CONVERSATIONS WITH THE GURUS

At Forbes India, studying and tracking capitalism is part of our core. Much of our work as journalists has been around observing entrepreneurs, their ambitions and the challenges they face in scaling up their enterprises. That is why we call ourselves the drama critics of business. That is why a few months ago, when the Isha Foundation announced the setting up of a unique leadership programme designed to help ambitious entrepreneurs scale up their businesses, our ears perked up. Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev of the Isha Foundation, who without doubt is a child of the East, and Dr Ram Charan, one of the foremost CEO coaches in the world, author, and consultant, who has his roots in India but is a practitioner of management from the West, got together to create this programme. We were intrigued. Making it more interesting still is the fact that some of the best business leaders in the country are resource leaders for the programme. To understand what seems like a dichotomy, Indrjit Gupta, Shishir Prasad and Shravan Bhat engaged in conversations with both of them. What emerged are a set of insights that puts fresh perspective on wisdom that flows from the East and the West. Edited excerpts follow.

The full video of the conversation between Indrjit Gupta and Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev can be viewed at www.youtube.com/forbesindia
them. Because what somebody sees as a bottleneck, somebody may see as an opportunity.

**FI:** Another stress point for an entrepreneur is managing peer group relationships and performance all at once. How do you manage both expectations and performance? Sadhguru: Being an entrepreneur means doing what you want to do with your life. When you're doing that, there is great joy. But slowly you forget that and try to live up to expectations. But success is not measured only in terms of your size. It also ought to find expression in terms of who you are, your capabilities and competence. So, there is no need to be pressured as long as you can find full expression and, above all, establish your way of being.

**FI:** The formal learning systems in our country make it difficult to deal with failure. How much of a barrier is that? Sadhguru: On the contrary, I think in our society, success is more stigmatized. Because whenever somebody succeeds beyond a certain point, people start talking about morality and religion and stigmatize them. The reason why Indian families and people are so much averse to failure is not because of the mental make-up, it is because of our social structures. In other societies, there is enough of a net that allows opportunities to climb up again. This can be changed by looking at failure not as some kind of done thing for life—but as an ingredient of adventure.

The question you ought to be asking is: What is the level of risk you are willing to take when there is no social net? It's more a financial and social reality than a psychological one.

**FI:** Entrepreneurs from the West work in a better systemic way. It seems a deeper facet of their journey. But Indian entrepreneurs thrive in chaos. Would you agree? Sadhguru: There is a lot to learn from Western enterprise. But you need to understand that all Western markets are highly protected. If you open them up completely, you'll see they have no chance of survival because systems are expensive. People are flexible and mobile. Systems are fixed and need a lot to change. But if it is people, you can get them down and change things tomorrow morning. In India, we survive in spite of the broken system. In its essential nature, this is true enterprise.

**FI:** But in India we celebrate 'jugaad'. Is 'jugaad' essential in a globalised world? Sadhguru: No, it is not a magic potion. It is a survival kit. Sometimes, when things go wrong, jugaad could help. This is because the system has failed, and people find ways to survive. If you find the roads full of water, you learn to float on something. But that is not the way to exist. If you want to go boating, do it in the ocean, not on the streets.

**FI:** But that is a facet of emerging markets we see around the world. Sadhguru: If societies continue to remain without systems, they will have to find ways to survive. But that is not the way. Fundamental things should be organised. Other things can be left to individual genius. When I started driving in the US, I thought the cars are powerful, the roads are good, but I couldn't understand why I couldn't drive at 150 mph! Why am I restricted to 70 mph? But it is a place where even an 80-year-old woman drives a school bus. She can drive because there is a system in place. Imagine that in Mumbai. Forget driving, she can't walk. So, the system is relevant because it can do many things.

**FI:** We just released a list of the 100 richest people in India. A lot of people have told us that celebrating wealth in India isn't right. What is your take? Sadhguru: Everybody wants to be wealthy. But if somebody else gets there, it becomes vulgar. We chose the market economy. That means the market will decide. Once that is so, being rich is an important aspect of being in the market place because that is power. It is perfectly all right. Money need not necessarily mean greed. I see money as something that facilitates my work. I am sure a lot of business people also look at it as a means to do what you want to do. It is unfair to say that just because you make money, you're in the wrong. If that is the case, let us stop all businesses and move back to poverty. Would that be morally correct?

**FI:** Scaling up requires focus. But there is also the growing expectation that entrepreneurs give back to society. How do they reconcile? Sadhguru: I don't think entrepreneurs need to give back to society. They should use their money to make this a vibrant economy rather than doing out something to somebody. Giving is the government's business. Every business person should have every rupee of theirs—except what they need personally—floating in the market, generating opportunities.

**FI:** Sometimes it seems that decisions are easier for companies in Europe or America because those economies are down and they go to emerging markets. What is an Indian company to do? Dr Ram Charan: Indian companies are moving. They have smaller companies like Marico and they have a very clear, focussed strategy, mainly in South East Asia where they are going about in a methodical way and creating a large foothold. Then you have the Tata sons who bought Jaguar and Land Rover, which are global brands for a global market. You have the Birla group, for whom 55 percent of their sales are outside India.

**FI:** Are there any traits you think a globalised company ought to have? Dr Ram Charan: The fundamentals never change. In addition to energy, character, the ability to inspire people and having a vision, what makes a difference is the ability to understand better than others the external factors, government policies, economic changes, collecting the right people. Thinking is not enough. People have to execute. Look at a Nokia or a Kodak. They had the ideas, they had the technology, they knew what was coming, but they did not execute. It takes skill and discipline. People are not trained. It requires coaching people.