‘Our readymade answers a hurdle to kids’ seeking spirit’

Rashi Lal@timesgroup.com

Lucknow: When Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev speaks, his voice draws and holds your attention effortlessly. The 59-year-old mystic, yogi, and author began his address to a select gathering early Thursday morning with a soothing devotional song. When he stopped, the hall on the cold December morning felt a little warmer, a little cosier.

Before the guru stepped on the stage, live music and singing by members of Ishia Foundation had already spread calmness and serenity at the venue organized by CFI Young Indians at a city hotel.

After his soulful rendition, Sadhguru began the Mystic Morning—that was the title of the event—talking about distinguishing between seekers and believers.

“Seekers are alone and believers in a congregation, because seeking is possible when you are by yourself,” he said. Anyone can become a mystic if one seeks knowing life rather than simply passing it for survival, he said.

“If you don’t give ready-made answers to children, there will be millions of mysteries in the world. When a child asks you, ‘who is God?’, tell him the truth. And the truth is you don’t know what God is because you haven’t seen him.”

In his characteristic style of wit blended with intensity of thought, Sadhguru went on to give the example of his own daughter’s unique childhood.

“When my daughter was born, I had decided that no body would teach her anything. I let her imbibe everything around her. When she was 18 months old, she could already speak three languages—all by listening to voices around her. By the age of three years, she knew her name and could spell it. She considered all of them her friends and as equals.”

“One cannot demand that children listen to their elders, Sadhguru said, in response to a question. One has to earn their attention.

“We teach our children what didn’t work out for us,” Sadhguru said, inviting sighs and hums of agreement among the audience.

“The truth is, Sadhguru said, that one can never know anything in entirety. The reason everyone cannot be a mystic, Sadhguru said, is because we are caught in survival. The seed of happiness is within us but we are too tangled to let it blossom into liberation, he said.

“Mysticism is like technology you have to find out how it works. The human mechanism is the most superior technology. But have you studied the user’s manual,” he said. The choice is simple. Each one of is capable of downloading the entire cosmos within us as also capable of creating a ‘private hell for ourselves’.

“We suffer what does not even exist. The past is gone and the future hasn’t come as yet. Both are non-existent. Still, we make ourselves suffer,” Sadhguru said, emphasizing that one could instead pick various reasons to smile everyday.

“If you wake up tomorrow, smile. Check on your loved ones, if they are alive, smile. When you realize that death is inevitable and that there is a limited lease of life, you will do everything that matters to you,” he said.

What the world throws at us might not be in our hands or our choice but what we make of it is our choice. “We seek heaven but what proof do we have that we are not already living in heaven and messing it up.”

‘Experience the nature of life; bring integrity to your home’

Yogi and spiritual master Sadghuru Jaggi Vasudev shares his views on life, the malaise in society and politics with Nischal Arora. Excerpts:

What is the most important thing in life?

Knowing the nature of life is most important. All other things are decorations. Unfortunately, there is no focus on that as most human beings are just enamoured by their own psychological drama. They don’t experience the nature of life, its limitless possibilities.

What should people strive for in order to gain peace?

People who don’t mess with their mind are peaceful. If they learn to handle the simple faculties that they have, they would be peaceful. We are too focused on the goals, not the process. When we want mangoes in the tree, we don’t have to think of mangoes, we have to think of soil, manure, water, sunlight. Similarly, if you cultivate your mind, body, emotion and energy to a certain level, to be blissful will be natural. We are in pursuit of happiness, instead of creating a situation for it.

Anger and hatred seem to be a global trend. People seem to have shut themselves up against inclusiveness. Why?

If you try to impose inclusiveness as a policy, it won’t work. This is why I say experience the nature of life. To put it simply, right now what you exhale, the trees inhale and what trees exhale, you inhale. If this was in your experience, you would clearly know one half of your lungs are hanging out there. Then should I teach you to not harm trees? Inclusiveness is not an idea, it is the nature of life. If you experience life, you will be inclusive, if you experience only your thought you will become exclusive. Because thought is exclusive. Life is always inclusive.

What is your take on politics of today, whether it is India or the USA, it’s the same story?

As we have aged in democracy, people have understood a basic aspect of democracy, it’s simple arithmetic. If you make certain people insecure, they will vote en masse. This is subversion of democratic process. Whether in the US or Europe or India, everything is happening in reaction to the other mode. In the US elections, one party tried to make the minorities insecure to make them vote en masse. Well, it didn’t work for them, but that was the effort. Democracy will only work if a person thinks for himself or herself and votes. If one votes as a family, community, caste, creed or religion... we are practising feudalism in the garb of democracy.

Are we headed in the right direction?

Yes, but a little slow. We are such a complex nation. It’s difficult to have everyone going in one direction. Everybody was complaining that people were exploiting the system, there is black money. But if you take action, everybody is complaining because it hurts. We don’t have commitment to go through that pain. We have a mindset. Status quo is best. We call ourselves a developing country, when will we be a developed one? When 90% of the people live in a bad condition, 60% of the population is malnourished, we are not ashamed of that. We are an ancient civilization, but now, we need to change. Also, we have got used to the thing that if nothing free is being given nothing is happening. If I have to give something for free, I have to rob somebody. These are Ponzy schemes being run forever, not governments. We have been exploiting poverty, 60% of the population is being kept poor. The system has been made in such a way, any change would disrupt the way they are milking it.

What about corruption by politicians? Is it justified?

Politicians don’t drop on us. They are people who are willing to do the dirty job for us. You try to be a leader in this country, you will know what it takes. They are not a separate species. Take for example, if there is no policeman at the red light, how many people will stop? Those who don’t are all corrupt. If you make them chief minister or prime minister, what will they do?

What is the way forward?

We should bring back integrity to our schools, to our homes. Corruption is actually bred in homes... between a boy and a girl, right hand and left hand. If you are taught such things at home, you will be corrupt.