



Feeding the Fires

CURIOSITY may have killed the cat but curiosity is what helps children grow up into observant adults who are always seeking answers to problems and issues that tickle their minds. Curiosity is what propels a child to ask questions and as an adult dig deeper for answers.

SCIENCE Q&A: QUICK ANSWERS TO FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

by **Biman Basu**,
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Unfortunately, owing to societal and cultural pressures and unresponsive adults in the form of parents and teachers, very soon in the growing years a child stops asking questions and starts accepting whatever is handed down to her or him unquestioningly. It is easy for such a child to get caught in the web of blind faith and irrational thoughts.

It is, therefore, imperative that every effort made at quenching the thirst for knowledge and feeding the fires of curiosity among children be applauded. The book *Science Q&A* is an appreciable effort in this direction.

The author, Biman Basu, former editor of *Science Reporter*, makes it quite clear right at the beginning that the questions included in the book are in fact questions posed to him by children during interactions with them or sent to him after the interaction. One look at the questions and you can easily make out the logic and innocence of a child.

For instance, why do we feel cold when we go to a hill station even though we are closer to the sun? Why cannot metal utensils be used in a microwave oven? How do wheels make moving an object easier? How do rocket engines burn in space where there is no oxygen? Why do some birds such as storks and flamingos stand on one leg while resting or sleeping? Why can't we sneeze with our mouth open? These are just some of the about one hundred and twenty five questions that make up the book.

Exceptionally well brought out, the book is illustrated with very good colour photographs. The questions cover a wide range of disciplines from earth to space sciences, ocean to weather sciences, physical to chemical sciences, plants and animals, human health, etc. And the language is lucid and easy to understand.

Hasan Jawaid Khan

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