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## Figuring out meltdown is no rocket science

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MUMBAI: The bonfire of the economic vanities now threatening the world reminds Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev of an interview he gave in the US in 2004. We are meeting with the renowned mystic yogi, who started the Isha Foundation, during his visit to the Maximum City for a book launch at the Bombay Stock Exchange.

So, should we be surprised with the venue? Not really. Last year, he spoke in four panels at the World Economic Forum in Davos, addressing issues ranging from diplomacy to economic development, education and the environment.

In 2006, too, he addressed the World Economic Forum, the Tallberg Forum in Sweden and, not to forget, the Australian Leadership Retreat. Sadhguru has also served as a delegate at the United Nations Millennium Peace Summit and the World Peace Congress.

He is the only speaker to have been invited to the World Economic Forum three years in a row. All in all, Sadhguru seems like a most unusual mystic — someone aptly described as being “at home in loincloth as much as he is in blue jeans; as adept at going barefoot through the Himalayas as being comfortable astride a BMW motorbike on an expressway”.

Now that the boom had gone bust, and with people were talking about the mother of all meltdowns stalking the global economy, what were his views on the cause of the downturn? “When I was asked in 2004 to comment on the American economy, the Indian economy was just beginning to boom,” he replies.

“I remember telling the interviewer that I didn’t know all the intricacies of the \$14-trillion US economy. But I could see that everybody from a certain class owned three or four homes. What was more, without having a single dollar in your hand, you could go out and get a house loan!

“Not only that, they gave you money to go and have a party!” the Sadhguru chuckles heartily. “Have you heard of this anywhere? Anybody who has lent money, even hundred rupees, knows that unless you have some kind of hold on the borrower, how difficult it is to get it back.

Once people borrow money and spend it, the exercise changes their consciousness. Here you had students coming out of college, many of whom already owing a quarter of a million dollars each to the bank. These guys had obviously no intention of paying. All they had to do was to declare bankruptcy.

It’s such common thing in America. All you had to do was to go to the court and declare insolvency and prove your credit-worthiness in some other kind of business, only to borrow money once again, without assets in hand, and the bubble went on expanding.”

“What was the basis of this kind of credit?” I asked. Sadhguru reminisces, “It just was not healthy. It does not take great rocket science to figure out that at one time or the other, you’d have to pay back. It’s taken three-and-half years for them to get there. This is not some kind of spiritual prediction I made; anybody who had a little sense could see it coming,” he says.

He amplifies his discourse with a striking image of a five-foot-tall human trying in vain to make great strides wearing three-foot-high heels. “That’s how an over-hyped economy is behaving,” he explains. “It is definitely not going to go anywhere, forget dancing somewhere on those artificially ramped up togs.

That only means you’ve got to be realistic, not fantastic and lose your sense of balance.” In the new book, called Joy 24X7 compiled by Jeetendra Jain for Jaico, Sadhguru has a chapter called fixing accounts in which he says you could still make great profit from all that nonsense that’s happened with your life. “That’s because you handle the balance sheet (of your life),” he adds.

“There’s no review from anywhere. The source of your misery is not your past actions. The source of your misery is the way you are processing the material of your past. If you have a sack full of stinking fish in your bag, you can make good manure out of it, or you can sleep with it and be terribly miserable.”

In this context, Sadhguru emphasises that humans do have a flair for finding different ways of being miserable. “People will find a reason to be miserable with just about anything. When the share market goes up, I am sure lots of people will be suffering because they missed an opportunity and if it goes down they will suffer as well, perhaps for a different reason.

You will continue to suffer for all sorts of reasons as long as you do not take charge of your interiority.” How to achieve that control is what Sadhguru claims to teach his

disciples spread around the world with a blend of traditional, modern techniques.

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