



Address by the Guest of Honour

Health and Happiness through Yoga

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The Yoga Institute has a unique approach to Yoga and we believe that Yoga has the key to health and happiness of the man, living in any age and any circumstance. We humbly differ on the general stand and practice of emphasizing the physical practice and trying to achieve the benefits at mental level, as a side effect. We believe in total integration of body and mind and in embracing Yoga as a lifestyle.

Yoga's physical benefits are undeniable and that is what is attracting people all over the world to Yoga but getting lost in this physical aspect would be doing a disservice to ourselves and picking only a few gems from this enormous treasure. The Yoga Institute does not give undue importance to 'asans' and believes more in loving and caring for the body and becoming more subtle in life. Developing awareness about the body, its strength and weaknesses, the mind, its strength and weaknesses and developing an overall awareness about life should be the objective of Yoga.

One should flow with the body's character and not make it a regimented practice that one has to do at a particular time, for a particular duration even if the body and mind is not ready or willing for it. Going after difficult asans is also not necessary as simple asans can bring similar benefits. We think that emphasizing only the physical aspect of Yoga is a totally wrong approach and it should be treated instead as an education in self development. We don't treat even 'Pranayams' as an exercise but as a means of creating awareness about our breath, our thoughts and our minds.

The mind is behind all the problems that people face. It creates problems where there should be none or complicates the ones that already exist. Human mind is like a child and needs a constant training. We believe that this training of mind with correct understanding and correct technique is of utmost importance. We follow Yoga sutras for the understanding of classical Yoga and fine analysis of the mind and keep in touch with 'Sankhya' which provides the philosophical base of Yoga.

Just as we don't believe in Yoga being only a physical practice, we emphasize that it is not religion specific and encourage people of different faiths to practice it. We think people should not get stuck with names and symbols and miss out on the benefits of this wonderful science of living. If people are averse to 'Aum', they can hum the 'A', 'Oo' and 'Ma' separately or they can do 'Bhramari'. If they think 'Surya Namaskar' is against their faith they can separately practice all the asanas included in the 'Surya Namaskar'. We should find a way around these things and spread the essences of this experiential science.



Yoga is such an amazing science that even one technique or one simple principle of Yoga if followed diligently; can change one's life or bring in remarkable results. Following basic yama and niyamas or trying to follow the principle of the right diet, right thinking, right actions and engaging the mind in right activities (Aahar, Vihar, Aachar, Vichar) is of utmost importance from this point of view and we emphasize it totally.

Bhagvad Geeta is another source of inspiration for us as it mentions Yoga and talks of a fantastic concept called 'Karma Yoga'. We believe that rather than spending 2-3 hours on doing asans and pranayams, it is more worthwhile to spend your time doing your duty or your karma with a balanced mind and in a detached way. 'Doing your duty to the best of your ability and leaving the results to a higher reality' is the best mantra that a man can follow to experience true peace of mind. If you are living a meaningful life for others, are being useful to others, being caring and compassionate, then you will definitely get happiness. It is ingrained in human nature to feel joy by doing things for others. One has to discover it. That is Yoga.

We believe that every individual has an immense potential for self development. People have to know themselves, work on themselves, remove their weaknesses and delve deeper in selves to reach higher levels of consciousness. That is Yoga.

