



“Explore Your Inner Self, Find the Bliss!”

ASHOK OJHA

When I entered the fiftieth floor apartment of a high rise building in Manhattan, I expected to meet someone wrapped in an orange robe. To my surprise, a bearded person wrapped in warm clothes greeted me with a broad smile on his face. This was Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev, a tall man with an imposing personality and commanding voice. During my lengthy conversation with Sadhguru, I never felt submerged in a spiritual galaxy full of ancient thoughts neatly derived from the Vedas and the Upanishads. To my utmost surprise, Sadhguru declared that he hasn't studied any of the well-known Hindu scriptures; neither Vedas, nor Upanishads or the Bhagavad Gita. He is an unusual mystic claiming to know the "piece of life" in and out.

I got overwhelmed by his simple explanation of the outer world and the inner body. Sadhguru, the founder of a non-profit organization, Isha Foundation, has been working for decades to advance physical, mental and spiritual health of his disciples. He is an advocate of yoga and self-transformation that the foundation's 100 yoga centers and ashrams are promoting throughout the world.

Sadhguru's discourses are based on scientific and logical thoughts, though they are independent of any scientific explanations. His direct and powerful thoughts, that don't belong to any tradition or school of thoughts, still refuse to depart from the age old concept of connecting with the cosmos. He understands the limitations of scientific knowledge and has adopted the philosophy of yoga as a means of self-transformation. He wants us to explore our inner self and find a blissful life. He has named his method of exploring the self as "Inner Engineering."

In an exclusive interview with *Tathaastu*, Sadhguru spoke on topics ranging from spirituality to the theory of evolution.

What is the essence of your teaching?

Sadhguru: We, the human beings, are a unique creation of nature. Our problems are not of survival. In fact, our problems begin after our belly is full. We need happiness. We need peace. We miss these things as we don't know how to control our senses.

We should learn to manage our mind, body, and the chemistry that runs inside us. I want people to be blissful. Please don't get influenced by the external forces. Look inside yourself. It will happen once your inner systems: physical, mental, chemical and your energy system, start taking instructions from you. If you can control your mind, body, and emotional energy, you will live blissfully. Then no external forces could cause stress in you. Stress is not an external product: it is caused by our inability to manage those forces. Stress doesn't occur due to the nature of your job, it happens because you haven't learned to control your inner forces.

Is this what you call "Inner Engineering"?

Sadhguru: What is engineering? It means a method to create certain situations. We have created a lot of comforts and conveniences in this world. Today's generation is probably the most comfortable generation that enjoys so much of scientific innovations and luxuries. However, this is also the most disturbed generation too. Certainly it is not the most peaceful one. Why?

External engineering has gone through the roof, but what about internal engineering? Do you think about that? You have fixed the outside, but your inside is troubled. Modern life is depending on logical intelligence. But the very organic knowledge is missing in our lives. People are not encouraged to cultivate the right side of the brain. There is no balance in life. We must activate the organic knowledge, the power of the right side of the brain.

There must be an equal proportion of growth for both the logical intellect as well as the organic intellect. Only then a sense of ease will develop. A deep sense of ease will bring an effortless, stress free life.

A dog recognizes his master and can distinguish between his master and an intruder in the house. But humans don't trust their senses. They are bogged down in logics and are disconnected with their inner self.

I could keep my eyes closed but still could tell you who has entered the room. It is not a great yogic science. You have to

rise above the logical intelligence and connect with your senses. This is what you call "Inner Engineering."

How does one achieve this status of inner control?

Sadhguru: As scientists have discovered, cells of our body receive information that is transmitted to the right brain and processed. That is one dimension of computing. Another dimension of human experience is intuition. If there is coherence in both perceptions, there will be enhancement of durability to live. Perception is a tremendous tool. It must be enhanced in order to succeed. One can achieve this coherence by yogic practices. "Isha yoga" is a way to achieve this coherence that will result into practitioners' physical, mental, and emotional well-being. Added with the simple act of "Shambhavi Maha Mudra," one could accelerate one's inner growth. It has been proved by scientific tests too.

What is the difference between silence and "Samadhi"?

Sadhguru: Silence shuts you from everything. You can become silent by your own nature. Once you stop making noise, you bring silence.

Sama is equanimity, "dhi" is buddhi. "Samadhi" is the stage of fulfillment. When in "Samadhi," your intellectual thirst is fulfilled. It is natural that human needs and desires are boundless. When the survival needs are taken care of, most of the problems begin. One wants to experience more and more. But as soon as one reaches the stage of "Samadhi," all needs are taken care of.

I have been practicing yoga since the age of 11 years. For many years, I was doing yoga just for my physical well-being. One day I was sitting on a hill. I must have sat for ten to fifteen minutes. But when I got up almost four and a half hours had passed. I didn't know what I was, and, what was not me. While I was sitting on a rock, nothing seemed logical. It was all so real—the realization about myself that was not separated from the rock itself. Every cell in my body was bursting with ecstasy. I was peaceful and happy. I had tears rolling down my eyes. I was experiencing something that couldn't be explained.

I started repeating this experience. One day I sat for twenty minutes. When I got up, thirteen days had passed. When I opened my eyes my sense of time had disappeared. "Samadhi" lifts you in a state where time loses its meaning.

Is there a difference between timelessness and “Shunya”?

Sadhguru: Do you think because you exist? Or do you exist because you think? You are thinking because you exist, but people don't understand this. If I simply sit here, I sit here for next five days without a single thought. There is a tremendous life process going on inside you that is far bigger than the psychological mess you experience in the outside world.

“Shunya” is being without a sense of thought. Few moments of conscious state of “Shunya” possess the power to cure even a chronic disease. The moment the thought process comes down, the level of rejuvenation will increase tremendously.

We devised “Shunya Meditation” to help people get relief from stress. It is a sure way to relieve your body of any kind of stress.

Science can't explain the nature in its totality. It explains the chemical reactions and the cosmic happenings in nature. Spirituality is a whole experience in millions of different ways.

Does spirituality support the theory of evolution? Do you see a conflict or harmonious co-existence between spirituality and the nature as we all know?

Sadhguru: Spirituality is a process of enhancing your perception. The rest is imagination. If you want to know the nature, you have to enhance your perception.

Science can't explain the nature in its totality. It explains the chemical reactions and the cosmic happenings in nature. Spirituality is a whole experience in millions of different ways. Religious people don't experience God, they just believe in God. A yogi doesn't believe — he experiences the changes in perception.

It is the self-realization that is the nature of life. Spirituality explores the nature of life.



I haven't studied the scriptures; all I know is this piece of life (pointing to self). Once you know this piece of life, you know everything.

In the West, there is a conflict between evolution and spirituality. In India, such conflict doesn't exist. We didn't get attached to any belief system. We understand that existence can't be created. It can be explored and experienced. We don't know where the creation begins and ends. A closest piece of creation is our own body. Do you know what happens inside the body? People make conclusions without knowing the whole creation. We don't even know how many cells this body is made of. How would you know how the universe was made?



Photo Courtesy: Ashok Ojha

Do you believe in miracles? Is a miracle the result of ignorance?

Sadhguru: How do you define a miracle? It happens as a cause and effect. Correct? If I didn't know how a cell phone works, I would think it is miracle that I am speaking with someone in India. So there are two ways to look at life: Everything is a miracle or nothing is a miracle.

How does your spiritual approach differ from other spiritual gurus, who seem to be chasing disciples in the West?

Sadhguru: For 20 years I, as a rule, never appeared before the media, not once in front of a camera. Millions have joined

my program on the strength of word of mouth. Ours is the largest non-religious movement in South India. It has been functioning almost like an underground movement. We have been working in about 4700 villages in the state of Tamil Nadu in India.

Our work in the U.S. is progressing mostly in the Midwest - that is also known as the Bible belt, where no other guru has done well. But we are doing well. We are active in Detroit, Ohio, and Tennessee. Many of my disciples are white Americans, but I haven't been chasing them. They came to me by learning through word of mouth.

We have built a wholly volunteer-based organization. Millions of our volunteers, full time and part time, are doing phenomenal work in the West. We don't deny the strength of media. It is also a scientific way of communication.

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What is your message for the world's victims who are caught in the spiral of economic crisis? Is spirituality an answer to this crisis?

Sadhguru: You have no control over the outside situations whether it is the economy, your society or your work. If you let your happiness depend on the outside forces, you are never going to be happy. So, why not control your inner forces? Let your inner situation happen your way. If you want to be happy and blissful, then create inner happiness by controlling your inner self. ●