

The Shadow of the Ego

By Sadhguru

Your ego is not an achievement, acquired because you did something well or because you're rich or beautiful or you have a well-toned body. All it is, is a defence mechanism. When you started kicking in your mother's womb, the ego was born. Identifying with your physical body gives birth to your ego.

Human 'organisms' are surrounded with their vast existence of which they have no perception to even know where it begins and where it ends. Just survival requires projection of oneself as bigger and better than the rest. So what we call the ego is a false identity created just for the sake of survival. Your ego is like your shadow. The moment you have a physical body, you have a shadow. The shadow itself is neither good nor bad. It changes too, according to different positions of the sun. So your shadow is moving according to the sun, which is an external source. This can be applied to your ego. We should have an ego just like that.

To handle different kinds of situations in our lives, we need different kinds of identities. If you are fluid and can change from one to another gracefully, then you can play your role to the hilt and have no problem with it.

The problem begins when you identify with your role, when you start believing you are that character. Once you believe 'I am the shadow' you have a problem on your hands. When our bed is cosy and has plenty of soft pillows we crawl up in comfort. What if those

pillows were replaced with stones and rocks? We would moan and move away from that bed. That is how everybody views life. If the outside situation is carpeted, we crawl up in comfort, if little thorns spring up we cry.

For most people life is limited to the physical. Everything that you know is through your five senses, and perception through the senses is only physical, and the physical has no purpose of its

own. It is like a peel to a fruit. Its purpose is solely protective. This body is important because there is 'something else' inside. That 'something else', you have never experienced. If that 'something else' goes away tomorrow, nobody would be interested in the physical body. So today because it is here, we have to take care of it; it is everything!

If we do not transcend the limitations of the physical, if we do not transcend the limited existence of the physical, then all life will be a struggle - confidence and diffidence. If situations go well, you are confident, if situations don't go well, you are diffident. You are wide aware of the fact that things can go wrong even when a situation is going well. It is not even a question of wrong; life can just take a whole new course at any moment.

If everything in your life is going 'wrong' and yet, you go life untouched, peaceful, joyful then you know life the way it is. Otherwise you are just a slave of the physical.

Free Introductory talk on Inner Engineering on June 24, 2009 at 6:00 p.m. at Commerce Centre, 3rd floor, Vasco. Contact 9822100305, goa. ishafoundation.org.



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