

28. The Best Tonic

The greatest disease (or absence of ease) is the absence of peace. When the mind gets peace, the body also will have health. So, everyone who craves for good health must pay attention to the emotions, feelings, and motives that animate the individual. Just as you give clothes for a wash, you have to wash the mind free from dirt again and again; otherwise, if dirt accumulates and you form a “habit”, it is difficult for the *dhobi* (person who washes the clothes) as well as harmful to the clothes. It should be a daily process; you should see that no dirt settles upon the mind. That is to say, you should move about in such company that dirt is avoided. Falsehood, injustice, indiscipline, cruelty, hate — these form the dirt.

Truth, righteousness, peace, love (*sathya, dharma, santhi, prema*) — these form the clean elements. If you inhale the pure air of these latter, your mind will be free from evil bacilli and you will be mentally sturdy and physically strong. As Vivekananda used to say, you should have nerves of steel and muscles of iron. That is to say, you should have hope and joy and elation as an unshakable resolution, not despair and dejection.

What is studied is not put into practice

Your heart should be like glass, with the spiritual light inside illuminating the world outside, with the world outside reacting on the inner urges and making them lean toward service, sympathy, and mutual help. Now, people read and study all kinds of unintelligible *Vedantic* texts and struggle with commentaries and notes and translations to grasp their sense. It is being poured down their throats, but the portion does not get down to soften the heart. It is not translated into practice. The truths of the *Vedanta* are put on for public exhibition, as in a drama, where appropriate dresses are worn on the stage but taken off when the actor moves off the stage. They do not adhere to them all the time to derive the Bliss of the Soul (*Atmananda*), which they can give.

It is chiefly a matter of careful, well-timed, regulated discipline; it cannot be got by spurts and skips; it has to be climbed step by step, each step being used as a foothold for the next. There is no systematic living according to any known principle, now; this is true of the student, the householder, the mistress, and the master of the house. Virtues have to be cultivated in the home; each member sharing in the joy with the rest, each one seeking for opportunities for helping others. This attitude has to be stuck to, so that it may stay as character. How can a vessel kept with the mouth downward get filled with water? It has to open up and receive the good impulses. You have to learn each lesson by systematic study. Application and effort alone will give success.

Have faith in the Lord and His Grace

In all effort, if you trust in a Higher Power, which is ready to come to your help, work is made easy. This comes out of devotion and reliance on the Lord, the source of all Power. When you travel by train, you have only to purchase the ticket, enter the proper train, and take a seat, leaving the rest to the engine. Why should you carry the bed and trunk on your head? So too, put your trust in the Lord and carry on to the best of your ability. Have faith in the Lord and His Grace. Try to earn it by using the intelligence and the conscience with which He has endowed you.

You have all gathered here to celebrate the completion of four years in the life of this Sathya Sai Hospital. So I want to tell you that the best and the wisest thing is to see that you do not fall ill. The doctor read out in the

report that this year the number of out-patients as well as the number of operations was greater than last year, as if that is a sign of progress! But I do not think that speaks well of the people around and their sense of values. The hospital should radiate preventive measures also and try to educate the villagers in methods of avoiding illness. Develop self-reliance; that is the best tonic. You have been born because you did not pass in certain subjects; there is some balance of experience that you must acquire to complete the course. If you get convinced that your true nature is the *Atma*, then you have finished the course and “passed”.

Cultivate prema toward all beings

For reaching that stage, you should start with the cultivation of the “feeling of kinship with all beings” — *sarvasamanabhava*, as it is called. It is very difficult to get, but that is the only way to see the *Atma* that is in all. For example, a person with that sincerity of feeling (*bhava*) will not be happy at the killing of animals for food or even hunting them. Why should you seek the animal to its den, lie in wait for it, and lay traps for it, so that you may derive pleasure by killing it? *Prema* should be cultivated toward all beings so that you may see the Innermost Self in all beings. The *Atma* is Omnipresent. Do not think it is found only in persons belonging to certain castes or colours or creeds, or that it is of a big size in fat people or of a brilliant nature in rich people. It is consistently being, awareness, bliss absolute (*sath, chith, ananda*) in every being. Spiritual exercise has to go a long way to win this outlook.

But you can begin with little things. You can avoid causing annoyance to others, can't you? Even if you are unable or unwilling to do service to others, at least, if you desist from causing harm, that is meritorious service indeed! For example, take the words you speak. I always say purification of words leads to cleansing of the mind. That is why I insist on quiet talk, sweet talk, and little talk; the pure and serene (*sathwic*) talk — no anger, no heat, no hate. Such talk will cause no quarrel, no blood pressure, and no factions. It will promote mutual respect and love.

Then again, do not cynically laugh at the good that others do or at the spiritual exercises of others. Inquire, but do not insult. Respect the sincerity of the other person; respect also elders and people with more experience than you. In company, behave in a well-mannered way, showering brotherhood and joy on all around you.

Moderation in food is always to be welcomed

Strive for the happiness of the community and of the human race. Pray that all people everywhere may have peace and plenty. Be eager to do good and be good.

This being a function connected with the Hospital, I must tell you about certain other things also. By regulating your diet and avoiding certain bad habits, you can preserve health. Moderate food and food of the pure (*sathwic*) type, will promote mental poise and also physical happiness. Moderation in food is always to be welcomed. Many people consume more than the necessary quantity of rich food, and such have to practise moderation. So too, if you do not smoke, you escape a number of illnesses that follow that passionate (*rajasic*) practice. Any intoxicant or stimulant, because it disturbs nature's even trend, is harmful. Moderation in food, moderation in talk and in desires and pursuits, contentment with what little can be got by honest labour, eagerness to serve others and to impart joy to all — these are the most powerful of all the tonics and health-preserves known to the science of health, the *Sanathana Ayur-Veda*, the *Veda* of the full life.