



CANCER

A YOGIC PERSPECTIVE

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Cancer: A Yogic Perspective
Sadhguru
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NOTE TO READERS

This book is an amalgamation of excerpts taken from various discourses by Sadhguru. Throughout the book are sharings from individuals who have benefitted from Isha Yoga practices in their recovery from cancer. There are also several information boxes that include relevant snippets of the latest research from medical science. We hope you enjoy the book and find it useful.

Isha Volunteers



INTRODUCTION

The word “health” comes from the word “whole”. When your body, mind, emotion and energies are in tune with each other and you feel wholesome within yourself, that is when you feel healthy; that is when you are a complete life by yourself. Every human being is a complete life – whatever created you did not make you half a life. But so many people live their life in a half-hearted manner. They only live half a life, never a full life. So, health means that in your experience, you are a complete piece of life, not half a life. When you feel complete within yourself, physically, mentally, spiritually – in every way – it means you are healthy.

Health and wellbeing is everyone’s concern – every human being aspires for it in whichever way he knows it. It is just that different people have different ideas of what health is, and still more different ideas of what wellbeing is.

On a certain day, an old, shriveled-up man was sitting in a “Bachelors Only” club at 11 o’clock in the morning. He was drinking whisky and chain smoking. A lady noticed this, went up to him and asked, “Hey old boy, it looks like you don’t have a care in the world!”

The man said, “Yes, I don’t have a care in the world.”

She asked him, “What’s the secret of your life – that you can be like this?”

“The secret of my life is, I have my fifth whisky by noon, I chain smoke and I eat whatever I please. That’s the secret!”

“That’s amazing. How do you manage this? By the way, how old are you?”

“I’m 22.”

Unfortunately, society today has a very limited understanding of what health means. Medical science as we know it has advanced by leaps and bounds. Yet, at the same time, probably never before has humanity known the kind of ill-health that they experience today. We have overcome infections and epidemics, but the diseases that human beings manufacture within themselves are becoming more prevalent.

Let’s make a distinction between infectious and chronic diseases. An infectious disease comes upon us because of an external invasion, for which modern medicine has created so many chemicals. The chemicals you use to kill these organisms also damage your own system, but because human beings are living in such close proximity, we need to use medicines to control the spread of these diseases. It is like spraying insecticides on our crops. We know it is not healthy. At the same time, we cannot stop it right now because we have not yet propagated more efficient and organic ways to control pests.

For almost every infection that can arise today, medical science has some solution. But for chronic ailments like diabetes, blood pressure, migraines or whatever else, medical science does not offer any solution. It only talks about managing these diseases, never really about freeing people from them. There are so many kinds of specialists, and a lot of money and time is being spent on just managing these chronic diseases within certain limitations.

Our external environment has been sufficiently fixed. What no one could have ever dreamt of a hundred years ago is available to ordinary citizens on a daily basis today. However, human beings are still not well because we took care of the outside, but never bothered to take care of the inside. For example, in the so-called developed world today, in some countries standing as examples of ultimate success, over 20% of adults¹ are on some sort of psychiatric medication. This is not wellbeing. From poverty to affluence is a hard journey. After making this hard journey, if we cannot live well and instead suffer our affluence, it is a tragedy. We might as well have suffered our poverty – at least it would have been eco-friendly.

¹ *America's State of Mind: A Report by Medco (2011)* <http://apps.who.int/medicinedocs/documents/s19032en/s19032en.pdf>

Is there a way to create our inner situation the way we want? As there is a whole science and technology to fix the outside situation, similarly, there is a whole technology to fix the inner situation, including our own health. Yoga and meditation is that dimension of science which focuses on creating the right kind of interior, so that you can live a joyous and peaceful life.

Though many people are going about as if health is the ultimate goal of life, it is not. Health is a natural process. If we don't mess with the system, the system is designed to run in a healthy manner. Yoga is not focused on health because what you call "health" is a natural outcome of being in harmony within yourself. There are hundreds of thousands of people who have come out of serious chronic ailments, which generally were given up as hopeless cases, with just a simple, foundational yogic practice. If this human mechanism is properly attuned to the very source of creation functioning within you, health is a natural consequence.

Can yoga also cure cancer? I would not say it is a cure, but it can definitely enhance the immune system and the body's balance and vibrancy as a whole. To what extent is subject to various realities – the way one's constitution is made, and to what intensity and in what kind of atmosphere one can practice.

This is a medical fact also, that something as simple as physical exercise decides the distinction between health and ill-health for a lot of people. Just taking a walk in the morning can make a person healthy. Similarly, yoga is a more complex system, which

is not limited to the benefits of exercise. It is much more than that. If it is done properly, there will definitely be a benefit. Is it a miracle? No, because it is a science. As with any other science, you have to apply it and work with it step-by-step.



‘WHY DOES CANCER HAPPEN?’

If you have read what has been written about cancer, you may have noticed that opinions and concepts seem to change frequently, sometimes dramatically. But the fundamental physiology, the chemistry, and the very basis of your existence has not changed. So, why is it that these concepts keep changing? From concepts to consciousness is too much distance. With concepts, there can be no consciousness. So, rather than reading everything from the outside and getting confused as to what is true and what is false, if you start listening to your body and gain a deeper understanding and insight of your own system, you would be able to handle it more efficiently.



*Dr. Tracy Gaudet
in conversation
with Sadhguru at
Duke University
Medical School*

We are looking at it from an experiential perspective, because what is you is everything. Anything that is worth knowing can be known in a single moment if you are willing to turn inward. You may not discover how to build a nuclear reactor, but you would know how the atoms in your body behave. If you turn inward, everything is right there – you are a cosmos by yourself.

There are millions of people right now going through different states of cancer. These things occur for a variety of reasons and all of us are a part of it. This is not only because of external situations such as pollution or industry, but also because of how you maintain your system. It is not just external chemical influences that are acting on you. Your body is the biggest chemical factory. If you do not handle this factory properly, it produces the wrong kind of chemicals and freaks out on you in some way.

In yoga, we do not look at cancer as different types. Where and how it manifests in a particular individual may depend on various aspects of one's physiology, genetics, lifestyle, diet and so on, but we always see the root cause as an imbalance in what is called the *pranamaya kosha* or the energy body.

Fundamentally, the yogic system looks at physiology as five different layers. We will look at the first three; the other two are not concerned with health. The first layer is called the *annamaya kosha* or the food body. The food that you eat has become the body, isn't it? If you do not eat anything, this

body will dissipate. So, the physical body is referred to as the food body.

Until recently, medical science was only involved with the food body or *annamaya kosha*. They did not focus on anything else. They thought they could handle all the infections in the world, but then they found they were unable to do anything about chronic ailments like blood pressure and diabetes. This is because they were looking at the food body, which is only an external manifestation.

Within this is the *manomaya kosha*, which means the mental body. Today, medical science recognizes that man is psycho-soma – whatever happens in the mind naturally happens in the body. For example, if you create mental tension, your blood pressure will go up. So, there is a mental body that needs to be properly taken care of. This mental body and physical body can function only because there is an energy body. The work of yoga is fundamentally on the level of the energy body or the *pranamaya kosha*. From the yogic perspective, cancer and other disturbances or diseases that the system manufactures from within, are caused by an imbalance in the energy body.

Cancerous cells are present in everyone's body, but having a few cancerous cells that are disorganized will not affect your life or health in any way. However, if you create certain situations within the energy body, they organize themselves – they go from petty crime to organized crime!

If we use an analogy to describe cancerous cells, we could say they are like criminals in a society. If there are individuals here and there doing little things, it does not really affect the society as a whole. There are petty criminals in every town who do a little pick-pocketing now and then – no problem. But if fifty of them get organized, the whole atmosphere in the town suddenly changes. When these fifty criminals come together, it becomes dangerous for you to step out on the street. That is all that happens in the body. If the cancerous cells loaf around by themselves, they are not a problem. Once they all gather in one place and hit it off, it becomes an issue.

Initially, a criminal is happy picking someone’s pocket. Two of them dream of breaking into a house. Five of them meet and dream of robbing a bank. If law enforcement is conscious and active, it makes sure criminals never gather in big numbers and become a major problem. The same is true with the body. You have to dissolve these cells before they gang up.

Due to certain “blanks” that happen in the pranamaya kosha, either because of attitude, lifestyle, food, or so many other reasons, the energy body gets affected. If the flow of energy is not proper in certain areas of the body, cancerous cells will generally choose those places to grow and fester. When it comes to chronic diseases, the root cause is always in the energy body. Once the energy body is disturbed, it will naturally manifest both physiologically and psychologically.

For example, we generally find that for people who smoke regularly, their breathing is very different from non-smokers. Because of this restricted way of breathing, naturally the energy levels in that area become low and that becomes a place cancer is attracted to.

Another example is breast cancer, which is rampant today, especially in Western societies. This is because a lot of women do not conceive when they are at a child-bearing age. The mechanism of the breast, which was mainly made to feed the offspring, is either not utilized or is only utilized during a specific time period. In the past, if a woman went through the normal process of conception, from the age of around 16 or 18 till about 45 she would conceive periodically, which would have kept her whole system, the uterus and the breast active in so many ways. This would have also kept the energy flowing.

Today, some women do not conceive at all, or for most women, child-bearing is over before they are 30 years of age. Then for another 15 to 20 years of their life when they are still able to bear children, the necessary hormones and enzymes are still being produced but are not made use of. Because of this, that part of the body becomes low energy, which attracts cancerous cells and becomes a place for them to accumulate.

Does this mean we must produce more children? Please don't. This is an already overpopulated world. There are other solutions for this. Rather than allowing it to happen according to the atmospheres in which you live, it could be corrected by balancing the system and making it a more controlled process. There

are certain types of yogic practices or inner work to control the body's hormonal levels, which can absolve women from these problems.

If your energy body is in full flow and properly balanced, there cannot be any disease either in your physical body or your mental body. People come to us with asthma for example, and we give them a certain practice that may release them from the condition. Someone else comes for diabetes, and we give that person the same practice, which works for them too. This is because we are not treating the disease as such. The disease is only a manifestation of the disturbance that exists in the energy body.

Fundamentally, yoga is not a form of treatment. This is a way of balancing your inner energies. We never really treat the physical or mental body in that sense. Irrespective of what the disease is, we only aim at balancing and activating the energy body.

IS YOUR BODY HAPPY?

Your physical body is a self-contained, quite complete instrument. It is designed and structured to function by itself without much participation from your side. You do not have to make your heart beat, make your liver perform all its complex chemistry or even try to breathe. Everything that is needed for your physical existence to manifest itself is happening on its own.

If you are fascinated by gadgets, there isn't a better one. This is

the most sophisticated piece of machinery on the planet – the highest level of mechanics that you can imagine, the highest level of electrical connectivity that you can dream of, and the highest level of computing capability that you could conceive of.

Every cell in the body has a deep instinct to survive and be well. The very basis of life within you is to be well. When the entire system that you refer to as your body is designed to create health for you, not disease, why is it that your own cells turn against you? Getting a disease from an external organism is a different thing, it needs medication. But you manufacturing disease in the body is not necessary, nor is it natural. Because a large population is getting it, people think it is natural. No, health is natural. The chronic diseases manufactured from within us could be avoided if we just set the necessary conditions for ourselves.

One reason why people are getting cancer these days is because somehow, the body has become unhappy. I am not talking about the person. If the physical body itself is happy, it does everything very well. Have you noticed how some bodies are happy while some bodies are not?

For example, suppose you went into a garden after a light shower of rain, all the plants seem to be almost laughing. It is not just that they are clean; they seem to be happy. Have you felt this? Similarly, the physical body itself can be happy, and when it is, it will ensure that nothing wrong happens with it. If you keep the

rejuvenation process on a high, the body's intrinsic intelligence will function at its best and the chances of some part of your body becoming unhappy will be very low.

There are ways to enhance the rejuvenation process in the body by doing specific yogic practices involving the breath. You can distinctly see how the body becomes exuberant all the time, which means the body is happy by itself.

MIND YOUR CHEMISTRY

As I said earlier, medical science recognizes that man is psychosoma. That is, whatever happens in the mind naturally happens in the body. People are paying attention to cancer because it kills. But they are not paying attention to a very prevalent disease on the planet: "mind cancer." Like Old Faithful, people will burst, splutter around, act funny, and behave in ugly ways, not paying any attention to it because others around them are unfortunately passive to it. If people poked you when you blew up, you would know this will not work. But because they are also like that, people put up with you.

Whether it is a moment of irritation, anger, agitation, anxiety or fear, whatever you go through has an impact on your cellular structure and chemistry. If you create the wrong kind of chemistry within yourself, it is the first step towards ill-health.

Today there is substantial evidence that if you just keep yourself pleasant, without a moment of irritation, agitation, anxiety or

Marcella Lopez *"After my second occurrence of thyroid cancer, my doctor reluctantly said that my problem may be related to my mind and he suggested I learn some kind of meditation where I could keep my body and mind relaxed.*

Two weeks after I started my Isha practices, I had a blood test that showed that my thyroid globulin levels, which in my case indicated cancer cells, had dropped for the first time in four years! My doctors are now so intrigued by this sudden health improvement that they want to know more about this meditation and Sadhguru. This practice has brought me not only health improvements, but also happiness and harmony in my life."



stress, your perception will increase. Your ability to perceive life and the way your intelligence functions keeps increasing. People have experimented with this, but you yourself can know this experientially any moment. Have you noticed that when you are very happy, it is very easy to skip a meal? Your whole system is functioning at its best when you are in that state, so even if you do not eat, it will go on well. On the other hand, when you are not so happy, if you miss your meal it is a big deal. Whenever you create unpleasantness within yourself, in some way your own intelligence and energies are working against you. If you are angry or furious about something for five minutes, you are literally poisoning your own system.

It has been medically established that if you create some kind of tension either in your mind or body, your blood is actually

getting chemically poisoned. Your anger, irritation, agitation and resentment are all poisons that you drink and you expect someone else to die. Life does not work like that. If you drink poison, only you suffer.

The incidence of cancer is as high as it is right now because there is a huge sense of joylessness in people. There are other factors like pollution, chemical influences and the kind of food that we are eating, but one major factor is that people experience very little joy in their lives. Joylessness creates a fabric, which brings about certain aspects within yourself, both in terms of your own chemistry and the way you process your food. If people experienced at least a few hours of joyfulness in 24 hours, you would see the incidence of cancer would come down dramatically.

JOY – YOUR FUNDAMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

Whatever yoga can or cannot do about cancer, we can definitely improve an individual's mental condition in a significant way. It may make a big change in their physiological situation also. Even for those who are undergoing treatment for cancer, if they develop some enthusiasm, if they are not tense or fearful, their whole system will work much better. There is no doubt about that.

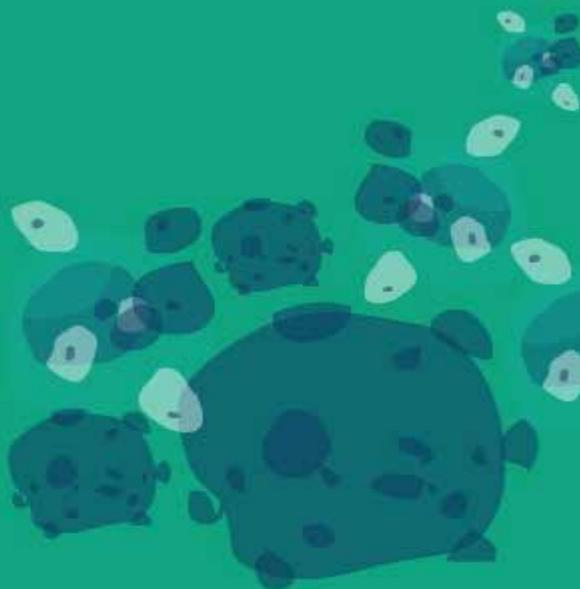
Some Facts About Cancer

is a generic term for a large group of diseases that can affect any part of the body

Other terms used are malignant tumors and neoplasms



Cancer is one of the leading causes of death world-wide



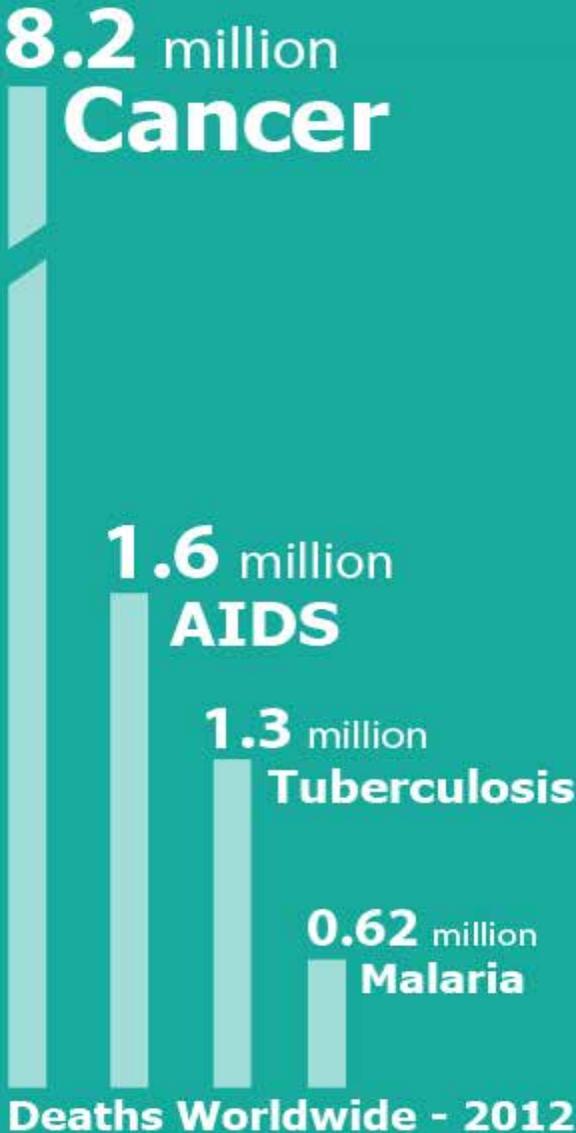
One defining feature of cancer is the **rapid creation of abnormal cells** that grow beyond their usual boundaries

These cells can then **invade** adjoining parts of the body and **spread** to other organs

This process is referred to as **metastasis**, which is the major cause of death from cancer

Cancer is the 2nd leading cause of death in the US, after heart disease.

It is estimated that 11.4 million people will die from cancer in 2030, showing an expected increase in the number of people with the disease.



8.2 million
Cancer

Disease	Deaths (2012)
Cancer	8.2 million
AIDS	1.6 million
Tuberculosis	1.3 million
Malaria	0.62 million

1.6 million
AIDS

1.3 million
Tuberculosis

0.62 million
Malaria

Deaths Worldwide - 2012



1 in 8
Deaths in the world is due to cancer.

Cancer causes more deaths than AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria combined

Many people who are recovering from cancer have gone through the Inner Engineering program² or Isha Kriya³ and definitely, at the end of the practice they felt a significant improvement in their mental state and energy levels. After a few months we have been in touch with them, and they felt much better because their psychological make-up and emotional stability were greatly improved after doing the practices. In that way, yoga definitely helps in recovering from the disease because it is not taught as a practice, but in a holistic way that brings about a total understanding of oneself and one's environment.

Right now, your happiness, peace and misery – everything within you – is happening accidentally. That means your very way of being is decided by external situations. If people around you are wonderful, you feel great. If people around you become nasty, your mood takes a downward turn. Once your inner situation is decided by the outside, you are going to live as an accident because nobody – whoever you are, even if you are superhuman – has one hundred percent control over external situations. External situations are always subject to many forces in the world. That is the reality of life.

However, when it comes to your inner situation, it is just you. This

² *An intensive program for personal growth, which includes an initiation into the ancient Shambhavi Mahamudra kriya. Visit <http://ishayoga.org> for offline class schedules and <http://innerengineering.com> for an online version.*

³ *Isha Kriya is a simple yet potent practice rooted in the timeless wisdom of the yogic sciences. See the Isha Kriya section at the end of the book for written instructions or visit <http://ishakriya.com> for the free guided meditation.*

inner situation at least must happen your way. If it was happening your way, you would definitely create a joyful situation within yourself. Only because it is out of control – it is happening in random reaction to external situations – it is not joyful. This is happening because you do not even exist here, you are scattered all over the place thinking, “For my joy, this person is responsible, for my misery that person is responsible, for something else, someone else is responsible.” You have thrown yourself all over the place. First, gather yourself. First, see, “the basis of my experience is me, no one else and nothing else but me.” If you come to this, then you have gathered yourself. Now it will naturally follow to be joyful.

What you call “joy” is just a certain expression of your life energies. Your life energies are capable of functioning in many different ways. You may be identified with many things, but you are actually a certain amount of life energy. That is the reality. Your name, shape, sexual identifications, social identifications, educational backgrounds, all these are in your mind. If I erase your memory right now, you are just a certain amount of life energy. If you fall asleep right now, you are just a certain amount of energy pulsating here as life.

This life energy which you call “myself”, has sometimes known misery, sometimes joy, sometimes agony, ecstasy, tranquility, turmoil – it is capable of finding all these expressions. If your life energies find expression by conscious choice, you would obviously choose a joyful

expression to them. And in that state of being, both your body and mind function at their best.

When life becomes very pleasant in your experience, that means it is becoming pleasant within the system also. When you wake up and first thing in the morning, if for no reason a smile appears, you probably cured yourself of some cancer that was happening within you because the system is moving from being in a state of dis-ease to ease. Only when it comes to ease, it is natural for you to be like that. It is not that there is a policy in your life that you must be happy all the time, but if everything is pleasant, it is natural to be like that.

9 TOOLS TO MAKE JOY YOUR COMPANION

#1 STOP PURSUING, START EXPRESSING

Today, we are seeking happiness so vigorously that the very life of the planet is being threatened. Don't be in pursuit of happiness. Know how to express your happiness in the world. If you look back at your life and see, the most beautiful moments in life are moments when you were expressing your joy, not when you were seeking it.

What you save will never be your quality. What you dispense will be your quality. If you save your joy, at the end of your life no one will take account, "She saved every bit of joy in her; she's

the most joyfully dead.” They will say, “This horrible creature never even smiled in her life!” But if every day you dispensed your joy and love, people would say, “Oh, she was a joyful and loving being!”

#2 REALIZE THAT JOY IS YOUR ORIGINAL NATURE

It does not matter what you are pursuing in your life, whether it is business, power, education or service, you are doing so because somewhere deep inside you, there is a feeling that this will bring you happiness. Every single action that we perform on this planet springs from an aspiration to be happy because that is your original nature. When you were a child, you were simply happy. The source of joy is within you; you can take charge of it.

#3 SEE THAT BEING JOYFUL IS YOUR FUNDAMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

The first and most fundamental responsibility for a human being is to become a joyous being. Only if you are joyful, other great possibilities open up. Whatever you do, it is only your inner quality that you are going to spread. Whether you like it or not, that is the reality. Unless something of true value happens within you, you cannot do anything of tremendous value to the world. So, the first thing you must do is transform yourself into a joyous being.

#4 PUT THINGS IN PERSPECTIVE

Today morning, did you see that the sun came up wonderfully

well? The flowers blossomed, no stars fell down, the galaxies are functioning very well. Everything is in order. The whole cosmos is happening wonderfully well today but just one worm of a thought in your head makes you believe it is a bad day.

A thought in your head or an emotion within you determines the nature of your experience right now. And your thought and emotion may have nothing to do even with the limited reality of your life. The whole creation is happening wonderfully well but just one thought or emotion can destroy everything!

Suffering happens essentially because most human beings have lost perspective as to what this life is about. Their psychological process has become far larger than the existential process, or to put it bluntly, you have made your petty creation far more important than the Creator's creation. That is the fundamental source of all suffering. We have missed the complete sense of what it means to be alive here.

#5 SEE THE MIND FOR WHAT IT IS

What you call as "my mind" is not yours actually. You do not have a mind of your own, please look at it carefully. What you call as "my mind" is just society's garbage bin. Anyone and everyone who passes by stuffs something into your head. You really have no choice about whom to receive from and whom not to receive from. If you say, "I don't like this person," you will receive a lot more from that person than anyone else. You really do not have a choice. If you know how to process and use it, this garbage is

useful. This accumulation of impressions and information that you have gathered is only useful for survival in the world. It has got nothing to do with who you are.

#6 MOVE FROM PSYCHOLOGICAL TO EXISTENTIAL

When we talk about a spiritual process, we are talking about shifting from psychological to existential. Life is about the creation that is here, knowing it absolutely and experiencing it the way it is; not distorting it the way you want. If you want to move into an existential reality, to put it very simply, you just have to see that what you think is not important, what you feel is not important. What you think has nothing to do with reality. It has no great relevance to life. The mind is just chattering away with nonsense that you have gathered from somewhere else. If you think it is important, you will never look beyond that.

Your attention naturally flows in the direction of whatever you hold as important. If your thought and emotion are important, naturally your whole attention will be right there. But that is a psychological reality. That has nothing to do with the existential.

Suffering is not showered upon us, it is manufactured. And the manufacturing unit is in your mind. It is time to shut down the manufacturing unit.

#7 SMILE!

When you get up in the morning, the first thing you should do is smile. At whom? No one. Because just the fact that you woke up is not a

small thing. So many millions of people who slept last night did not wake up today, but you woke up. Isn't it great that you woke up? So smile because you woke up. Then look around and if there is someone, smile at them. For so many people, someone dear to them did not wake up today morning. Everyone who is dear to you woke up – Wow! It's a great day, isn't it? Then go out and take a look at the trees. They did not die last night either!

You may think this is ridiculous, but you will know the reality of it when someone dear to you does not wake up. Don't wait till then to realize the value of it. It is not something ridiculous, this is the most valuable thing – that you are alive and everything that matters to you is alive. On this disastrous night, when so many people did not wake up and the loved ones of so many others did not wake up, you and your loved ones woke up. Isn't it a fantastic event? Appreciate it and smile at least. Learn to look at a few people lovingly.

#8 REMIND YOURSELF TO SMILE!

For many people, it just takes an hour to forget all this and pretty soon their reptilian brain wants to bite someone. So give yourself a dose once an hour – a reminder of the value of life. If you are very insensitive, remind yourself every half-an-hour. If you are horribly insensitive, remind yourself every five minutes. It takes only ten seconds to remind yourself. You could do it in just two seconds too – “I'm alive, you're alive. What more?”

#9 TRANSFORM WHAT'S WITHIN

At present, the quality of your life is not determined by the clothes you wear, the educational qualifications you carry, the family background you come from or the bank balances you hold. Rather, the quality of your life depends upon how peaceful and joyous you are within yourself.

Definitely, someone who does not have food and who is deprived of the basic needs for survival can be physically miserable. That needs to be addressed. For such people, we must take care of those things first. But for most others, their needs are an endless list. You think the man who is driving a car is happier than the man who is walking on the street? No. It is not decided by what you have. It depends on how you are at that moment.





THE MECHANICS OF HEALTH

FOOD

Yoga pays so much attention to food because the body is constructed with the food that you eat. What food you should eat depends on what you are preparing the body for. Are you preparing so you can run like a dog or a cheetah, or are you preparing this body to walk around carrying a hundred kilograms? Do you want to go through some endurance test or are you preparing so that the body becomes conducive for higher possibilities? You can prepare the body for many things. You need to have the right kind of food for whatever your intention is.

Food is about the body. So when it comes to food, ask the body what it is really happy with. Try different foods and see how your body feels after eating that. If your body feels very agile, energetic and nice, that means it is happy. If the body feels lethargic and needs to be pumped up with caffeine or nicotine to stay awake, it is not happy.

If you bring some uncooked vegetarian food into your diet, it keeps the body healthy and energetic. Start with 25% natural food and

slowly push it up to 100% in four to five days. Stay there for a day or two and again cut it down in five days to 50% natural food and 50% cooked food. This is an ideal combination for most people who wish to be active 16 to 18 hours a day.

SPACE BETWEEN MEALS

In yoga, the ideal break between one meal and the next is 8 hours. Most people can manage that even while leading an active lifestyle. Unless you have some ailments, a minimum of 5 hours is a must for everyone, because your excretory system functions properly only when your stomach is empty.

A big mistake that many people make is that they eat too often. A whole lot of doctors are saying you must eat as often as possible: “Don’t eat a big meal, eat every two hours.” When there is food in the stomach bag, purification will not happen on the cellular level. The cells will retain impurities for a long period because when the digestive process is happening, everything else is brought down, including your brain.

You can experiment: measure the weight of your daily meal. Divide the same meal into two portions and eat it one day, then make the same meal into ten portions that you eat at ten intervals during the day. You will see that when you eat ten times a day, you will put on more weight simply because the excretory system is not efficient. A lot of garbage which would have gone

out of the system does not go out because the stomach is constantly full. The impurities in the body should go out as quickly as possible. It is only when the stomach is totally empty that cleansing happens well.

EATING WITH GRATITUDE

When you are hungry and food is served in front of you, all your body wants to do is eat – both hands will want to grab the food! However, if you wait a little and say a prayer of gratitude within yourself – gratitude for the food you are about to eat, to the people who contributed to making it available to you, to those human beings who have nothing to eat and to the elements in this food that will be the building blocks for your body – it does tremendous things to the system. As other forms of life give up their life to sustain ours, if we can eat with enormous gratitude, the food behaves very differently within.

A simple act such as this also loosens you from your body, bringing in the awareness that you are not that. When you are very hungry, you are the body. But give a little space and suddenly, you are not it anymore. Hunger is there, you are there, and it is okay.

NEEM AND TURMERIC

The neem leaf is the most chemically complex leaf found on the planet, with about 130 formats of chemical processes taking place in it. It has particular benefits in opening up the system

and generating heat, which results in less mucus in the system. It destroys the troublesome bacteria in the intestinal region and keeps the colon clean and free of infection.

One of the most important benefits of neem is that it keeps the number of cancerous cells in the body within a certain percentage, where they do not gather against the system. This may not be a treatment for a person who is already diseased, but generally, if you consume neem and turmeric paste on a daily basis by making it into small marble-sized balls, cancerous cells in the body can be easily contained. It acts as a preventive measure and works in multiple ways.

When inertia levels increase in the body, it does not allow a certain amount of energy to enter the cellular level, and as we looked at earlier, areas of the body where energy does not flow freely can become susceptible to cancerous growth. Neem and turmeric along with very mildly-laced honey water, act as a wonderful cleanser and dilator of the system. They dilate the cellular structure in such a way that it is able to absorb energy.

For example, if your ophthalmologist wants to examine your eyes, he cannot see much by simply looking. By applying a dilator, your eye expands and now, he can see. Neem and turmeric dilate the body in such a way that they allow the energy to enter and fill up every crevice inside – you can feel the body simply crackling with a different kind of energy.

Consuming neem and turmeric paste also keeps your colon clean. Turmeric has additional benefits. It is one substance which not only works on the physiology, but the energy system as well. It activates a certain purification process in the blood, body and energy system and brings translucence to your energies. You can use turmeric as a purifying substance even on the outside by taking a small pinch of turmeric and putting it into a bucket full of water. If you pour it over your body, your body becomes very vibrant.



Neem and turmeric powder is available from IshaShoppe.com

The Neem Tree

An Arboreal Blessing

Azadirachta Indica
Meliaceae Family

Neem
Nimba
Indian lilac
Veppam
Arya Veppu
Margousier

2,000+ years

have proven the versatility of neem
in traditional South Asian medicine

Source: Pamela Paterson, "Neem the Wonder Tree"

Medicinal Applications

<i>Antibacterial</i>	<i>Antioxidant</i>	<i>Boils</i>
<i>Anticarcinogenic</i>	<i>Antiparasitic</i>	<i>Blood Detoxifier</i>
<i>Anticlotting</i>	<i>Antiperiodontic</i>	<i>Diuretic</i>
<i>Antifertility</i>	<i>Antiseptic</i>	<i>Eye Diseases</i>
<i>Antihyperglycemic</i>	<i>Antituberculosis</i>	<i>Immunomodulatory</i>
<i>Anti-inflammatory</i>	<i>Antiulcer</i>	<i>Pimples</i>
<i>Antimalarial</i>	<i>Antiviral</i>	<i>Skin diseases</i>
<i>Antimicrobial</i>	<i>Antiworm</i>	<i>Spermicidal</i>

Source: Pamela Paterson, "Neem the Wonder Tree"

All parts of the neem tree are used in traditional medicine for the treatment of inflammation, infections, fever, skin disease and dental disorders.

Source: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/15777222>

200+
insect
species,
as well as some
mites, nematodes,
fungi, bacteria and
viruses are affected
by neem

Source: U.S National Research Council,
"Neem – A Tree for Solving Global
Problems"

Protecting

Leaves applied to skin in a paste form to treat skin disease; infused in tea to increase immunity of the body.



Cleansing

Seeds dried, crushed and soaked to produce oil which is used in medicines, cosmetics and as a pesticide

Healing

Bark and Twigs repels pests; twigs are chewed on to improve dental hygiene; bark is powdered and used in the treatment of various diseases



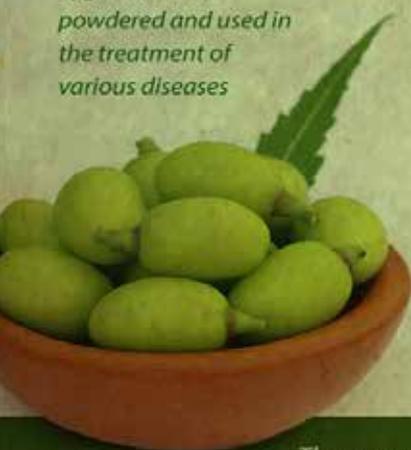
Purifying

Roots Powdered and used in the treatment of various diseases



Clarifying

Fruit eaten fresh or cooked



Natural

Flowers used in dishes as a vegetable

140
compounds
have been isolated
from different parts
of neem

Source: R. Suhapriya, S. Nagari,
"Medicinal Properties of Neem
Leaves: A Review"

100+
diseases
are treated by
using the
various parts of
the neem tree

Source: Pamela Paterson,
"Neem the Wonder Tree"

The neem tree is native to lowland tropical regions, but neem production has expanded to many other areas in the world

Source: World Agroforestry Centre



☪ BENEFITS OF ☪ FASTING

One aspect of a cancerous cell is that it needs much more nourishment. They say it needs many times more food than a normal cell. One of the simple preventive measures that we can take to keep the number of cancerous cells down is periodic fasting. It is a way of cleansing the system.

If you consume caffeine on a regular basis, you may find it very difficult to fast. So if you do want to fast, you should first prepare the body by eating the right kind of food. Forcefully depriving yourself of food is of no benefit; you will only make yourself weak. Coming to a deeper insight of how your body functions is more important, so you can know what is best for your own system. It may not be good for everyone to fast, but it does have many benefits if done with proper understanding and if the system is in the right condition.

To stay alert and also to purify the body, you could go without food the whole day – you ate dinner the previous day and the next thing you eat is dinner today. If you are unable to go without food because your activity levels are such and you do not have sufficient preparation, you can go on what is known as *phalahara* or fruit diet, which is light on the stomach.

While fasting, if you feel thirsty, drink water. If you feel tired, add a few drops of honey or put a little bit of lemon into the water. That will take care of it. Fasting for 24 hours is not very difficult for a

The medical community is realizing that fasting keeps cancer at bay, and aids in recovery from chemotherapy. For example, increasing the duration of overnight fasts reduces breast cancer risk.⁴ Prolonged fasting also protects the immune system from damage, a side-effect of chemotherapy, and speeds up immune system regeneration. A research paper declared, “with a system heavily damaged by chemotherapy, fasting cycles can generate, literally, a new immune system.”⁵



healthy body. If your body does not have that much capability, there is something seriously wrong with your system. Any healthy body can forsake food for this period. If the body – not the mind – is going through enormous trouble, then you might need a medical check-up. If it's difficult for you to take a break, you can go on a juice or liquid diet one or two days in a month. There are different ways to do it for different people. You could drink only tender coconut milk or just warm water and honey for a day. The idea is to take something that is easy on the system, so that it does not have to process the normal type of food on that day. Forcefully denying yourself food to the discomfort of the body is not a good thing to do – it can cause damage to the system. But giving it a break here

⁴ *Overnight Fasting May Reduce Breast Cancer Risk in Women* (<http://health.ucsd.edu/news/releases/Pages/2015-04-20-fasting-may-reduce-breast-cancer-risk.aspx>)

⁵ *Fasting triggers stem cell regeneration of damaged, old immune system* (<https://news.usc.edu/63669/fasting-triggers-stem-cell-regeneration-of-damaged-old-immune-system>)

and there is definitely a good thing.

If you observe the natural cycle of the body, you will find there is something called a *mandala*. A mandala is a cycle of 40 to 48 days that the system goes through. In every cycle, there will be three days where your body does not need food. If you are conscious of how your body functions, you will become aware that on a particular day the body does not require food. Without effort you can go without food on that day. Even dogs and cats have this awareness; on a particular day they will not eat.

The day the system says “no food” is a clean-up day. Since most people do not have the awareness of which day their body should go without food, the day of *Ekadashi* was fixed. Ekadashi is the eleventh day of the lunar segment and happens every fourteen days – the eleventh day after the full moon and the eleventh day after the new moon. If you look, there are three Ekadashis in 48 days.

BREATHING RIGHT

Yogic practices have done incredible things for people, and many have bounced back quite miraculously. We can greatly enhance the body’s ability to stand up for itself by just breathing properly and activating the energy system using the breath as a vehicle.

We have conducted a few Inner Engineering programs for cancer

Margie Hudnell *"I felt that the Inner Engineering program helped markedly reduce the pain of surgery and boost my recovery from treatment, as well. My post-surgery recovery was quite remarkable. Aside from the pain medicine provided in the recovery room following surgery, I did not have the need for further medication and my incision healed at least twice as quickly as normal, as per my surgeon. I felt totally healed and so energetic that my family had to remind me to take it easy. I attribute my continued cancer-free state directly to my Isha practice and the dietary recommendations provided as part of the program."*



survivors in the United States and individually treated many people in India after they completed their course of therapy. They recovered quite well and the doctors who were treating them were surprised to see this quick recovery. On average, I would say about 60% of the people have a good response to the program. So I would say supplementing medical intervention with properly taught yogic practices could definitely benefit the patient.

It is not that whatever kind of cancer you have will go away if you do yoga. That is not true, but at the same time, if your system is properly activated by practicing yoga, the cancerous cells will not find a weak point where they can grow and become a disease. If you do not provide an area for them to flourish in your body, naturally your body's defense mechanism will contain them by itself.

So you cannot say that yoga is a cure for cancer, but I can definitely say that if you practice yoga regularly, the chances of you getting cancer are low. Other influences are there but if you keep the system in its best possible condition, you reduce the chances dramatically.

DON'T SMOKE YOUR LIFE AWAY

People are always coming to me and saying, "I want to give up smoking. What should I do?" I tell them, "Why would you smoke? Your body is not that kind of machine which smokes. These days we are even working hard to design automobiles that don't smoke! If you don't want to smoke, don't smoke." Then they say, "No, I am a smoker. I am trying to give up smoking and it is not working." The problem is your intelligence is deeply entangled with the identifications that you take on in your life.

For example, during the Victorian age in England and in Europe, it was fashionable to have tuberculosis, which was referred to as "consumption." Many young intellectuals, poets and artists died because they refused to get treated. In those times, being an intellectual meant you must look fragile and sickly, coughing

Tobacco use is the most important risk factor for cancer, causing 22% of global cancer deaths and 71% of global lung cancer deaths.

Not using tobacco is the best way to prevent certain cancers such as lung, throat, mouth, pancreas, bladder, stomach, liver, and kidney.



all the time. If you looked healthy and robust, it meant you were just brawn, no brain. That was the understanding. Can you believe that now? This is just two centuries ago. One of the greatest poets we lost to tuberculosis was John Keats. He died at the age of 26 because he refused to get his tuberculosis treated.

Your intelligence is so deeply entangled with the social identifications that you have taken on that you are no longer working in line with the life within you. Instead, you are working against your own life - your mind, body and emotion are working against the fundamental life force within you. This life is always longing to become exuberant and joyful, but your mind, emotion and even your body are sometimes going in opposite directions. If you just see that it is stupid to make a non-smoking machine into a smoking machine, it will slowly drop off.

There is also a certain chemical factor to this. Your chemistry has become dependent on nicotine. That can be changed. You will see, if you just practice Shambhavi Mahamudra,⁶ suddenly your whole system is so fired up that the need to smoke, drink coffee, tea or anything else just evaporates.

I do not believe in telling anyone, "Give this up or give that up." You would just keep the cigarette down for two minutes and again you

⁶ *A simple but powerful kriya offered in the Inner Engineering program, which takes 21 minutes to practice.*

would go *poof, poof, poof*, because this is the biggest experience you have. But if I create a bigger experience for you than smoking, drinking, sexuality, drugs or whatever you have known, do I have to tell you, “Give this up”? It will just fall apart by itself. If you knew how to become absolutely ecstatic just by your own chemistry, you would not smoke or take a drink in your life. With Shambhavi Mahamudra, the first day you sit and do it, you will just burst into ecstatic states. After that I do not have to tell you to give anything up. Suddenly your life is in line.

Recent research into the human brain has yielded some incredible results. An Israeli scientist spent several years of research and found there are millions of cannabis receptors in the brain!

Then, neurologists discovered that at different times of the day, if you closely observe the system and what happens with the brain chemistry, the body develops its own cannabis which satisfies the receptors in the brain. If a person is in a certain state of blissfulness or ecstasy, he produces these chemicals, which the brain is constantly waiting for. Millions of cannabis receptors are sitting there in your brain and waiting, not for you to smoke or drink or do drugs, but for you to become blissful.

When they found this chemical which goes towards the receptors, there was no name for it. The scientist had the freedom to name this newly-found chemical. He wanted to give it a name that would be truly relevant. When he researched the various scriptures on the planet, to his amazement he found that the Indian scriptures

are the only ones that talk about blissfulness. No other religion on the planet talks about bliss, which is known in India as *ananda*. Religions talk about sin, fear, guilt and punishment, but no other religion talks about blissfulness. So he called this chemical, which moves towards the cannabis receptors, “Anandamide.”

So, all you have to do is produce a little bit of Anandamide because there is a whole marijuana garden inside! If you cultivate it properly and keep it on, you can be stoned all the time, but your mental capabilities will not shrink. To remain calm, to remain in an extreme sense of pleasure all the time is available to every human being if he just explores his own system a little more. The science of yoga gives this pleasure to you.

Yogis are not against pleasure. It is just that they are unwilling to settle for small pleasures. They are greedy. They know if you drink a glass of wine, it just gives you a buzz and then tomorrow morning you get a headache and everything. They are not willing to go for that. But through the process of yoga, you can be totally drunk all the time but one hundred percent stable and alert. To enjoy the intoxication you must be alert, and nature has given you this possibility.

I have never touched a substance in my life but if you look at my eyes, I am always stoned. I can be drunk 24 hours of the day – no hangover, it does not cost anything, and it is good for health! We look at alcohol, drugs and these things as kindergarten stuff because we can get intoxicated a thousand times over just with our aliveness. Why simply wine? You can get drunk with the di-vine!

HEALTH FROM INSIDE OUT

In yoga, the most fundamental process is referred to as *bhuta shuddhi*. Every aspect of yoga that you do is just a small extraction from bhuta shuddhi practices. *Bhuta* means “element” and “bhuta shuddhi” means to become free from the taint of the elements. Whether it is the individual human body or the larger cosmic body, essentially they are made of the five elements or the *pancha bhutas* – earth, water, fire, air, and space. In this, the first four elements are the active participants and space is the catalytic force. It is in the lap of this boundless space that these four elements play the game.

What you call “myself” is just a mischief of these five elements. It is very common in India to refer to the body as a puppet made of five elements. By composition, the body is 72% water, 12% earth, 6% air, 4% fire, and the remaining is space or *akash*. How these five elements behave within you will determine just about everything. If they do not cooperate, you can struggle as much as you want, but nothing happens. Only with their cooperation, from the basic aspects to the highest aspect, your life becomes a possibility.

There are some simple processes by which you can practice bhuta shuddhi in a very natural way. These methods are not the ultimate type of bhuta shuddhi, but some cleansing of the elements can happen through them.

WATER

Among the five elements, our biggest concern is water because it is 72% of our bodies and it has tremendous memory. You need to take sufficient care of the water that you consume – not just in terms of its physical purity, it being bacteria-free and so on, but in terms of how you keep the water and how you approach it. There is substantial scientific evidence today that a thought, an emotion or a touch can change the molecular structure of water and greatly alter the way it behaves within your system.

Water has a great sense of memory. Everything that happens around a body of water is in some way stored in the water molecules. You could call it a fluid computer. You are not dealing

According to

preliminary results of a clinical trial in the United States, copper surfaces tested in hospital Intensive Care Units were found to kill 97% of the bacteria that are capable of causing hospital-acquired infections. This rate of reduction is equal to what is achieved by “terminal” cleaning – a process that is done after a patient is discharged from a room. The results also showed a 40% reduction in the risk of acquiring an infection.⁷



⁷ <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/07/01/us-copper-antimicrobial-idUSTRE76031820110701>

with a commodity – you are dealing with life-making material. Water is life. It is important how you treat it before it enters your system.

One thing you can do is just put some neem or tulsi (Holy basil or *Ocimum tenuiflorum*) leaves in it. These will not remove chemical impurities but they will make the water very vibrant and energetic. You can keep the water in a metal container, preferably made of copper or an alloy of copper, wash the container every day with an organic substance, keep the water in a place where it is not touched by other smells and substances, and ensure there is sufficient space around it. If you do this, and you approach it by holding the vessel in your hands with a sense of gratitude and reverence because it is life-making material, and then consume it, it will do wonders to your system. Healthfulness and equanimity will be a natural consequence.

EARTH

The earth that you walk upon has a sense of intelligence and memory. Even if you live in a concrete jungle, it is important to keep in touch with the earth upon which you live. Create ways for yourself to somehow remain in touch with it. If your bare hands and bare feet – particularly the palms and soles – come in touch with the earth on a daily basis, it will harmonize the physiological process in your system.

Try to spend at least a few minutes barefoot in your backyard

or garden, touching plants or trees, because the earth is the basis of life. All life – yours and that of every other creature – has come from this earth. Stay in touch with it and harmonize your system.

Another aspect is about how food goes into you – from whose hands it comes to you, how you eat it, how you approach it – all these things are important. Above all, the food you eat is life. Other forms are giving up their life to sustain us. If we can eat with enormous gratitude for all the living things which give up their life to sustain ours, food will behave in a very different way within you.



Teachers trained at the Isha Hatha Yoga School offer Bhuta Shuddhi practices around the world. For contact details, visit: ishayoga.org

AIR

Though air represents only a small percentage of your body's elemental composition, it is the most dynamic element in terms of the transaction that happens on a minute-to-minute basis.

It is well-known that what kind of air you breathe is important, but how you breathe and how consciously you do so is equally important.

Especially for those of you who live in large cities, it may not always be in your hands what kind of air you breathe, so it is good that at least for a few minutes every day, you take a walk in the park, along the lake or the river, whatever is available to you. If you have children, it is important that at least once a month, you take them out far enough from the city, where nature is in a reasonably pure state and they can climb a small hill, walk in a forest, or swim in a river, to be in touch with nature and do something where the breath is dynamic.

This is not just for aerobic exercise but because there is a constant exchange of air from within and without. The very intelligence in the body will make sure that when it senses the air is pure and alive, the way the body breathes will be different. With this exchange of air, cleansing will happen within the system. If you are in pure air, it is important to bring the breath to a dynamic state with some activity. You do not have to do too vigorous an activity – just enough to breathe slightly deeper than normal for a period of time. Especially for growing children, this is very important because it greatly enhances the body's integrity and strength.

If you are not able to take yourself out on a daily basis, you can do

a simple yogic practice called **nadi shuddhi**⁸ at home to cleanse the breath.

FIRE

Fire accounts for another part of your elemental make-up. What kind of fire burns within you? Is it the fire of greed, hatred, anger, resentment, lust, love, or compassion? If you cleanse the element of fire, once again your physical and mental wellbeing will be well taken care of. You become an equanimous and exuberant being. A simple process you can do to cleanse the fire within you is to get some sunlight every day. Though we have contaminated every other element, fortunately, sunlight cannot be contaminated – it has remained pure. Make best use of that.

If you wish to, you can light a fire with an organic substance like straw or firewood, without any oil, and stand facing the fire with open hands and open eyes for three minutes. Then stand with your back to it, exposing your spine for three minutes. This process cleanses your aura and brings about a new sense of resurgence in the system. It rekindles and reconnects the fire within with the fire outside. This is the basis of all fire-based rituals of the East.

If having a fire is not practical for you, at least light a lamp with

⁸ Learn nadi shuddhi for free at <http://isha.sadhguru.org/peace-quotes-and-tips/>

vegetable oil or *ghee* (clarified butter commonly used in India) and be around this lamp. First, sit facing the lamp, then turn around and sit so that the fire element within you gets rekindled.

Over the past century, Western medical science has stressed the hazards of too much sun exposure. While overexposure can cause skin cancer, sunburn and other health problems, underexposure to sunlight has equal if not greater ill effects on our health. The World Health Organization estimates that underexposure to sunlight contributes about 4.5 times more to global disease burden than overexposure.

Among the many health benefits of getting some sunlight on the body, one important aspect is production of Vitamin D. Unlike other vitamins, which are primarily available through food, Vitamin D is mostly synthesized in the skin through exposure to UVB radiation. Vitamin D is essential for proper bone formation. Underexposure to sunlight is also linked to increased risk of dying from Hodgkin lymphoma, as well as breast, ovarian, colon, pancreatic, prostate, and other cancers. Exposure to sunlight also improves the immune system and helps prevent autoimmune diseases, besides increasing blood levels of natural opiates called endorphins, which combat stress, tension and anxiety.⁹

⁹ *Benefits of Sunlight: A Bright Spot for Human Health (2008)*
<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2290997/>

AKASH

Akash is an intermediary situation between that which is creation and that which is the source of creation. If you know how to get the cooperation of akash into your life, this will be a blessed life. Akash has a certain intelligence. The nature, quality, and power of your life is essentially determined by how much access you have to the akashic intelligence. There is only a limited amount of water, air, earth, and fire, but the *akashic* dimension is limitless. If your access to it expands, both your perception and intelligence will grow.

To get the cooperation of akash, there is one simple process you could do. After sunrise, before the sun crosses the 30-degree angle from the horizon, look up at the sky once and bow down to it for holding you in place today. After the sun crosses 30 degrees, any time during the day, look up and bow down again. After the sun sets, once again look up and bow down; not to some god up there, just to the empty space for holding you in place for today. If you just do this, life will change dramatically. If you consciously do this three times a day, if you get cooperation from akash, life will happen in magical ways.

C.J. Fessendon of Ellijay, GA

“Unpredictably, just two months after taking the Inner Engineering online course, I was diagnosed with 4th stage Large B Cell Non-Hodgkin’s Lymphoma. My bone marrow was 90% involved with cancer cells and several of my organs were also cancerous. I deteriorated quickly from one week to the next, and in short order I was near death.



I continued to do my practices with the help of my wife, even in my most weakened state, as best I could. I requested from Isha, and quickly received, the blessings of Sadhguru. My wife eagerly digested some of the clinical research on my cancer type while focusing mostly on building a regimen of the “natural” cancer healing remedies. As I took these supplements, I concurrently underwent chemotherapy once every three weeks. During this time, an Isha volunteer contacted my wife and told her about Bhuta Shuddhi and then put her in touch with an Isha Hatha Yoga Teacher. The teacher then came to our home and initiated my wife and me into the practice.

Within two to three days after our initiation, my health and energy noticeably began to improve. It was most remarkable. After practicing Bhuta Shuddhi for a short time, my oncologist, who was only able get my chemotherapy dosage to 65% of the protocol because of the pervasive cancer in my bone marrow, had difficulty ‘squaring in his mind’ how sick I was according to the numbers (blood analyses) but how much ‘more alive and stronger’ I was becoming.

In between my chemo treatments I became strong enough to make a trip to be initiated into Shambhavi at Isha Institute of Inner-sciences in McMinnville, Tennessee. That was about 30 days ago from this writing of my testimony. I continue to practice Shambhavi twice daily, along with Bhuta Shuddhi, and the Isha Kriya meditation. I must add that in addition, my wife and I perform a range of daily practices as suggested by Sadhguru throughout his videos, blogs, and books, of which there are many.

After my recent bone marrow biopsy, the malignant cancer cell occupation in my bone marrow has declined from 90% to >5% (2% is considered “full” remission) and has disappeared from my organs. The lesions on my bones are also no longer active. These are the facts of what took place in my experience. Naturally, each one reading this testimony will have his or her own view of the individual contributions to my recovery: from my loving wife, her knowledge and care; to kriya and hatha yoga practices; to the increase of raw in my diet; to the intake of herbs and supplements targeting specific assistance to body organs and systems; and, last but not in the least, the Grace of the Guru which is becoming ever more apparent to me in so many ways.”





YOGA: POSSIBILITIES UNLIMITED

Though most of the yoga institutes in the United States and elsewhere have turned into health institutes, health is not the focus of yoga. It is only a side-effect, a lure. Becoming healthy has been made a part of yoga, but it is not the goal of yoga. Yoga is to be always treated as a discipline, not as a therapy. If you do the right kind of yoga over a period of time, health will naturally flower, but yoga is not a treatment. If you bring it into your life as a discipline, you will live healthy on the physical and mental levels, and the other dimensions of life can also be touched.

A NEW PARADIGM IN MEDICINE

Medical science is busy studying disease, but health is a natural state of the human body. Maybe it is time to study health, rather than disease. Human nature is such that we always put our attention wherever the problem is, which is a very rudimentary way of thinking and functioning. Unfortunately that is how the world is right now – if there is no problem you don't attend to it, but when it becomes a problem, you start doing things.

It is time for a thorough paradigm shift. Just like the discovery of penicillin changed the entire thinking of medicine in the last 50 years, it is time to shift to a new way of perceiving health, disease and the human body as a whole. Right now, we are just looking at human beings as chemistry. Yes, chemistry is very much a part of you, but you are not just chemistry. There are other aspects involved to make a human being whole – your chemistry is more of a consequence than a cause. Everything that you do, even something as simple as physical postures, mental attitudes, emotional states, atmospheres you live in and above all, energy imbalances, cause chemical changes which could be beneficial or detrimental to you. The science of yoga has looked at every one of these with microscopic meticulousness.

People think spirituality is about transcending or going into a trance. I want you to know, to be transcendent is to be attentive. Only fools think it is about losing contact with the physical. You are so deeply involved that the surface becomes absent and the core has become present. A trance does not mean you are removed from here, a trance means you went so deep inside the process of life that the surface is missing. You are not transcending life, you are transcending the barriers that are not allowing you to experience life.

YOGA – A SUBJECTIVE SCIENCE

When it comes to the science of yoga, there is an experiential dimension involved that you cannot “prove” to anyone. Someone who goes through yoga may say they feel really happy. Trying to measure that happiness directly with a machine is not going to help. There are other parameters that can be measured, and such studies are yielding impressive results, but unfortunately in today’s world if someone says they are happy, even if everyone around can see they are truly happy and peaceful, it is still not enough. People will immediately say it is temporary euphoria, hypnosis or something else, which amounts to ridiculing the whole process.

I feel that it is only in the last five to eight years that doctors are even willing to listen to the word “yoga.” However, today there is a yoga studio on every street corner and it is presented as a sport for fitness and health, which is not at all what it is meant to be. This is because the established safeguards are no longer being applied.

During the early 20th century, when modern science was evolving, all kinds of people started claiming fantastic inventions. Then, the responsible scientific community took time off their research to establish safeguards. These safeguards have restricted science in many ways but at the same time, it is only because of these that science has become a fruitful force in the world today.

Yoga and the entire Eastern spiritual tradition had very tight

safeguards, but in recent times these have been removed because of unscrupulousness, commercial forces or simply over-eager people. Once you remove the safeguards, the spiritual sciences will become absolutely ridiculous because they are subjective. It is not something objective that you can read in a book and understand. When we say it is subjective, that means it is about you. Having an intellectual understanding of the inner sciences is meaningless unless you come to some experiential understanding. A simple thing like altering the way you breathe may cause certain things to happen in the body, which anyone can experience within two to three days of practice. But if you ask me to put it on an instrument and tell you how it works, I am not sure it can be done. Let me share something that happened to me. I never submit myself to these kinds of indignities usually, but because of some obligatory situation I got into this. A few years ago, some doctors and scientists wanted to measure the gamma waves in my brain. I did not even know I have such things – all I care about is that it works. But they said, “No you have gamma waves and we want to measure them.” They put 14 electrodes on me and told me to meditate. I replied, “I don’t know how to meditate.” They were surprised, “You teach meditation to everybody!” I said, “Yes I do, because they don’t know how to sit still, so we teach them all kinds of methods.” Their problem was their study needed the name of the meditation and how many gamma waves it generated. So I told them, “If you want,

I will sit still.” They debated a while and agreed.

I sat down. After about 10 to 15 minutes, they started knocking on my elbow with a metallic object. You know that painful, very sensitive place? They found that spot and started hitting me there. I thought “Okay, maybe it is part of their experiment,” and I just sat. Then they tried knocking on my ankles, which was very painful but I still sat unmoving. After that, they tried my knees and it became very persistent and painful. Then I thought, “If they want me to open my eyes, they could just ask. They don’t have to beat me up like this.” I opened my eyes and looked.

They were all looking at me in a weird way. I said, “Why? Did I do something wrong?” It seems their machines went all flat, so they said, “According to our instruments you’re dead.” I replied, “That’s a great diagnosis.” Then they reconsidered and said, “Either you’re dead or you’re brain-dead.” I said, “No, no, don’t give me that. This is very insulting. I will take the first diagnosis. I don’t mind someone saying I am dead but if you give me a certificate that my brain is dead, that’s not something I can live with.”

Sometime ago I was speaking at the MIT business school and they told me, “Sadhguru, here we teach people: ‘What you cannot count does not count.’” “What cannot be measured does not count,” is the most idiotic thing you can do to your life. You will reduce a fantastic, fabulous life process into just a simple piece of mechanism.

When you go about checking out life from bits and pieces of

information and knowledge that you have, you will obviously come to wrong conclusions. However, checking out these parameters is important in society because the world happens that way today. Because I was not willing to subject myself to this again, I asked some of our meditators to allow their brains to be scanned. After these scans were processed in a premier institute in India, they found that there is a phenomenal coherence between the right and left brain in people who have practiced Shambhavi Mahamudra regularly for three months. The people who looked at it said, “We have never seen anything like this.”

What this means in terms of life is, whatever information you receive and process through the five sense organs generally goes to the left brain. Whatever information is perceived through the rest of the body – which instead of being logical, is more homogeneous and essential for your life – is processed in your right brain. You may not be conscious of it but you are always using this information, otherwise you could not be here. Unless there is an active coherence between the left and right brain, you cannot access this information consciously. Consciously being able to access this part of information and knowing within you is most vital for your life. It can take you places that you have not imagined. What you have been doing in your life with great effort, you could simply do with ease.

For any number of people, it has translated into their lives in terms of action and how they live. Fundamentally, your ability

to function in the world can be so greatly enhanced. Physically and mentally, it will set you apart in any crowd of people if you give yourself to the practice sufficiently. And health-wise, there is any amount of medical research today to tell you that it does miraculous things to you.

Still, all these benefits of physical health, mental capabilities, and being able to handle life with ease are just side-effects. The real thing will slowly build up and you will know it only when it flowers. Until then, you think nothing is happening. It is like you planted a flowering tree in your house. As it grows, first only the leaves come up. Your neighbour comes and tells you, "This is no good. You said flowers would come but only leaves are coming. Let us chop it and make firewood out of it." You said, "Let me see. Maybe tomorrow morning it will work." The next morning nothing happened, but again you said, "Let me see, one more day," If you did not know how long it takes for this tree to flower, probably you would have chopped it a hundred times over. But if you keep nurturing it, one day when it blooms and is full of flowers, you realize this plant was not about leaves, shade, or a little bit of oxygen. This, when it flowers, is incredibly beautiful.

Subjective sciences cannot be taught through a classroom. It will not work like that. You may think, "Isn't it better that people at least come to know something about yoga?" For that, there are many ways. We can write inspirational books about hatha yoga for example, but not instructional books. Hatha yoga

should never be taught through a book, though all this is being done today.

However, there is something called upa-yoga,¹⁰ which large segments of the world are not aware of, including many people who are involved in yoga. This is something that gives you physical and psychological benefits but does not touch the spiritual dimension.

Yoga itself is not an exercise form. It is a much subtler dimension. It is a technology through which a dimension beyond the physical becomes a living reality within you. Yoga is that which renders you to a higher possibility in your life. If something has the power to transform, it also has the power to cause damage if mishandled. So yoga needs to be handled in an extremely committed atmosphere. But upa-yoga does not demand that level of commitment nor does it cause any problem if you do it improperly because you cannot do it improperly – it is very simple!

In Indian vernacular languages, the word *upayoga* has come to mean something useful, but actually it means sub-yoga or pre-yoga. This can be learnt in five minutes and the benefits are quite immense. You will be in better shape physically and mentally

¹⁰ *Isha's upa-yoga practices are available for free at <http://isha.sadhguru.org>
[/5-min-practices](#)*

limbered up. Plus, you do not need any equipment, you can practice it anywhere.

CONVERSATIONS

QUESTIONER: Sadhguru, is there any guidance that you can give for people who are going through the pain of chemotherapy, to reduce the stress on the body and help them to come out of it more easily?

SADHGURU: What you call as chemotherapy is a complex cocktail of medicines and poisons together. The basic form of chemotherapy is a bunch of chemicals, which is an extract from mustard gas – a very destructive chemical. But now, the choice that we are making is between death and damage. We choose to damage the body a little bit because otherwise it could be death. It is a very aggressive way of treating the system, but in the last decade, chemo is administered with much more expertise than it was earlier. Initially, if someone went through chemotherapy, all their hair would fall out and so many things would happen. This is not so anymore because they have counter drugs for that. Plus,

Noted philanthropist and heart surgeon Dr. Devi Shetty in conversation with Sadhguru



today they are fixing canisters in the body, which allow a gentle release of chemo. It is not really chemical warfare anymore. It has become very mild – like industry, it poisons you slowly!

But the chemicals that you put into the system are incapable of identifying what is cancerous and what is a healthy cell. They can just calibrate this cocktail of medicines in such a way that they only affect those cells that are in a certain phase of cell growth. It is not capable of identifying beyond that, so it goes for everything which is in that stage of development.

That is a calculated risk we are taking and above all, no chemo really destroys all cancer. It is just that if it gives you a certain level of relief, the system may handle it beyond that point. The problem with chemo is, all the cells across the board – whether healthy or otherwise – cannot multiply, so the rejuvenation system in the body is seriously affected. How to administer the chemo is a medical decision a doctor has to make and there is no single standard. I think how individual doctors administer it is very different from person to person. With some people, it causes very little reaction. With other people who may do it a little more aggressively, it causes much more reaction.

There is no perfect formula there. It is the doctor's judgment, based on the reports that he has and his skill. People want to go to a particular oncologist mainly because of a certain level of expertise, which someone might have gained over a period

of time. This is not a perfect science, but you want your house to be free of insects, so you fumigate the whole place. You also get a little poisoned in the process but it is okay because you cannot live with them there. This is what has happened to the body. There are some things you want to get rid of but there is no way to shoot just those things. You will have to shoot all of them at once.

Now, how do you recover from this? The main problem here is that cell multiplication is affected, the DNA is affected, and the protein necessary for the multiplication of the cells is taken off. This affects the rejuvenation process, which can lead to a variety of problems if it goes beyond a certain point. We know there are substantial problems but I do not think anyone has really looked at how many problems. After the chemo period is over, the main thing is the cell multiplication should be brought back to normal. That is, the rejuvenation process of new cells replacing the old cells must be brought back to normal as quickly as possible, for which there are various practices we can introduce. Bhuta shuddhi or anything that you do with the elements can do tremendous things. I know a few people who never went for any medical treatment after they were diagnosed with cancer. The only thing they did was spend four to six hours a day in fresh water, doing certain things. By immersing themselves up to the neck in the ocean, a river, a pool or something like this, they came out of their cancer without any medical treatment.

Medicine is only looking at how to kill the cancer cells, while the yogic systems look at how to improve the healthy cells, so that they can take care of cancer by themselves before it even develops. It is a possibility that you can come out of it just by being in touch with water, but not everyone has the necessary strength to do such things. Above all, it is not worth taking the risk. When you have been diagnosed with cancer, the best thing is to go through the treatment and then do other things so that recurrence does not happen. There are many practices in the yogic system we could prescribe for people, but with cancer the risk levels are so high and the time allowed is so little, we do not usually take a chance with that.

For recovery from the effects of chemo, the elemental processes that we do can be of immense value and people can regain their rejuvenation process very effectively. General exercise will also have a positive impact, but if you do the right kind of yogic practices along with bhuta shuddhi and a proper diet, the body's ability to bounce back to its normal rejuvenation scale should happen quickly. If it does not happen quickly, your cancer may be gone but you may not have the joy of being healthy, simply because the body will pull you down in many ways when the rejuvenation process is not good.

Sandra Cohen *“I had been doing the Isha practices for only a few months when I was diagnosed with lung cancer. Normally, I would have become a drama queen and completely overreacted. Instead, I surprised myself by being very calm. I thought it through and did the next logical thing, which was to undergo surgery.*

Surgery was unpleasant. When I came out of it, people were telling me how difficult it must be. But I found myself dealing with things quite calmly, with such equanimity within myself. The only thing I can attribute this to is the yoga, exercises and meditation that I had learned during Inner Engineering.”



QUESTIONER: Sadhguru, I discovered towards the end of last month that I got my second attack of cancer. They said I must go through chemotherapy and radiation and the doctor said my chances of recovery depend on how I am able to take it. Now, this is where I find myself in a dilemma – how do I take it? Do I calmly accept the drug as it flows into my veins? This is one feeling which I am getting. The other feeling is that of fighting back. I just want to know, how should I look at it?

SADHGURU: Coming to the doctor’s statement, “It all depends on how you take it.” Yes, it all depends on that. “Should I fight it?” How can you fight an enemy that you cannot see? And cancer is not somebody. You are the cancer. A part of you has turned against yourself. You cannot fight it.

“So what should I do?” It is just that largely, every human being is always working against himself or herself in some way. If you

created a moment of anger, you are working against yourself, isn't it?

In some way everyone has some kind of cancer. Only when it manifests physiologically it becomes a medical issue, but until then it is your problem. Now that it has manifested physiologically for a variety of reasons, fighting cancer is not the way. Fighting for something and fighting against something are two different things. It is best to take the fight out of it. If you want a plant to grow and blossom into beautiful fragrant flowers, you can think you are fighting the earth and getting flowers out of it. Or you can see it as a great love affair, that your involvement with the earth gives out such beauty and fragrance for you. The second is a more intelligent way of doing it because your experience will be pleasant. We do not know what the result will be, it may flower or the cow may eat it up. But whichever way, if your experience of what you are doing is very pleasant, the results will become irrelevant to you.

“Then does it not matter whether I live or die?” It matters, that is why you must do it the way it works. If you get into a fight and die just because you are a brave man, that is of no use to anyone and that is of no consequence to your life. Maybe it happened your way or it did not happen your way, but what is most important is that at least you did the right things.

QUESTIONER: I have heard that Reiki, pranic healing and that sort of thing might be useful in healing disease, but I have heard that it works on the *karmic* level and involves some sort of energy manipulation. Is it a reliable method of curing yourself?

SADHGURU: These days, healing has become very popular, but using your energies to heal another person is a very juvenile act. In the process of healing, you can cause great distress and damage to your own life in so many ways. If it is just your life that is being damaged and you do not care what happens to you, that is different. But by healing someone, you are also causing damage to the other person. Attempting any pranic healing is a very childish thing to do because there is a deeper process to whatever is happening to a human being.

“But I actually did this and somebody’s headache went away.” That is quite possible. If someone has a headache, if you simply hug them lovingly, their headache will go away many times. Even without doing anything, it goes away after some time. Ninety percent of the time, there is nothing to whatever people call “healing.” Ten percent of the time, there is something to it. When there is nothing to it, I am okay with that. Suppose I sell nothing to you, then I am just a smart businessman and you are a little stupid, but no harm comes to you. You have the pleasure of shopping and I am doing business. But now, if I sell you something which causes you harm, that is worse than selling nothing to you. “Nothing” is

just a clean con job. It only costs money, it does not cost life. But the “something” that you do by trying to heal someone, can cost life. That ten percent of the time when something does happen, that is when the danger is and it is unnecessary.

In yoga, health is about going to the foundations of your energy system and activating it in a proper way. It is about building a foundational yogic practice that establishes your energy in such a way that your body and mind are naturally fine. But whenever someone attempts any healing, they are always trying to remove the symptom because that is what they consider as disease. If you take away the indicator, the root of the problem still exists. The indicator manifested itself on the physical body just to bring that root to your notice. Instead of taking notice of it and seeing what should be done, if you just wipe out the indicator, the root will take effect in a much more drastic way in your system. What was asthma can become a big accident or some other calamity in your life. It is possible. If the root has to be removed, it cannot be dissolved just like that. It has to be worked out in some way.

These attempts at healing are a very childish thing to do. Because people have not understood and experienced life in any great depth, because they have seen life only in the physical dimension, they believe that relieving a person of his physical pain at that moment is the greatest thing they can do. It is not so. It is understandable that once the pain of the disease comes to you, you just want to be relieved, no matter what. But if you are

beginning to feel life a little deeper than the physical body, you will see that how you get rid of your disease also matters.

Disease can be taken care of by reorganizing your own energies but you have to go through *sadhana* (spiritual practices). We are teaching *kriyas* and practices to people through which healing is a natural process. The objective is not healing, but it is definitely happening. But with these so-called healing methods or clinics, things are being done with a lack of understanding and depth. Just laying your hands on someone and relieving him of pain or something else is not a good thing.

Another part of this whole activity of trying to heal someone is, in some way you are trying to play God by manipulating energies in a certain way. By getting instant relief, it will give you respite but bind you in another way. No one who genuinely walks a spiritual path will ever attempt healing because it is a sure way of entangling yourself. These aspects which have become famous around the globe today came from people who dropped out of Zen monasteries halfway through their spiritual process and they acquired a little power. They wanted to use it and they marketed themselves well.

If you are on any live spiritual path, whoever is heading that place will always make sure that you never acquire any kinds of powers. We want to be ordinary, more ordinary than other people – that

is what makes you extra-ordinary. We do not have the disease of wanting to become special by doing something that others cannot do. It is not necessary. In trying to play God, in some way you want to do something that other human beings cannot, which is just a sideshow. This can lead to a lot of entanglement for a person.

I am not wishing that people should go through pain. If it has come, then we have to find relief for it. But it is always best to teach a person methods by which he can work it out by himself rather than trying to work it out for him. When people heal themselves it has a different impact on their life.





COMING TO TERMS WITH MORTALITY

Right now, because all that you have is physicality, mortality is a big issue. But if you look at it, we are all on termination mode. If people were immortal, I would not bother to teach them yoga – let them find their way. If you were immortal, I would not even look at you. You have all the time, you can find it. I will sit, close my eyes and enjoy myself.

But even if most of them think they are immortal, they are mortal. I know they are mortal, so I am in a hurry that they should know something, in a hurry to make them joyful because joy is not a goal by itself. Joy is a condition which opens you up for life. It opens you up to perceive and know life. And if a person is truly joyous, he could go beyond the disease.

WORRYING DOESN'T HELP

QUESTIONER: I notice that I tend to think too much about my disease and this leads to a lot of worry. How can I avoid worrying and move into a state of joy?

SADHGURU: Trying to avoid worrying does not work because you tried to make it a slogan in your life: “Don’t worry, be happy.” It does not work and it cannot work. How can you not worry about things that you are concerned about? The moment you tell yourself “don’t worry, be happy,” you obviously have a situation within you where your mind gets into a repetitive thought process beyond your control. That is worry. Thinking about something is not worrying. You better think about things clearly.

Worrying means you go on thinking about the same nonsense, like a broken record. You come to that place and say the same things over and over. If your mind has become like this, it is not in good shape.

With these slogans, instead of fixing the record or switching off the record player, you are just changing to a different tune. Initially it looks like it is working, but after a while, you will get into a state of deep frustration. At one time people made “positive thinking” very popular: “No matter what is happening, it is all for the good. I’m okay, you’re okay, everything will be okay.” But the very apostles of positive thinking lost their minds and some even committed suicide. Initially it works to some extent but it will not work with all aspects of life. Except the fundamental truth of life – that truth which is the very basis of this existence – nothing works on all levels of life. You can bullshit yourself into wellbeing in so many different ways but it will not last.

That is why I have been saying, “If you do not get out of your shell, you are just a nut.” When they heard this, some people protested, “This is very insulting. Sadhguru cannot say such things!” But if you do not know how to laugh, then you are already long gone! When you laugh, your shell breaks to some extent. It forms again but at least it opens up at that moment. If it does not open up at all, your brain causes more trouble than cancer ever can, believe me. Tumors can be fixed with a surgery sometimes. Your brain is more trouble – it will torment you throughout your life if you do not keep it well. And shell-breaking is very simple if the nut is willing, because it does not really exist. It is an illusion that you have created. You are the working of this magnificent creation and the source of creation, but you build a shell and think you are a nut.

The biggest problem is that you are inebriated with your own thought and emotion. All the sadhana is essentially to give you a distance between the thoughts worming through your head and yourself. If you are out of this inebriation, you will see there is only one way – to be here and to throb with the process of life. If you throb with this process of life, you will throb with the whole cosmic pulse.

IS DEATH STILL TABOO?

I was invited some time ago to a TV reality show in the USA. On the show, there was a 48-year-old man who just found out he has cancer and would be dying soon. He had been married only

seven months.

The show had brought on a psychiatrist, a lady who was supposed to be a shaman crystal ball reader, and myself. We were supposed to be there and help the couple out with their difficult situation.

The man, through a video, was asking the question, “Will something really happen out of praying? Even if I pray, why would God choose my prayer against so many other peoples’ prayers?” And he particularly mentioned, “There may be many other people praying in Iraq and Iran. Why would God choose my prayer above theirs?” This is a genuine question from a man who is dying in the next few days. All his beliefs have fallen apart, and now he is asking a genuine question. He wants a solution. “What is the way? How do I die well?” That is all he is asking.

When death comes, people who do not know how to live will have problems with how to die. It is just that most people go about their lives as if death is not going to happen to them, which is a foolish way to live. Only one who is constantly aware of his mortal nature will be a true lord of his life. Others can never live totally. If you have found something beyond the physical, death is not an issue. If all you know is only physical, then it is a big issue because it is the end of everything that you know.

When everything that you know as life is going to end and you do not know what is beyond, it should bother you. Only if you are

beyond death or if you are below death, you will not be bothered about it.

Today, people have generated so much negativity about death, as if it were something unnatural. Death is not an unnatural thing, it is a natural progression of life. What you call as the physical body is a loan that you have taken from this planet. Suppose you took a thousand dollar loan, and in 30 years you made it into five million. If the person who gave you the loan comes to your house, what would you do? You would welcome him in a grand manner, give him a party, return that one thousand to him and maybe give him another thousand as a gift. But suppose you took a loan and squandered it, if he comes to collect, terror would definitely arise within you. Death is just that. Planet Earth is saying it is time to pay back. No interest, just give back what you have taken. Why is there so much terror? Because you have not done anything out of it and you realize that only when death comes.

If life happens, death is a natural process. Being afraid of a natural process is unnatural. This fear has come because of a certain sense of ignorance and unawareness. We are not in touch with reality and have gotten deeply identified with this body. If we had explored and established ourselves in other dimensions of experience, the body would not be such a big issue. But now our whole experience of life is limited to this

body. No matter what kind of teachings other people give you, whether someone tells you that you are the soul, the *atman*, *paramatman*¹¹ or whatever else, your experience is limited to the physical body, so the fear of losing it is natural. But if you establish yourself in other dimensions of experience, the body becomes an easy thing to handle. Life or death will not make such a big difference.

DYING GRACEFULLY

QUESTIONER: A very dear friend of mine is completely consumed with cancer and she is very ill and near death. Is there anything that I can do or she can do to prepare for this?

SADHGURU: Now, I am not talking with any disregard to your friend but I want you to understand, people need to die. When and how is the only question. If death comes to us, we will do everything possible to save ourselves but if it goes beyond that, let us learn to die gracefully. Let's not fight with it endlessly. Just stretching it one more month and one more month does not make any sense.

Death is the last thing that you do in your life. Shouldn't you do it gracefully? We must learn to accept death as a part of our life. We are not wishing death, but when it comes, let us learn to go through it gracefully.

¹¹ *Sanskrit words referring to the concept of the "soul" or the "immortal self."*

Unfortunately, life is not understood that way. We are always thinking of stretching it. So if someone's body is broken beyond redemption, let us make the person understand it is okay. We are all in the queue, aren't we? I am not trying to make fun of someone's illness but we should understand where one thing stops and the other thing begins.

One important thing that needs to be done is to ensure that the withdrawal from the body happens smoothly. Everywhere in the world, people talk about dying peacefully. All they are talking about is they do not want to die in a choppy manner; they want to recede gently. To take away the choppiness of death, one simple thing you can do is to have a lamp burning constantly, preferably with ghee but you can also use butter. Keep the lamp next to that person and ensure it is on 24 hours of the day. This creates a certain aura so that the choppy nature of withdrawal can be regulated to some extent.

Just having a lamp burning in your house all the time has immense benefits and makes a huge difference in the way you are. The choppiness of your own energies can be taken off by just being in the vicinity of the lamp. Things have changed nowadays, but just 25 years ago, there would not be a single Indian home without a lit lamp. If there was no lit lamp in your house, that

meant it was like a cremation ground.

Another thing you can do if the person is willing, is set up some kind of universal chant – something like *Brahmananda Swaroopa*¹² on a CD – at a very mild volume. If you have a lamp and a simple chant going, the choppiness of withdrawal can be taken away and this should continue up to 14 days after one has been certified dead, because she may be medically dead but not existentially dead. Death happens slowly. The withdrawal of the life process from this lump of earth – the body – happens step-by-step. For all practical purposes, the lungs, heart and brain activity has stopped, so they will declare the person dead, but it is not yet so. Even if the person's body is burnt, she is still not dead because her movement into the other realm has not started.



The Kalabhairava Karma process for the deceased.
lingabhairavi.org

¹² A consecrated chant. Both the music file and free Android app can be downloaded at <http://www.ishafoundation.org/blog/lifestyle/music/mystic-chants-brahmananda-swarupa/>

It is based on this that up to 14 days after someone dies, there are various kinds of rituals in India. Unfortunately, the knowledge and power behind these rituals have mostly been lost and people are just doing things for their livelihood. Very few people truly understand the significance of what it is. If one leaves so absolutely consciously that he is instantly off, for such a person we do not do any *kriyas* and *karmas* after death. For all others however, these things are done because you have to show them the way. Otherwise they will hang around, still attached to things around them.

The first thing that is done when someone dies is, any cloth or material that has been intimately in touch with their body is burnt. Other clothes are distributed – not just to one person – but among many people. All these things are done within the first three days. First the undergarments are burnt, then the jewelry, clothes, everything is distributed as quickly as possible so that they get confused. They will not know where to hang around anymore. If you were to give a bundle of their belongings to someone, they would go there because the energy of their own body exists in the clothes.

These things were done not only to settle the dead but also to settle the family and relatives, so that they understand that the business is done; it is over. It does not matter how involved and attached you were to someone, when it is done, it is done – the game is up.

In yoga, it is not just about life. When we talk about living well, we are actually also talking about dying well. We have a *vanaprastha* ashram at Isha Yoga Center. People come to retire and die gracefully. When we say a spiritual possibility or a spiritual space, there is also room to die. It is a means to live, but it is also a means to die because living and dying are not different.

If you look at this life right now: inhalation, exhalation, inhalation, exhalation – if the next inhalation does not happen, it is finished. That is how fragile this life is. People always think death is something that happens to someone else. It is not so, it will happen to you and me.

If you remind yourself every day that you will also die, naturally you will move towards knowing higher dimensions of perception. If you are aware of the mortal nature of your life, is there time to get angry with somebody, quarrel with somebody, or do something stupid in your life? Once you come to terms with death and you are conscious that you will die, you will want to make every moment of your life as beautiful as possible. Only people who believe they are immortal can fight, and fight to the death. Those who are constantly aware of the mortal and fragile nature of existence, they do not want to miss a single moment. They will naturally be aware. They cannot take anything for granted. They will live very purposefully.

There is a beautiful Egyptian legend. It says, if you want to enter

heaven, there are two questions they ask you. Only if you have a big “yes” for these two questions you gain entry. Otherwise you are out. The first question is, “Have you found joy for yourself?” The second question is, “Have you created joy for people around you?” If you have not done these two things, you have no entry to heaven. If you have done these two things, that you are joyful and you have created joy for people around you, then you do not have to go to heaven because you are already there.



CONCLUSION

Do not bother too much about the present statistics, because the current depiction of the world is only from what is happening right now or what happened yesterday. The longing in a human being is not taken into consideration in those figures. The statistics may say 90% of the people are miserable, but these are not taking into consideration that 100% of the people are longing to be joyful. If only we can stoke that, it can become a reality in no time. What is needed is an effective system and a mechanism to keep that longing alive and conscious. If only we can make them conscious of this and put a little fuel into it, joy will be a natural part of the world in a very short time.

Trying to handle individual aspects of your psychological make-up will be an endless sifting through the sands. Instead of that, if we bring the necessary sadhana into our life and balance the way our minds and bodies work, chronic ailments could easily disappear. If you are unable to do that at home, if it is not conducive, it is always best that you take a break once a year or once in six months. Take time off, not for your work or family, just for you to work on yourself. Come to a consecrated space and incubate yourself in this energized space for some time. Your system will rejuvenate itself and you can walk out of

your problems.

The initial methods we set up for people are created to give you a steady experience of meditation. The fundamental Isha Yoga is that if you sit here, you will experience, “I’m not the body, I’m not the mind.” This is not just as an intellectual or mental understanding, but as a constant experience.

Whatever kind of suffering you might have known in your life has entered you either through the body or through the mind. Do you know any other kind of suffering? Right now, whatever step you try to take with your life is always half a step, simply because in the background of everything there is always a fear about what will happen to you. If this one aspect is taken off, you stride through this life joyfully and with absolute grace.

Once you sit here and your experience of life is such that you are neither this nor that, if there is a little space between you and your body, between you and your mind, this is the end of suffering. Slowly, this experience starts sinking into you, and as the fear about what may happen to you starts dissolving, life becomes full throttle.



TOOLS FOR WELLBEING

ISHA UPA-YOGA

Isha Upa-Yoga¹³ is a series of practices designed by Sadhguru, which is based on the science of Upa-yoga. Upa-yoga is an aspect of yoga oriented towards physical and psychological benefits. These 5-minute processes are easy-to-practice yet potent tools to enhance health, joy, peace, love, success and inner exploration, helping one cope with the hectic pace of modern life and realize their full potential.

THE PRACTICES HELP:

- ☪ Enhance vitality, focus, memory and productivity
- ☪ Stabilize the body, mind and emotions
- ☪ Strengthen and stabilize the spine
- ☪ Relieve back pain, stress, anxiety and tension
- ☪ To find relief from chronic ailments and improve overall health
- ☪ Enhance teamwork and communication
- ☪ Impart a lasting sense of joy, peace and fulfillment

¹³ Isha Upa-yoga practices are freely available online at

<http://isha.sadhguru.org/5-min-practices/>

You can also download the Android app at <http://isha.sadhguru.org/mobile-apps/>

ISHA KRIYA

Isha Kriya™ is a simple yet potent practice rooted in the timeless wisdom of the yogic sciences. “Isha” refers to that which is the source of creation; “kriya” literally means “internal action.” The purpose of Isha Kriya is to help an individual get in touch with the source of his existence, to create life according to his own wish and vision.

Through Isha Kriya, a 12-minute practice, an individual can pursue immediate and ultimate wellbeing, experiencing success in the social sphere, while nourishing the inner longing for deeper dimensions of life. Isha Kriya empowers an individual towards a stress-free way of being, and promotes enhanced clarity, heightened energy levels, and a state of peacefulness and joy. Daily practice of Isha Kriya brings health, dynamism and happiness. It is a powerful tool to cope with the hectic pace of modern life.

Isha Kriya requires no special physical agility or previous experience of yoga to practice. It integrates seamlessly into one’s daily life, bringing the possibilities of a spiritual process – which were once available only to yogis and ascetics – to every human being in the comfort of their own home. Created by Sadhguru, it has the potential to transform the life of anyone who is willing to invest just a few minutes a day. The instructions for Isha Kriya are given below. You can also watch the Isha Kriya instruction video at www.ishakriya.com

PREPARATION

Sit facing east in a cross-legged posture, with your spine comfortably erect.

Keep your hands upon your thighs, with your palms facing up. With your face slightly upturned, eyes closed, keep a mild focus between eyebrows.

THE MEDITATION

This meditation will happen in three stages:

Stage 1: Inhale and exhale gently, slowly.

With each inhalation, mentally say to yourself: “I am not the body.” The inhalation should last the whole duration of that thought.

With each exhalation, mentally say to yourself: “I am not even the mind.” The exhalation should last for the whole duration of that thought.

Repeat this for 7 to 11 minutes

Stage 2: Utter a long “A” sound (as the “a” in father). The sound should come from just below the navel. You need not utter it very loud, but loud enough to feel the vibration.

Utter the long “A” sound 7 times, exhaling fully into each sound.

Stage 3:

Sit for 5 to 6 minutes with a slightly upturned face, and keep a mild focus between your eyebrows.

The total time of this practice is between 12 to 18 min. You can sit longer if you want.

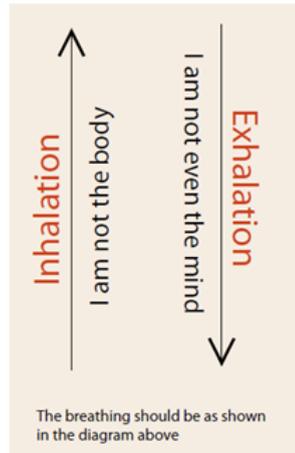
PLEASE NOTE

While you sit for the Isha Kriya, do not pay attention to the activity of the mind or body. Whatever is happening in your body or your mind, just ignore it and simply sit there.

Do not take a break in between, as it will disturb the reorganization of energies that happens during the practice.

Each time you do the kriya, you must do it for a minimum of 12 minutes, and twice a day for 48 days (considered as a full mandala or cycle), or once a day for 90 days. The purpose of the mandala is to firmly establish the practice in your system. Thereafter, you can do it for a minimum of once a day.

Anyone can practice this kriya and enjoy its benefits. Simply follow the instructions without making any changes. This is a simple but



very potent kriya. You can remind yourself that “ I am not the body. I am not even the mind” anytime during the day.

QUESTIONER: What can I possibly gain out of this?

SADHGURU: Where is the need to meditate, first of all? Starting the process of life was not your conscious choice, it “happened” to you. When you were born your body was so small, and now it has grown. So obviously, the body is something that you gathered. It is an accumulation. What you call as “my body” is an accumulation of food. Similarly, what you call as “my mind” is an accumulation of impressions.

Whatever you accumulate can be yours, but it can never be you. The very fact you accumulated it means that you gathered it from somewhere else. Today you could gather a 70 kg body, but you can decide to make it a 60 kg body. You don't go looking for those 10 kgs, because they were an accumulation. Once you drop it, it is gone. Similarly, with your mind, it is an accumulation of impressions.

The moment you are identified in your experience, the moment you are identified with something that you are not, your perception goes completely haywire. You cannot perceive life the way it is; your perception is hugely distorted. So the moment you start experiencing this body, which you gathered from outside, as “myself,” the moment you start experiencing the impressions that you have in your mind as “myself,” you cannot perceive life the

way it is. You will only perceive life the way it is necessary for your survival, and not the way it really is.

Yet once you have come as a human being, survival is very important, but it is not enough. If you had come here like any other creature on this planet, stomach full – life would be settled. But once you come here as a human being, life does not end with survival. Actually, for a human being, life begins only after survival is fulfilled.

So meditation gives you an experience, an inner state where what is you and what is yours is separated. There is a little distance, there is a little space between what is you and what you have accumulated. For now we can understand this as meditation.

What is the use of doing this? It brings an absolute clarity of perception. You see life just the way it is. No distortions about it; simply seeing life just the way it is. Right now if we see this very hell as a world, your ability to go through this world is only to the extent that you clearly see it. If I have no clarity of vision but if I have confidence and if I try to go through this, I'm going to be a bumbling idiot. Whenever there is no perception, people try to overcome that by building confidence in them. Without the clarity of perception people are trying to make it up with other kinds of substitutes; there is no substitute for clarity.

Once you understand this you naturally become meditative; you want to clear up everything and just look at life the way it

is, because you want to walk through life with least amount of friction, without stumbling on this or that.

QUESTIONER: Why should my head be slightly upturned?

SADHGURU: Sitting with your head slightly upturned is not because you want to see something floating in the sky or imagine something. You keep your head upturned because when your system “looks” upward it becomes receptive. It is like opening a window. This is about becoming receptive to Grace. When you become willing and receptive, your body naturally arches up.

QUESTIONER: What does this meditation do?

SADHGURU: This kriya will create a certain space between you and your body, between you and your mind. If at all there is any struggle in your life, it is because you identify yourself with these limited aspects of yourself.

So the essence of meditation is that it creates a space, a distance between you and what you refer to as your “mind.” All the suffering you go through is manufactured in your mind, isn’t it so? If you distance yourself from the mind, can there be suffering in you? This is the end of suffering.

Now while you are meditating, there is a distance between you and your mind, and you do feel peaceful. The problem is that the moment you open your eyes, you are again stuck with your mind.

If you meditate every day, a day will come when you open your eyes, and you can still experience that the mind is there and you are here. This is the end of suffering. When you are no longer identified with your body and mind, you will be in touch with the source of Creation within you. Once this happens, Grace happens.

Whether you are here, or beyond, this is the end of suffering. That means your whole karmic bag – your past, or your unconscious mind – has been kept aside. It cannot have any influence over you. Once the past has no influence over you, then life becomes a huge potential. Every breath becomes such a tremendous possibility in your life, because the past is not playing any role in your existence here now. If you sit here, you are absolute life. Life becomes effortless.

QUESTIONER: What is the importance of the breath? Is there more to breathing well than being healthy?

SADHGURU: Breath is the thread which ties you to the body. If I take away your breath, your body will fall apart. It is the breath that has tied you to the body. What you call as your body and what you call as “me” have been tied together with breath. And this breath decides many aspects of who you are right now. For different levels of thought and emotion that you go through, your breath takes on different types of patterns. If you are angry you will be breathing one way. You are peaceful, you breathe another

way. You are happy, you breathe another way. You are sad, you will breathe another way. Have you noticed this?

Based on this conversely is the science of pranayama and kriya: by consciously breathing in a particular way, the very way you think, feel, understand and experience life can be changed.

This breath can be used in so many ways as a tool to do other things with the body and the mind. You will see with the Isha Kriya, we are using a simple process of breath, but the kriya itself is not in the breath. Breath is just a tool. Breath is an induction, but what happens is not about the breath.

Whichever way you breathe, that is the way you think. Whichever way you think, that is the way you breathe. Your whole life, your whole unconscious mind is written into your breath. If you just read your breath, your past, present and future is written there, in the way you breathe.

Once you realize this, life becomes very different. It needs to be known experientially; it is not something you can propound like this. If you know the bliss of simply sitting here, the blissfulness of just being able to simply sit here, not think anything, not do anything, simply sit here, just being life, then life would be very different.

In a way, what this means is today there is scientific proof that without taking a drop of alcohol, without taking any substance you can simply sit here and get drugged or stoned or drunk by

yourself. If you are aware in a certain way, you can activate the system in such a way that if you sit here it is an enormous pleasure. Once simply sitting and breathing is such a great pleasure, you will become very genial, flexible, wonderful because all the time you are in a great state within yourself. No hangover. Mind becomes sharper than ever before.

QUESTIONER: What effect does uttering the sound “Aaa” have on me?

SADHGURU: When you utter the sound “Aaa,” the maintenance center in your body gets activated. This is Manipuraka chakra, or the navel center. Manipuraka is just three-fourths of an inch below your navel. When you were in your mother’s womb, the “maintenance” pipe was connected there. Now the tube is gone, but the maintenance center is still in your navel.

Now as there is a physical body, there is a whole energy body that we generally refer to as either prana or shakti. This energy, or prana, flows through the body in certain established patterns; it is not moving randomly. There are 72,000 different ways in which it moves. In other words, there are 72,000 pathways in the system through which it is flowing. So nadis are pathways or channels in the system. They do not have a physical manifestation; if you cut the body and look inside, you will not find these nadis. But as you become more and more aware, you will notice the energy is not

moving at random, it is moving in established pathways.

When you utter the sound “Aaa,” you will see the reverberation will start about three-fourths of an inch below the navel and spread right across the body. Sound “Aaa” is the only reverberation which spreads right across the body because this is the only place where the 72,000 nadis meet and redistribute themselves. They all meet at Manipuraka and redistribute themselves. This is the only point in the body like that. If you utter the sound “Aaa,” the reverberations of this sound are carried right across the system.

This reverberation can assist greatly in energizing your maintenance center. Activating this center will bring health, dynamism, prosperity and wellbeing.

www.ishakriya.org

KALPAVRIKSHA – CREATING WHAT YOU WANT

SADHGURU: The most miraculous thing in this existence in terms of instruments is not the computer, car or spacecraft, but the human mind. This is the most miraculous instrument, if only you could use it consciously.

The reason why success comes so easy and naturally for one person and is a struggle for another is because one person thinks the way he wants and another person thinks against himself. There is a beautiful story in the yogic lore.

A man went for a walk and accidentally walked into paradise. After the long walk he felt a little tired and thought, “I wish I could rest somewhere.” He saw a beautiful tree beneath which was wonderful, soft grass, so he went and slept there. After a few hours, he woke up well-rested. Then he thought, “Oh! I am hungry. I wish I had something to eat.” He thought of all the nice things he wanted to eat and all of them just appeared in front of him.

After he had the sumptuous food, the man thought, “Oh! I wish I had something to drink.” He thought of all the drinks he wanted and all of them appeared in front of him. In yoga, the human mind is referred to as a markata, or monkey, because that is its nature. The word “monkey” has also become synonymous with imitation.

If you say you are monkeying someone, it means you are imitating them. This is the full-time job of your mind! So, an un-established mind is referred to as a monkey.

When this “monkey” became active in the man who went to paradise, he thought, “What the hell is happening here? I asked for food, food came. I asked for drink, drink came. Maybe there are ghosts around.” He looked and there were ghosts. The moment he saw them he got terrified, he said, “Oh there are ghosts around here, maybe they will torture me,” and the ghosts started torturing him. Then he started screaming and yelling in pain and said, “Oh these ghosts are torturing me, they are going to kill me!” And he died.

The problem was, he was sitting under a wishing tree or a Kalpavriksha. Whatever he asked for became a reality. In yoga, a well-established human mind is referred to as a “Kalpavriksha.” In this mind, whatever you ask for becomes a reality. In life, you are also constantly sitting under a wishing tree, so you need to develop the mind to a point where it becomes a Kalpavriksha, not a source of madness.

If you develop your mind to a certain level of organization, it in turn organizes the whole system. Your body, your emotion, your energies, everything gets organized in that direction. Once all these four dimensions of you are organized in one direction, anything that you wish happens without even lifting your little finger. It

would help to assist it with activity. But even without doing any activity you can still manifest what you want, if you organize these four dimensions in one direction and keep it unwavering in that direction for a certain period of time.

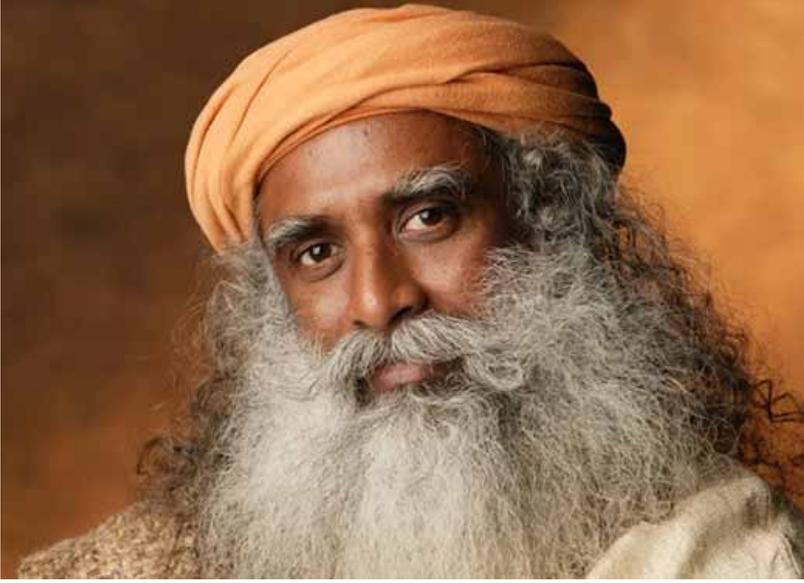
Right now the problem with your mind is, every moment it is changing direction. If you want to travel somewhere and you keep changing your direction every two steps, the question of you reaching the destination is very remote, unless it happens by chance. So by organizing your mind, and in turn organizing the whole system and these four basic dimensions of who you are right now in one direction, you are a Kalpavriksha yourself.¹⁴



¹⁴ The guided meditation Power to Create for health is available at <https://www.ishashoppe.com/downloads/portfolio/power-to-create-health/>.

ABOUT १SHA

Sadhguru



Yogi, mystic and visionary, Sadhguru is a spiritual master with a difference. An arresting blend of profundity and pragmatism, his life and work serve as a reminder that yoga is not an esoteric discipline from an outdated past, but a contemporary science, vitally relevant to our times. Probing, passionate and provocative, insightful, logical and unfailingly witty, Sadhguru's talks have earned him the reputation of a speaker and opinion-maker of international renown. With a celebratory engagement with life on all levels, Sadhguru's areas of active involvement encompass fields as diverse as architecture and visual design, poetry and painting, ecology and horticulture, music and sports.

Sadhguru is also the founder of Isha Foundation, a non-profit organization which has been dedicated to the wellbeing of the individual and the world for the past three decades. Isha Foundation does not promote any particular ideology, religion, or race, but transmits inner sciences of universal appeal.

<http://isha.sadhguru.org>

<http://youtube.com/sadhguru>



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ISHA FOUNDATION

Isha Foundation is a non-profit human-service organization, supported by over two million volunteers in over 150 centers worldwide. Recognizing the possibility of each person to empower another, Isha Foundation has created a massive movement that



is dedicated to address all aspects of human wellbeing, without ascribing to any particular ideology, religion or race.

Isha Foundation is involved in several path-breaking outreach initiatives: Action for Rural Rejuvenation (ARR) enhances the quality of rural life through healthcare and disease prevention, community revitalization, women empowerment, the creation of

sustainable livelihoods, and yoga programs. Isha Vidhya empowers rural children with quality education. Project GreenHands (PGH) initiates mass tree planting and creates a culture of care for the environment to keep this planet liveable for future generations. Isha's unique approach in cultivating human potential has gained worldwide recognition and reflects in Isha Foundation's special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations.

The Foundation is headquartered at the Isha Yoga Center, set at the base of the Velliangiri Mountains in southern India, and at the Isha Institute of Inner-sciences on the spectacular Cumberland Plateau in central Tennessee, USA.

<http://ishafoundation.org>

<http://ishafoundation.org/blog>



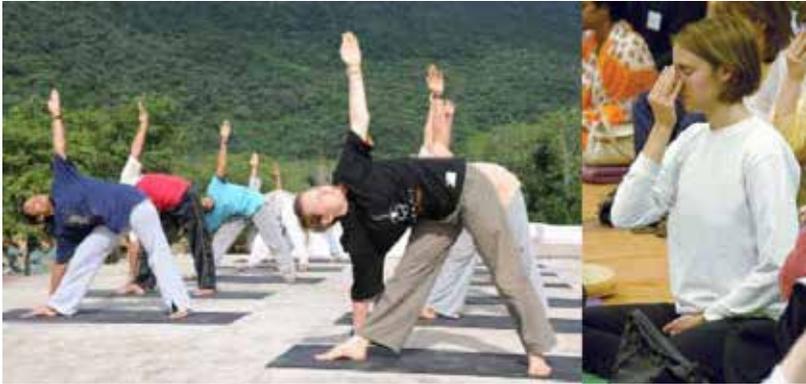
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ISHA YOGA

Isha Yoga is a customized system of yoga which distills powerful, ancient yogic methods for a modern person, creating peak physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing. This basis of total wellbeing accelerates inner growth, allowing each individual to tap

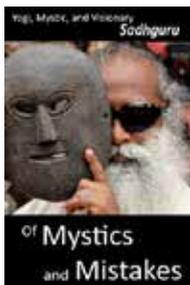


the wealth of vibrant life within oneself. Sadhguru's introductory program, Inner Engineering, introduces Shambhavi Mahamudra a simple but powerful kriya (inner energy process) for deep inner transformation. The uniqueness of Isha Yoga is that it is offered as a science. It draws on the ancient yogic principle that the body is the temple of the spirit and that good health is fundamental to personal and spiritual development. Scientifically structured, it promotes beneficial changes in one's inner chemistry to accelerate the release of physical, mental and emotional blocks and produce a life-transforming impact of profound experience, clarity and boundless energy.

<http://ishayoga.org>

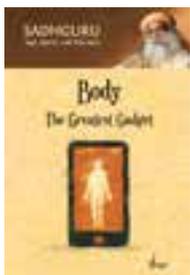
OTHER BOOKS FROM ISHA FOUNDATION

OF MYSTICS AND MISTAKES



“There are only two types of people: Mystics and mistakes,” says Sadhguru. That sounds damning, but mistakes can thankfully be rectified, and that’s the hope this book holds out to seekers. It reminds us that each one of us can make the journey – from confusion to clarity, from error to enlightenment, from self-deception to self-discovery – if only we choose.

BODY: THE GREATEST GADGET



Body: The Greatest Gadget is an introduction to the most sophisticated gadget on the planet. It is a first step on an intriguing and exciting journey that culminates in total mastery of the system, allowing us to stay rooted in the physical, and yet taste the beyond. Above all, the book is a glimpse of a possibility to live and function in a way that most human beings would consider superhuman.



FOREST FLOWER

Forest Flower is Isha’s monthly publication, full of inspiring expressions by Sadhguru, the latest news in and around Isha, shared experiences by Isha meditators and much more. Forest Flower is not just something to be read and enjoyed – it also helps you stay connected to Sadhguru and Isha and includes Sadhguru’s poems and articles, delicious recipes, and the latest news from Isha.

All Isha books are available for digital download at <http://ishadownloads.com>. Paperbacks can also be ordered online at <http://ishashoppe.com>, or purchased at all major bookstores.