

Professor Anil Kumar has presented this talk as an extra satsang. He has selected important messages Baba has imparted to the students gathered around Him during the afternoon sessions on the veranda at Prashanti Nilayam. These talks will continue.

PROF. ANIL KUMAR'S SATSANG: BABA'S CONVERSATIONS WITH STUDENTS

**"Sai Pearls of Wisdom"
Part 23**

November 12th, 2003

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

**Sai Ram.
With Pranams at the Lotus Feet of Bhagavan,**

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

THE SACREDNESS OF THE VEDAS

As Bhagavan comes out of His residence and walks towards the Kulwant Hall auditorium, both morning and evening the students start chanting the Vedas. The chanting of Vedas may appear to be just noise, just some voice or some loud sound, meaningless sounds. But my friends, it is not so.

The Vedas contain *slokas*. The *slokas* are in the Sanskrit language. These are not composed by any man. They are born out of the intuition of the saints, who spent years and years in penance in the forest, long ago. They got some intuitive feeling which they started memorizing, and that knowledge is passed on, from one generation to the next.

The very sound of the Vedas has an effect on our brain. The electromagnetic waves of the Vedas have an effect on our nervous system, circulatory system, digestive system and so on. Vedas help us individually at the physical level, at the mental level, and at the spiritual level.

Chanting of the Vedas also helps the entire community to grow. It is also a type of prayer to ensure timely rain, so that the country may prosper, so that the country may be blessed with plenty. The Vedas pray for the welfare of the entire humanity and the whole universe, not just for the welfare of a particular country, region, or religion. Vedas have nothing to do with religion. With this brief introduction, I will proceed with the rest of the details.

You are quite welcome to put any questions you may have, at the end.

TEACHING CULTURE AND VALUES

My friends, let me tell you that there are around three hundred universities in this country with forty *lakhs* (one *lakh* = 100,000) of students enrolled to receive higher education. But I

can tell you one thing: There is only **one** university where the teaching of culture and the teaching of values is the main theme; and that is none other than Sri Sathya Sai University. This is a fact and will be confirmed slowly, as you listen to my other talks, which contain statements made by eminent educationalists from all parts of this country. Sri Sathya Sai University is the *only* university in the country which focuses on the cultural values and the traditions of this country.

CHANTING THE GLORY OF GOD IN UNITY

The second point I want to draw your attention to is that all students know the chanting of Vedas, right from kindergarten level to Ph.D.

All students chant the Vedas in unison. They join in chorus in perfect harmony, excellent diction, beautiful pronunciation, ideal modulation, full-throated, with joy, for hours. It's not easy to teach Vedas to hundreds of children. They all sing the glory of God, praying for the whole of humanity, so that all of mankind will live in peace, security, safety and prosperity. This is something great and quite unique about this institution.

Another thing, which we don't find anywhere else, is that the girls are chanting the Vedas. This is an exception. Women, in earlier days, were prohibited from learning the Vedas. Later they protested. Vedic knowledge is still not very popular among women. But Sri Sathya Sai Baba made all the girls of Anantapur recite the Vedas. I am still unable to believe this, even though I have been listening to it for fourteen years. I ask myself, "Is it true?" That is how I feel every time that I hear the girls chanting the Vedas.

In this country, there are priests who perform rituals: spiritual activities like marriages, house-warming functions, naming the child, etc. These are religious activities, which are performed by priests. All priests are supposed to know the Vedas. As the chanting of Vedas by all students is of professional standards, I even joke with them: "Arrey boys! You don't have to worry about unemployment -- you can live as priests as well!" (*Laughter*)

Well, I am not a serious man by temperament, and I don't mix with serious people. I believe religion is bliss, and that God is bliss. I believe that seriousness is a kind of sickness, not spirituality. So I like people who smile, and I like to make people smile.

I appreciate the boys' ability to chant the Vedas for another reason. Outside priests chant the Vedas as a means of livelihood, to earn their bread. I tell the boys, "You, you are Ph.D.'s and M. Tech.'s and M. Sc.'s who can chant the Vedas. I think you are all first-class enemies of the priestly class in this country!" (*Laughter*)

They have reached a remarkable standard of excellence. The intonation and modulation is of an unbelievable standard! If a pundit were to listen to a cassette of the boys chanting, he would say that the boys must have studied at a high-ranking Vedic university.

My friends! Why do we worship? To enjoy the blessings of God. Why do we pray? To get the blessings of God. Why do we meditate? To see the manifestation of God. Why so we sing *bhajans*? To see God in front of us. All our spiritual activities are to enjoy the manifestation of God. This Vedic chanting in front of God is something fantastic -- a lifetime fulfillment.

Outside people chant the Vedas in order to see God. Whereas here, you see Him and chant His glory in front of Him, which is really profit doubled. Double the profit -- not a thing to be taken for granted.

SWAMI IS PROUD OF HIS STUDENTS

Our God also wants all of us to know how great His children are. When God takes a human form, He displays certain humanistic tendencies. He wants the whole world to know that all the students are expert in the Vedas; that this is not a monopoly of a couple of students only. You must have noticed how He suddenly will ask all college boys to stop chanting, after which He will ask high school students to start. Then suddenly He will stop that. He will ask elementary school students to start chanting. In this way, we know that all students of Sai educational institutions are very well versed, very familiar with the Vedas and its chanting.

Not only that. He sometime plays games: He wants one boy to start, and then another boy to continue from where the first boy left off, like a chain. This way the chanting is not mechanical. Chanting is an art of perfection, not mere memorization. He wants boys to chant perfectly and we are extremely happy to witness this.

Suddenly one day He asked somebody, "Do you know the meaning of Veda?"

The boy said, "Yes Swami!"

"All right – Start!"

After one stanza, Swami said, "Stop! Now tell the meaning in English."

The boy started giving the English meaning of the verse.

"*Haan. Stop! Next verse.*" So it was, verse after verse, and in between, the English translation.

Please don't misunderstand me. A fact is a fact. Most of the pundits do not know the meaning of Veda. The great majority of Indians do not know Veda, nor its meaning. Amazingly, the students can give the English meaning, verse after verse. To chant the Vedas is sufficient achievement, but to also know its meaning is a unique accomplishment.

IMPROMPTU ORAL EXAMINATION

One day He suddenly asked one lecturer, "Come here! You ask these boys some questions on Veda. "

To prepare a question paper, a teacher needs at least three to four hours. He should gather all his books, see the syllabus, see the previous year's question paper, and then prepare the question paper. But here is our good God, who suddenly asks one lecturer to put questions on Veda. The lecturer was caught unawares. The boys did not know that they were going to be examined; and in addition, in front of thousands of devotees. If they failed, they would cut a sorry figure and Swami would feel very much let down. But God never fails!

So, to demonstrate this, Swami asked one lecturer: "Come on! Put some questions."

Please believe me, all questions were highly informative and the answers were excellent. None failed. There were claps and cheers. Most of you must have watched the whole scene that day. I noted those questions and answers for the benefit of English-speaking people. Some Sanskrit verses are here, the language that I myself do not know. So, for convenience sake, I have written in Telugu, my mother tongue, but it will be written in English Roman script, courtesy of our friends.

A lecturer on the dais in Sai Kulwant Hall put questions to students. This was viewed by a public of thousands. Any student could get up to give the answer. You must have seen that. All of them were unprepared. To me it appeared as if it were a public oral examination, an open *viva-voce*.

QUESTION 1: RUDRAM

There is a portion of Veda chanting called Rudram. Rudram has two parts – namakam and chamakam. What is the difference between the two?

One boy got up and said, “Swami! I will give the answer.”

“Yes. What is the answer?”

“The *chamakam* part of chanting of Veda helps in the fulfillment of your desires. So all *mantras* of this *chamakam* part end with these two letters: *chame..chame...chame...chame*. *Chame* means ‘I want that’. Therefore *chamakam* is the submission of desires. And you get them fulfilled. The other part is *namakam*. What is *namakam*? The *namakam* part of this *Rudram* is surrender to God. Here there are two letters: *na + ma: ma - mine, na – not; so, ‘not mine – everything is Yours.’* So, it means submission to God, surrender to God. “Nothing is mine and everything is Yours” is *nama-namakam*. I hope I am clear. Therefore, that is *namakam* and *chamakam*. The interesting thing is that in *namakam*, the first letter is *na*, while in *chamakam*, the second letter is *ma*. *Nama* meaning ‘egolessness, not mine’.”

As was very well noticeable on Swami’s face, he was very very happy at the meaning explained by the boys.

THE SECOND QUESTION - EVERYTHING IS FULL

There is one sloka, which says that everything is full in this world. Nothing is a fragment. Nothing is a bit. You are full. Everything is full. Which sloka from Upanishad says that everything is full, that Divinity is full, and that this universe is full? Full minus full is full. Full plus full is full. Because we are fools, we don’t understand what fullness is. Zero minus zero equals zero. Zero plus zero equals zero. Zero multiplied by zero equals zero. Simple mathematics. So, that is infinite, this is infinite. That is full. This is full. Which sloka says that?

One boy said:

***“Purnamadah Purnamidam Purnat Purnamudacyate
Purnasya Purnamadaya Purnamevavashishyate.”***

THIRD QUESTION

How do you say, that has the quality of fullness, that meaning Divinity, and this has the quality of fullness, this meaning humanity? Cite one example given by Baba in support of this concept.

One smart fellow got up and said, “When you want to make some sweets, what do you do? You go to a shop and buy jaggery. Out of that big lot, you cut a piece. Out of this piece, you cut a still smaller piece and make use of the material to make rice pudding or a pie or a doughnut. Now the point is, the piece of jaggery, which you use, is as sweet as the mass you have.”

This example has been given by Baba. It constituted a good answer by a student. One bag of sugar is as sweet as one bottle of sugar. One bottle of sugar has as much sweetness as a spoon of sugar. So far as the quality of sweetness is concerned, a bottle of sugar is as sweet as a bag of sugar.

QUESTION NUMBER 4 - UPANISHAD

What is the meaning of Upanishad?

Upa means 'near', *ni* means 'down', *shat* means 'sit'. 'Sit down near'. So, *Upanishad* means students should *sit down near* the teacher.

This may not be possible for western students. "Why should I sit down? I want to sit on the head of the teacher!" (*Laughter*) Why? Equal rights! But, the idea behind 'sit down near' is this: The teacher sits at a higher level and the students sit at a lower level. Knowledge flows downward just as water flows downward. *Upanishad* means 'sit-down-near'. *Upanishad* is taking place every day in the presence of Swami. Swami sits on the stage, while we sit on the ground.

Everybody liked the answer.

QUESTION 5 - PURUSHA-SUKTAM

Then there is another portion that they chant every day. It is called Purusha-Suktam. Purusha-Suktam means everything in praise of God, the Divinity: Praise His greatness, His uniqueness, His glory, His vastness, His splendor. God's attributes are described in Purusha-Suktam.

So the question is, what is the relevance of Purusha-Suktam for modern society? If someone starts chanting Vedas on the road today, we would think something is wrong with his mind. What has Purusha-Suktam to do with modern society? In a world of computers, where man is sent to the moon, how do we apply Purusha-Suktam?

One boy gave the answer, quoting from Swami's discourse. "Man is the limb of the society. Society is the limb of the nation. The nation is the limb of Divinity. So, man and God are related. Part of God is nature, part of nature is society and part of society is man. So, the relationship between man, society, nature and God is very well explained in *Purusha-Sukta*. They are inter-linked, inter-connected, inter-dependent and inter-related. The modern society requires the inter-relationships now more than ever before, because we are divided on a lot of silly considerations. So for unity, we need to study *Purusha-Suktam* today."

You must have heard of the caste system in India. Most unfortunately, the caste system is politicized: It is used by politicians to their advantage. It was exploited by the foreign rulers in the past, to divide the country, so that they could maintain their control of the country. But the original concept of caste was different. This *sloka* speaks of it.

There are four castes: First caste, *Brahmin*, the priestly caste, represents the head of God. Second, *Kshatriya*, the warrior class, represents the shoulders. Third, *Vaishya*, the business class, that is the stomach. Fourth, *Sudra*, the agricultural labor, the feet of the same body.

Can there be a body without a head? Can there be a body without the feet? Can there be a body without the hands? So, all the castes are compared to the limbs of the same body – the body of God. But unfortunately, people came to think that the castes are totally separate.

This divided the people, and the country became weak. Even now, politicians play games, taking advantage of the caste system in order to divide the society.

But the original design of the caste system was based on the temperament, profession, vocation, avocation and attitude to life of individuals. *Brahmins* are supposed to be the priestly class. They are supposed to take care of spiritual pursuits and spiritual needs of the society. *Kshatriyas*, the army, are supposed to protect the country. *Vaishyas* are supposed to take care of business – ministers of commerce and industries. *Sudras* are supposed to take care of grain, food, agriculture. So, tell me who is important and who is unimportant? Can you say? No. That's the original idea as explained by this boy.

QUESTION 6 - BHRUGUVALLI

In one Upanishad, there is a small portion called 'Bhruguvalli'. What does the Bhruguvalli convey?

The answer was given by one boy: Bhrugu is the name of a saint who, as a boy, went to his father, who was himself a great saint, and said, "O Father! Who is God? Let me know."

Father said, "You go and investigate. You do some penance. You do certain spiritual activity. You will know the answer."

After some time the boy returns and says, "Father! I have found out who God is."

"Oh! Did you?"

"Yes."

"Who is God?"

"Food is God," he said.

"Food is God?"

"Yes."

"My son, you need to know little more. Go and meditate further."

The boy goes to the forest once again, meditates for some time and returns: "Father, I know who God is this time."

"Oh son, good. Who is God?"

"Life is God."

So from food, he has evolved to the state of life. Life is God!

Then the father says, "Son, you need to know little more. You better go again."

The boy did penance for some more years and returned. "Father! I know some more details of God."

"Oh son, how nice! Who is God now?"

“Mind is God.”

“Mind is God? You need to know some more details.”

The fellow went and did more penance and again returned. “Father! I have known.”

“What have you known?”

“Bliss is God.”

Then father said, “You have arrived at the end.”

So, the investigation or the inquiry into God begins with food. We think food is God at one time. Later, life is God; and at a later stage, we begin to understand that mind is God. Still later, we begin to understand that spirit is God, *vijnana*. And finally, we come to know that bliss is God, which is the end of it.

This is the summary of Bhruguvalli as answered by that student on that day.

QUESTION NO. 7 - IMMORTALITY

Vedas taught the way to Immortality. Vedas say that there is only one way to Immortality. What is that way?

A *sloka* is given there. I will convey the meaning. “The only way to Immortality is awareness of the Self, experience of the Self. The path of inquiry takes you to the state of Immortality. This knowledge of the Self was first revealed to Indra by Brahma Himself. And later, it came down to the earth and its people.”

What is important for us today, right now, is the path of self-inquiry. In modern society, it is not possible to spend a long time in penance. It is not possible to do rituals like *yagas* and *yagnas* today. We do not have eligible, qualified, experienced people to do these spiritual rites today. The modern technical scientific mind does not accept the old methods. Self-inquiry is the method which you have to follow today. It is the only path to Immortality.

QUESTION NO.8 - USE OF VEDA CHANTING

What is the use of Veda chanting? What then is the benefit of chanting the Veda loudly?

We can have Swami’s *darshan*. We have two benefits. As some chant, others hear. There are those who chant and those who hear. First, they atone for their sins. All the sins are forgiven; no dues remain. Secondly, Divinity is experienced. That is the second purpose of Veda chanting.

QUESTION 9

Towards the end of bhajans, we hear the following:

***Asato Maa Sad Gamaya,
Tamaso Maa Jyothir Gamaya,
Mrithyor Maa Amritam Gamaya.***

***Father, lead us from untruth to Truth,
From darkness to Light,***

From death to Immortality.

These three are from which Upanishad?

The answer came from a high school boy: "This is from *Brihadaraanyaka Upanishad*. There are 108 *Upanishads*. Of them, the twelve *Dwadasha* are very popular *Upanishads*. Amongst them, *Brihadaraanyaka* is one."

QUESTION 10 - SHIKSHAVALLI

Shikshavalli is a part of one Upanishad. What is its ultimate teaching?

The ultimate teaching of *Shikshavalli*, a portion of the *Upanishad*, is: Speak the truth, follow righteousness. *Sathyam Vada, Dharmam Chara*. Speak the truth; follow *dharma* – the righteous conduct – in humility and with Love.

QUESTION NO.11 - APAURUSEYA

Vedas are also called Apauruseya. Why?

Vedas are the revelations arising from the intuition of sages and saints. They are not composed by a human being. The sages and saints got the intuitions as a result of penance, renunciation and total dedication to the welfare of humanity. Therefore Vedas are called *Apauruseya*.

QUESTION NO.12 - PRASTHANA-TRAYA

The three sacred texts are called Prasthana-traya. What are they?

Brahma Sutra, Bhagavad Gita, Upanishad. All these sacred texts together are called *Prasthana-traya*.

QUESTION NO. 13 - BRAHMA-SUTRA

Brahma Sutra is one among those three. What are Swami's views about this book?

Behind all the apparent world, there is a hidden principle of Divinity. There are flowers in a garland and a thread passes through all these flowers making it a beautiful garland. But, the thread is not seen while the flowers are openly seen. So in *Brahma-Sutra* – *sutra* is the thread, *Brahma* is the Divinity, bringing together the flowers of creation. Am I clear? That's what Bhagavan said.

QUESTION NO. 14

You must have heard this –

***Aditya Varnam Tamasa Parastat
Vedahmetam Purusham Mahantam.***

(After chanting this sloka, Anil Kumar says,) As a result of hearing these *slokas* repeatedly, some things have gotten into my head. (Laughter) Don't think I know all of that and that I am an expert. Please don't mistake me.

Now, how did saints view Divinity? What is their view? What is their vision?

Answer: *Aditya Varnam* means brilliance, radiance, splendor, illumination. *Samataha* – darkness. *Saraspat* – beyond. “Beyond darkness, there is effulgence, there is light, that is Divinity.” It means, darkness is ignorance, while effulgence is self-awareness.

THEN QUESTION NO. 15 - PANCHAMA VEDA

There are only four Vedas. But there is a book called Panchama Veda. Which has been given the status of Veda, although it is not Veda. What is the fifth Veda, Panchama Veda?

The great epic – *Mahabharatha* – about the Pandavas and Kauravas. That is called the fifth Veda.

QUESTION NO. 16

Why is it called the fifth Veda?

What is present in the world is present in *Mahabharatha*. Whatever is not mentioned there is not present anywhere. Political, ethical, moral, spiritual -- all aspects of life are dealt with in all thoroughness and depth in the *Mahabharatha*. So it is given the status of a Veda.

QUESTION NO.17 - MRUTYUMJAYA

There is one mantra which is repeated, which prays for long life. Ordinary people take this path to be immortal, to conquer death: Mrutyumjaya. ‘Mrutyum’ is death and ‘jaya’ is victory. So you can conquer death if you repeat this sloka.

***Triyumbakum Yajamahe Sugandhim Pushtivardanam
Urvarukamena Bandaanaath Mrutor Muksheya Mamrutaath.***

Can I be deathless by reading this sloka? I don’t think so. What is death? Desire is death. Attachment to the body is death. Ego is death. So you can conquer death by being desireless. You can win over death by being egoless. But why is it called Mrutyumjaya? Can you conquer death? Why is it called so?

Some living creatures go to the other world before schedule; that is, they die at a young age. As an example, some flights reach the airport half an hour before the scheduled time. When the flight schedule time is 12:00, the aircraft may reach by 11:00 -- one hour before schedule. Likewise, some living creatures go to the other world ‘before schedule’, dying at a young age. So this *sloka* at least will take us to the destination at the right time, not before our time. That’s how also we can take it.

And further what does Baba say about it? “O God! As I leave this world, let me leave this world in full knowledge and awareness -- in full awareness of the Self, with full experience of the Self, just as a ripe fruit gets disconnected from the tree and falls onto the ground.”

Fruit falls on the ground automatically at maturity, painlessly, effortlessly, naturally, easily, instantaneously. Similarly, “O God! When I leave this world, let me drop like a fully ripe fruit, easily, simply, effortlessly, joyfully.” Joyfully! There is no reason to cry for death because death is a celebration. When I change my dress, when I feel like wearing a nice suit, I don’t cry for my other clothes when I change into the new suit.

I have a dark blue suit I wear on special occasions when Swami talks to doctors at international conferences.

Swami jokes, "Oh! You are in suit now?"

"Swami, I am an international fellow now. (*Laughter*) We have doctors from all parts of the world, so I can't afford to be simply in an Indian dress." So, when I change my dress, there is no reason to cry. We can be happy. "Death is the dress of life." That is the meaning of the *Mrutyumjaya mantra*.

QUESTION NO. 18 - TAITTREYA UPANISHAD

There is one Upanishad named Taittreya. What is it? What is the etymological meaning of this word Taittreya?

There lived a great saint named Yajnavalkya. He vomited all the knowledge that he had acquired. All that he vomited was eaten by birds called Taitree birds. These birds, by taking all that was vomited, started making the sounds of this *Upanishad*. As all the sounds are repeated by the birds named 'Taitree', it is called Taitreeya *Upanishad*.

QUESTION NO. 19 - ISAVASYOPANISHAD

There is a very popular *Upanishad* called *Isavasyopanishad*. These days, most people want to hear experiences, stories and miracles. This denies many of us a chance to go into the depth of the philosophy.

My preference is to read *Upanishads*, to read Ramana Maharishi and His teachings, and to go into the depth of the *Brahma Sutras*. But people say, "Anil Kumar, please tell me the latest miracles." I don't know what 'latest miracles' or 'outdated miracles' look like. The *Upanishad* literature is not much appreciated by ordinary people unless there is within them a depth, some awakening, or unless they are especially blessed by God.

Isavasyopnaishad is a popular Upanishad. What is the first sloka of this Upanishad?

***Isavasya Sarvam Idam Yat Kinchat Jagatam Jagat,
Tena Tyaktena Bunjeeta,
Ma Bruhat Kasya Siddhanam.***

That is the first sloka. What is its meaning?

***The whole universe is filled with Divinity.
Thou shall not covet others' property.***

This is in the Ten Commandments. Am I not right?

QUESTION 20

There is one Upanishad, which compares the human body with a car. What is that Upanishad?

It is *Katho-Upanishad*.

QUESTION 21 - KATHO-UPANISHAD

Katho-Upanishad is the conversation between two people. Who are they?

It is the conversation between a boy, Nachiketa, and the god of death, Yama. Nachiketa wanted to know about life after death.

Yama says, "My boy! Why do you want to know about life after death? You want a kingdom? I will give it to you."

"No, sir. I want that knowledge."

"You want money? I will give it to you."

"No, sir. I want that knowledge."

"You want palaces?"

"No, I want that." He kept pestering and insisting that Yama teach him the science of the Self. So, ultimately Yama told him.

Katho-Upanishad speaks of the fundamental Vedanta philosophy, taught by Yama, the god of death himself, to Nachiketa, a true aspirant, who could conquer Satan. Just as Satan tempted Jesus Christ, Yama tempted Nachiketa in every way. But Nachiketa said, "I want that knowledge only."

ONE FINAL QUESTION

Then, towards the end, Swami asked a young boy, aged 6 years: "**Do you know Mantra Pushpam?**" *Mantra Pushpam* has a number of Sanskrit verses in praise of God. 'Pushpam' means flower. *Mantra Pushpam* – the flower of *mantra*. So He asked the boy, "**Do you know what Mantra Pushpam is?**"

"Yes, Swami."

"What is it?"

The boy said:

***Antar Bahischat Sarvam,
Yapya Narayana Sthitaha.***

"Do you know the meaning?"

"God is inside. God is outside also. God is everywhere. The whole world is the very form of God. The world is a manifestation, the reflection of God. God is the energy providing sustenance for the maintenance of the entire creation."

We were all dumb-founded that evening. This is a summary of all that had happened on 25th of October there in Sai Kulwant Hall. This is yet to come in Telugu *Sanathana Sarathi*.

UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMISSION VALEDICTORY FUNCTION

On the evening of 30th October 2003, in the evening there was a meeting, the valedictory function of the vice-chancellors. In the Divine presence of Bhagavan, the vice-chancellors of some Indian universities held a symposium on human values – a three-day program. Three of the vice chancellors addressed the gathering, which was presided over by Bhagavan. The three vice-chancellors expressed their feeling about the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning. As devotees of Baba, we will be happy to know how His University and His children are viewed. So, with this idea in mind, I recorded the speeches of all the three people and noted some important points. This will come in the Telugu *Sanathana Sarathi*, later.

This year 2003 happened to be the Golden Jubilee year of the University Grants Commission, New Delhi. The University Grants Commission is the apex body, an independent, autonomous central government body, which gives recognition and also financial support to all the universities in the country. It rates the quality of teachers and students of every university.

The University Grants Commission wanted to have a symposium organized in Prashanti Nilayam, with the permission and blessings of Bhagavan Baba, on value-oriented education. Swami approved. This led to a three day conference on the 28th, 29th and 30th of October. On 28th of October, the inauguration ceremony took place, while the valedictory function took place on 30th.

V.S. PRASADA RAO

The first speaker was V. S. Prasada Rao. He is in charge of the National Assessment and Accreditation Committee. It is the top body that rates every university, every lecturer and every degree. It determines the standard. It is a supervisory body. Prasad Rao, the first speaker, made certain important statements, which should be of immense interest to all Sai devotees.

Point one: "We, the Vice Chancellors, visited the whole university here. We went around to all the departments. We visited all the hostels. We visited the hospitals. We visited *Chaitanya-Jyoti* museum. We have been to all places of interest in Prashanti Nilayam and had the opportunity to talk with people in charge of these centers."

Point no 2: "We, the Vice Chancellors consider it to be a blessing, the greatest fortune given to us by Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, to have our conference in the Divine presence."

Points no. 3: "We, the Vice Chancellors have noticed the spirit of devotion, dedication and duty amongst the teachers and professors of this university. We also observed discipline amongst students. As we visited the Super-Specialty Hospital, we met some of the former students of Sathya Sai Institute who work there. We observed former students practicing all the values they had learned as students in the university."

Next point: These committee members recognized and fully appreciated this university, calling it the 'crest-jewel of education in India'.

He said, "The education system adopted in Sri Sathya Sai University is called 'integrated education'. What is integrated education? It means teaching the human values along with the academic curriculum. As one teaches physics, he simultaneously teaches values. As one teaches bio-sciences, he blends the subject with human values. This is called 'integrated education', which is unique here in Swami's university."

"Sri Sathya Sai University has a special course called 'Environmental Science'. Environmental Science is present all over the world, but environmental science in this university is beautifully combined with the value system. By following the values, you can preserve the purity of the environment. The environment can be protected from all sorts of pollution by practicing these values. All universities, all over the country, may adopt these values."

Prasada Rao finally said that all the vice-chancellors requested Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, the Chancellor of this University, to start a National Institute of Excellence in Education in Human Values, in order to train all professors all over the country in batches, so that they

learn what integrated education is, how to blend the curriculum with human values, and how to introduce values into the syllabus. So, Baba, we pray that You start this national institute.

PROF. K. SUDHA RAO

The second speaker was a lady, Prof. K. Sudha Rao. She is the vice-chancellor of the Open University, Mysore, in the state of Karnataka, India. She made a brief speech and these are the points she made.

“I see every person here in this institution not as an individual, but as an institution in himself.” She also said, “For the total development of the human personality, the integrated education system, which is followed here in this university, is best suited and most ideal.

“We find that values are very much talked about all over the world.” Here she observed the values being practiced in daily life. She noticed this in the manner in which teachers and students talked to each other, in their behavior, in their day-to-day routine. She said, “If the values are not practiced and are simply spoken or taught, they lose their real value. Values are *practiced* in this university.”

She concluded her talk saying, “All this is because of the location of this university in an ideal place like this, far from the maddening crowd, with Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba as the Chancellor of this University. I thank Swami and the university professors for the courtesy, invitation, generosity and hospitality extended to us.”

N. JAYASANKARAN

The third speaker was N. Jayasankaran. He is the vice-chancellor of Sri Chandra Sekhara Saraswati Vishwa Mahavidhyala located in Kancheepuram, Tamil Nadu. His speech was very well applauded. Everyone liked it. This is the gist of the third speaker’s speech.

“As I look at the huge gathering here, students, staff and devotees, I see that each one here in the auditorium is a reflection of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Baba and His bliss. I have participated in a number of symposia and conferences. For the first time ever, my voice is fumbling, my legs are trembling. You must have watched me drink five glasses of water. All this because I am in the presence of the Divinity, Sri Sathya Sai Baba. That makes me feel nervous”.

Further, he mentioned that on the previous day, the 29th of October, four students had spoken in four languages -- Hindi, Sanskrit, Telugu, and English. The vice-chancellor appreciated all four speeches made by the students in the four different languages.

“There are certain very well-known speakers in this country: the late Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan, Lakshmana Swamy Mudaliar, Ramaswamy Mudaliar, Hon. Srinivasa Shastry. They all belong to Tamil Nadu. They are all very popular orators. The British appreciated their English. Some of these speakers even corrected the pronunciation of the British. Some of them have also pointed out their grammatical mistakes. So you can imagine their scholarship in English language and literature.”

Then Jayashankaran said, “The four students who spoke are going to be orators of that standard in the years to come.” Further he said, “All the vice-chancellors here on the dais cannot make speeches of that standard. All the talent and skills of communication, the language, feelings and the thoughts -- all these things are the gifts of Bhagavan to the students of this university. I request all students here to be the messengers of Sai, to be the propagators of Sai message all over the world.”

He mentioned a small miracle. The daughter of his maidservant had a heart problem. That little girl was taken to Apollo Hospital in Madras for treatment. After conducting all the tests, the doctors said that she should be operated upon at a cost of rupees three *lakhs*. You cannot expect a maidservant to spend so much money. It is practically impossible. So, as a result of this, she cried and cried as she worked in the house of this vice-chancellor.

The vice-chancellor wanted to do something for the maidservant. He happened to go to Bangalore on official work when Swami was in Whitefield, and he got an interview.

There he said, "Swami, I have a request."

"What?"

"My servant's daughter is suffering from a heart problem, Swami. You should bless her."

"Is that so?"

He materialized *vibhuti* for her. He then called the director of the hospital, Dr. Saffaya, and gave instructions that this girl should be operated upon at the earliest. The girl was operated on free of cost. It has now been three years, and she is hale and healthy. The doctors had given her three months' time to live, that's all. But three years have now passed.

The vice-chancellor also recalled another incident. Along with him happened to be another person who was called for an interview by Baba that same day, three years ago. He is from England. The devotee had a ring with three diamonds. Because of prolonged use, the shape of the ring had changed. The symmetry had changed, and one diamond had fallen out and was lost.

Swami gently removed it. "Hmm! Shape is gone. No diamonds."

"Swami, one fell down. What to do?"

"Is that so?" (*Swami blew on it.*) A perfect new ring with three diamonds appeared -- three perfect diamonds, a shiny new ring. Swami gave it to him.

Further, Vice Chancellor Jayashankara said, "Swami, we are very grateful to You for Your kind hospitality, which was of the same standard as that given to a marriage party. We were treated first-class. Thank You very much. We enjoyed every minute."

Then he said, "All the vice chancellors have come here not merely to attend a conference. This is a holy pilgrimage to Prashanti Nilayam." He also commented on the serenity, the solemnity, the dignity, the sanctity, the peace and the silence that he observed here, which he had never experienced anywhere until now.

He concluded his speech with a beautiful remark, which I am sure you will enjoy. He said, "Swami, there are three hundred universities in this country. This university is great because You are here. I pray that You be in three hundred forms and exist in every university as chancellor, so that other universities can also come up to this standard. Otherwise, it is impossible to match Your University."

Usually when vice-chancellors or professors go for conferences at other places, they go for sightseeing, and they also shop in order to bring back gifts for their family members. The vice

chancellors said, "This is the only place where vice-chancellors sat through *all* the proceedings." They were very serious and took things very seriously.

And the miracle of miracles is that all vice-chancellors agreed on all the points, on all the resolutions arrived at towards the end. All resolutions were passed unanimously. This is the grace of Bhagavan! This is, in brief, the valedictory function held on October 30th, which will appear in the *Sanathana Sarathi* sometime later.

***Om Loka Samastha Sukhino Bhavantu
Loka Samastha Sukhino Bhavantu
Loka Samastha Sukhino Bhavantu
Om Shanti Shanti Shanti***