

## The Umbrella



The life, this existence, is pure by nature. You are pure by nature. That *is* your nature. But there are things that come in and cause doubt and confusion. That's why it is so important to have someone who can clean, who can help you straighten out your priorities, put you back in touch with your heart, with what is important.

We look at our situation and say, "It's hopeless." I look at it and say, "No. Wash it. Here is the soap." When you wash it, the dirt is gone. Cleanliness isn't poured over the shirt. No. Soap has the capacity to bind with dirt and take it away as it is washed. And purity returns.

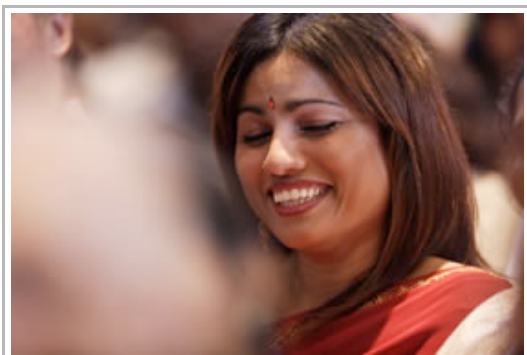
Let me give you an example. There is a tiny mouse that lives in Africa. This little mouse doesn't have big teeth or big claws to defend itself against the eagles or hawks that attack it. It has only one thing—speed.

It can run really fast. But by running fast, it is very easy for this little mouse to stumble and fall and get swooped up. So this mouse has a strategy.

The strategy is to use what it has been given—speed—and to make sure the road is clear so it doesn't fall. It has researched all the routes from its home to the places it needs to go for food. Meticulously, it keeps those tracks clean—no twigs, no rocks, nothing. When it spots a hawk, it runs fast and makes it back home. The strategy works because they're still around.

It's only a cute little mouse, but can we learn something from it? That's what we need to do in our lives, too—keep those tracks clean. If we can keep those tracks clean, when that time comes that we need to use them, we'll make it.

There are people who will tell you, "Chant this mantra and clouds won't come." I say, "No matter how hard you try, clouds will come, and it will rain. You cannot change that. So carry an umbrella—the umbrella of clarity. When it rains, simply open up the umbrella." Why do you want to change the clouds or the seasons? It's going to rain. When it does, open up the umbrella, and you won't get wet. Go out, but take the umbrella.



Some people say, "I don't need any help—my life is going nicely, my business is doing really well." I stand at the crossing and say, "It's going to rain. It's going to rain." Some people who don't know about the umbrella say, "I don't understand what he's saying. I don't get his message." Those who know say, "Thank you for reminding me. Let me go get my umbrella. I don't want to leave home without it."

There is so much that is waiting for you. Inside of you, there is joy, peace, fulfillment. Accept that. It can be there always, but remember, if it is raining, it is not just a question of having an umbrella. One, it has to be open. Two, it has to cover your head. You can't just hold the umbrella and say, "I had the umbrella open in my hand and I got wet."

I can just remind you. I cannot do it for you. I will never walk behind you with an umbrella. I don't do that and have never done that.

But I can remind you, I can show you, and I can guide you.

Maharaji