

8. Start Good Associations

This gathering makes Me very happy, since people from Andhra, Mysore, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala have joined together to arrange this meeting. It is rather hard for all of you to join in one place for one function. But remember that you have in all five vital breaths (*panchapranas*), and here you represent only four. The fifth “vital breath” is Uttar Pradesh, and unless the Association representing it joins you, you are not complete, fully alive! All of you are here to serve this land and its people, so you should not feel separate from them.

What have the Andhra Association, the Tamil Association, the Kerala Association, and the Mysore Association been doing all these years? Each group has some festival that it celebrates once a year and probably honours any distinguished person from the region to which it belongs, when he comes to Lucknow. Perhaps, you thought I was an Andhra or a South Indian! The whole world is My Mansion; it has many rooms, each State being just one room in that Mansion of Mine. I came here to tell you this truth about Me.

The language that really matters

And also to tell you that you should not attach so much importance to the language you speak. It is the meaning that is important, the feelings you express, the behaviour you adopt. The language of the heart is expressed through sympathy, kindness, service, love, brotherliness. That is the language that really matters; that language can be understood by everyone. The language of anger, hatred, love, trust —it is patent and clear, though the speaker is dumb and the listener deaf! That language of the heart (*Atmabhaasha*) comes only from the relationship of the hearts (*Atmasambandha*).

The duty of Associations like yours is not to lay stress on the distinction between one language and another and start quarrelling over or boasting about the superior excellence of your language but to overcome the handicap of many languages by learning and using the common, easily spoken, easily understood language of the heart. Religions are many but the road is the same; flowers are many but worship is the same; professions are many but living is the same. Therefore, you must all live in concord and brotherliness, helping each other and loving each other.

The basic needs of people are those mentioned in the prayer of the ancients: “Lead me from the unreal to the real, from darkness to light, from death to immortality (*Asatho maa sath gamaya, Thamaso maa jyothir gamaya, mrithyor maa amritham gamaya*).” People want the Truth; they get disgusted with falsehood. They want Light; they get defeated by darkness. They want no death; they get torn by birth and death. This prayer rises from every person, whether an Andhra or a Malayali or a Mysorean. This yearning has no connection with the land of your birth or the language spoken or the form of Divinity revered. It is the cry of humanity everywhere, at all times.

Make the best use of the time you have

These three —Truth, Light, no Death— can be obtained only by spiritual practices, by following the path of love and truth. Discovering that path and describing it has been the distinct contribution of the Indian Nation (*Bharathavarsha*), and it is a disgrace if you, who are all children of *Bharathavarsha*, whatever the name of the state from which you come, do not adhere to that path and show by your way of life that the Indian way is the way to real joy.

Hence, I want to ask you this: Why can't you meet every day or on several days a week for meditation on the Lord, for listening to the description of His Glory, for studying the techniques of repetition of the name and meditation from the scriptures? Consider that the allotted span of life is being spent away every moment. In fact, life is an oblation poured in the Fire of Time. The sun, when it rises and sets, is stealing fractions of your life day by day, relentlessly, steadily, uninterruptedly. So make the best use of the time you have. The Lord is the Embodiment of Time (*Kalaswarupa*), remember. Even the minutest fraction of time wasted or misused is treason to God. Make every moment holy, do pious deeds, think good thoughts, and keep the Lord's Name and Form ever in your mind.

All of you join a good association — an association of people all of whom are sincere, simple, and pious. Meet every day at about 5 p.m. and listen to or sing the Lord's names, meditate, or repeat the Lord's names until about eight. That will give you so much peace (*santhi*) and promote mutual love and brotherliness. Let the various streams of Telugu, Malayalam, Kanada, Tamil, and Hindi merge in the ocean of bliss (*ananda*). That is the real bliss. Today, you taste the first glimpse of that joy; make this a frequent feature.

Cultivate the broadest love toward all

Every country is a limb in the Body of God. He is conscious of the slightest pain or sensation in the most distant part of creation, for that too is His Body. He is Lord of the Universe. He is the secret spring within all activity. Have faith in this and cultivate the broadest Love toward all. See that you do not give up Love or deviate from virtue (*dharma*). Earn prosperity (*artha*) while adhering to *dharma* and have always only one wish: to get liberated; that is the way to realise the four goals of life. Let *dharma* dominate prosperity and liberation (*moksha*) dominate carnal desire (*kama*); then your life will be a success.

I have said this so often, but just as one has to take food every day, this too has to be spoken again and again. You wash your face again and again, is it not? So too, this advice has to be given again and again. The *Vedas* also repeat the essential teachings often so that they may sink into the minds of people.

By means of eating (*bhukthi*), the body is maintained in a good condition; this helps cultivate skill (*yukthi*) for sharpening the intellect (*buddhi*) into an instrument for wisdom and discrimination; then, eating (*bhukthi*) develops in wholesome things and attitudes. This type of attachment to edifying things and feelings gradually induces the spirit of renunciation. The next step is devotion, the overpowering desire to see the Lord and serve Him; Devotion brings about the spiritual wisdom (*jnana*) that there is nothing besides the Lord and that one is oneself Brahman. Thus, one is liberated, i.e. gets *mukthi*.

Every step in this chain is important, so I will not ask you to give up even eating. I always speak of the path of Divine Reality and the path of Righteousness; they are the two wheels of the bicycle that you have to ride. Living was not so hard in the past ages, but now, since it is riding a two-wheeled vehicle, skill and vigilance are needed to keep one's balance and avoid falling.

Knowing how to get inner peace is good fortune

The Governor, in his introductory speech, spoke of India's poverty and deplored this plight. But why deplore the plight of a land where the Lord Himself is moving as an *Avatar*? In what way are you deficient? This land is fully equipped with all the resources needed for a happy life. People can get all the light they want by just switching 'on'! But they do not know how to do it or where the switch is, that is all. Nature is bountiful; the Lord is

showering His Grace. What more is necessary?

I feel hurt when anyone calls this land deficient or poor. It may be that some do not know the methods of getting rich or may not care to adopt them. But they all know the means of getting inner peace. This is great good fortune, indeed.

India has the treasure that will make her the Guru of all Humanity. People born here are indeed luckier than the rest, but their responsibility is also greater. They should not be downcast and depressed at their poverty or 'low' standard of living. They should demonstrate by their lives that spiritual discipline makes one happier and more courageous to fight the battle of life.

The world is suffering today from too much knowledge; virtue has not increased in proportion to the advance of knowledge. That is the root cause of the misery in human society. Of the two tyres of the vehicle that humanity is riding, the tyre of the Brahman wheel is flat, and it has to be filled by pumping the Lord's Name into it. You cannot go far on a flat tyre.

Therefore, start a holy association, cultivate good activities, and derive joy therefrom. That is My suggestion to you today.

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When you go for a bath in any holy river, the priest asks you to take three dips.

Do not think that the three dips are simply conventional.

They are for cleansing the gross, subtle, and causal bodies.

They are for cleansing the outer, inner, and innermost (*bahya, bhava, and chittha*).

They are for consecrating action, contemplation, and sacred knowledge (*karma, upasana, and jnana*).

Sathya Sai Baba