

'Farmers, don't despair'

SRI SRI RAVI SHANKAR talks to farmers in the wake of natural disasters that have destroyed crops

We must always remember that there is one Supreme power, and we are all floating in the sea of that Divine power. When faith dawns from within, then nothing can shake us. Life acquires such great inner strength when faith comes to us. Until a person does not become strong from within, he will never be happy. That inner strength can only come from this faith that there is one Supreme Power that takes care of everything; we are never alone.

Recently, our farmers have been very dejected. Their crops have been destroyed because of natural disasters. I want to tell farmers to not lose hope. Life is much greater than the events that take place. Believe that 'God is there and is taking care of me at all times'.

With this faith, you will get a lot of self-confidence. You will think, 'When the Creator of creation resides within me, why cry for petty, trivial things?' This faith brings great enthusiasm and patience within.

Problems come to everyone. Krishna, Rama, Buddha, and Prophet Muhammad — they all faced problems. But despite problems, when you have total faith in the Divine, then no problem appears like a problem that you cannot overcome. When spirituality grows in the country, then even nature is happy and at peace. These fu-

rious outbursts of nature are because of the rising injustice and wrong deeds in the country.

If we continue to damage soil, pollute air and water resources, then nature will react angrily. Did you know that the amount of toxic dioxin produced by burning just one plastic bag is enough to induce cancer in almost a thousand people?

We have to care and tend to our environment. Try and avoid the use of plastic products. It is difficult to completely do away with plastic in today's time, but we can surely reduce it to the maximum extent possible.



WOMEN AT WORK ON A RICE FIELD IN THANE DISTRICT

Refrain from throwing plastic waste in rivers or burning them in the open.

It is time for our farmers to wake up! I urge every one of you to adopt chemical-free farming techniques.

Today, animal slaughterhouses in the country have increased. When



Then, one man had four cows in his house. Today it is just opposite: the population has risen to 120 million and our animal wealth has dwindled to 20 million. India has suffered great losses because of this. We are exporting 6.5 lakh tonnes of beef every year. If this goes on, a day may come when we will only get to read about milk in books but never really have it. It will be tragic for coming generations.

One cow is sufficient to make one acre of land fertile.

The percentage of hydrocarbons and nitro carbons in our soil has also become less. **By international standards, the percentage of hydrocarbons in healthy fertile soil is 6 per cent. In India, it is 0.2-0.3 per cent only. Just as reduction in iron content in blood causes anaemia, our Indian soil is suffering from a similar anaemia.**

It's because we are subjecting our fertile soils to toxic chemicals and artificial fertilisers. I strongly urge farmers to adopt chemical-free farming techniques.

I urge you all to abandon chemical farming techniques and assure you of the goodness of our

India became independent, the animal wealth of the country was 120 million and our population just 30 million.

indigenous seed varieties and organic farming.

We always would sow multi-grain crops in farms — two or three different crop varieties in the same land to ensure that the soil remains healthy and fertile, and gives a healthy crop.

Even if one crop got destroyed, we would still have enough from the other two crops to help us get by for our own needs. Mono-cropping (planting or harvesting only one kind of crop) is used where there is a shortage of manpower and resources and is not suitable for Indian soil.

I once again ask our farmers that to prevent natural disasters, let's ensure that we attend regular *satsangs*, and chant sacred mantras in farms and villages. Our scriptures say and I have seen from my own experience that wherever there is chanting of *Rudram* (sacred verses chanted in the glory of Shiva) and other mantras, the environment is charged with positive vibrations and the crops are healthy and bountiful. South America has readily adopted our ancient techniques, the *Trayambakam Homa* and the *Agnihotra* for beneficial use in their farming. Why should we not adopt our own cultural heritage and follow these practices?

I ask farmers here to not lose hope and not be discouraged. There is still humanity in our country.

There is no need for you to commit suicide. ■

Follow Sri Sri Ravi Shankar at speakingtree.in