



YOGism and Afterthoughts*

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Dr. Bhaskar C. Harinath is presently Director, Jannalal Bajaj Tropical Disease Research Centre and Coordinator for Bioinformatics Centre (Supported by DBT) and Arogyadham and Herbal Garden. After completing Ph.D. at Oklahoma State University and Post doctoral study at Washington University School of Medicine, St. Louis, USA as Fulbright fellow, joined the first rural Medical Institute, Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Medical Sciences at Sevagram in 1970 which was just started as Gandhi Centenary Project, to establish the Department of Biochemistry. During the last forty years, in addition to teaching and hospital biochemistry work, the department was developed into an advanced centre for Tropical Disease Research with about 200 publications in International and national journals. He has widely traveled in the world participating in International Seminars and Workshops at Nairobi, Sydney, USSR, Malaysia, France, USA, Singapore, Thailand and Brazil. His research work was recognized by Amrut Modi award -1986 (Unichem Labs), PA Kurup Endowment award – 1991 (SBC), Awadesh Saran Oration – 1992 (ACBI), Dr. B. C. Roy National award – 2004 (MCI), Dhanvantari award – 2004 (Education Society, Wardha), S.C. Parija Oration award in TROPACON 2008, New Delhi and AJ Thakur Award for Distinguished Clinical Biochemist, ACBI in 2009. Dr. Harinath was President of Indian Immunology Society (1990-92) and President of Association of Clinical Biochemists of India (1994-95). He was also Dean, MGIMS from March 93 to September 94, Silver Jubilee year of the Institute. In addition to research on filaria and tuberculosis Dr. Harinath is Editor of SEVAMED - Quarterly Update on Infectious Disease Research and Traditional Medicine and developing Medical Informatics and Arogyadham for research in Lifestyle Medicine.

When I received invitation to be the Chief Guest at seventh Convocation of prestigious SVYASA Yoga University, I was elated. The next sentence requesting for the Convocation address within seven days brought me flat to the ground. I know Yoga is beneficial but I have yet to develop an expertise to deliver an oration. Then I recalled our National Symposium on Holistic Living in 2006 without precise definition of 'Holistic Living' at that time in online databases. Then we did explain Yoga as Science of Holistic Living. When we see the websites now, we see holistic living associated with luxurious nature / health resorts, again missing the corner stone of yoga i.e. simple living close to Nature.

At the end of Holistic Living Conference in 2006, we defined Holistic Living and requested for comments from SEVAMED readers. We are very grateful and fortunate to receive enlightening and thought provoking comments from Respected Dr. Jayadeva Yogendra, President, The Yoga Institute, Santacruz (E), Mumbai. The same is reproduced for information of readers.

Dear Dr. Harinath,

Many Thanks for your letter of 2nd March. I appreciate the spirit behind the article on "Holistic Living". I enclose my thoughts herewith. Hope it is useful.

In our so-called "Holistic Living", we miss out the central core of the "human being" who is essentially spiritual. We may extend our definition of health to physical, mental, moral and spiritual well-being but we have very little to offer under the spiritual heading. In fact in our present material culture we clearly skip spiritual contents by bringing in concepts like "Total", "Fullest development" etc. The belief in a non-material reality is difficult to comprehend or accept. We cannot go beyond the concept of cessation of mental activity. Consciousness remains beyond meditation or thinking and its



stoppage is hard to understand. It is even harder to materialize someone who lives at a spiritual level. We suspect the yogi and the fakir and the mystic. They are difficult to understand for us and they appear sometimes to us as of unsound mind!

Take away the spiritual content and the word "holistic" is an empty word. We may meet individuals who claim to be holistic, integrated and spiritual but in their life and style of living we see lot of materialistic content. They may be just clever salesman of the concept "holistic living" without necessarily being in their living.

A man who has truly renounced material objects totally and lives a very simple life remains unknown since he does not proclaim himself or herself as a Guru or a Swami or a Maharaja etc. He or she may be highly concentrated, fully aware and integrated and totally disinterested in material things. Such individuals come closer to the "holistic ideal" and need to be understood more.

Our best wishes to you,

Yours in Yoga
Dr. Jayadeva Yogendra
*The Yoga Institute,
Santacruz East, Mumbai
March 5, 2007*

After these words of Wisdom from Dr. Yogendra, I thought why not we have 'Symposium on YOGism' which is Indian discovery and very relevant to the problems, the world is facing in these times. Most of the – isms, though well intended have to stand the test of time. Communism based on secrecy and fear has failed. Capitalism based on consumerism and greed is not sustainable. Already cracks are seen. Socialism is a glamorous hybrid, but never worked. **All these lack spiritual element.** YOGism is simple living in harmony with Nature, connecting to the **One ness** of the Universe, is the need of the day for bringing peace in the world. It takes care of not only the health of the individual but that of whole world. It fits well the aspiration of New Age Movement showing a direction to the restless youth of modern world to live in peace and be creative. **One should question the broader goal of life than incentive based self growth.** YOGism, the conscious (living in the present moment with cessation of thoughts) and conscientious way of living makes one realize the purpose of life with concern to Nature and Universe. Thus whole world gets interconnected.

When we tried to see the definition of YOGism online, the freedictionary.com states YOGism, as an orthodox Hindu Philosophical system concerned with the liberation of the self from its non eternal elements or states. Though it is true as the ultimate goal, YOGism or Yoga way of living for peaceful and successful living is not deliberated thus keeping the common man away from YOGism. Many other websites mentioned YOGism as practice of yoga. Urbandictionary.com attributes Yogi – ism to famous New York Yankee Catcher, Yogi Berra, making mockery (un intentional) based on calling him Yogi by a childhood friend and leading to malapropism English language phrases so called YOGisms. **It is most unfortunate that the westerners never realized the greatness of YOGI, living simple and thinking for universal betterment.** In this context, YOGism Symposium is the need of the day for extensive deliberation.

Based on eternal Vedic wisdom of

1. *Unity in Diversity (Visualize a flower garden)*
2. *Vasudeva Kutumbakam & Sarve Jana Sukhino Bhavanthu (whole World is one family and let all people be happy)*



3. *Poornamadah Poornamidam Poornaatpoornamudachyat Poornasya Poornamaadasya Poornamevavashishyate Ishopanishad*

(Whole Universe (living and non-living) has got an integral existence. It is interrelated, interdependent and cohesive in nature).

We defined **YOGism** as 'Simple living in harmony with Nature and concern for whole Universe. Yoga way of living (YOGism) harmonizes the body, mind and spirit and connects to the **Oneness** of the universe.

Yoga has the complete diet for peaceful and successful living. Basically Yoga is spiritual with noble goal of enlightenment, but it also takes care of earthly needs of man, namely physical, mental and emotional health. Yoga is strongly preventive. Yogasanas, Pranayama, Meditation have been shown to be useful in purification of body and mind and thus help in promotion of positive health and resistance to disease. Therapeutic Lifestyle modification has shown promise in better management of chronic diseases such as allergy, diabetes, heart disease etc. Thus yoga irrespective of race, religion and philosophies of the world, is being integrated with conventional medicine. Crores of people are practicing yoga and meditation throughout the world for stress free life. New disciplines such as Lifestyle medicine and Mind-body medicine are being developed. Medical schools abroad are establishing division of Integrative Medicine which is healing-oriented medicine that takes account of the whole person (mind, body and spirit) including all aspects of Lifestyle to provide customer oriented, preventive services and medical care in a healing environment by integrating conventional and complementary medicine and by nurturing the intrinsic healing whole person-body, mind and spirit.

Yoga and Nature:

With fast – paced life and excess use of junk foods and modern electrical and electronic gadgets namely the car, TV, cell phone, air conditioning, microwave oven, refrigerator etc and cordless & remote controls and environmental pollution distanced the man away from nature, causing number of lifestyle health problems causing life threatening morbidity and even death.

Yoga way of life – means the way of life based on the vision of Oneness. It is a complete science for living a simple life in harmony with Nature and whole creation. The human race is simply a part of Nature, one amongst millions of creatures. There is only **Nature** left when you have exhausted all the Gurus and -isms, all those meditations, breathing and other techniques. Hindu way of life nurtures Nature. We worship the sun, wind, land, trees, plants and water which is the very base of human survival.

We take for granted, the natural beauty of flower garden or fruit trees. Varieties of shapes and colors. Just be aware and observe the flowering of buds, the maturing and ripening of fruits, eating and playing of birds. Nature, they say heals. It is a stress buster too. Nature is macro and also micro. It is gross and also subtle. It is simple and also complex. That is the beauty of Nature. Sparing sometime for watching and appreciation of Nature's beauty in variety of flowers (shapes & fragrance), fruits (sight & taste) and birds (sounds and movement) produce subtle joy and relaxation and strengthen the innate immunity.

June 2, 2010

Prof. B. C. Harinath

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