Knowledge - Boon or Curse?

Knowledge is accumulated information. What you call a cookbook or a textbook is just that - accumulated knowledge. When we have to do something physical or material, whether cooking your meal or manufacturing cars, you need accumulated knowledge because you have to make use of the past experience of life of so many other people and all the generations which have lived on the planet. If you do not make use of accumulated knowledge, you will have to re-discover the wheel every day. Only an utter fool reinvents something that has already been invented. A wise man uses what has been invented in the past and produces something else for tomorrow.

But about knowledge about life - when I say life we are talking about this life which is yours. You cannot accumulate knowledge about this life because if you come to a conclusion about life from accumulated knowledge, it will become prejudiced knowledge. It will not allow you to experience anything fresh. To conduct life you need clarity, not knowledge. Knowledge should not encroach upon your clarity of perception. If it does, you will not see anything the way it is. The old knowledge will constantly superimpose itself.

Nothing new will ever happen to you.

To have knowledge and not be identified with it or allow it to encroach upon your clarity of vision is very vital, because to see things the way they are right now, you must be free of knowledge. You need knowledge only to know what was in the past. Knowledge is in your memory. If there is clarity, if there is a clear distinction between what your memory is and what the scalpel of your intellect is, there will be no problem. If your memory is stuck to your intellect, then the scalpel will lose its sharpness and will not cut through anything. It is in that context that I say knowledge has to be dropped.

Intelligence is like a knife. The sharper it is, the more easily it cuts through anything. If a lot of things are sticking to it, it will not be sharp and it cannot cut through anything. So if you know how to keep the past in the past and be aware of what is there right now, then knowledge is not a problem. But if you have become knowledge then you have become an accumulation - you only exist because of what you have accumulated in the past - and you have no clarity. Then knowledge is a burden.

When it comes to life, you cannot have knowledge about it because it is life. You have to perceive it, you have to know it now. Krishna and Buddha knew it but it does not matter what they knew, because you cannot experience it through them. You can use their experience but you cannot use their perception. You have to perceive. There is no other way. So it is in that context that I say, do not burden yourself with knowledge.

(Sadhguru, a yogi, is a visionary, humanitarian and a prominent spiritual leader, www.ishafoundation.org)