The Mind Bender

He's at home in a loincloth as much as he is in jeans. He doesn't think twice before walking barefoot through the Himalayas, or straddling a BMW mobile on the expressway. So who else, but Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev, founder Isha Foundation, to tell us about how the West perceives Indian spirituality?

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Sadghuru Jaggi Vasudev, yogi and mystic as he is called by his followers the world over, could easily be called a new age guru. After all, he talks of finding practical solutions to inner well-being, and uses cool new age phrases like 'blissed out' and 'freaked out' to explain the state of nirvana. He also confesses to having succumbed to the technological advantages of a high-end mobile phone, as he gives you his email ID and asks you to 'stay connected'. Ask him if this is the cultivated image of a new age guru, and he shoots back with, "Why? Even our sages and gods and goddesses were not against technology. Boxes and arrows you... whatever was the advanced technology of that time, they used it," he laughs. And he vehemently objects to the new age guru title. "Why do you want to call me new age anything?" he wants to know, "Don't I look ancient enough?"

Definitely not, we'd like to tell him, as we hear him reel off data and survey figures to tell us why every individual in the world today needs to have an inner balance system in place. "Which is why the quest for spirituality is at its peak now," he lets you know. And he would know, for he's just back from doing prana prathishtas of the largest meditation hall the West, in Tennessee. So, would he explain the West's fascination for spirituality?

"In the West, religion is very set. It isn't as if they all believe in spirituality. Initially, there's a lot of scepticism and disbelief," says Sadhguru. But since spirituality is a living process and has evolved along with the evolution of mankind, it has practical solutions for all of life's problems, says Sadhguru. "Once they catch on to this, they're on. Tennessee, for instance, is a hardcore Bible belt where people are extremely virulent about their religion. But we are doing very well there. That is because

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They believe in something, and from that evolves teaching, or philosophy. Fundamentally, if you work hard enough on a human being right from his or her childhood, you can make him or her believe anything. So, what you believe is not of much significance -- you can believe just about anything, it is accidental, based on where you are born and how you are brought up. But our sages were wiser than that. What they taught us was based, hundred per cent, on science.

Our spiritual ethos is no longer a conscious process... it is a heritage now. Carrying it as a heritage, a relic of the past is not good. It has to be a live process. But even this relic has the power to make an impact on the world.

Many things have happened towards human well being. But nowhere in the world has any culture looked at the inner mechanics of the being as a science, as an evolved essence of technologies, except for us.