Exploitation Won't End If You're Your Own Foe

**SPIRITUALITY**

**SADHGURU JAGGI VASUDEV**

**QUESTIONER:** It upsets me that though feminism is a beautiful quality, still men or women are exploited in the world.

**SADHGURU:** The reality in the world is that just about anything can be exploited, not just the feminine. Don’t think men are not exploited; men are also exploited by other men. Exploitation happens at all levels—people, animals, plants and trees are all exploited, aren’t they? People will exploit everything; that is true. It is not something that we can deny, but that does not mean we must destroy everything that is beautiful just because somebody is exploiting something. People pluck the flower and make a garland out of it; it is exploitation. So, just because somebody is exploiting this, we don’t stop growing flowers. If we keep growing flowers, then at least the flowers will be there.

So, in reaction to one kind of ugliness, do not create another ugliness. There are always ways to see the way of the world, unfortunately. Somebody is doing something ugly, you do something uglier than that. If you lose your temper and get angry, frustrated and depressed—this does more damage to you than somebody trying to use you in small ways. So, you don’t need anybody to exploit you; you are your own enemy. ‘When you are doing horrible things to yourself, why shouldn’t somebody else also join the party?’ They are always looking for it. All they have to do is just push you a little bit and leave you; you will do the rest of the job.

We cannot change what somebody else does or the world does overnight. But you can change what you do to yourself in a moment if you are willing; and if you have not done something, why are you different from the person who is exploiting you and what right do you have to complain because you do the same things, too? Somebody is exploiting you but you are doing more

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Inordinate things to yourself. When they see that you are not made this way and you will not pursue those things to yourself, such women are never touched.

So, let’s take the first step. The first step is that you stop all the nonsense that you do to yourself. Then let’s see how others do it. It will become very minimal here and there which you can handle; that is there for everybody, man and woman. Somebody is always trying to finger you somewhere, isn’t it? So when they see that whatever they do has no impact on you, you go about doing whatever you have to do; then they will join your party.

Right now, just about anybody can hijack your life. All they have to do is say one word and you are finished. Somebody else decides your way of being—that’s not dignity; you decide your way of being—this is dignity, isn’t it? When you are in reaction, somebody else is deciding your way of being. It is your responsibility to see that exploitation doesn’t touch you. If you do not take this up, if you get into states of reaction you will be an endless reaction. You will become a psychological mess in no time.

Human dignity does not come because you fight. True dignity is known only to one who has risen beyond the vicious circle of reaction. It is a quality that sustains itself within itself which allows us to go through moments of success and failure untouched; acceptance and rejection untouched; recognition and persecution untouched. It is a state of life and death untouched. This is true dignity that no matter what kind of situations life places you in, who you are remains the same. Anybody can be in the same spot and that’s not dignity.

The author is a prominent spiritual leader.

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