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## **Time to have larger universal identity, sing global anthem, Sadhguru tells top US doctors**

**15 May 2020, Coimbatore:** In a session on Leadership Dilemmas charged with emotion and tempered by pragmatism, physicians from America's leading medical institutions interacted with Sadhguru, Founder, Isha Foundation, as they grappled with a pandemic that has left the world's mightiest economy tottering on the brink.

Physicians from some of America's most well known institutions such as MD Anderson, Beth Israel Stanford and Harvard Medical School, some looking visibly shaken by the trail of death and destruction that COVID-19 has unleashed, engaged Sadhguru in probing questions on moral dilemmas, ethical choices, professional decisions and transitioning into an unknown post-COVID world. The session was moderated by Dr. Balachundhar Subramaniam from Harvard Medical School.

Two research experts from Indiana University and the University of Virginia also shared research findings on two of Isha Foundation's advanced meditation programs – a 4-day program and an 8-day retreat – which have analyzed and compared pre and post-program results to prove that yogic and meditation practices can play a vital role in strengthening immunity and protecting the system from disease.

An angst-ridden question on “how to make sense of something so senseless” from Maya Hastie, MD, Columbia University, speaking from New York which has become the playground of COVID in the US, set the tone for the evening's session in which Sadhguru's famous pragmatism gently forced participants and audiences to

acknowledge that humanity has no choice but to collectively put its best foot forward to tame the deadly virus. “This is a time when we must become conscious. We must bring humanity into a new level of realization,” said Sadhguru so that the price that we have paid in the form of human lives and near annihilation of the global economy does not go in vain.

Asserting that “Reverence for Life” must underpin decision making during a calamity compounded by scarce resources, Dr. Lachalan Furrow from Beth Israel said “every human life should have equal right” to all resources. “Science is the tool but the greatest power is the human spirit,” he said.

Dr. Furrow’s brief talk on Ethics evoked an absorbing and incisive response from Sadhguru who detailed the fundamental flaw in the global education system that has allowed a disproportionate focus on intellect to stymie all other aspects of human intelligence, producing skewed perspectives and narrowing human potential by promoting exclusiveness rather than embracing the inclusive nature of life. “If you apply just your intellect without making use of other dimensions of intelligence within us which are more inclusive in nature, there is no inclusive experience. Emotional intelligence is more inclusive. Intellectual intelligence is more exclusive,” he said and spoke about the four categories of intelligence that are always equally promoted in the yogic sciences to enable human beings to explore the full depth and dimension of their potential to make them more competent, insightful and balanced thus enhancing their ability to respond to life in a much more impactful manner.

Sadhguru also introduced the novel idea of a global anthem at a time when the world is more receptive than ever before on collaborative unified action. “First and foremost thing that needs to happen in the world is that people must have a larger identity, a universal identity. We are all busy singing our own national anthems. It’s time we sing a global anthem,” he said adding that it would expand individual identities and promote an experiential understanding of inclusiveness.

Dr. Carin Hagberg from MD Anderson said that one of the positive impacts of the pandemic was that it had become a catalyst for collaboration between segments that rarely collaborated in the past. Acknowledging that this had improved quality of

decision making and promoted solidarity between otherwise competitive individuals and institutions, Dr. Hagberg asked how these collaborative bonds formed during the time of crisis could be maintained as the world returns to normality.

“That’s a wonderful thing and fortunately it’s happening across the world,” Sadhguru acknowledged but cautioned that it may be “a bit unfair to expect the same thing beyond this time” because the investment in the medical system has made it a business which must be profitable in order to survive and serve the people. Sadhguru agreed that “We can make it less aggressively competitive because this involves human life, it’s not just another business.”

Dr. Hagberg wanted to know “Are your decisions based on your mind, your heart or your gut? And once you make a decision, how do you find peace with these decisions?” Sadhguru joked, “Fortunately my brain, my heart, my gut and my little finger also operate as one, they don’t operate separately, they don’t create any conflict in me.” These are times in which no one can escape making hard decisions, he said. “We may not make life decisions, we may have to make livelihood decisions” which can be equally hard to make and painful for those impacted by such decisions. “Though we are making hard decisions, we can still do it with absolute softness of heart,” he said. Sadhguru spoke about basing decisions on “fundamental humanity and not on any other value” in response to a question from a nurse practitioner on helping people deal with “moral distress” while making hard choices about other people’s wellbeing. “In any given situation, nobody can make a perfect decision...let our decisions come from the core of our humanity, that’s the only way. It must be so that we always did our best, never less than that,” he said.

Dr. Senthil Sadasivam, Vice Chair for Research from Indiana University and Dr. Swaminathan Sudararaman, a researcher in Immunology from University of Virginia shared their findings from a study on Isha meditators who underwent 4-day and 8-day programs of Yoga and meditation. The researchers reported that pre and post-program tracking and measuring of meditators revealed increased activation of immune system pathways, better lipid profiles, improved HbA1c levels (markers that track blood sugar), decreased depression and anxiety and improved focus. The researchers said the meditators were tracked for as long as 6 months and displayed persistent benefits.

Highlighting the toll of the emotional impact of COVID-19 on healthcare professionals, Dr. Stephen Pratt, asked Sadhguru how healthcare leaders can help their staff cope with the emotional turmoil of witnessing excessive human suffering.

Sadhguru said it is very important for medical personnel to invest “12 to 15 minutes a day” for their own wellbeing which can “make a big difference” to themselves and the people they serve. He spoke about Isha’s Inner Engineering Online program which is being offered free of cost to medical professionals around the world. “A few hundred thousand people are going through this, it is important that everybody goes through it,” he said about the 7-session module that incorporates simple yogic practices. “This will work 100% because this will change the fundamental chemistry of who we are”. Terming it a “technology to create blissfulness”, Sadhguru urged all medical professionals to do a “simple practice of 12 minutes” to bring emotional balance and physical wellbeing into their lives.

“Right now, when the world is facing a situation like this, medical professionals must be in the best state of mind and body. This is why we’re offering Inner Engineering Online. It is my wish and my blessing that you stay healthy. Your work, your emotional balance and your own wellbeing and the wellbeing of your families is very vital for the rest of the population also. Keeping this in mind, please keep yourself well,” Sadhguru said.

Sadhguru has been interacting with several groups from Industry, Education and Healthcare through webinars over the past two months. The COVID-19 pandemic has infected over 4 million people worldwide and caused more than 300,000 fatalities. It was first detected in Wuhan, China, late last year and erupted into a global pandemic this March, forcing the world indoors and bringing economic activity to a grinding halt.

**If you would like to know more about this, please write to [mediarelations@ishafoundation.org](mailto:mediarelations@ishafoundation.org).**