



‘A Sense of Identity with Humanness Should Prevail Among All Other Identities’

(Excerpt of Sri Sri’s talk at the 3rd World Congress of Rabbis and Imams for Peace in Paris on December 15, 2008)

It is so timely that once again in 2008, we have started the dialogue here between Rabbis and Imams of the world. All of whom have come from different parts of this beautiful planet of ours, because I know you all care for this planet and its people. This Earth belongs to God and we care for our people and we want to see a stress-free, violence-free society. We want a violence-free world and we are all striving for it.



The wise always see the commonness among all the religions and celebrate the differences. Today this is necessary for us as the world has shrunk into a global village. Communication and technology have improved so much. If there is conflict, it doesn’t remain localised, instead it spreads throughout the globe.

We are all aware of what has happened recently in India in the city of Mumbai. It is the most inhuman act that has happened in recent times. India used to be proud that it was the only country in the world, where Jews were always safe, respected, held in regard and had a place. This time we felt pain that we can no longer claim that this is a land where no Jew was ever subject to any form of violence. We cannot be proud of that heritage that we have been very proud of.

Though I represent one of the oldest religious traditions of the world –Hinduism, I am the youngest among all of you here, I sincerely urge that let us all sit together in these coming days and whatever we formulate – that journey from the head to the heart, let us bring to every nook and corner of our planet.

I would urge our Director General of UNESCO to formulate a textbook for children in classrooms, where they learn a little bit about all the traditions or all religions of the world. A child will then grow up having a broad vision of belongingness to the whole planet. There is an ancient concept of a One World Family which we are all a part of.

Multi-cultural and multi-religious education is most essential and UNESCO can take it up and push it to all the countries of the world. I think we will not find any more fanatics or extremists in any part of the world. Even if extremists are found in a tiny part of the world, the world will not be a safe place to live in. So, this education has to happen throughout the world and made available to every child so that the child does not grow up thinking ‘Only I am in the right direction, right religion, right thought and right path. Everybody else is going to go to hell’.

So, we need to safeguard against mental corruption. It is happening in almost every religion in the world today. The most peaceful of religious people are becoming angry, stressed and extremism is coming out. This is a matter of concern. For this, we need to teach our kids, our youngsters to

channel their energy, to release their frustration and anger and to manage stress.

First and foremost, we are all part of divinity, one life and then we are part of a particular religion, tradition and nation. This sense of identity with humanness should prevail among all other identities. If we can all work towards bringing that one change: that one journey from head to heart, from a limited national or religious identity to a universal identity of human values and a human being, we would have achieved something great in this century. We have made revolution in education and we need a revolution in the spiritual transition of celebrating the diversity and recognising the similarity.

I wish you all success. I am sure there are hundreds and thousands of Imams and Rabbis on our beautiful planet. They will all join us in this sacred venture of bringing peace... peace to the individual, peace among communities and peace among the nation. *Om Shanti Shanti Shanti.*