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MAHESH BABU

BALANCING FAME AND FAMILY

https://youtu.be/T1g_rLFwSC4

Host: Our ambassador this evening, ladies and gentlemen, is someone who broke all norms of the industry right from his early days. His look on screen was something people wouldn't normally associate with South Indian cinema. His on-screen and off-screen persona is a far cry from the usual over-the-top drama associated with show business.

He commands one of the biggest fan followings in the world of Indian cinema, cutting across Telugu and non-Telugu audiences across the globe. He was recently voted India's most desirable man in an online poll. Seven state awards, four filmfare awards, apart from a house full of trophies and recognition for his superlative acting talent.

The more adulation he receives, the more he retreats deeper into his inner mysterious world. We're very proud and happy and grateful to have him here, offering his support as Goodwill Ambassador to the Heal-a-Child Foundation. We're very, very grateful for him having taken time out to be here and reach out to his admirers and fans and his following all over the world to support the Heal-a-Child Foundation.

In this long and wonderful journey of yours, you've had a lot of opportunities to join or show active support as you're doing now for various other organizations with all due respect to the work they're doing. Why Heal-a-Child

Mahesh Babu: I think it happened with the birth of my son, Gautham. He was a preterm baby. He was in rainbow for like ten days, twelve days, and the doctors took care of him and he was really tiny. And then we got him home and it was an emotional experience for us because he was a first baby. And then if you look at

my son now, he's like the tallest in his class. So that thought went into my head was we had the money and we could do it and what would have happened if we didn't have the money? And that's why organizations like Heal-a-Child are amazing. In fact, if they can help children, nothing like it because I think children are beautiful.

Host: What a thought. Thank you so much. How many years ago was that?

Mahesh Babu: Gautham is eight now.

Host: He's eight now and wishing him a lovely life ahead. As you see children again with the Heal-a-Child Foundation supporting them so much, you've touched their lives in a lot of ways. Do you think it comes back manifold? How do you feel that love?

Mahesh Babu: It was this incident a couple of months ago. It was I think it was from this foundation called Make-A-Wish. And I met this ten-year-old boy who was not feeling very well and he wanted to meet me in my sets. So he came to my shoot and I was getting my shot and I went and I was looking at this kid and he was like very sad looking down and so I walked up to him and he saw me and he had this big smile on his face. If I could do that to that boy, I mean I'm blessed.

Host: Thank you so much. Thank you for the blessings that you're passing on. Let's open the house to questions, questions that you have to ask but for those of you who've put your names in the chat and into that bowl, Mahesh may I request you to pull out Chetan. Let's see who that is from. Soman Kumar. Good evening,

Audience: Mr. Mahesh. Everybody down here thinks you have tons of money.

Host: Everyone up here also thinks he's got tons of money.

Audience: Anyway, in the light of vain, what is your personal take on money and what values would you like your children to imbibe with that money when they grow up and when they're growing up?

Mahesh Babu: Money is very, very important but I believe that you have to work very hard to earn it and that's what I would be telling my children also.

Audience: Thank you.

Host: You've been born in a filmy family, so to speak. You've grown up watching cinema and knowing the fame and fortune. What kind of an effect did it have on you as a child at home or just knowing that everything was available?

Maresh Babu: Like when I was in Chennai, we all grew up in Chennai and my father was this huge star and we had this very, very normal life in the sense like I would go to school in an auto-rickshaw and I wouldn't tell my friends that my father was a big movie star because it was, I don't know, in the sense they would treat you differently.

So I would feel that it was a little embarrassing. So we all lived a very normal life and that's helped me right now because it makes you grounded in life and I have to give it to my father. He brought us up like that.

Host: Even when as a child, I mean when you did that role in your first film, obviously there must have been, oh okay, he's a star now. In the sense like, yeah,

Maresh Babu: I grew up in Chennai like I said, so not too many people watch Telugu films except the Telugu people but when I did films when I was young, that's another story because I think one summer holiday my father decided that, okay, come on, you do a film now and that film did well and the next summer holidays he made me do another film.

So every summer holiday of mine I would do these films and before I realized I was a big child star and my dad said, okay, now you go back study. After four years come back and do films as a hero. So it was as simple as that and I can never, I mean my dad is the best in the sense he's laid it out all before me and it was so effortless and smooth.

Host: I just rewound my childhood in summer holidays and my grandmom wasn't such a great co-star but what about Gautham now? I mean of course he just launched the audio of your recent film.

Maresh Babu: He also acted.

Host: He also acted in it. So the industry obviously is looking forward to him growing up and then getting on screen as a hero. I'm sure you come across a lot of that so how do you deal with it at home or explain to him at home?

Mahesh Babu: It's a lot of pressure to be honest but he wants, I mean he's interested after doing that film. I think in his head he thinks that acting will actually he can miss school. So that's what I think.

Host: Alright next question.

Audience: Hi Mahesh. Out of all the movies that you've done, all the movies that you've let, which is your most favorite one and we'd like to know that and why?

Mahesh Babu: It's called Okkadu which is I think it's a film which actually gave me stardom and it's a brilliant film. It's one of my favorite films.

Host: What is the one role that you would like to probably do or essay with your knowledge of world cinema and everything that you experience?

Mahesh Babu: Telugu cinema to be honest is totally different. So I take it film by film and once I okay the script it's the director for me. So I don't really plan. I hear the narrative if it is interesting I do the film.

Host: What kind of roles do your kids love to see you in? What kind of films of yours do they like?

Mahesh Babu: My son just started watching my films. He doesn't like action films.

Host: He doesn't like action films at all?

Mahesh Babu: He can't, I mean the sound he can't handle it. So now he started watching so we'll know now.

Host: Okay next question. Let's pull out another name from the bowl.

Audience: Hi Mahesh. You look very relaxed. You're chatting away.

Mahesh Babu: Thank you so much for that.

Audience: You've done this event for the foundation. But you're actually a very quiet person. Why are you so reserved?

Mahesh Babu: I'm not really reserved. I mean do I look reserved? No.

Host: He's married it's not the same thing. But you do have a very reclusive persona. It's been you all through or looking at the entire glamour or the intrusions that the industry has. Does that get you even more closed?

Mahesh Babu: I try to stay away from the publicity, the entire media and all that because I like to keep it simple. And I've been like that all my life. So all of a sudden I can't change and say hey let me be this way. So I like it this way.

Host: So what do you do when you're not at work?

Mahesh Babu: Watch a lot of films in my house.

Host: Okay. You travel?

Mahesh Babu: Yeah.

Host: Lots of I mean personal holidaying.

Mahesh Babu: With the family.

Host: With the family. What's your favorite destination?

Mahesh Babu: Dubai.

Audience: Hi Mahesh. This is a slightly imaginary scenario. Imagine it's a Saturday night. You're in LA and you can take any actress from the last 30 years out for dinner. It's a platonic dinner. That's it. You can have dinner and spend three hours with her. That's it. Who would you take out? Who would you call?

Mahesh Babu: What's the fun in that?

Audience: You're going to get beaten tonight by Namrata. I promise you that.

Mahesh Babu: I would find it boring actually for three hours to sit.

Audience: Who would you take out?

Mahesh Babu: Demi moore.

Audience: Good choice. Thanks.

Host: So Mahesh, tell me has there been a moment when you walk up to your friends and go I don't know what I'm doing. I don't want this stardom. I'm sure it's overwhelming to handle the responsibility of the star that you are.

Mahesh Babu: The pressure is there. And that's why your house is very important. You know, your home. And I have to give it to my wife. I mean, she balances it out beautifully. So it takes the pressure out. Really.

Host: All right. Without pressure. Next question.

Audience: Hi Mahesh.

Mahesh Babu: Hi.

Audience: I'm sure you would have been asked this question earlier. A lot of actors have joined politics. Right? So in case you've been made an offer in future to join politics, would you?

Host: You've got diplomacy. I'll give you that.

Mahesh Babu: The country has enough problems.

Audience: Would you?

Mahesh Babu: No.

Host: We have another question, please.

Audience: Hi Mahesh. Thank you for coming out to support this organization. We've obviously heard a lot about Mahesh at work. And the papers cover it. We've seen it in the cinemas. You've told us you like to watch movies. But tell us the one thing that Mahesh likes to do for leisure that we haven't heard yet.

Mahesh Babu: I think I answered that question before. It's movies again. But yeah, whenever we go for holidays, I mean, it might sound stupid, but food. That's one thing which we like to indulge in. Food, food, food. Because we don't, I mean, I'm always on a diet here. So whenever we go, we eat.

Audience: Thank you.

Host: Quickly moving on to the next question.

Take two. Our next question.

Audience: My question

is about your father and son relationship. One superstar to another superstar. How is your relationship with your father? Does he involve or influence your career anyway? Can you elaborate?

Mahesh Babu: First of all, he's my inspiration. My dad. And like I told you the story before, how when I was young, he used to make me act in films. And that was the biggest gift he could ever give me. And another thing, once I started acting in films, he never advised me what to do, like never ever advised me which film to do. He would just say, do it on your own, because even if you do mistakes, you can learn from them. And I think it's one of the best advices anybody can give because you learn it by yourself. And I would be doing that exactly to my son. You have to do it by yourself.

Host: All right. We have a question from Diana. Now she'd like to ask Mahesh a question.

Audience: Hi, Mahesh. How are you doing? You know, your father was a superstar. And I remember on Sunday, we would make sure we were home when his film was on in the evening. I'm sure many of you went through it, too. Your father was a superstar. You got into films. What if your daughter wants to get into films? Would you encourage her down that route?

Mahesh Babu: I would. Yeah, but I think I'm going to make her a scientist. But no, if she wants to, it's her choice.

Host: Are you a morning person or a night person? Morning. Are you fit by choice or compulsion?

Mahesh Babu: Choice.

Host: One lie you've told and gotten away with?

Mahesh Babu: My wife is sitting here. Dude, why would I tell you that?

Host: How many pairs of shoes do you own?

Mahesh Babu: Not many, actually. I think this and my running shoes.

Host: He doesn't have lots of money. Top three things you indulge in when traveling?

Mahesh Babu: Food, food, food.

Host: Are you a tech freak?

Mahesh Babu: Yeah.

Host: Top three gadgets you've indulged in?

Mahesh Babu: iPhone, iPad, desktop.

Host: If you could reset life, if you could reset your life, what would you want back? Fame or money?

Mahesh Babu: I think it's a process. Life is a process. So I don't want to reset anything. It's like you get the fame and then you get the money. So why would you reset that?

Host: All right. Namrata, could we have you on stage, please? On a scale of one lowest to ten highest, rate yourself and rate him. You rate him and he'll rate himself. All right? So I'll ask you first. As an actor, on a scale of one to ten how would you rate yourself?

Mahesh Babu: I'd give myself a six or a seven.

Namrata: I'd say ten

Host: On a scale of one to ten one lowest, ten highest, as a husband.

Mahesh Babu: I would say a six or a seven.

Namrata: I'd say ten And I'm not lying.

Mahesh Babu: See, the temper tantrums are working after all.

Host: As a father?

Mahesh Babu: ten

Namrata: Twenty

Host: As a friend?

Namrata: Twenty

Mahesh Babu: Nine.

Host: As a human being?

Namrata: Hundred

Host: I can see why she's your biggest cheerleader. I think we lose count on that one. But thank you so much, the two of you, for giving us your love and support to Heal-a-Child Thank you so much, ladies and gentlemen. I tried to put him in a spot, but as always, Mahesh remains spotless. It was a wonderful time having you on stage. Thank you. Thank you.

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