

SHREE SATHYA SAI'S TRIBUTE TO SHREE GHANDIKOTA SUBRAHMANYA SHAASTHREE

(English version of Baba's Telugu talk on Vijayadhashami Day, October 1986 in
Puurnachandhra Auditorium, Prashaanthi Nilayam.)

'Over many eons, generation after generation, billions of people have sung the praise of the unique *Bharatheeya* culture. However the *Vedhik* component of this great culture has been declining because of the eroding effect of time and also because of the weakening of the human mind. Today there is sadly an acute shortage of scholars who could teach the common people the meaning and significance of the *Vedhas*, the *Vedhaantha* and related disciplines. If today the *Vedhik* Culture is not restored, the very fate of Bharath's position and prospects will be seriously affected.'

'If the reverence and respect for *Vedhik* culture is gone, the name and fame of Bharath will be destroyed. Bharath's life and vital spirit are based firmly based on the *Vedhas*. Therefore the Sathya Sai institutions are ready to dedicate their efforts for the cause of restoring the *Vedhas*.'

'Ghandikota Subrahmanya Shaasthree is a fully ripened doyen of *Vedhik* knowledge; he lived a long, fulfilled life. Recognized as the standing court scholar of the principality of Vizianagaram, he achieved great fame. He was an unequalled *Vedhik* scholar in the entire state of Aandhra Pradesh.'

'He not only lived upto the high standards of *Vedhik* living, but also fulfilled his life with devotional surrender with immense love for Svaami. Having imbibed the nectarine essence of all the *Vedhas*, this great scholar sincerely believed in the truth that Sathya Sai is verily the embodiment of all divinities. Possessed with such faith, he spent his last days in the closest proximity of Svaami in Prashaanthi Nilayam. He was blessed with a very long fulfilled life.'

'In his loving memory and also for the promotion of *Vedhik* learning and culture, I am today inaugurating the Shree Sathya Sai Ghandikota Subrahmanya Shaasthree *Vedha Shaasthra Parishath*. Subrahmanya Shaasthree will remain an immortal person. With a broad and nectarine heart he earned the right to immortality. It is therefore proper that his great ideals and excellent qualities and above all his valuable *Vedhik* teachings deserve to be widely disseminated. Sincerely hoping that *Bharatheeyas* will continue to follow the *Vedhik* path and thereby recapture Bharath's ancient glory, I extend my blessings to you all.'



Bhagavaan presenting Shree Ghandikota Subrahmanya Shaasthree with a shawl in the interview room in the Mandhir in Prasanthi Nilayam, September 1986. This is the last picture of Shree Shaasthree taken with Swami.

Shree Ghandikota Subrahmanya Shaasthree: Revealer of Sathya Sai Gaayathree

-a brief background note-



The revered late Shree Ghandikota Subrahmanya Shaasthree was a great doyen of *Vedhik* learning and culture. He was a great devotee of Bhagavaan Shree Sathya Sai Baba. During his last days spent in close proximity of Baba in Prashaanti Nilayam, he was a daily recipient of Baba's Divine Grace. He passed away in peace with Baba's name on his lips and in the arms of his eldest son, G.V. Subba Rao, in Prashaanti Nilayam on the first day of Dasara, October 1986.

Shree Subrahmanya Shaasthree served for many years as the standing Court Scholar of the kingdom of Vizianagram, in northern Andhra Pradesh. He was honored with many titles, including *Sahithya Rathna*, *Abhinava Vidhyaaranya*, etc. He was a versatile *Vedhik* scholar, a good speaker, writer, author and poet in Sanskrit; he was an authority on *Vedhik* interpretation, on *Dharma Shaasthra*, and on sacred ritual lore. He was a founding member of the *Prashaanti Vidhvan Mahaa Sabha* - Academy of Scholars, founded by Bhagavaan. Shaasthreeji was invited by Baba to supervise the performance of many *Dhashara Yagnas* held in Prashaanti Nilayam. The revered Shaasthree was the revealer of the holy Shree Sathya Sai Gaayathree *Manthra*; he was called a *Rishi* (Sage or Seer), by Bhagavaan Baba.

He received the grace of inspiration of Bhagavaan Baba to reveal the Sai Gaayathree *Manthra* in His Divine presence in Whitefield, Bangalore, on December 24th 1977, at the holy evening time of Christmas Eve. The Sai Eeshvara Gaayathree, now chanted by millions all over the world, reads as follows:

**Om. Sai Eeshvaraya Vidhmahe
Sathya Dhevaaya Dheemahi
Tannah Sarvah Prachodhayaath
We realize that Sai Baba is God
We meditate on this God of Truth
We pray that He lead us to enlightenment and liberation**

The outstanding features of the life of this great *Vedhik* scholar and savant are as follows:

- He loved, cared and served his father and mother all through their old age; he considered them on a par with the Divine.
- He was a great votary of Veda Maatha, the Mother Vedha, dedicating a good part of his life to imbibing and imparting the knowledge, culture and practice of *Sanaathana Dharma*, the universal and eternal religion.
- True to the *Vedhik* way of living, as Baba remarked, he dedicated the first third of his life to *Vedhik Karma Kaanda*, performance of sacred rituals, the second third of his life in *Vedhik* meditations, *Upaasana*, and the remaining third part of his life steeped in *Jñāana Kaanda*, contemplation of unity in all diversity.
- It is in the third part of his life that he was blessed with the close association of Bhagavaan Baba, who made him a member of the Prashaanti Academy of Scholars. He was honored by Baba to preside over the *Dhashara Yagñā* activities in Prashaanti Nilayam.

A great traditional *Vedhik* Scholar, Shree Shaasthreeji developed deep faith and conviction that Baba is a Divine Avaatar of great power, and an epitomy of Divine Love. He came to this conclusion through various criteria laid down in the scriptures, that Baba, as Shiva Shakthi, is the embodiment of all divinities, *Sarva Dhevathaa Svarupah*.

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G. V. Subba Rao, Prasanthi Nilayam, August, 2002