

## 20. The New Year pledge

TODAY is the holy Ugaadhi (Telugu New Year) day. We bid farewell to the year gone by and welcome the new year. We hope that during this year called Siddhaarthi our time and activity will be meaningful. We pray that the new spring should confer on all beings longevity, health and goodness. Pleasant experiences and unpleasant memories of the previous year that linger in the mind contain many good lessons. When one reviews the past year within oneself, one can realise how much time was spent selfishly and how much in service.

Man has achieved some progress physically and scientifically but morally he has fallen. He is sliding down due to his egotism. What is the cause of this fall? Selfishness, ignorance and *avidhya* (absence of wisdom) are the only causes. It is selfishness that is now operating behind every thought, word and deed. Those who seek the joy of liberation should burn this selfishness in the fire of *jnaana* (spiritual wisdom). Otherwise there is no future.

Do not misuse time which is precious. Time fleets fast. The span of life is like a porous pot. Not to realise this is the basic ignorance. Make good use of time by recognising what is permanent and true in human life.

### **Cultivate the spiritual feeling of oneness**

There are 5,64,000 small villages in our country. Their condition is sad and pitiable. People like you living in the towns must involve themselves in social services programmes and help these fellowmen. It is because of your selfishness that you become useless to others. When can you recognise the good in others? You entertain all kinds of hopes and finally get deceived. People preach a million things but do not practise even one.

We say from platforms "Brothers and Sisters." We feel that we are all brothers. But, even real brothers wrangle over properties and go upto the Supreme Court in litigation. So, instead of thinking that we are brothers merely in words we should cultivate the higher spiritual feeling of 'Oneness.' The fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man become meaningful only then.

Today is the holy Ugaadhi day. It is not enough if we wear new clothes and partake in feasts. Launch a new movement to mark the new year. People in the villages have no medical and educational facilities. They have no drinking water, no sanitary arrangements. They have no food to eat. Provide these facilities for them and thereby realise Divinity. The need of the hour is the man of action, not the one who only talks. Our *Bhaarthabhumi* (land of Bhaarith, India) is *Karmabhumi* (land of sacred action). *Karma* is exertion, effort. *Bhaarithabhumi* is also the land which is known for its love of God.

### **Put the money to use of people in distress**

Today our lives are tainted by a desire for wealth. Wealth makes a man intoxicated and mad. Money is necessary but it must have a limit. Excessive money can be harmful to the 'mind. It is more difficult to spend money than to earn it. It is even more difficult to take care of money. This difficulty has an advantage---put the money to good use by spending it for the rural folk and people in distress. It is not '*Dhanamoolam idham jagath*' (money is the basis of this mundane world) but '*Dharmamoolam idham jagath*' (righteousness is the basis of this world). If money grows, unrest also grows. Money brings sorrow with it. A rich man is harassed from three sides--the Government, his relations and thieves. God alone knows the agony suffered by a rich man.

Those who amass wealth for the sake of their sons, themselves suffer privations, and ruin the very sons. So, give away your money in charity and make it purposeful. Members of Sathya Sai Organisations must tour every village and improve the lot of the rural folk. This is a new challenge for the members of the organisation.

I shall visit every village along with you, serve them without any discrimination of caste, creed, race and class. I wish that the Sathya Sai Organisations should, from this day onwards, undertake programmes of rural uplift, go to each village and provide educational and medical facilities. Meditation and penance are useful to one's own self only but the good of the world at large is achieved through sacrifice. The *Upanishaths* refer to "sacrifice as the only means of *salvation*"--- *Thyaagenaikena Amrithathwamaanasuh*. So, I wish that from today onwards members of Sathya Sai Organisations should develop the spirit of sacrifice and provide the basic necessities of life for the rural masses. It is in the villages that a certain amount of morality and honesty is still left. I hope that all rich people will strive to improve the condition of the villages.

Does a festival mean only wearing new clothes and eating sweets? Get rid of old ideas and plant new ones. The bitter-sweet mix served on the *Ugaadhi* day symbolizes that one should treat pleasure and pain equally.

Children and students must be trained to serve in rural areas. There are 2,55,00,000 children in our country today. Forty percent among them go about begging. It is not good to keep quiet when there are such hardship in the society around. We should give up *japa* and *saadhana* and uplift such people through service and sacrifice. We should feel that *Jane Seva* is *Janaardhana Seva* and *Maanava Seva* is *Maadhava Seva* (service to people is service to God).

All of you should take the pledge on this New Year Day that you will serve the rural people to the best of your ability. You must do this as a sacred duty which goes beyond differences of politics, caste and creed. Such a feeling is strengthened by self-confidence and equanimity in joy and sorrow. We say we are all children of Bhaarath but in what way are we sustaining the culture of Bhaarath? Our culture cannot be sustained without proper faith on our part. Faith and self-confidence are essential for spiritual progress.

With the hope that you will regard service to villages as service to God, I offer my blessings to you.

*Shivam, Hydherabad, 28-3-1979*