

## **Ayurveda Conference Notes (February 2008)**

*Where Science Meets Consciousness – Ayurveda and Yoga Conference in Rishikesh, February 21-25, 2008*

During the last weekend of February I traveled to Rishikesh to attend an International Conference on Ayurveda and Yoga – “Where Science Meets Consciousness.” I was first introduced to Ayurveda when I was a child. My grandfather grew up in Kerala and was very knowledgeable about medicinal herbs. However I didn’t really incorporate Ayurvedic principles into my lifestyle and really studying this “Science of Life” until the Spring of 2005. One of the Director’s of the Yoga Teacher Training Program I was completing is an Ayurvedic Doctor. Prior to Ayurveda I has spent 1.5 years as a 100% raw/vegan. Essentially, I only ate fruits, vegetables, nuts and seeds. I came to raw/veganism because my mother has uterine cancer and I had read about Cancer patients curing themselves through raw foods and my body really took to the lifestyle. While I found huge benefits to raw veganism the philosophy behind Ayurveda, “There is no right or wrong but what is appropriate for whom and when” made much more sense to me and I feel much more balanced practicing an Ayurvedic lifestyle and sticking to a dinacarya. Essentially it comes down to knowing your body and listening to your body. Nowadays people have lost their connection with their body and I believe that this is what ultimately causes dis-ease in the world.

The conference was empowering and inspiring. I finally got to hear Dr. Robert Svoboda, Dr. David Frawley and Mother Maya speak and “networked” with other like minded individuals. A mentor of mine (Mark Lund) that lives in Brazil told me that while people in the business world “network” we had to constantly and continuously employ “spiritual networking” because only when we truly change peoples thinking will the world change and we will really evolve. It is just amazing how everything keeps coming together.

Held at the Parmarth Niketan Ashram on the banks of the Ganga the conference drew people from all over the world. Interestingly enough the organizers were mostly Tamil! There is a special connection I feel with my fellow Tamil brothers and sisters and it was amazing to see how an “Akka” or “Anna” will go out of their way for you. The conference reminded me about my love affair with Sanskrit and how I MUST review my Sanskrit. I sacrificed one year of my life to study the language (it really took over my life) but have not been doing translations for close to two years and have forgotten so much, it is such a shame and really unacceptable!

The highlight of the conference for me was the final night’s arati by the Ganga. There were hijras, sadhus, videshis, orphans and ashramites all singing and rejoicing together under the stars and moon. We sang Mahamritunjai’s by the yagna, followed by Tulsidas’ Hanuman Chalisa and many other bhajans. I started crying out of joy. I was just so happy and felt so blessed to be there under the stars and I could feel the Ganga’s love everywhere. I had first heard about Muniji, the ashram leader many years ago from my neighbor back home in New Jersey, Bhanu Aunty. He led our nightly prayers with the help of the orphan boys in the ashram’s gurukul and their voices were filled with so much

bakti. I will never forget the dancing sadhu and smiling hijra and happy babies all seated next to me as we sang for Lord Krishna. Even though I subscribe to nondual thought I love singing devotional songs.

In our Saturday evening satsang Dr. Robert Svoboda talked about Sri Adi Sankaracarya's composition Bhaja Govindam. Growing up I would hear this song and Vishnu Sahasranam sung by the beloved MS Subbulakshmi in my home. I still remember Rajaji's introduction to Bhaja Govindam with complete clarity and his discussion of how jnana and bakti are one in the same. Rajaji also happens to be the grandfather of my mentor, Ramchandra Gandhi and the composer of my family song, "Kurai Ondrum Illai." Dr. Svoboda discussed one line in particular of Bhaja Govindam stating that if you do satsang you will want to avoid everyone else. If you stop hanging out with people living in duality then your own delusion will be reduced. Where sat is delusion cannot be and when sat is there you are never confused about your dharma. When you have no delusion then you can attain moksha. Like Lord Siva we should have our eyes half open to the world and the other half in communion with totality. Overall, the conference reminded me that I'm not alone, I'm never alone (In fact if you break alone apart al one can also mean all is one) in my quest for meaning and knowledge and that all I have to do is continue to be true to who I am and my svadharma and everything will be taken care of.

I learned sooo much in the 2.5 days I was at the conference and what follows are my notes from the talks, teachings and workshops I attended.

*Dr. Hari Sharma*

Ayus = Life

Veda = Science or Knowledge

Ayurveda is used for prevention for healthy people and management of disease for unhealthy people

A healthy person is one who is established in the Self

Health is Swastha in Sanskrit, Sw – Self, Isthā – Established

Yoga is a method to become established in Self

Hatha yoga focuses on physical postures (in the US they are building a house but only working on the basement their whole life because they only focus on asana)

Laya is the complete absorption or melting of the mind. Laya yoga teaches one to concentrate upon and merge in the real subtle sounds emanating from various inner creative forces of the Divine in nature.

Karma yoga is union with the divine through good work

Mantra yoga

Raja yoga, 8 fold path, Patanjali

Yama = avoidance of immoral actions

Niyama = righteous conduct

Asana = right posture

Pranayama = control of subtle life forces

Pratyahara = interiorization of mind

Dharana = concentration

Dhyana = meditation

Samadhi = transcendental consciousness

Life consists of consciousness and matter

Creation comes into being sound

Don't get trapped by the intellect

Microcosm and macrocosm

For experiencing totality for better health practice meditation

Meditation reveals the persons inner infinite unbounded consciousness to overcome co-dependency the mistaken notion of relying on another person, drug or food for support (pragya-aparadh—mistake of intellect) as the person experiences a sense of Self Love

Everyone is addicted to something so get addicted to nonchanging infinite eternal consciousness

The habit of self reliance or inner reliance develops

Neti neti = pure conscious totality

Different modes of vibration create sound

We are prakriti

Aham Bhramasmi, Brihad Aranyaka Upanisad

The goal of life is to realize your inner awareness

Keeping in touch with the source is meditation

Meditators biological age 5-10 years younger, they slow the aging process

Meditate for your health

In the waking state you have awareness, in the dreaming state the gross body sleeps

In deep sleep the channels of the subtle body open and this is VERY GOOD for the rejuvenation of the physical body

Effect of sound and music, form of vibrational energy. Cells vibrate dynamically and transmit information via hormones wave motion, affects plant growth

Good music decreases blood pressure, heart rate, respiratory rate

Rock music increased cancer cell growth, soothing music decreased cancer cell growth and hanuman chalisa also decreased cancer cell growth

Pranayama creates proper cakra frequency and flow back and forth becomes normalized

\*grape fruit seed extract

When you get angry you hurt yourself more than others

Rasayana, massage the body with sesame oil

Sanatana, never distance

Dharma, that which guides you

Experience of getting the yogic feeling, that is yoga

### **Ayurveda and Woman – Dr. Claudia Welch**

Dinacarya (daily routine)

In all dealings accept the middle means avoiding extremes

Live in balance between nourishing qualities

Lunar, heavy, dull, cool, oily, smooth, dense, soft, stable, gross, cloudy, liquid, earth, water

Solar, lightening, light, sharp, fast, hot, dry, rough, (liquid), hard, mobile, subtle and clear, fire, air, ether

Caffeine energy is adulterated energy, nourishing energy is very different

Always a bit of the other in the one

Ignite your quest to learn more

Pancakosa and yoga

Judge Larry Standleyà sentenced a man to one year of yoga

Happiness, taitreya upanisad

Don't look at what gives happiness but the experience of happiness

Annamaya = physical

Pranayama = life force

Manomaya = mental

Vijnanamaya = intellectual

Anandamaya = bliss

Kosas are subtleties of existence

There is no prana in hair or nails

The mind is an instrument

We are guided by ananda, our very nature is ananda

Abhyasa is discipline, vairagya is to let go

In the sleep state no object can give you joy, happiness is your nature, nothing can improve that. Plants and animals never forget their nature but humans do. Speed is how we have come away from our nature

Tigers are not violent, they eat when they are hungry

You are not in harmony when you eat when you are not hungry

Relax at the body level

Consciously relax

Happiness is object related, bliss is not

By nature you are blissful and happy

Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest the divinity within by controlling the nature internal and external

Abhyasas – raja and karma Vairagya – jnana bakta You can also be peaceful

Bhakti, find god within and outside

Yoga = peace of mind and harmony

Moving away from our nature is unconscious

Gurukul boys know their value and purpose

New Paradigms, illness to wellness and beyond

Health is spiritual, physical and mental well being

Modern science is limited to physical universe

Stress is multidimensional

Four wives story

4<sup>th</sup> wife = body

3<sup>rd</sup> wife = status and wealth

2<sup>nd</sup> wife = family and friends

1<sup>st</sup> wife = soul, jivatma

4 x 27 surya nadi shodhana

Yoga reduces mental retardation and cancer

PRAYER FOR EATING from the Bhagavad Gita

The act of eating is an internal yagna

Brahmaarpanam brahma havih

Brahmaagnau brahmanaa hutam

Brahmaiva tena gantavyamBrahma karma samaadhinaa

For him the act of offering is Brahman, the oblation is Brahman.

By Brahman is it offered into the fire of Brahman. Brahman is that which is to be attained by him who realized Brahman in his actions. II 24 II

Aham vaishvaanaro bhootvaa

Praaninaam dehamaashritah;

Praanaa paanasamaayuktah

Pachaamyannam chaturvidham

I, having become the vaishwanara Fire (digestive fire), abide in all living entities and having united with Pranaand Apana. I digest the four kinds of food.

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*Dr. Robert Svoboda* – Yama and Niyama in Ayurveda  
Yamas: ahimsa, aparigraha, asteya, brahmacharya, satya  
Niyama: soucha, santosha, ishvara, tapas, swadaya

Yama and Niyama same root shared with yantra

Wherever there is yantra, mantra, nyasa, guru and diksha there is tantra

Tantra is about shakti and employing these methods (above) for transformation.

Indian alchemy is rasa vidya, rasayana

The root Yan is limiting or restraining or encasing. Yama deva is a limiting God. Dharma raja.

Any yama is a limitation you place on yourself to move forward and have yama be away from you until the last minute.

Asteya = non stealing (Sadhu on the rock wanting justice story)

Ayurveda is about qualities. Whenever you eat you are stealing the prana from that vegetable. Always be aware that you are stealing and the less you steal the better.

Aparigraha = grab hold, covetous, hoarding, wanting what someone else has.

Satya = relativity with lying nature doesn't like things to be absolute

Ahimsa = relativity (cheese mites)

Brahmacharya = a method that lend you in the direction of supreme reality. Abstinence if that is the proper dharma for you.

In beings nonviolence is the best life promoting factorà what you do will be done to you.

Ahimsa promotes life prowess

Not being eaten and to eat is all you have to do.

Instead being a user of the internet you are used by the internet!

Sukha = good space

When akasha is in samya, balance, the space is good

Aurogiya is a lack of disease

Knowledge of reality is the best method to promote pleasure

Brahmacharya is the best path to follow

Patanjali said to do yamas and niyamas before asanas

Kaushalaà kusha grass, verse 51-52 of the Bhagavad Gita, definition of yoga

Niyama = ishvara pranidan promotes chitta vridhhi nirodha, surrender to ishwar. Aliging yourself with ishvara

Ishta is being fond of

In any Sanskrit test the first lines are the most important

Santosha = very satisfied

Saucha = purity, make sure we are pure in thought word and deed

Story of the yogi and the prostitute, he got the karma not her

Swadhaya, Self study

Study of big and little Self

Tapas = burn out parts of your personality obstructing reality and you do this before pranayama and asana

Protect ojas, protect from afflictions of the mind. Chastity of the senses.

Carika Samhita

Life promoting = nonviolence to others and ourselves

Happiness promoting = control of sense organs

Pleasure promoting = knowledge of reality

Don't get worried. Life is a journey, it will keep continuing. Openness brings insights, not expectations

*David Frawley*

Yoga and ayurveda are not 2 separate things

Yoga is a sadhana for inner purification and the goal is to transcend the body and mind.  
Yoga is the practice of veda and dharma

Aurobindo = a yogi should be able to do EVERYTHING better than a nonyogi

Wherever there is veda there is yoga

Yoga is MUCH older than Patanjali. He is just a compiler in the middle

Yogeshwar = Lord Krishna

Samkhya = philosophy and principles

Rishi Kapila is the most famous sage

Ishwara Krishna is different from Lord Krishna

Hiranya Garba is the founder of the yoga tradition

Yoga sastra and dharana related to Hiranya Garba

Yoga darshana is one of the 6 schools of yogic philosophy

Lord Siva is the lord of yoga. Ancient saivaite yoga, 3 headed Siva lord of animals is the oldest image in the world, on seals

Closest number to one is two!

Ayurveda chikitsa tradition, deal with disease of body and mind, vedic system of medicine

First you treat the dosha, then you treat the gunas

Yoga is a remedy for permanent alleviation of ALL suffering

Yama's and niyama's are the dynamic foundation for all human life

Ahara are substances you take in and vihara are things we do

Exercise reduces tamas but it is NOT yoga

Yoga is union, all aspects of your nature. If you only do asana it is not yoga

Asana is external medicine of yoga

Physical body rests upon the food we eat. You need to change the input

Spine reflects the condition of the digestive tract

You need to do more pranayama than asana to really practice yoga

Attachment to asana is an obstacle on the path

Asana practice is to reduce rajas

You must transform rajas à tamas to create yoga and when you do this you reduce body consciousness

Great yogi not good at asana (story about yogananda disciple janakananda achieved Samadhi in a chair)

Gaps in between are juicy

Asana becomes more important the older you get

Pranayama is the internal medicine of yoga

Outer limbs of yoga, inner yoga is REAL yoga

Pratyahara is the turning of energy within

Principle of healing by doing less, letting go, eating less and slower, breathing slower

Yoga is not about doing but about being

Turning our energy withing

Dharana is increasing our power of attention, lack of attention and awareness

Mind heals itself when it is in silence, mind requires space for healing

In Ayurveda you always treat the individual

Cikitsa = application of consciousness

Sattvic prana

Yoga is the balance of solar and lunar forces, prana and apana. Foundation of yoga is mantra yoga

Synthesis of yoga = aurobindo

Bakti yoga is the most important, psychological suffering is lack of bakti

We look at our enemies according to their tamas and ourselves according to our sattva

Aham brahmasmi

We must reclaim control of our own health. What does the pain tell you

Medical care has kept us living longer in a state of disease and suffering

The doctor should look at the WHOLE patient

We need yogic doctors, mantra is most important healing toold

Falling away from the sacred has ruined our lives

Ritualistic foundation of our lives is a necessity

Sankalpa shuddhi, higher or true intentions

In America 25% of children are medicated. We don't need to take anti-depressants, chemistry of the mind and brain is a reflection of how we live

Our true self is our greater universal self

Can't make a new beginning, start today and make a new ending

*Muniji*

Parmarth Niketan is not a piece of land but a land of peace...medicine, mantras, meditations and miracles

Meditation is the best medication next comes ganga jal

Biggest miracle is you (me)

Punarnava is here to rejuvenate you...become new, change yourself, your life and the world...you must be the change you want to be in the world

We are here to find ourselves

After so many degrees, where do we stand?

The gift is given to serve and share, that is true yoga

When yoga becomes your life then you see the same unity and divinity in all

Postures are not being perfected, you are being perfected

Selfless motives = great seva

Life is to give

Our personal balance sheet must be maintained

Sirsasana is great but how do you live your life?

What counts in being a true yogi is what is in your heart

Don't get disturbed by snakes, love them. One day they will change you and not sting you.