



‘Know that spirituality is as relevant to society as medicine to the sick, rest to the tired and wealth to the poor’

(Over 1,600 people waited to see the man ‘Who is changing the world’ at the Majestic Theatre in Sydney on April 2, 2009. This marked Sri Sri’s first public talk in the country after five years. What followed was an informal interaction – Q & As with the audience – dominant with Sri Sri’s characteristic wit and simplicity.)

How are you all today? This evening we will have an informal chat – a chit-chat! Those things which are very dear to our hearts can only be shared in an informal atmosphere. A formal atmosphere does not suit spiritual or personal subjects so sit back, relax and shout out any questions that you have. Don’t worry about whether they are appropriate. Just be yourself. *Spirituality is about being yourself. Free of inhibition. Free of prejudice, worry or concern but full of care and compassion.*

Today we live our lives on a treadmill – running and getting nowhere! And, we have to keep on running just to stay stable. This is the reason for frustration. It is the reason for frustration in our individual lives. We ask ourselves, “What is the value on spirituality in this society?” Know that it is as relevant as medicine to the sick, rest to the tired and wealth to the poor.

A violence-free society, disease-free body, quiver-free breath is the right of every individual. Just observe your breath – It indicates your state of mind. Have you noticed that before you encounter an unpleasant situation you start to feel it a few minutes beforehand. Your breath shakes, you get hot or some such feeling. Often we don’t pay attention to it but then within a few minutes you find yourself flaring up!

All our spiritual practices help us to achieve a quiver-free breath. They empower us to handle all our problems. A trauma-free mind, sorrow-free soul, confusion-free mind – these are our birthrights. Any spiritual practice is supposed to offer these things.

Are you all here?

As I speak, your mind decides to take a walk. I must tell you that the most amazing thing in creation is not the flowers or the animals – it is the human mind. The most amazing thing! In the *Bhagavad Gita*, an ancient Indian spiritual text – it is said that there is no friend like the mind and no enemy like the mind. It is your best friend when it is attended to and your worst enemy when it is not attended to. How often do we get caught up in our mind on an imaginary trip only to find that things are not the way we imagined?

There are three important dimensions of human life:

1. Perception
2. Observation
3. Expression

And these are supposed to improve each day. Education and culture are supposed to be all about this, improving these aspects. These bring human values alive in our day-to-day life.

Today, there has been an economic meltdown. It took 10 years to bring the downfall of communism and only 10 months to bring the downfall of capitalism. Any ‘ism’ is good for nothing without humanism! The greed of a few puts millions of lives in trouble. This is economic terrorism. There are other ways to ruin life than guns.

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Humanism will have to blossom in life to be happy, peaceful and content. Discontent leads to a greed trip and greed kills the customer and the owner.

(The audience begins to ask questions)

Q. How do we improve our sharpness of mind?

A. Breathing and pranayama. Are you attentive? How? By being still.

Four things make you attentive:

1. Curiosity (*Sri Sri whispers – “There is something in the pillow – it’s a secret...”*) When we explore a secret, we become attentive. Curiosity makes you attentive.
2. Fear. If someone says: *“Hey the building is on fire! There is a bomb scare!”* It makes you very attentive. Even if you are sleepy and tired, you sit up and say *“WHAT?”*
3. Greed – Do you want a million dollars? If someone says *“Stand on one leg for 20 hours and I will give you a million dollars.”* How many takers would there be. Many wouldn’t do it for 24 hours.
4. Love. When you love something you are totally attentive. If you love astrology, you are totally attentive in the planetarium. If you are a botanist you are so alert, so attentive because you love botany.

In all four, no effort is needed, and if you make the effort you cannot love, you cannot kindle the feeling.

Q. How can you stay focussed on your goals in these tough times of economic meltdown?

‘If you have a crisis you only have to look at a bigger crisis – start to serve the bigger ones and yours seem smaller and you overcome it effortlessly.’

A. You need the four things curiosity, fear, greed and love. Remember the planet has faced worse crises than these. If you have a crisis you only have to look at a bigger crisis – start to serve the bigger ones and yours seem smaller and you overcome it effortlessly. When a crisis seems too humungous for you and you feel you cannot handle your own, focus on a bigger one. Have you noticed how children come to you with a big problem, and it turns out that their friend doesn’t want to speak to them. It seems so big. Or you argue with your neighbour, your girlfriend or boyfriend. The problem seems so big but this planet has had so many crises. The tsunami, war, famine, economic meltdown and still we overcome them all. Have faith and confidence.

1. Have confidence in you. You have the strength to manage the problem. If the problem is the tail then the body is the solution. So have confidence.
2. If this doesn’t work then know that there are people with greater problems and start serving them. It will make you feel better.
3. Surrender to the bigger power. Feel your helplessness and offer the problem to God. The sincere prayer will make things turn around. You don’t have to think about what denomination to pray. Just from helplessness arises the spontaneous prayer.
4. Know that it is a passing phase. It will always go. See life in the bigger picture. No problem stays forever. It came and it will go.

Q. What do think about climate change and global warming?

A. It is good that the world has woken up. Last year 10.6 million people from the Art of Living stood up to take action and promised 55.4 million trees to be planted. 36 Million are already planted. You should start to plant trees.

Q. How can we achieve enlightenment?

A. Be like a child. Meditate. Drop your inhibitions. Become free. Accept life and move on. Enlightenment is not far away, it is right with you. A few more minutes of stillness and meditation then no one can take the smile away from you. The smile is usually so fragile. The smallest thing throws you off balance. Spirituality gives you a smile that is permanent and it is worth having. Don’t trade your smile for anything on the planet - even if you are offered the job of the President of the United States. That is a seat where you could use your smile the most.