SADHGURU DISCUSSES THE ROLE OF A PARENT TO THEIR CHILDREN

Becoming an asker or a seeker

Many times I have heard that we should not fill our children with our own nonsense. So if my children ask me for advice, should I share what I've learned from my past experiences?

Sadhguru: If you have something that has really worked for you – if it has brought much joy and life to you – you can tell them for sure. If you do not know something, tell them, "I don't know, let's look at it." What is the problem? Do not pass on things which have not worked for you.

At least maintain this much sincerity in your life. What has worked for you, pass it on to your children. But what does not work, do not say that just because it is said somewhere else. The whole world is busy trying to teach everybody something that has not worked in their lives.

Becoming an asker or a seeker?

Just because you came here a few years before your children does not mean you are supposed to know everything. It is wrong for you to assume and make your children assume that you know everything. Just admit to them, "I came here a few years before you and I have been busy having you. So I don't know these things, let's figure it out." If something is important, spend time to figure it out. If something is not important, ignore it.

We do not know a whole lot of things in this universe. In fact, we don't know almost everything. We just know a handful of things – enough to survive and walk around on this planet, nothing more. If you admit this, if there is a certain keenness of intelligence in your child, he will become a seeker for sure, an active seeker.

But you are afraid of that. You do not want your child to become a seeker, you want him to be an asker. You want him to earn so much money, and become so-and-so in society. You do not care whether he knows truth or not, whether he becomes a beautiful human being or not – he must be successful, he must be a little better than your neighbour's children. The neighbour may not be right next door. It may be someone's children somewhere else. You want your children to go to a better university than someone else's children – some rubbish like this. This is only of consequence to survival, it is of no consequence to life.

If you are truly interested in your child's wellbeing, this is something you should nurture within them. "If there is something that both of us want to know, we need to invest time to seek and to know. If we do not want to know, we can ignore it and go ahead with something else."

If we admit this, there is no way your child can avoid being a seeker because that is the nature of human intelligence – unless it is corrupted because of the lies that parents, pundits or priests tell. If it is not corrupted, every human intelligence is naturally a seeker. How can you avoid it? No one can live with a total "I do not know." They have to find out something about their life. Everyone must, otherwise what is the point of living?

Only when you try to find out and do not have the necessary wherewithal to know, will you understand what you are lacking. Otherwise you will never know what you need to acquire, what is missing in you.

Knowing What You Don't Have

It happened, Shankar Pillai's business fell on hard times and he had to join a rich man's house as house-help. Being a man of certain competence and street-smartness, he pleased his master by doing so many things. After a few years, one day he said, "I am quitting, I am leaving tomorrow." The master said, "How can you leave? I have treated you well." Shankar Pillai said, "That's not the point. You've given me good food, you fed me well, you clothed me well, all that is fine but you don't trust me."

"How can you say this? I have given the house keys to you. Every key in the house I have given to you, including the keys to the safe. How can you say I don't trust you?" "Well, that's the problem. I tried all the damn keys but none of them open the safe."

Even to know what you do not have, takes a certain amount of striving. What is it that is lacking in you, why are you not grasping what someone else grasped? Just to know that, a certain amount of seeking is needed.

Ranked amongst the fifty most influential people in India, Sadhguru is a yogi, mystic, visionary and bestselling author. Sadhguru has been conferred the Padma Vibhushan by the government of India in 2017. http://isha.sadhguru.org/