When you are ‘independent’, you are a master. So, be independent to be a master. But if you are in dependence, you are a slave.”

“Swami, very good, very good. I am extremely happy.”

Being a dependent, you have to look for others’ help every moment for everything. So, for any individual, for any institution, for any nation, independence is important.

All right, there were still five minutes more before *bhajan* time. Having failed all earlier attempts, I could get only one sentence from Him about dependence and independence. OK.

But still, “Swami!”

“Huh... yes?”

“It seems in Your younger days, You have composed a few songs in praise of this country. You have composed patriotic songs at a young age.”

He said, “So what?” (*Laughter*)

“Swami, roughly how old were You at that time?”

Do you know what Baba said?

“My age at that time? You say in My younger days? How can I say? I am ageless. How can I say My age? I am eternal.”

Though my intention is to drag Him into the political field, He has taken me to spiritual heights. He has taken me to spiritual heights by revealing that He is beyond time and space.

So, conversation with Swami is not only a matter of pleasure and revelation, but at the same time, it is quite risky and challenging. But it’s worth taking the risk, because we will be benefited ultimately.

That’s all that has happened during the month of August.

Anil Kumar closed the talk with the bhajan “Govinda Gopala Hey Nandalala”.

OM SHANTI SHANTI SHANTI

Thank you very much. Tomorrow again we will meet at the same time. Good night!
(*Audience*) Sai Ram!

HARI OM!