He may not fit the definition of a conventional yogi. He is as comfortable in a loin cloth as he is in his blue denims. The yogi who loves to ride a BMW motorcycle, the head of Isha Foundation, spiritual master ‘Sadhguru’ Jaggi Vasudev, presents yogic sciences to suit contemporary life.

Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev addresses key aspects related to spirituality as he shares his valuable insights with ‘The Hans India’ on his way to Delhi for a conference of the Guru Samangam. The confederation of all ‘recognised’ gurus and institutions was formed with an idea of creating a reliable platform, where spiritual masters can come together, examine the processes of spirituality, and optimise the potential of the rich Indian heritage.

Sadhguru-Namaskaram. What is the difference between Guru and God?

The only culture in the world which is truly a godless culture is India. This is the only place where there is no concretised belief system about what God is. In India, if you can look up to your father like God, you can bow down to him. If you can see your mother like God, you can bow down to her. If you can see the flower as God, you can bow down to it. People have the freedom to envision their own gods. This is known as Ishta devata. When everybody is creating their own gods, it is clear somewhere it is who we make this. So, the highest goal in this part of the world has never been God; the highest goal has always been freedom. The liberation of the human being has been held as the most important thing. Even God is seen as a stepping stone towards that. A Guru is like a road map. Maybe you can reach the destination with your own road map, but when you are travelling on an unchartered terrain, if you go without any kind of guidance to find the destination which is just next door you may go round.

The world. That’s what a Guru is. Is he a must? Not necessarily, if you have to find your own way, you can do it, but it may take forever.

It is said that the Guru comes looking for the disciple when the time is right. Is that true?

You don’t go searching for a Guru. If you just deepen your longing, if you are really torn by the pain of not knowing the very nature of your existence, if the longing is so deep, you don’t try to find the Guru. He will find you.

Wherever you may be, if your longing becomes deep enough, if the pain of ignorance really screams within you – a Guru will reach out. A Guru is not a person; a Guru is just a possibility. The word “Guru” comprises: “Gu” meaning ‘darkness’ and “ru” meaning ‘the dispeller’. Anyone or anybody who dispels your darkness is your Guru. It is not somebody you meet. It is not somebody that you shake hands with. It is not somebody that you bow down to. It is not somebody to whom you go and beg for this or that. A Guru is a certain space, a certain energy. So, it is not necessarily a person, but you can relate better to one who is embodied because you need to be talked into everything, isn’t it? A genuine seeker, a person who develops an urge within himself, will find his Guru always. There is no doubt about it. When any being calls or really yearns, the existence answers.

We have witnessed a rapid emergence of spiritual institutions in the country. What is “Guru Samangam”?

On January 6, 2011, for the first time, various Gurus representing diverse spiritual movements in the country met under the banner of Guru Samangam, which means a confluence of Gurus. About 17 of us met and another 8, who could not make it for various reasons sent in their blessings. It was incredible. These are very prominent people in the country – each one of them commands a following of millions. And their institutions are doing fabulous work in the fields of health, education, environment, humanitarian service and so many things. This is an event which has not happened in thousands of years.

The idea is to present India as a spiritual gateway to the world, to make all dimensions of spirituality available on one platform. As a part of this, we have launched a portal called, ‘India—the Spiritual Gateway’, where we have already generally identified a little over three hundred ashrams and institutions which have something valuable to offer in their own right. All of this will be on website where if people type out ‘spiritual’ every kind of spiritual process which is offered in a responsible atmosphere will be available in one spot for them to choose from.

Guru Samangam is also an instrument to see that those who are behaving irresponsibly cannot be a part of it. We want you to understand, these are not gurus behaving irresponsibly; these are entrepreneurs who are wearing the mantle of a guru because they think it is lucrative to be like that. We resolved that Guru Samangam will be a confluence of spiritual movements and we will meet at least once a year.

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