

**You're at the right place, right now, IF ...**

- You want true health - physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual
- You want your body, energy, mind and emotions to support you in living your potential
- You want to cut through the clutter of conflicting wellness 'tips' received everyday
- You're tired of chasing health 'goals' through dieting, gym-ming and running
- You want well-being to be your default state of being, and not a goal to chase

If YOU are ready to stop being taken for a ride, and get in the driver's seat of your journey to well-being, then this series of guidebooks is for you. To be your companion in the journey towards well-being, irrespective of your age, background, ailment or health issue.

### **The Secret Sauce - Yog**

The "secret sauce" to reversing ailments, to being healthier than we were ten years ago, to thriving and reaching our potential is Yog. Yog is NOT Yoga. "Yoga", the "modern" oversimplified version of Yog, is a set of physical contortions - Asanas and Pranayama. Yog is a system for living, not just practices for wellness. Adapted to today's context, Yog can make us achieve far more than just reversal of diseases.

### **About the 'From Yoga to Yog' Series**

This 5-part series of books gives an insight into yog - the science to remove the root cause behind "dis-ease" and restore internal harmony. Well-being and harmony in our external reality is a natural outcome of this state.

- 1) From Treatments for Illness to Yog for Wellness
- 2a) From Obsessive Diets to Yogic Aahaar
- 2b) From Excessive Exercising to Yogic Kriyaas
- 2c) From Stressed Mind to Yogic Vichaar
- 3) From Doing Yog to Being in Yog

**At the end of this journey, you will have**

Well-being  
Independence  
A healthy community

All proceeds from the sale of this book go to Swasth Yog Institute, an initiative of Swasth Foundation, India



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From TREATMENTS FOR ILLNESS to YOG FOR WELLNESS

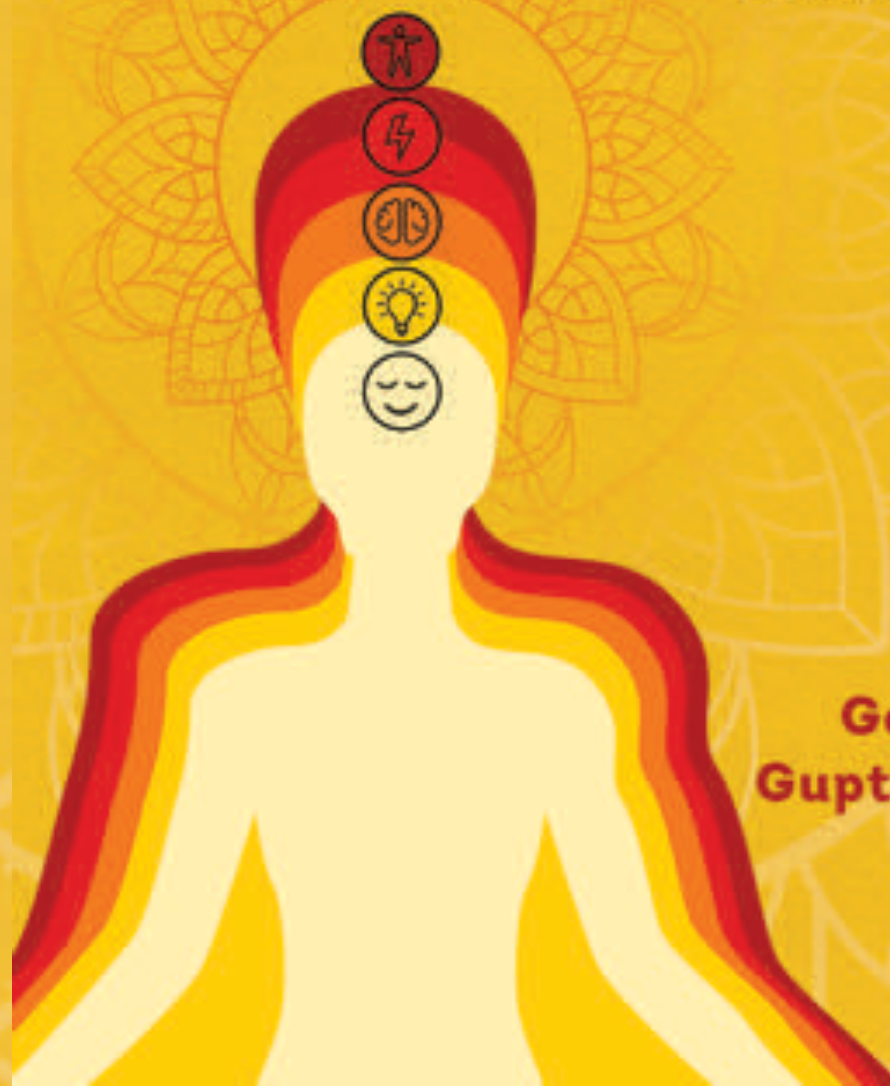
Garima Gupta Kapila

**"FROM YOGA TO YOG" SERIES**

• PART 1 •

# From TREATMENTS FOR ILLNESS to YOG FOR WELLNESS

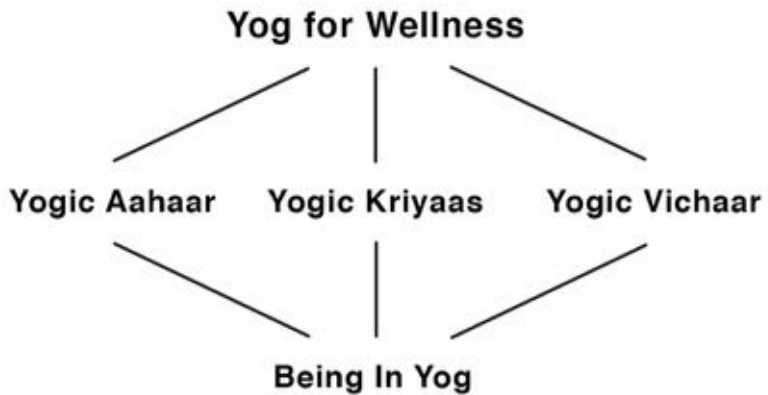
Stop outsourcing your health  
and tap into the power within you  
to be healthy, NOW.



**Garima  
Gupta-Kapila**



## MAP TO “FROM YOGA TO YOG” SERIES





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You are responsible for your own choices, actions, and results. In the spirit of taking personal responsibility for your decisions, you should seek the services of a competent health care provider before beginning any improvement program.

# Dedication

## Peace, Love, Joy for All

May our body, energy, mind and emotions be in harmony (Yog)

May we be aligned with our true self

May each of us feel – “I’m free to be me”

May we all live fully and freely

This book is dedicated to the countless, selfless Yogis who undertook the hardest journey of all – the journey inwards – and shared its fruit - Yog - with the world, for the world.

ॐ सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः  
सर्वे सन्तु निरामयाः ।  
सर्वे भद्राणि पश्यन्तु  
मा कश्चिद्दुः भागभवेत् ।  
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

Om Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah  
Sarve Santu Niraamayaah |  
Sarve Bhadraanni Pashyantu  
Maa Kashcid-Duhkha-Bhaag-Bhavet |  
Om Shaantih Shaantih Shaantih ||

## Meaning:

- 1: Om, May All be Happy,
- 2: May All be Free from Illness.
- 3: May All See what is Auspicious,
- 4: May no one Suffer.
- 5: Om Peace, Peace, Peace.

# Acknowledgements

To...

... my parents, Mahipal & Geeta, for giving me the gift of life and molding me into who I am

...Sundeeep, my spiritual partner in life and the wind beneath my wings

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...the countless Yogis who inspire me every day to live life in Yog

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# Is this Book for me?

## ***Are you at the right place?***

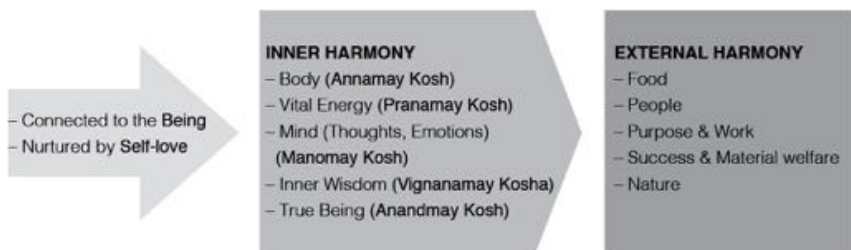
- Do you wish to enjoy true health – physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual?
- Do you want your body, energy, mind and emotions to be in harmony? Do you want them to actively support you in living your potential?
- Are you tired of chasing your health ‘goals’ through dieting, gymming, running, reading?
- Do you want well-being to be your default state of being, and not a goal to chase frantically?
- Do you want to cut through the clutter of conflicting wellness ‘tips’ you receive from myriad sources every day?
- Are you ready to stop being taken for a ride, and get in the driver’s set of your journey towards well-being?

If so, this guidebook is for you. To be your companion as you undertake the journey towards well-being. Your age, background and type of chronic ailment or health issue do not matter. What matters is your intention.

## ***Let’s face it!***

- We have a problem: Today, we are less healthy than our less ‘advanced’ older generations
- Unfortunately, the problem is worsening: Life is becoming longer, but NOT healthier.
- Fortunately, the problem is reversible: The miracle of life has given our body the ability to recover and heal itself.

- But the “right” tools for reversal seem hard to find today: There is an overload of often conflicting tools and information, retractions of previously accepted “research” after long-term studies leaving people confused.
- Consequently, we have given our power away: Powerless, we have outsourced our health to providers (doctors, dieticians, yoga teachers, healers, therapists) and technology (fit-bits, Google, apps)
- The “modern” approach to well-being is fundamentally flawed: Most modern wellness practitioners have a flawed approach - reductionist and silo-ed. Dieticians reduce the food we consume to nutrients and schools of thought fight over the importance of proteins or carbohydrates or fats. Gym instructors work with isolated body parts, in a bid to build out specific muscles. Neither of them address the importance of our mind. Dieticians feed us fear and guilt. Gym instructors nurture strong bodies but give rise to inflexible and hyperactive minds.
- The key to well-being lies with(in) us: Ancient Indian researchers (Yogis) had given us the science to remove the root cause behind “dis-ease” and make well-being our default state. The “secret sauce” to well-being is Yog. Yog is NOT Yoga. It empowers us to take charge of our health and our life, to reach and live our true potential.



***We believe and know, beyond doubt, that***



...your body, energy, mind and emotions can be your greatest supporters to reach your potential

...health is your natural state of being, and you can be healthier today than you were a decade ago

...the journey towards well-being can be full of peace, love and joy

## **SOME TOOLS USED**

- Yogaasan, Praanaayaam, Breathing & Loosening Practices
- Body Wisdom & Awareness
- Yogic & Ayurvedic Food
- Laughter Yoga
- Mindfulness & Meditation
- Chanting & Sound Resonance
- Affirmations & Mirror Work
- Life Coaching
- Emotion Release Tools
- Creative / Art based therapy

### ***This guidebook will do the following***

- Make well-being attainable: Enable you to make simple, but profound changes to your life. Provide tools that are feasible for integration in your life in minimal budget and time.
- Present a bouquet of integrated tools: Addressing the body, energy, mind and emotions holistically through different tools

- Bridge the gap between the East & the West: Present ancient Ayurvedic and Yogic concepts adapted to today's context with modern tools
- Empower, instead of create dependencies: Build knowledge of foundational principles, helping you to choose information presented by various health service providers and technology
- Make this a joyful journey: Help you discover your inner child, hidden talents, and dreams in the process...

***At the end of this journey, you will have***

- Well-being: A tangible, measurable difference in health which YOU can perceive. A feeling of well-being.
- Independence: The knowledge and motivation to continue your journey to well-being independently.
- A healthy family: Tools to impact and influence the health of your friends & family.

**Health Issues addressable directly, with a HIGH impact**

- Muscular pains & fatigue, especially in the back and neck
- Joint Pains
- Gastro-intestinal disorders such as Acidity, Peptic Ulcers, IBS, Piles, irregularities in Bowel movements & Urination
- Obesity or excessive weight gain
- Headache or Migraine
- Menstrual problems, PCOD/PCOS
- Imbalances in appetite, sleep, energy levels
- Better management and reduction of side effects/complications of chronic ailments
  - Hypertension, Cholesterol
  - Asthma
  - Metabolic disorders such as diabetes

- Hormonal imbalances such as Thyroid, Acne
- Arthritis (Osteo and Rheumatoid)
- Auto-immune disorders

**Health Issues addressable indirectly, with SOME impact**

- Relief from acute or infectious diseases such as malaria, diarrhoea, pain, and tuberculosis
- Neurological disorders (e.g. epilepsy, movement disorders such as Parkinson’s disease, Speech and language disorders, Injury to brain, spinal cord and peripheral nerves, Sleep disorders, Behavioural /cognitive syndrome)
- Mental & mood disorders, anxiety & depression, phobias, eating disorders (e.g. anorexia nervosa, bulimia)
- Rehabilitation post accidents, health shock such as , Cerebro-vascular stroke, surgery, geriatric cases
- Problems in external organs such as skin allergies, ENT disorders, Dental issues
- Any other ailments not covered in “addressable section”

***Are you the right fit for this journey?***

With power comes responsibility. For our health too! If you wish to merely get rid of pain, you can take painkillers or countless therapies available. But if you wish restore your body’s innate healing capacity, and get in the driver’s seat of your journey to well-being, you need to commit to some responsibilities:

- Honoring the commitment towards your well-being, by reading!
- Commitment to modifying your lifestyle and habits in line with recommendations
- Taking out 30 minutes every day for self-care
- Completing reflection questions and experimental activities to maximize your learning– such as health status measurement questionnaire, health diary, checklists to track activities

The following questions will help you in determining if you're at the appropriate inner and outer circumstances in life to undertake this journey.



### **Questions for Reflection**

- What health challenges am I facing currently?
- How are these health challenges impacting the quality of my life?
- What could happen, if this situation continues for a few years?
- What is my intention behind undertaking this journey to well-being?
- If this happens, what would be the impact on my life?
- To meet my health goal, what am I ready to commit to?

# How to use this book?

## How is this series structured?

This is a 5-series book addressing the body, energy, mind and emotions, holistically

- 1: Yog for Wellness (Yogic Philosophy of disease genesis and healing pathway)
- 2a: Yogic Aahaar (what we call Nutrition)
- 2b: Yogic Vyaayaams (what we know as 'Yoga')
- 2c: Yogic Vichaar (approach to Mind & Emotions)
- 3: Being in Yog (how to use the tools, to be in Yog)

## How to approach this series?

The first book covers foundational concepts of Yog, and it is highly recommended that you read it, before reading anything else.

Based on this, you can select which Yogic tool(s) – Yogic Aahaar, Yogic Vyaayaams and Yogic Vichaar – you wish to explore for your well-being. Each of the three books has a deep-dive into focus Yogic tools for well-being. You may choose one, or two or all three. We suggest choosing the path that is most aligned to your temperament, and which you will be most committed to implementing in life. As without implementation, these ideas will only stay on paper and not translate into your physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual well-being!

The last book makes it easier for you to stay committed to the tool(s) of your choice, and most importantly, to make the journey towards your well-being joyful and therefore, sustainable. This is not a crash dieting or exercising or detox program that you implement once and forget. This is a way of life!

Hence, it is highly recommended, that you read the last book in the series, along with, or after the selected tool(s).

### **Note on the journey through the series:**

The secrets to fully utilizing the benefit of any Yogic tool for well-being are in the first and the last books. Without them, the essence of the tools will be lost. Yogic Aahaar will become the same as obsessive dieting, Yogic practices will be no different from mindless exercising. It will be like using a supercomputer as a calculator for addition. You will be able to add, yes, but will not be tapping into the amazing abilities of the supercomputer.

### **How to make the most of the 3 books on Yogic tools?**

Yogis outlined a 3-step process to integrating any new knowledge – Shravan (श्रवण, listening or reading), Manan (मनन, reflection and contemplation) and Nididhyaasan (निदिध्यासन, integration). Modern research on learning is also echoing this approach.

This book has been designed accordingly. For each tool, the book explains overarching principles of each tool, provides activities for self-reflection or experiencing concepts and provides supporting information, checklists and formats to enabling you to get started and stay on track through self-tracking.

The implication for you is that reading this book to build fundamental concepts is only 10% of the impact. To get the other 90% of the impact, we suggest you do the following:

- **Reflect:** Reflect deeply during and at the end of each chapter, before moving to the next. Compare what is written with your past experiences, or your future experiences if you haven't



been aware in the past. Use the self-reflection questions, and maintain a separate journal to track your responses.

- Do: Get started, and implement the learnings in your life!
- Experience: Do the activities or real-life experiments in the book for experiencing concepts. Guided audios for many exercises mentioned are available on our YouTube channel (see Resources at the end). Approach the activities with an open mind and heart. Be aware of the holistic experience of implementing the learnings in your life. Trust your experience more than the words in this book!
- Persevere: Stay on track. Implement this for 6 weeks to start with, and ideally over 3 months. Using self-tracking formats and checklists given in the book, and read the last book for troubleshooting advice for commonly faced issues.
- Enjoy: Most, most important of all, enjoy the journey! More important than the % of insights you implement, is the % of joy you experience during this journey. After all, everything we do or want in life, is for joy, right? If you implement nothing, but stay joyful throughout your journey, your well-being is guaranteed!

*Remember, the goal is not to finish the book,  
but to bring it alive in your life!*

**Welcome to the world of peace, love and joy!**

# Chapter 1

## “Swasth Scale”

### How healthy am I, really?

#### Importance

Before taking action and evaluating results,  
we need to understand  
the current level of our health.

## **Current reality – Health in numbers**

Globally, this is the first generation which is expected to live less than its parents, despite all the wonders of modern science.

Today, between the age of 45 – 60, it seems normal to be afflicted by one or more conditions such as obesity, diabetes, hypertension, arthritis or joint pains, asthma, allergies, neurological de-generation, auto-immune disorders, spondylosis or back pains, menstrual disorders.

The health statistics in India are mind-boggling:

- 1 In 5 Women are affected By **PCOS** in India
- India is the **Diabetes** capital of the world, with 50 million Type-2 Diabetics
- 33% urban Indians are **hypertensive**, but only 7% have their BP in control
- 36% of **children < 5 years** from Mumbai slums are underweight, 16% wasted, 47% stunted
- **60 Million Indians are impoverished annually** due to “health shocks”. **Non-Communicable Diseases** contribute significantly to this vulnerability.

Unfortunately, **the problem is worsening**: Life is longer, but NOT healthier. From 1990 to 2016, life expectancy in India improved by ~11 years, but the share of Non-Communicable Diseases in total burden of disease shot up from 30% to 55%.

The situation is no different in countries on the other end of the spectrum of development. Heart Disease is the single largest cause of deaths in the USA. Healthcare expenditure takes up as much 17% of the GDP of the country!

***Our health is an urgent personal  
and global priority.***

**Health beyond Diseases**

An optimally functioning body is not meant to get a fever or cold at every season change, to need nutritional supplements, to pant after climbing a few stairs, to have aches and pains in various parts of the body, to have trouble sleeping at night, to need an alarm clock to wake up in the morning, or need stimulants such as tea, coffee and tobacco to get through the day.

Yet, for many of us, these and many more complaints of accelerated, degenerative aging are a way of life now. Many of us do not even consider these abnormal, as almost everyone around us has these issues!

But this is not what our body is designed to be and do.



***We're designed to be healthy.***

***Our health is in our hands.***



## Questions for Reflection


Consider the people two generations before you whom you have seen while they are/were alive - your grandparents, or those of your extended family and friends.

Ask yourself this – When you reach their age, what do you think will be your level of health in comparison to theirs at the same age? Or, what was their level of health in comparison to yours, when they were at the same age as you?

In most cases, barring some episodes of acute or undiagnosed ailments, it's very likely that we find the generations before us to be healthier.

## Why diagnose our current level of health?

A diagnosis of our state of health can be used by multiple stakeholders, but it is, first and foremost for us.

- **We:** Become aware about our health, and observe body signals not tracked otherwise. Identify, habits that may be contributing to less than optimal well-being and determine where changes might be most beneficial
- **Doctor / Yog Therapist / Wellness practitioner:** Can detect ailments previously unknown to us, understand our special needs in order to provide personalized/ customized support 
- **Both:** Understand the impact on our health, after bringing Yog in our life.

## **How to diagnose our current level of health**

The “Swasth Scale” is designed by Swasth Yog Institute to give us a holistic view of our well-being. The Scale draws from research, theory and practitioners, and in various fields – yog, allopathy, naturopathy, homeopathy and therapy.

It examines the entire process that results in well-being –from our inputs to the resulting multi-dimensional impact.

### **Inputs (self-care habits and lifestyle):**

- Food habits
- Exercise
- Leisure
- Sleep and Rest

### **Impact (Well-being at all dimensions of health):**

- Ann-may Kosh – Diseases and Physical symptoms
- Praan-may Kosh – Body signals and body functions
- Mano-may Kosh - Mental and Emotional well-being
- Vigyaan-may Kosh – Our connection with our inner wisdom
- Aanand-may Kosh – Joy factor, Satisfaction with Life

## **When do I measure?**

We suggest measuring these parameters at least thrice during your journey:

- at the beginning of the journey (as a baseline)
- 3 months post start of the journey (midline)
- 6 months post the start of the journey (endline)

We can continue to track these for ourselves every month, to see progress along our journey towards well-being.

## **Who will measure?**



Most of these parameters can be measured by us ourselves. After all, we know the state of our well-being better than anybody!

For some parameters such as blood sugar/HbA1C, blood tests are required

### **How to measure?**

It is very important to fill the form completely honestly. It is NOT an assessment or a judgement on us, but a tool to help us. It is very likely that as we fill the form, we experience tendencies towards denial and self-deception. By doing this, we are helping no one, only disrupting our own journey to well-being! Let us start our journey by answering the questions with full integrity. We always have freedom to choose what we want to do with this data, and may choose to not change some habits. But let's begin the journey of living fully and freely, with answering this honestly in that spirit.



### **Questions for Reflection**

Follow-up self-reflection questions AFTER we've filled the form might include:

1. As you review your results, what do you feel good about?  
Where do you feel pleased about the state of our wellness? Where are you seeing improvement?
2. Where are areas of less than optimal wellness or habits?
3. Of these, what do you most feel committed to changing?
4. What would it be like if you were successful in making the positive changes in each of these areas?



## Key Points

- To know how our health is improving, we need to understand the current level of our health.
- The Swasth scale draws from practitioners, theory and research in various fields – allopathy, naturopathy, homeopathy, therapy.
- Through the Swasth Scale, we become aware about our health, and observe body signals not tracked otherwise. Identify, habits that may be contributing to less-than-optimal well-being and determine where changes might be most beneficial <sup>[1]</sup><sub>(SEP)</sub>
- The Swasth Scale is designed to give us a holistic view of our well-being. It examines the entire process that results in well-being – starting from our inputs (habits and lifestyle) and going to the resulting impact on all dimensions of our health.
- It is advisable to measure these parameters at least thrice – at the start of the journey, 3 months after start of the journey, 6 months after start of the journey
- It is very important to fill the form completely honestly. It is NOT an assessment or a judgement on us, but a tool to help us.

## ANNEXURE – HEALTH HABITS MEASUREMENT

### Section 1a: Food Pattern on a Typical Day – Start of Intervention

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Slept previous:  
night at (time)

Woke up:  
at (time)

Total hours:  
of sleep (hours)

Fill the table in as much detail as possible. E.g. Instead of writing you had daal – mention which daal it was.

Meal	Time	What you ate/ drank	Quantity
Before breakfast			
<b><u>Breakfast</u></b>			
Between meals			

<b>Meal</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>What you ate/ drank</b>	<b>Quantity</b>
<u><b>Lunch</b></u>			
Between meals			
<u><b>Dinner</b></u>			
After dinner			

## Section 1b: Food Pattern on a Typical Day – End of Intervention

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Slept previous:  
night at (time)

Woke up:  
at (time)

Total hours:  
of sleep (hours)

Fill the table in as much detail as possible. E.g. Instead of writing you had daal – mention which daal it was.

Meal	Time	What you ate/ drank	Quantity
Before breakfast			
<b><u>Breakfast</u></b>			
Between meals			

<b>Meal</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>What you ate/ drank</b>	<b>Quantity</b>
<u><b>Lunch</b></u>			
Between meals			
<u><b>Dinner</b></u>			
After dinner			



## Section 1b: General food habits

Item	at START of intervention	at END of intervention
Tea/coffee/cold drinks	_____ Times a day	_____ Times a day
Processed & Junk Food (e.g. Burgers, cookies, biscuits, chips, fried items, chocolates, etc)	_____ Times a week	_____ Times a week
Bread	___ Times a week	__ Times a week
Egg/chicken/fish/other non-vegetarian items	_____ Times a week	_____ Times a week
Dairy – Milk tea / milk/ yoghurt / butter / buttermilk/ / icecream/ paneer / cheese (e.g. if you have 1 tea daily & yoghurt twice a week, write $7 + 2 = 9$ )	_____ Times a week	_____ Times a week
Meals not cooked at home (restaurants, street food, etc)	_____ Times a week	_____ Times a week
Alcohol	_____ Times a week	_____ Times a week
Cigarette smoking	_____ Times a day	_____ Times a day
Tobacco / zarda	_____ Times a day	_____ Times a day

Item	at START of intervention	at END of intervention
Oil used in food	_____ Litres a month, for ____ people in family	_____ Litres a month, for ____ people in family
Sugar used in any food	_____ Spoons a day	_____ Spoons a day
Grains other than wheat/rice/corn (e.g. millets, quinoa)	_____ Times a week	_____ Times a week
Fruits	_____ Times a week	_____ Times a week
Vegetable Salad	_____ Times a week	_____ Times a week
Type of oil (circle)	Refined / Kacchi Ghaani	Refined / Kacchi Ghaani
Type of salt (circle)	Refined / Sendha or Jaadaa	Refined / Sendha or Jaadaa
Type of sweetener (circle)	Sugar / Jaggery-Dates-Honey	Sugar / Jaggery-Dates-Honey
Type of honey (circle)	Market / Wild & Raw / No	Market / Wild & Raw / No
Type of rice (circle)	Refined / Brown	Refined / Brown

## Section 1c: General Time of Activities

Activity	at START of intervention	at END of intervention
Breakfast: Between 7 and 10am	_____ times a week	_____ times a week
Lunch: Between 12 and 2:30pm	_____ times a week	_____ times a week
Dinner: Between 7 and 10pm	_____ times a week	_____ times a week
Sleep : Latest by 11:45pm	_____ times a week	_____ times a week
Giving my body the amount of sleep, it needs	_____ times a week	_____ times a week
Quantity of Sleep	_____ hours across night & day	_____ hours across night & day
Mental and/or physical relaxation (e.g. chanting, meditation, awareness, socializing, power naps!)	_____ times a day	_____ times a day
Hobby/activity that gives joy	_____ minutes a day, _____ days a week	_____ minutes a day, _____ days a week
Actively addressing emotions – e.g. journaling, speak to the person, or others, meditate, arts	Never / Rarely / Sometimes / Most of the time / Always	Never / Rarely / Sometimes / Most of the time / Always

Activity	at START of intervention	at END of intervention
I listen and attend to signs/ symptoms of my body	Never / Rarely / Sometimes / Most of the time / Always	Never / Rarely / Sometimes / Most of the time / Always
Exercise other than home/ office routine – Walk, Praanaayaam, Aasan, Dance, Loosening, Gym, Sports	_____ minutes a day, _____ days a week	_____ minutes a day, _____ days a week

## Section 2b: Habits Inferred from 1a

Activity	at START of intervention	at END of intervention
Fruit: At least 2 hours post meal or 1 hour before	Followed / Not	Followed / Not
Sleep: At least 1 hour post meal	Followed / Not	Followed / Not
Maximum 6 hours gap between meals during day	Followed / Not	Followed / Not

# Swasth Scale

## Health Status

### OBJECTIVES

- **Participants:** Become aware about their health status, and observe body signals not tracked regularly otherwise
- **Doctor / Therapist:** Understand special needs of the participants, in order to provide customized / personalized support
- **Both:** Understand the impact on their health, before and after a wellness intervention

**When:** The scale should be filled at least thrice

- at the start of the wellness journey (baseline), 3 months after, and 6 months after

Name:	Age:	Gender:	Date of:

### SECTION 1 – Ann-may Kosh (Physical “Food” Body) 1a – Current Health Conditions

Ailment	Last checked on	Ailment present at the time of check (√ / x / ?)
Diabetes		
Hypertension		
High Cholesterol		
Hypo-thyroid or hyper-		

<b>Ailment</b>	<b>Last checked on</b>	<b>Ailment present at the time of check (√ / x / ?)</b>
thyroid		
PCOD/PCOS		
Asthma		
Arthritis (Osteo / Rheumatoid)		
Auto-immune disorders		
Any existing infectious disease – eg malaria, diarrhoea, TB		
Mental & mood disorders (anxiety & depression, phobias, eating disorders such as anorexia nervosa, bulimia)		
Recovering from significant health shock (e.g. paralytic stroke, heart attack)		
Neurological disorders (e.g. epilepsy, Parkinson's, Speech and language disorders, Injury to brain, spinal cord, Behavioral /cognitive syndrome)		
Problems in external organs such as skin allergies, ENT, Dental		

### 1b – Medications being used

Note: Also mention any medications which you may not use daily, but frequently enough

Name of Medication	Ailment for which used	Taking since how many years	Dosage / day

### 1c – Vital and Specific Parameters

Parameter	Units	Start (S)	Middle (M)	End (E)
BP – Diastolic / Systolic	mmHg			
PR: (Pulse rate)	- bpm			

## 1d – Results of Key Diagnostic Tests

Test	Normal Values	Start (S)	Middle (M)	End (E)
Blood Sugar (Fasting):	Upto 110			
Blood Sugar (PP):	Upto 140			
Total Cholesterol:	0 – 200			
HDL/LDL:	1.5 – 3.5			
<b>Thyroid</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• T3</li> <li>• T4</li> <li>• TSH</li> </ul>	<b>Thyroid</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 60 – 200</li> <li>• 3.2 – 12.0</li> <li>• 0.25 – 5.5</li> </ul>			



### 1e – Symptom Score

Give a rating on a scale of 0 to 10, where  
 0 = No issue and 10 = Very severe issue

<b>Parameter</b>	<b>Start (S)</b>	<b>Middle (M)</b>	<b>End (E)</b>
<u>Overall symptom intensity (0-10)</u>			
<b>Diabetes &amp; CardioVascular</b>			
- Urination (0 - 10)			
- Thirst (0 - 10)			
- Fatigue (0 - 10)			
- Pain in limbs (0 - 10)			
- Numbness in limbs (0 - 10)			
<b>Backpain/ Neckpain/ Spondylosis</b>			
Location of Pain:			
Intensity : 0 to 10			
Duration: 0 to 10			
Location of Pain:			
Intensity : 0 to 10			
Duration: 0 to 10			
<b><u>Other sensory involvement</u></b>			
Tingling: (0 to 10)			
Burning: (0 to 10)			
Numbness: (0 to 10)			
<b><u>Aggravating Factors for backpain:</u></b>			

<b><u>Parameter</u></b>	<b>Start (S)</b>	<b>Middle (M)</b>	<b>End (E)</b>
Forward bending: (0 to 10)			
Backward bending: (0 to 10)			
Side bending – left or right: (0 to 10) – Write higher of the two values			
Twisting – left or right: (0 to 10) – Write higher of the two values			
<b>Rheumatic/ Arthritis/ Joint/ Skeletal Pain (e.g. knee/ankle/elbow)</b>			
Location of Pain:			
Intensity: (0 to 10)			
Location of Pain:			
Intensity: (0 to 10)			
Location of Pain:			
Intensity: (0 to 10)			
<b>Digestive Problems</b>			
Acidity Symptoms: (0 to 10)			
Irritable Bowel Syndrome – Alternating diarrhoea & constipation : (0 to 10)			
Piles Symptoms: (0 to 10)			
<b>Headache / Migraine</b>			
Headache / Migraine: (0 to 10)			

## SECTION 2 – Praan-may Kosh (Vital Energies)

Give a score on a scale of 0 to 10, where  
0 = No issue and 10 = Very severe issue.

Circle the area of concern. The higher the number, the farther you currently are from the ideal situation written in the second column

Aspect	Ideal Situation	S	M	E
<p><b><u>Respiration</u></b>  <b><u>(Praan)</u></b></p>	<p>Breath flow is rhythmic, relaxed (not panting, gasping etc)</p> <p>Normal sound (no wheezing, whistling etc)</p> <p>Sputum does not have blood or dark yellow color</p> <p>Not affected by respiratory infections</p> <p>Don't get regular bouts of cough and/or cold</p> <p>Breathing happens naturally through nostrils (not mouth), and easily</p>			
<p><b><u>Bowel Movement</u></b>  <b><u>(Apaan)</u></b></p>	<p>Regular motions (at least daily)</p> <p>Able to clear stomach within 1 hour of waking up in the morning</p> <p>Stool is not very strong/foul smelling</p> <p>Normal motions – neither constipation nor loose, like diarrhoea</p> <p>No blood / mucous / pain in the stool passed</p>			
<p><b><u>Urination</u></b>  <b><u>(Apaan)</u></b></p>	<p>Light yellowish color (not very dark)</p> <p>Not very strong/foul smelling</p> <p>No burning sensation or pain while urinating</p> <p>Normal pressure – neither less, nor incontinence (unable to control)</p>			

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Ideal Situation</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>E</b>
<p><b><u>Menstrual Health</u></b></p> <p><b><u>(Apaan)</u></b></p>	<p>Gap of 28 days between 2 cycles – from start of previous cycle (gap neither less nor more)</p> <p>Normal blood flow (not too less, not too much)</p> <p>Bleeding for 3-4 days</p> <p>No other auxiliary problems (backpain, headache, dizziness, acne, excessive anger/ irritation/ sadness/ depression)</p> <p>Not accompanied by much pain</p>			
<p><b><u>Hunger / Appetite</u></b></p> <p><b><u>(Samaan)</u></b></p>	<p>Feel hungry at the appropriate time</p> <p>Normal appetite (neither too less, not too many hunger pangs)</p> <p>Enjoy subtle flavors, don't feel the urge for spicy/stimulating food/drink</p> <p>Largely stable, does not fluctuate wildly during a day/week</p>			
<p><b><u>Digestion</u></b></p> <p><b><u>(Samaan)</u></b></p>	<p>Able to digest whatever you eat</p> <p>No cramps in the stomach</p> <p>No acidity, gas or rumbling</p> <p>No bloating, stomach feels light (instead of full)</p>			
<p><b><u>Sleep</u></b></p> <p><b><u>(Udaan)</u></b></p>	<p>Eyes are normal in the morning (not bloodshot, or bags under eyes)</p> <p>At night, able to sleep quickly after getting to bed</p> <p>Sleep is deep, undisturbed. Do not wake up in the middle of the night</p> <p>Sleep in peaceful, do not get very disturbing dreams/nightmares</p>			

Aspect	Ideal Situation	S	M	E
	Get up effortlessly in the morning, feeling energetic, fresh & satisfied No issues staying up during the day			
<b><u>Other Parameters</u></b>	No chronic Sneezing No chronic hiccuping No chronic vomiting No chronic coughing			

	Ideal Situation	S	M	E
<b>Overall</b>	Overall physical and energetic well-being			

## SECTION 3 – Mano-may Kosh (Thoughts & Emotions)

### Section 3a – Emotional Intensity

Rate the extent to which you feel this emotion, on a scale of 0 to 10 (where 0 = not at all, 10 = all the time)

Note that this does NOT refer to the extent to which you express this emotion to others or acknowledge to yourself.

EMOTION	S	M	E
• Angry, irritated, frustrated, hurt, critical			
• Sad, depressed, lonely, bored			
• Fearful, anxious, insecure, scared			
• Guilty, remorseful, ashamed			

## Section 3b – Emotional and Mental Well-being

Give a score on a scale of 0 to 10,  
where 0 = No issue and 10 = Very severe issue.

Circle the area of concern. The higher the number, the farther you currently are from the ideal situation written in the second column

	Ideal Situation	S	M	E
<b><u>Mental agility &amp; stability</u></b>	Involved in creative activities, able to conceptualize new things Able to concentrate on task at hand Action-oriented, able to get work done Good memory Body able to stay still when needed (no restless leg/ arm syndrome) Decision-making with clarity/ concentration, not feeling overwhelmed Balance of restfulness and activity of the mind Able to learn new things easily			
	<b>Ideal Situation</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>E</b>
<b><u>Emotional well- being</u></b>	Largely joyful, content and at peace Express feelings to others Feel self-assured and confident about own skills/talents/abilities Value your own self, your feelings, thoughts and needs Loving and caring to self/others (not destructive thoughts/ actions)			

	Ideal Situation	S	M	E
<b>Overall</b>	Overall mental and emotional well-being			

## SECTION 4 – Vigyaan-may Kosh (Inner Wisdom)

Rate the extent to which you are able to stay in this state,  
on a scale of 0 to 10

(where 0 = not experience at all, 10 = experience all the time)

Situation	S	M	E
Fully present in the NOW (instead of past or future)			
Led by Self - confidence, clarity, compassion, courage, curiosity, connectedness, calmness, creativity			
Connection to any of these - a religious figure, nature, spiritual force, a scientific theory, a personal way of life, a 6 particular philosophy or a moral and ethical code).			
Recognizing and accepting things beyond own control, faith, surrender			
A sense of gratitude and hopefulness/ optimism.			
A sense of purpose and meaning in life			

## SECTION 5 – Aanand-may Kosh (Bliss)

\* Using the validated international scale –  
Satisfaction with Life (SLS)

Below are five statements that you may agree or disagree with. Using the 1 - 7 scale below, indicate your agreement with each item by placing the appropriate number: 1 - Strongly disagree / 2 – Disagree / 3 – Slightly disagree / 4 - Neither agree nor disagree / 5 - Slightly agree / 6 - Agree / 7 - Strongly agree

I'm at peace and satisfied with....

Aspect of Life	Start	Middle	End
My family relationships and home situation			
My relationships with friends.			
The ingredient of leisure, play, fun and recreation in my life.			
My work situation and relationships at work.			
My financial condition.			
My personal growth.			
Who I am as a person.			

Question	Start	Middle	End
In most ways, my life is close to my ideal.			
The conditions of my life are excellent.			
I am satisfied with my life.			
So far, I have gotten the important things I want in life.			
If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.			





## Chapter 2

# “Swaadhyaay”

## What is my purpose?

### Meaning

The Sanskrit word “Swaadhyaay” is one of the steps in Ashtaang Yog (8-limbed Yog).

“Swaadhyaay (स्वाध्याय) literally means self-study, i.e. understanding ourselves

### Importance

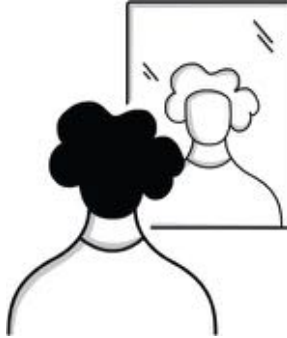
The first step in the journey towards sustainable well-being is being aware of our purpose.

## **What the difference between Goal and Purpose?**

Management Gurus talk of SMART goals - Specific, Measurable, Ambitious, Realistic and Time-bound. A well-defined goal is SMART. It lets us know whether we have been successful. E.g. I want to lose 5 kg of weight in 5 months is a SMART goal. Goals are helpful as they keep us motivated towards action, and let us know whether we are on the right track or need to course correct.

However, sometimes, we also end up chasing goals blindly, losing sight of the big picture. At other times, we may end up not meeting our goal, causing frustration. Sometimes, even after achieving our goal, we may feel unhappy, contrary to our expectation. E.g. I may lose my target 5 kg of weight, but still feel miserable about myself!

It is here that awareness of our purpose helps. Our purpose is often not clearly measurable, but it reflects our deeper intention or need behind our goal. Our purpose is our North Star.



## **How does our purpose inform our actions?**

Heard of the power of intention? Our purpose keeps us committed towards action. We realize that we aren't working towards a "number", but a bigger vision. Often, it opens up new strategies and avenues to achieve goals. At other times, awareness of our purpose helps us drop or modify goals, that are not fully aligned.

## How do we understand our purpose?

1. **Simply by thinking big picture:** Asking ourselves – “*What is my intention for my well-being?*” Formulating this in one simple sentence! This is best done from a place of stillness and connection to ourselves and hence is effective when done through a meditative process.
2. **Reflecting and Inquiring deeply into our goals:** This often works well with a coach, or through journaling ourselves. Some helpful questions for such an inquiry are:
  - What makes it important for you to meet your goal?
  - After meeting your goal - How would your life change? How will you feel? Who will you be? What will you start doing? What will you stop doing?
  - Underneath the goal, what are you really yearning for?



### **E.g. Chronic condition - Diabetes, Hypertension, Cholesterol:**

- Goal: I want to have normal blood parameters in 1 year
- I will be able to live a life free from medication
- A medication-free life will make me feel that I am well now and likely to be well in the future
- Wellness in future means I will be able to live my potential now, see my children getting married, enjoy retirement with my partner, travel around after having worked hard for so long

**E.g. Weight-loss:**

- Goal: Losing 5 kg in 5 months
- I want to lose 5kg to look good
- Looking good will help me feel good about myself
- If I feel good about myself, it will make me less self-critical.
- Being less self-critical will make me feel free, take risks and make mistakes, and live life fully and freely.

In the above case, as find that losing weight is a strategy towards being less self-critical and freer, we will also start examining our attitude towards ourselves in other areas of life

3. **Connecting to our right brain:** Our right brain is the land of dreams, images, metaphors, music. It is our creative, feeling and emotional side. We can connect to it through the faculty of art – by imagining how our life would be if we met our goal.

Imagining it in full detail and richness

- Ourselves (how we look, what we wear, what we do, how we talk, how we walk, our emotions)
- The environment around us (people, physical space, work, home).

Letting ourselves experience this state through all faculties – body, energy, mind, emotions. And by then expressing it in the form of a drawing, dance, poetry/song, etc.



## **How to stay grounded in our purpose**

Small rituals play a big role in grounding us in our purpose:

- Sharing it with other people, moving it towards reality
- Visualizing our purpose first thing when we get up in the morning
- Posting our drawing/poetry/stated purpose on a mirror, or our ward-robe, or office space – where we can keep looking at it again and again, to be motivated
- Reflecting regularly and seeing how we're slowly taking small steps towards our purpose, and celebrating this movement



### Questions for Reflection

In one sentence, my intention for myself is that ...



### Questions for Reflection - Deeper enquiry

What are my top 3 goals?

What makes it important for me to meet my goals?

After meeting my goal,

- How would my life change?
- How will I feel?
- Who will I be?
- What will I start doing?
- What will I stop doing?

Behind my stated goal, what am I really yearning for?



### Activity

What is my vision for myself (how I look, what I wear, what I do, how I talk, how I walk, my emotions) and the environment around me (people, physical space, work, home). Express it in the form of a drawing, dance, poetry/song, etc.

## ANNEXURE - Identifying my Purpose

<b>Deeper enquiry</b>	
What are my top 3 goals?	
What makes it important for me to meet my goals?	
After meeting my goal, 1. How would my life change? 2. How will I feel? 3. Who will I be? 4. What will I start doing? 5. What will I stop doing?	
Behind my stated goals, what am I really yearning for?	



<b>In one sentence,</b>
My intention for myself is that ....

<b><u>Right-brain visualization</u></b>
---



*What is my vision for myself (how I look, what I wear, what I do, how I talk, how I walk, my emotions)? What is my vision for the environment around me (people, physical space, work, home)?*

Expression it in the form of a drawing, dance, poetry/song, etc

## Chapter 3

# “Swa + Sth”

**What is the secret  
to well-being?**

### **Meaning**

The colloquial meaning of the Sanskrit Word  
“Swasth” (स्वस्थ) is healthy.

### **Importance**

To be healthy, i.e. Swasth, we first need to  
understand what the word truly means

## **Colloquial Meaning of Swasth**

As per the World Health Organization (WHO) – “Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”. Further, WHO recognized the importance of a fourth dimension - spiritual well-being, in 1984.

Examination of this definition reveals the following about “health”:

- **Holistic:** The concept of health extends beyond the body.
- **Positive:** Health is a positive concept. If someone does not have a disease, it does not mean that they’re healthy. E.g. If someone does not have a clinical disease, but finds themselves panting after climbing a few set of stairs or a slope, or feels lethargic, dull and does not feel like doing anything - such a person, is disease-free but not healthy.
- **Relation with Time (future):** As a future-looking concept, health is a good predictor of prevention of diseases in future.

If a person has some symptoms which don’t classify as a disease, but if they persist for a few months or years, they would lead to one. E.g. if a person feels generally lethargic and therefore does not do physical activity, over time, he/she is likely to experience weight gain, muscular and joint pains, etc. If continued unchecked, these could become risk factors for hypertension, diabetes and obesity.

Let us assume two people - one of them is in a state of general well-being and the other eats out a lot and has indigestion and acidity once or twice a week. Both people, on undergoing a medical check-up are diagnosed as disease-free. However, we all know that the second person is more likely to get a disease in future.

- **Connected to the external world:** Health extends beyond what happens inside us, and includes our external world – relationships at home and work, career, family, nature etc. Both influence each other, i.e. the state of our external world influences our health and vice versa. E.g. Many people develop diabetes and hypertension after a life-altering event such as the loss of a loved one or loss of purpose in life post retirement. If we have some discord within our family, our health is likely to suffer. The opposite is also true, i.e. when we are not in a state of health, our engagement with the external world is not joyful.

### **Deeper Meaning of Swasth**

Etymologically, the Sanskrit word Swasth can be broken down as “Swa” (स्व) + “Sth” (स्थ)

- “Swa” / स्व = means me/oneself
- “Sth” / स्थ = to be established in (other words with the same root - स्थान/sthaan meaning place, स्थिर/sthir meaning stable, स्थित/sthit – established, स्थिति/sthiti – situation. Interestingly, even the English word ‘stable’ has a similar prefix sound!)

**Hence, the actual meaning of Swasth is to be “Established in Oneself”**

It is very interesting to observe that the original, deeper meaning of Swasth has no mention of well-being! This is because of the Yogic principle that health and well-being is a natural outcome when we are established in our true self, our true nature.

## Panch-Kosh

To understand what or who is it what we have to be established in, we need to understand the deeper meaning of Swa (स्व), i.e. I / oneself. An ancient text, Taitreya Upanishad, beautifully explains the concept, by systematically unravelling the 5 dimensions of existence – called the Panch-Kosh (*Panch* means five, *Kosh* means layers or dimensions).

Panch-Kosh refers the 5 dimensions/ sheaths of existence – from gross to subtle:

1. **Ann-may Kosh – Gross Body**
2. **Praan-may Kosh – Vital Energies**
3. **Mano-may Kosh – Mind (Thoughts & Emotions)**
4. **Vigyaan-may Kosh – Inner Wisdom**
5. **Aanand-may Kosh – Bliss**



**Ann-May Kosh**

Who are we? The most, obvious, gross answer is the body. Everything around us has a body – whether living or non-living – humans, animals, plants, objects such as a stone, phone. Everything in the universe is sustained by “ann” or matter. This matter-based aspect of our existence is called the Ann-may Kosh. This is our physical body and consists of 5 key elements, or *Panch-bhut*, namely: Earth (*Prithvi*), Water (*Jal* or *Aap*), Fire (*Agni* or *Tejas*), Wind or Air (*Vayu*) and Space, (*Aakaash*). Our body is nourished mostly by the gross food (*Ann*) that we consume.

- “Ann” means “food”. The body is called “Ann-may” Kosh because essentially, it is an accumulation of food. A baby is small when it is born, and as it consumes food, it becomes bigger. After reaching adulthood, we do not see the accumulation of food as we stop growing. However, the process is still on, as our cells are constantly dying and are being replenished through the material from the food we consume. We are a totally different person in 7 years!
- An extension of the above concept is that our body is not a static machine, but it is evolving. This is unlike the mechanical view of our body which likens us to a car running on fuel. Here, the fuel is changing the very composition of the car.
- The Annmay Kosh also includes our microbiome – the collective genome of the bacteria, fungi, viruses and archaea that live in us and on us. Research is showing that we have at least as many microbes inside us as the human genome. Interestingly, indigenous cultures did not have a separate concept of environment, as they considered humans to be an integral part of it and didn’t see it as “us and them”! Our body replicates the same macrocosmic reality inside.
- The language of our body, in which it “speaks” to us is sensations. These are on, all the time, inside us! However, we are often engaged in other activities, and not aware of them

## **Real life experiment**



### **Activity**

A simple way to become aware of our body is to close our eyes and taking a few minutes to slowly “scan” our own body from head to toe. Examining every part of our body, becoming aware of all the sensations without judging them or trying to change them. Every time we judge them, we can remind ourselves that there is no ‘good’ or ‘right’ sensation!

In this process, we may come across new sensations we weren’t aware of. Sensations may increase or decrease as we take awareness towards or away from them.

The simple practice of awareness without judgement can deepen our connection with our body. A deeper version of this is used in the ancient meditative technique of Vipassana. We can do this anytime during the day. Over time, we can learn to understand the language of the body, and factor it in our process of decision making and action.



## Questions for Reflection

- What all sensations did I experience?
- Did I experience any new sensation?
- Did the intensity of the sensation(s) reduce or increase as my attention moved from one part of the body to another?



## Key Points

There is NO “right” answer to this activity! Your experience is the right answer

- Sensations are of many kinds - temperature, stiffness, looseness, pain, rumbling, pulsing, tickling etc.
- Sensations or our experience of their intensity can reduce or increase. They are transitory
- A lot is happening in our body at any point of time! We are aware of only a fraction of it
- As our awareness increases, we become aware of new sensations...



## **Praan-May Kosh**

While every object has a body, what differentiates a living object from a non-living object is the presence of “Praan”. When someone dies, we often say in Hindi “*Praan nikal gaye*”, i.e. Praan has left the body. So, what is Praan? Praan means the life-giving force or vital energies.

Praan is the basic vital force, the basic energy that flows through the universe, both inside and outside us. A uniform harmonious flow of praan to each and every cell of the Ann-may Kosh keeps them alive and healthy. The Praan-may Kosh consists of the (i) subtle channels (Naadis) of the flow of praan and (ii) subtle centers (Chakras) where the channels cross each other or meet throughout the body. These are not physical or gross channels and centers that can be seen, but subtle channels and centers that can be experienced.

Praan is what gives life to our organs – it makes our heart beat, our stomach digest, etc. This life-giving force shows its presence in the body in the form of PanchaPraan, which govern various functions of the body – e.g. Udaan (belching, vomiting etc), Vyaan (circulation, transmission of messages etc), Apaana (excretion, reproduction, etc), Samaan (digestion, etc), Praana (breathing etc).

Simple test of the presence of Praan in the body are breath or pulse – that is also what doctors check before pronouncing someone dead or alive.



### Real life experiment



#### Activity

There are multiple simple ways to become aware of the presence of Praan in our body. The techniques below move from gross to subtle:

- Breath awareness – tracing the whole path of breath from our nose to lungs and back, becoming aware of the connection of breathing with our body's movement, feeling the temperature and sensations of breath inside our nose. This forms the basis of the Aan-Paan meditation technique in Vipassana.
- Heartbeat awareness – closing our eyes and becoming aware of the beating of our heart Feeling the heartbeat spread out from the heart

- Pulse awareness – bringing our thumb and index finger into contact with each other (called Gyaan Mudra). Becoming aware of the subtle pulse in our thumb/finger. If the pulse is not clear, we can press the two firmly against each other.

The throbbing will become clearer then. After some time, we can release the pressure, and see if our awareness has become fine enough to perceive the pulse normally.



### **Reflection questions for pulse awareness activity**

- Was the pulse clear, the first time you tried to experience it?
- Did the pulse become clearer as you pressed your finger and thumb tightly?
- After some time of practice, did feeling the pulse become easier?



### **Key point**

Even though we can't see Praan or are not always aware of it, it is present and driving the functions of our organs at all times.

## Mano-may Kosh

This is the layer of our mind, which is the source and seat of our thoughts and emotions. Emotions are recycled thoughts which gain momentum in our mind. In the Yogic system, the mind is the seat of 4 key functions – intellect or analytical mind (बुद्धि), memory (मन), identity (अहंकार), and higher intellect or unsullied raw intelligence (चित्त). The language of the mind, i.e. how we see the manifestation of these functions is through our thoughts and emotions. These, in turn, have power to govern our actions.

More “evolved” creatures typically have a more evolved “mind” in addition to their body. As we move from micro-organisms to plants to animals to humans, our mind becomes more and more refined. It is the mind which has helped human beings in creating innovative products and services, simplifying our life, living safely even though many other animals are physically stronger than us. However, the nature of the mind is such that it can also become compelling, sucking us in. Especially these days, as our minds have become sharper, we are also more distracted at work, addicted to our mobile phones, find it difficult to sleep at night, have obsessive worries, prone to anxiety and depression. The hyper-activity of our mind is the main reason for our fatigue and many ailments today. We are no longer dying from infectious diseases caused by a bacteria or fungus. We are dying from psychosomatic ailments, i.e. those created by our mind!

The question is not if the mind is good or bad. The question is - who is in control? We control our mind, or our mind controls us?

Many ancient texts have called the mind a “monkey” – because it always keeps going here and there, never at rest. Trying to stop thoughts and emotions doesn’t work. If we try to control our thoughts, it becomes harder! E.g. in the next 10 seconds, try to NOT think of carrots. It’s unlikely that you succeed in this! Many times, we try to deal with our emotions by ignoring or denying or

suppressing them. Which does not work either, and leads to emotional outbursts or ailments in the long-run.

Yogis have designed many beautiful techniques for us to gain mastery over the mind. In fact, one of the definitions of Yog is - योगः चित्त वृत्ति निरोधः (Yogah Chitta Vritti Nirodhah), i.e. Yog is the cessation of the modifications of the mind. Note that the definition does not use the words विरोध (meaning opposition) or अवरोध (meaning blocking), but uses निरोधः (nirodh). This reflects the deep insight of our Yogis, in the strategies to master the mind.



### Reflection Questions

- In my life, where does my mind support me?
- In my life, where does my mind inhibit me?

## Real life experiment



### Activity

To become aware of our mind, we can simply sit quietly with our eyes closed and our gaze turned inwards. Becoming aware of the various thoughts and emotions that come up, without judging or trying to change them. Observing our thoughts and emotions as if we are watching a movie – knowing that we are different and distant from the movie character.



### Questions for Reflection

- Where all did my thoughts go – in space? (e.g. room, home, workplace)
- Where all did my thoughts go – in time? (e.g. yesterday, tomorrow, right now)
- If I tried to stop my thoughts, was I successful?



### Key Point

We are likely to find that our mind travels everywhere in even a short time span of a minute – being present in the space where we are seated and visiting other spaces (e.g. home, workplace, child's school), travelling across time - past, present and future. The mind travels faster than the speed of light! The sun's rays take 8 minutes to reach earth, but we can imagine a trip to the sun and back in a second!

## **Vigyaan-may Kosh**

Animals also have the ability to think and feel. So, what differentiates us from them? We have a sense of “right” or “wrong” and the discernment to choose. The Vigyaan-may Kosh refers to this discernment. However, the “right” or “wrong” here is “unconditioned”, i.e. it does not refer to what we infer based on our internal thoughts, feelings, intellect or external social norms, as these all lie in the realm of Mano-may Kosh. Vigyaan-may Kosh can also be described as the conscience, or the voice within us that continuously guides us to take decisions which are best suited to the situation at hand, and in the interest of the universe as a whole, and not driven by our individual, personal interests, feelings, fears and insecurities.

Another distinction - the Mano-may Kosh (mind) guides us based on learnings from the past or as per goals of the future. The guidance from Vigyaan-may Kosh lies outside this realm, though it does support us in processing the past or planning our future.



Vigyaan-may Kosh refers to the universal wisdom, the power to access which, lies within us. This is called by different names in various cultures and religions – Intuition, inner voice (अंदर की

आवाज़), conscience, to name a few. This wisdom is non-interfering, it guides us from within but does not impose itself.

It is the Vigyaan-may Kosh which enabled Yogis thousands of years ago, to understand intricate patterns of constellations, the structure of atoms, the shape of the earth – from the biggest to the smallest things – by going within, without instruments of external exploration such as telescopes and microscopes.

This is a very powerful source of pure knowledge, and our ability to access continuously has reduced these days, due to the dominance of our mind. However, we all have moments when we are able to tap into it, to access this state of “flow”, though not in a conscious, planned manner. E.g. many discoveries happen through intuitions. Sometimes, when we are relaxing or out in nature, the most brilliant forms of inspiration come to us – enabling us to see our problems with a very different perspective.



### Reflection Questions

**Think of a time when you may have got guidance from your Vigyaan-may Kosh**

- What was the difference between this and the guidance from the mind, through thoughts and emotions?
- How did it enable you to transcend the barriers of “I”?
- What was your state of Being at this time?



## **Aanand-may Kosh**

As hard as it may be to believe, our nature is bliss! A simple way to verify this is to ask ourselves:

- When our body is healthy, our mind is at peace and there is harmony internally and externally – how do we feel? Blissful.
- If all our worries and their causes were to disappear magically, how would we feel? Blissful
- How are children, in their natural state? Blissful
- How are realized, enlightened people, even though they don't have a single penny in their pocket? Blissful !

Yes - we are bliss! When everything aligns internally and externally, we are blissful. Similarly, when we are blissful, everything aligns internally and externally.

Bliss is not happiness, which is a transitory emotion. Bliss is a state of Being. Bliss the “basic stuff” of the universe. This is our true nature, this is our original state, the state of joy, a state of complete silence (of modifications of the mind), a state of total harmony and perfect health. Different cultural and religious



traditions call it by different names, such as स्व, soul, spirit, रूह, आत्मा, परमात्मा



### Real life experiment

To get in touch with bliss, just laugh! It may seem artificial at first, but as we continue to do it, it will become easier and more natural. Our body, energies and mind will start changing if we are laughing and smiling. To experience this, visit the nearest Laughter Yoga club, or start one yourself! There are thousands of people who have reversed their ailments simply by laughing their way to bliss. Another easy way to connect to bliss is by doing our favourite activities – being in nature, singing, painting/ drawing/ art-work, cooking something new, dancing, reading. We all have something close to us, which puts us in a state of Bliss.



### Question for Reflection

How many of us take out time every day, for something that truly gives us joy? If we can simply be joyful, we will be healthy. From today, take out 5 minutes daily, to cultivate Joy within us!

Choose something that is less dependent on a person, place or thing and less intensive on time or finances. This will enable sustainability, as doing this daily is critical. Activities such as shopping, meeting a certain set of friends may be hard to do daily. Whereas engaging with arts (singing, listening to music, dance), reading, praying, playing with your children may be easier.

Remember: Joy is inside us! Activities will only help bring it out

## **Connection back to Swasth (“Sth” in “Swa”)**

We are now aware of all dimensions of “Swa” (Self) or “I”. Being established (“Sth”) means to make something our default state of being and doing. What does it mean to be established in I? It means being our true Self, and doing what our true Self would do. This is true integrity – when our thoughts, feelings, words and actions are all aligned, to each other, and to who we truly are.

To be “established” in the “I”, i.e. to be our true self, all dimensions of our existence need to be in harmony – our body, vital energies, mind and emotions, inner wisdom and bliss. To do this, we need to learn and practice awareness of them, connection to them, and flow from the guidance we get when we truly listen to them. Yog is the process and outcome of aligning all dimensions of our Being.

Initially, we may not be able to do this all the time, but we can aim to be established in it more and more, i.e., to make this our centre, to which we keep coming back. With practice, we will be amazed to see our life transforms. Diseases will recede, as our body is designed for health and well-being. We are immensely lucky to be born as human beings, and to have whatever ailment we do have, which has brought us to the path of Yog. We can see our dis-ease as a curse, burden, responsibility. Or, as an opportunity to turn inwards, to find and be our true self, to be truly “Swasth”.

Through Yog, not only can we become free of diseases, but we can become truly free! Free from our self-limiting beliefs, free from limiting social norms...

We see freedom as something we want to get from someone else (e.g. India had to become free from the British rule). Real freedom is when free ourselves, to be ourselves – “Free to Be Me”. Let’s take the first step to living life fully and freely...



### Question for Reflection

Reflect and look back at all the meditative rituals you tried through this chapter, to start becoming established in yourself today. Of these, which will you do daily, for 5 minutes for the next 1 month?



### Questions for Reflection

For answering this question, make a mental switch: Fear, doubt, anxiety about your body and health may be your current state. Switch to trust, faith and courage. Just try.

Ask yourselves the question below, and accept any response to the questions below that emerges from this state

- How might my current health “problem” be an opportunity in disguise?
- Other than my body, what aspects of my life need healing?
- If I could be “free to be me”, who would I be? Who am I?



## Key Points

- Health is a state of complete physical, mental, social and spiritual well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. The concept of health extends beyond the body. Health is a positive concept. As a future-looking concept, health is a good predictor of prevention of diseases in future. Health extends beyond what happens inside us, and includes our external world
- The meaning of Swasth is to be “Established in Oneself”
- Everything around us has a body. The body is called “Ann-may” Kosh because essentially, it’s an accumulation of food. The language of our body, in which it “speaks” to us is sensations.
- Praan means the life-giving force or vital energies. Praan is what gives life to our organs – it makes our heart beat, our stomach digest, etc. The simplest test of the presence of Praan in the body is breathing – that is also what doctors check before pronouncing someone dead or alive.
- The language of the mind is thoughts and emotions. It is the mind which has helped human beings in creating innovative products and services, simplifying our life, living safely even though many other animals are physically stronger than us. However, the nature of the mind is such that it can also become compelling, sucking us in. The question is not whether the mind is good or bad. The question is - who is in control? We are in control of our mind, or our mind is in control of us?
- We have a sense of right/wrong and the discernment to choose. Vigyaan-may Kosh refers to the universal wisdom, the power to access which, lies within us. In the Western world,

this is sometimes called “intuition”. This is a very powerful source of pure knowledge, and the skill to access continuously has become extremely rare these days. However, we all have moments when we are able to tap into it, though not in a conscious, planned manner.

- We are bliss! When everything aligns internally and externally, we are blissful. Similarly when we are blissful, everything aligns internally and externally.
- What is the meaning of being established (“Sth”) in the “I” (“Swa”)? It means being our true self, and doing what our true self would do. To be “established” in the “I”, i.e. to be our true self, all dimensions of our existence need to be in harmony – our body, vital energies, mind and emotions, inner wisdom and bliss. To do this, we need to learn and practice awareness of them, connection to them, and flow from the guidance we get when we truly listen to them. Yog is the process and the outcome of aligning these dimensions of our Being. As we practice this more and more, we will be amazed to see how our life transforms. Diseases will recede, as our body is designed for health and well-being.

## **ANNEXURE**

### **Being Established in my Self**

#### **Mano-may Kosh**

In my life, where does my mind support me?	
In my life, where does my mind inhibit me?	

#### **Aanand-May Kosh**

What will I do to cultivate joy within me? (5 minutes daily)
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#### **Swasth = Swa + Sth**

What meditative ritual will I do, to start becoming established in my myself? (5 minutes daily)
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# ANNEXURE

# Free to Be Me

**By Sundeep Kapila – Founder-CEO, Swasth Foundation.**

*7 years at McKinsey (Healthcare) and 9 years at Swasth have fuelled Sundeep's passion for "Health and Joy For All". Having shed 11 kgs, and reversed GERD, Sundeep is now a joyful Triathlete. He relishes integrating his B.Tech (IIT), M.D. (Alternative Medicine) Yoga Instructor and Life Coach Certifications to engineer scalable, sustainable and empowering health systems.*

When I hear the phrase - "**Free to Be Me**" - I feel light. I feel airborne. I feel free. These feelings are accompanied by few questions as well -

*Who is getting Free?*

*What / Who is this Freedom from?*

*Where will this Freedom take me?*

This note is my attempt at answering these questions for myself.

## **Who is getting Free?**

As I say "Free to Be Me", I experience something deep inside me breathing again. Something that has been shut out for a very very long time. That is my SELF, my true Self, my inner Self, my Conscience, my Light, my Soul, my Spirit, my Atman, my Divinity. There are so many names that different philosophies and religions have given to this.

I think it is the Essence of who I am, not who I want to be, not who my parents want me to be, not who my spouse wants me to be,



not who my friends want me to be, not who my boss wants me to be, not who God wants me to be, NO... It is who I AM. And that Self breathes, that Self is getting Free.

### **What / Who is this Freedom from?**

We live in a free world and we are free. Then what / who is the Self gaining freedom from? My Self is gaining freedom from my system. A system that is there to serve my Self to lead a fulfilling life. A system that someday felt overwhelmed and decided to overpower my Self and take charge of managing my life. My Self let that happen then. Now, my Self breaks free from my system.

What is this system? This system has **4 dimensions – Body, Energy, Mind and Emotions**. All of these 4 dimensions contribute towards a fulfilling life if they are guided by my Self. However, when the system took charge of managing my life, they became the cause of my biggest suffering as well.

As a child, my Self was aware of these dimensions and also knew how to lead them towards a fulfilling life. As I grew up, I started facing situations which I was not always prepared for – expectation of always excelling, falling in love and then breaking up, losing my father to cancer. I was not prepared for these and that shook my system. My system responded by taking charge. It helped in the short term and it created its own problems.

**My emotions** did not get experienced and got bottled up (did not experience grief, anger as they were judged by others and not welcome), **my mind** rationalized and ignored the reality (“Compromise is a necessary part of a partnership”, “Let us achieve short term peace as long term peace is not achievable), **my energy** became erratic and in-authentic and **my body** became unhealthy (gained weight, lost stamina, hyperacidity). This was the time when the elements of my system got overwhelmed and over powered my Self and took charge of

managing my life. And that is what they have done in the last so many years – managed my life. And that is **ALL** that they have done – managed my life, kept me alive. **NOW**, my Self breaks Free from my system and takes back charge of my life!!

### **Where will this Freedom take me?**

My Self is limitless. My essence is divine. I cannot describe the place or the world where my Self will lead me to, but I know with my Self in charge of my life, I can only move towards fulfilling the purpose of my life, move towards an infinite space drenched with Peace, Love and Joy .....

I have tried to capture the essence of my experience in this drawing.

**I AM FREE TO BE ME**



## **Chapter 4**

# **“Ath Yog Anushaasanam”**

**How do I start my journey?**

### **Importance**

To embark upon our journey, we need to understand Yog – the process and outcome.

## **What is this?**

“Ath Yog Anushaasanam” is the first verse of Patanjali’s Yog Sutras, one of the most well-respected commentaries on Yog. One of the most special features of this text is that it encapsulated, what could be hundreds of volumes of books, into 196 simple sutras. Each of these sutras is, therefore, like an extremely powerful capsule!

Another interesting feature of these texts is that the first sentence is the most important, and the synthesis of everything else that follows. In that sense, reading these texts is the opposite of reading any story – you don’t have to wait till the end as the key is revealed in the beginning itself!

For any serious practitioner of Yog, it is critical to understand and imbibe this sutra – in fact, if we implement this fully in our life, we don’t need to do anything else.

अथ योगानुशासनम्

*atha yoga-anuśāsanam . 1.*

And now, the discipline of Yoga

*atha* = and now

*yoga* = union, harmony

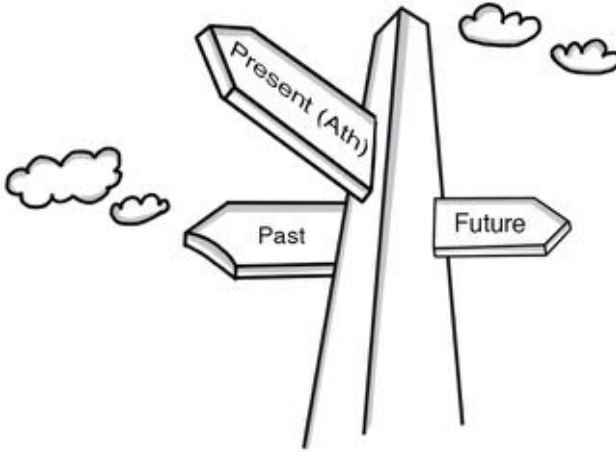
*Anuśāsanam* = self-mastery, discipline

Let us now try to understand the meaning of each word of the verse, to unlock its full meaning.

## Ath

Ath means now, the present. The Marathi word आता (Ātā) is derived from the same root. This seems like a strange word to start such an important text with! But, if an enlightened being such as Patanjali wrote this verse, he surely understood something we don't! In fact, as the first word of the first verse, “Ath” has a tremendous importance. In modern days, hundreds of books have been written, just on this single word (consider the bestseller – The Power of Now, by Eckhart Tolle)

Why “now”? Because this current moment is the only moment we have. We cannot catch what happened even two seconds ago. Life always happens in this moment. Let us understand some interpretations and their application in our life



**Forget the past, come to the present:** Whatever we may have done in the past that has led to our problems (internally or externally), let us not dwell on them. Let us not feel angry, sad, hurt, depressed or guilty for our mistakes or someone else's. What happened, is what brought us here. What is important is what we choose to do now, in this present moment. Physical or mental ailments are the reason many of us are “forced” onto the path of Yog, but through judicious choices, these can become the portals

into a different way of being and living. This is so freeing and empowering – it releases our bondage to the past, and empowers us to choose in the present.

**Forget the future, come to the present:** *“Will I get better?” “Will my relationships improve?” “What if people at home or work don’t change?”* - What is the point of thinking about what will happen in future? Again, the only thing in our hands is the present moment – what we choose to do in it. Also, it is likely that we will waver from this path at times in the future. At that point too, we will have a choice – do we fret over our “mistakes” or make a choice of making a different choice in that “now”.

**The power of now:** Now may seem like a small, fleeting moment. But its power is unparalleled. No matter what happens in our past or future, we will always have “now”. The past and future don’t belong to us, but now does. We have a choice, now.

**Available to all:** Now no matter what our condition, our success, fame, money, health; whatever we are in this moment, we can begin. “Now” does not discriminate – it is available to all. Don’t look for the most ideal or auspicious time. One of the sutras of Kautilya Arth-shastra says “Only fools wait for an auspicious moment, for the evolved person all moments are auspicious”.



### **Question for Reflection**

What resonates with you from the above?  
What is your lived experience of the power of “Ath” (now)?

**Key to Yog:** “Now” is the key to the next word in the verse – Yog – our goal and journey. This means, being truly present to every moment. Whatever we are doing, only being with that activity, and ourselves. It sounds overly simple, and that’s where its power lies. Because it is simple, we can apply it to our every day life. If we are in the present, here’s how life changes:

- While talking to someone, we will truly listen to them and examine the state of our Panch-Kosh, instead of multi-tasking!
- While eating food, our focus will be on the taste, texture, smell, sight of the food and how it’s reaching our body, instead of watching TV or conversing with people.
- While making something (e.g. food, a document, artwork), we will fully be present to all information and material we are working with, how it’s coming together, and how our Panch-Kosh is responding to it, instead of thinking of the next task

This is what is called “mindfulness”. Listening is perhaps the key foundation of a partnership. Think of how would this change the way we do our Yogic Vyaayaam? We can say that the different body positions of our Vyaayaam practice are designed to help us listen to ourselves better. A muscle stretches, fatigue sets in, now our physical body speaks aloud to us. We can perceive it, listen to it and be mindful of it.

Many guided meditations and activities such as observation of the breath, heartbeat, pulse, body and mind, art-work, intention setting, laughter yog that are mentioned in previous chapters also attempt to do the same - bring us to the present.

Slowly, we will observe that by doing this simple thing, the quality and efficiency of our interactions with the external world will transform – the food we cook will be tastier, our work will start becoming perfect, our relationships will start improving.

Note that the call is to be present to what is happening inside, as well as outside us.



## **Yog**

The word “Yog” is commonly called “Yoga” and understood to be Aasan, Praanaayam and Meditation. One set of common images associated with Yog is acrobatic stunts with the body and breath to demonstrate flexibility or supernatural feats such as living underground without air. The second set of popular images is the complete opposite – someone sitting alone with their eyes closed, all attention drawn inwards. However, these tools and manifestations that we see, are one small part of Yog, not all of it. They are the tip of the iceberg! So, let us understand real Yog.

The word Yog means union or harmony. Its Latin equivalent is yoke (also in German). Its Sanskrit root is युज्, which means to join. A Hindi word, often used in the context of separation of a person from their beloved or God is Viyog (वियोग). Viyog is the opposite of Yog, i.e. opposite of union = separation.

What are we joining, what is this a union of or in harmony with?

- Within our internal world – Our Panch-Kosh – body, vital energy, mind, inner wisdom, bliss.
- With our external world – food, time and space, people (relationships), work, success, material welfare, nature (plants and animals), society and world in general
- Jivaatma to Parmaatma – Human beings to the Higher consciousness/Universal Force/God/

Yog is this state of harmony, inside and outside. Well-being, i.e. being “Swasth” is a natural outcome of this state. Physical, mental, social, spiritual and universal well-being are all encompassed in Yog. The practice of Yog creates a relationship with ourselves. We know that in a relationship with other people, if we are constantly judging and criticizing them, the beauty of the relationship dies. But do we apply this in dealing with ourselves? Can we look in the mirror in the morning and say to

ourselves: "I love you!"? Yog establishes this harmonious relationship with you. It brings us in harmony with ourselves.

Yog is not a theoretical concept, but something we have all experienced at some point in our lives. Peace, Love and Joy (शान्ति, प्रेम, आनंद) are indicators that we are in a state of Yog

- If we look at our experience of any of the activities mentioned so far - observation of the breath, heartbeat, pulse, body or mind, art-work, intention setting, laughter yog – they are essentially trying to bring us to a state of Yog.
- Looking back at our own lives, we can all identify times when we experienced peace, love and joy...maybe strolling in a garden, coming up with a new recipe, listening to or singing our favorite song, going to a spiritual or religious place, playing with our children or grandchildren, having our favourite dish, consuming alcohol, dancing like no one is watching, being with someone we love – these are times when everything around us fades, as if in a movie! We become one with the object or person. Nothing else matters, we are truly in the present, and no separation exists. What is this, if not a state of Yog?!



### Questions for Reflection

In life, what gives me peace, love and joy? What puts me in a state of Yog (internal harmony)?

In the future that I envision for myself, what do I wish to be in harmony (Yog) with?

- In my internal world (body, energy, mind, emotions, something else)?
- In my external world (work, food, home, friends, finances, something else)?

We all want to be in peace, love and joy always! But repetition of the activities does not repeat the satisfaction. If the key was in the object or person or activity – it would continue to give us peace, love and joy – always. In fact, it's the opposite! By repeating same dish, song, place, people or activity, we start having a negative experience. The first gulaab-jaamun (Indian dessert) or chocolate bar is delicious, fifth not so much, and by the tenth, we're ready to vomit! Lovers can't take their eyes off each other initially, excitement reduces after 5 years of marriage but is kept intact through children, and after 20 years, anyone seeing them fighting wouldn't believe these people were madly in love at some point!

Our Yogis found the key to being in the state of Yog always. They realized that the key is NOT the external, but the internal. If our Panch-Kosh can be in Yog internally, we will always be Yog externally. Yog is not about denying pleasure, it is about always having pleasure!

Yog is also the key, or the process to reach this state – by first bringing harmony inside us. By aligning us to our true self, from where our Being will emerge and interact differently with the world through its Doing. This altered interaction, coming from a deep place of internal alignment to our true self will automatically result in external harmony.

## **Anushaasanam**

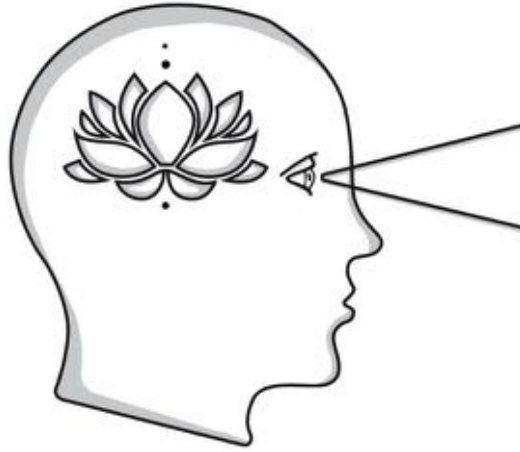
The word Anushaasan literally means to have mastery over. One might wonder – we were talking of peace, love and joy - how did Anushaasan suddenly emerge?! The answer is – Anushaasan is help us be in the state of peace, love and joy as a default and in our hands, not as a momentary experience or by chance.

“Shaasan” in Hindi means to rule. Whom do we rule? Our family, society? No! We rule ourself. Then we achieve self mastery. Shasanam is discipline, teaching. To learn something is to be under Shasanam. “Anu” also means ‘after’. So, one interpretation is that we can come to yog only after self-discipline. If we aren’t mentally, physically and emotionally disciplined, we will not succeed in yog.

We have talked earlier of mastering our mind, rather than being a slave to it. Self-Mastery refers to mastery over Panch-Kosh. Imagine 5 horses left on their own – they will go off in their own separate directions! A charioteer masters them by tying all horses, leveraging their collective power to go in one direction, with speed. Likewise, if we master our Panch-Kosh and take them along together, in harmony, in Yog, we can translate our purpose and intention into our reality much faster.

Self-mastery is an evolutionary stage of discipline. To come to our authentic self requires discipline. So, self-mastery is an evolution that is possible only from discipline.

It is important to note that being a master is not a violent process of forcing and suppressing our faculties. Rather, it’s a gentle process – a combination of the strength of resoluteness and the gentleness of love.



Think of a little child who has come out for a picnic. The child is fascinated by everything. There is something attractive in every direction – lights, colors, sounds, smells! As parents, we understand this fascination, and gently bring back our child every time he/she is going off course. But we are firm too. We lay down certain rules and ensure the child follows them. Such as teaching them to not go with strangers, or not to cross the road alone. Slowly, the child learns to respect these boundaries, after all, these are for their own well-being.



### **Questions for Reflection**

- What is my relationship with Anushaasan?
- How does Anushaasan help me in life?
- What barriers prevent me from implementing Anushaasan?
- How can I approach Anushaasan with Yog (peace, love, joy)?

We will also veer off in different directions in our journey to well-being. Instead of being violently aggressive with ourselves (e.g. crash diets to lose weight), we can be gentle with ourselves and forgive our small mistakes, while ensuring boundaries are

maintained. Slowly, the process will become effortless. We will not have to try hard to maintain Anushaasan – it will become our natural state. Initially, when we are learning how to ride a bi-cycle, bike or scooty, we have to pay attention to balance. It seems so hard! But once we master it, balance is effortless.

Yog is not dry theory, but always based on one's own practice and experience. It's a bit like an apple. We can spend years analyzing an apple, explaining it, breaking down its nutrients and describing it, but we will not know how an apple tastes. There is only one way to find out. It's the same with yog. Only through our own practice and experience (“*Nidhidhyaasanam*”), can we experience the state of yog. Anushaasan ensures that we constantly practice being in, and doing as per Yog.



### Questions for Reflection

- How do I intend to implement “Anushaasan” in my journey towards well-being?
- How will I stay committed to reading this book?
- How will I ensure I implement changes, and the commitments I set for myself?
- How will I make this a regular, joyful routine, rather than a process that starts and stops erratically?

## **Ath Yog Anushaasanam**

*And now, the discipline/self-mastery of Yog*

*Yog is possible in this moment after you achieve self-discipline.*

The moment we decide, that is the moment our yog begins. We can begin at any moment. So, when are we going to start Yog? One day when we retire? When our responsibilities are over? No. Yog does not ask us to give up anything. Sri Aurobindo said 'All life is Yog'. "Ath Yog" - This moment.

Some simple ways to apply "Ath Yog Anushaasanam" in our life:

- Whatever we do, do it with full commitment and engagement
- Our action matching our words, which match our thoughts, which match our true self
- Taking out time – at least 30 minutes a day - to invest in ourselves, our well-being
- Respecting our time, and that of others by showing up on time, meeting our word on commitments

The application of this principle is the essential difference between Excessive Exercising & Yogic Vyaayaam, Obsessive Dieting & Yogic Aahaar, Controlling our Mind and Yogic Vichaar. At Swasth Yog Institute, our curriculum and programs are designed to bring this principle to life, and translate it into our everyday reality.

### **Activity**

Write or draw your unique interpretation of  
"Ath Yog Anushaasanam"



### **Question for Reflection**

Decide 3 ways in which you want to bring "Ath Yog Anushaasanam" to life in the next 7 days



## Key Points

To embark upon our journey, we need to understand Yog – the process and outcome. “Ath Yog Anushaasanam” is first verse of Patanjali’s Yog Sutras

**Ath** means now, the present. This current moment is the only moment we have.

- Whatever we may have done in the past that has led to our problems (internally or externally), let us not dwell on them. What happened, is what brought us here. What is important is what we choose to do now, in this present moment.
- It is likely that we will waver from this path at times in the future. At that point too, we will have a choice – do we fret over our “mistakes” or make a choice of making a different choice in that “now”.
- “Now” does not discriminate – it is available to all.
- Whatever we are doing, only being with that activity, and ourselves
- We will observe slowly, that by doing this simple thing, the efficiency and quality of our interactions with the external world will change dramatically

**Yog** means union or harmony.

- The word “Yog” is commonly called “Yoga” and understood to be Aasan, Praanaayam and Meditation. However, these tools and manifestations that we see, are one small part of Yog, not all of it.
- Well-being, i.e. being “Swasth” is a natural outcome of this state.
- Yog is also the key, or the process to reach this state – by first bringing harmony inside us.
- Yog is not a theoretical concept, but something we have all experienced at some point in our lives. Peace, Love and Joy (शान्ति, प्रेम, आनंद) are indicators that we are in a state of Yog
- Our Yogis found the key to being in the state of Yog always. They realized that the key is NOT the external, but the internal. If our Panch-Kosh can be in Yog internally, we will always be in



Yog externally. Yog is not about denying pleasure, it is about always having pleasure!

**Anushaasan** literally means to have mastery over.

- Anushaasan is help us be in the state of peace, love and joy as a default and in our hands, not as a momentary experience or by chance
- Whom do we rule? Our family, society? No! We rule ourself.
- We can come to yog only after self-discipline.
- Self-Mastery refers to mastery over Panch-Kosh.
- Being a master is not a violent process of forcing and suppressing our faculties. Rather, it's a gentle process – a combination of the strength of resoluteness and the gentleness of love.
- Slowly, the process will become effortless. We will not have to try hard to maintain Anushaasan – it will become our natural state.
- Anushaasan ensures that we constantly practice being in, and doing as per Yog.

### **Ath Yog Anushaasanam**

- The moment we decide, that is the moment our yog begins.
- 'All life is Yog'
- The application of this principle is the essential difference between exercise & aasan, dieting & yogic aahaar, breathing & praanaayaam.

**“Ath Yog Anushaasanam” is a way of life.** Some simple applications in our daily life:

- Whatever we do, do it with full commitment
- Be fully engaged in what we are doing
- Our action matching our words, which match our thoughts, which match our true self
- Taking out time – at least 30 minutes a day - to invest in ourselves, our well-bein
- Respecting our time, and that of other

## **ANNEXURE**

### **Ath Yog Anushaasanam**

**Ath:**

What resonates with you from the readings?

What is your lived experience of the power of “Ath” (now)?

**Yog:**

In life, what gives me peace, love and joy? What puts me in a state of Yog (internal harmony)?

In the future that I envision for myself, what do I wish to be in harmony (Yog) with? In my internal world (body, energy, mind, emotions, something else)? In my external world (work, food, home, friends, finances, something else)?

**Anushaasansam:**

What is my relationship with Anushaasan?

How does Anushaasan help me in life?

What barriers prevent me from implementing Anushaasan?

How can I approach Anushaasan with Yog (peace, love, joy)?

**Anushaasansam – II:**

How do I intend to implement “Anushaasan” in my journey towards well-being?

How will I stay committed to reading this book?

How will I ensure I implement changes, and the commitments I set for myself?

How will I make this a regular, joyful routine, rather than a process that starts and stops erratically?

**Write or draw your unique interpretation of  
“Ath Yog Anushaasanam”**

**Decide 3 ways in which you want to bring “Ath Yog  
Anushaasanam” to life in the next 7 days**



## **Chapter 5**

# **“Ath” applied**

## **Am I listening to myself?**

### **Meaning**

Ath refers to now, and being in present.  
If we are present, we will listen to ourselves,  
i.e. our PanchKosh

### **Importance**

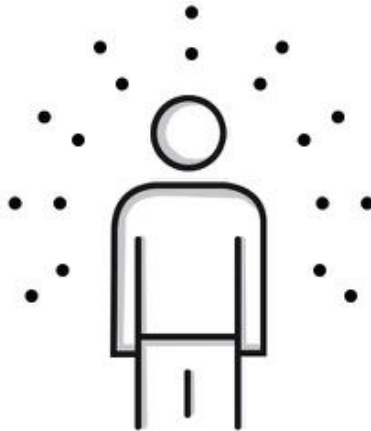
We need to learn to listen to our Panchkosh  
in order to reach a state of internal harmony  
(Yog), the natural outcome of which is  
being healthy (Swasth)

## **Step 1: AWARENESS**

### **What is a disease?**

*Disease = dis + ease*

The definition of a disease lies in the word itself. When we are not in our natural state of ease, it is a state of disease. Thus, a disease encompasses not just physical ailments, but also afflictions of the mind and emotions, our vital energies, losing touch with our inner wisdom and bliss.



### **What is a symptom?**

*How we get to know that we are in a state of dis-ease?* Some physical, mental or energetic symptoms that hamper our vitality and/or activities are typical symptoms of a state of dis-ease.

Let us examine some of these symptoms:

- **Chronic ailments:** Diabetes is often accompanied by feeling thirsty, weight loss, fatigue, frequent urination, hunger and blurred vision. Hypertension can go undetected for some time as its symptoms are subtle, and include headaches, shortness of breath, dizziness and chest pain. Symptoms of depression include disturbances in sleep, appetite, weight, behaviour and

cognition.

- **Acute ailments:** Infections due to micro-organisms such as malaria, typhoid, TB, and respiratory infections are accompanied by a range of symptoms including high fever, diarrhoea, cold and cough, body ache, loss of appetite.
- **Injuries:** Symptoms include swelling, skin turning blue, bleeding, pain, redness, heat

These symptoms indicate that one or more of our PanchKosh are not in a state of ease! Our PanchKosh is constantly indicating its current state to us – even when it is well. These signals include sleep, appetite, digestion, excretion, urination, breathing rate, energy level, menstrual cycles, fertility, quality of our hair, skin and nails, mental ability to focus and de-focus, emotional state and many more. Our Swasth Scale (from the first Chapter) covers a large list of these signals / messages / indicators. They've been used extensively in sciences such as Homeopathy, Naturopathy Ayurved for dis-ease detection and treatment



### Questions for Reflection

Refer to the Swasth Scale from the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter. Identify 3 “symptoms/signals” of the PanchKosh

- ...that you usually ignore and want be more aware of, going forward
- ...that are most critical for your well-being, which you will track during your wellness journey



**Step 2: POWER**  
**The power to make choices lies with us**

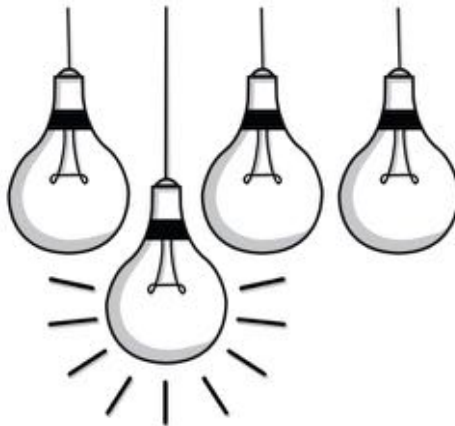
*How do we get to know if we have a dis-ease?*

The first instinct may be to say that our doctor or diagnostic laboratory reports tell us that we have a dis-ease. But that is an incorrect conclusion.

Let us examine it in more detail:

- *Does our doctor tell us that we aren't well and need to come and see him/her? No!*
- *Does a diagnostic laboratory ask us to visit them for an X-Ray or blood test? No!*

Most of the times, in the above cases, we experience some physical, mental or energetic symptoms that hamper our vitality and/or activities. In this state of dis-ease, we visit our doctor or diagnostic laboratory. They diagnose what condition we have (its technical medical name), the possible reasons and offer treatment to bring us back to ease. They do NOT tell us we are in a state of dis-ease, that is already known to us when we visit them. It is important to understand the above distinction correctly – the first person to get to know about our dis-ease is no one else, but us.



## Being aware of the choices available to us

Let's take the case of a traffic signal.

- *What information does it give?* Color of light
- *How can we use this information?* By stopping or moving, by slowing down or speeding up

A signal helps us to take a decision towards action. Let us see how this applies to our PanchKosh

- *What information does it give?* Various signals such as sleep, appetite, etc
- *How can we use this information?* By taking appropriate action (e.g. eating more or less, at different timings, changing what we eat, consuming a medicine etc)

If we are tuned into our PanchKosh, we can listen to the signals as they come and take action to correct minor dis-eases before they turn into major dis-eases. If we are not tuned into our PanchKosh, we can miss out on these signals, and get to know only when they've snowballed into major dis-eases.

## The impact of our choices

We can make the choice to listen to the signals we receive and take corrective action, as we know what works best for our body. We can also reach out to appropriate people to support us – doctor, wellness practitioner, health coach, yoga therapist, etc.

Sadly, the loss of connection to our PanchKosh is a major issue today. Catastrophic health expenses are the single biggest cause of impoverishment, pushing 32 to 63 million Indians below poverty line each year. Non-Communicable Diseases contribute significantly to this vulnerability. Diabetes kills 1 million every year and exposes many more to complications. 62 million Indians are diagnosed as diabetics, and millions more are unaware of their

condition. An analysis of hypertension (HTN) is shocking - ~33% urban Indians have HTN, of which, 42% are aware of their status.

By listening to our PanchKosh, we can detect hypertension before it appears suddenly a heart-attack, or diabetes before a foot has to be amputated. Tuning in further to our PanchKosh can open up the possibility of taking action at the right time, when these chronic ailments are taking root in us. Right action can help us manage and potentially reduce and reverse these ailments over time.

### **Step 3: PURPOSE**

The choices we make are driven by the purpose we want to fulfil. What is our purpose – to make our body an ally in life? Or to hate and fight our body for the challenges it creates in our life?

In either case, to make an educated decision, let us understand how the body works – how do diseases manifest in our body? What is the purpose of the message being given to us by our symptoms? We shall understand this in the next chapter.





## **Activity**

Connecting to the body and listening to its messages:  
This activity takes about 15 minutes to do, and is best done completely alone, while sitting in a comfortable position. Take a few deep breaths and allow your body to relax.

Once you've come to a state of quietness, let your attention flow from top to bottom and then focus your awareness on the part of your body which needs the most healing. Gently let all your attention go there and ask this body part a few questions about 'what the discomfort is all about' ..wait for the answer. Trust your instinct and go with whatever thought comes to you first, without trying to analyse or evaluate it. Then ask this body part a few questions about 'what you can do to ease the discomfort?'...again wait for the answer from within. Then very gently come back and open your eyes.

You can use the following questions as prompts for your body

### **CURRENT SITUATION**

- What is my body trying to tell me?
- Where did my body's problem come from?
- How am I contributing to this problem?
- Have I been having unhealthy habits?
- Is there some emotion troubling me inside?
- What areas of my life are in need of change?

### **VISION FOR FUTURE**

- What does my body want me to do?
- What relationships do I need to strengthen?
- What relationships do I reduce focus on?

- What changes do I need to make to my lifestyle – food, sleeping pattern, my approach to work and household chores, my relationship with myself, any other habits?
- How can I connect more with myself?
- What gives me joy?

Note: This activity can seem irrational at first, to our rational, logical mind. But if we expand the paradigm that we are used to operating in, and include the revised understanding of our PanchKosh, then “speaking with our body” this is a completely logical activity. Our body and mind are interconnected. Just like information flows from our mind to our body through Praan, it can flow in the reverse direction too!



## Key Points

- We need to learn to listen to our Panchkosh in order to reach a state of internal harmony (Yog), the natural outcome of which is being healthy (Swasth)
- Disease = dis + ease → When we are not in our natural state of ease, it is a state of disease.
- Some physical, mental or energetic symptoms that hamper our vitality and/or activities are typical symptoms of a state of disease.
- Our PanchKosh is constantly indicating its current state to us – even when it is well.
- The first person to get to know about our dis-ease is no one else, but us.
- If we are tuned into our PanchKosh, we can listen to the signals as they come and take action to correct minor diseases before they turn into major dis-eases. If we are not tuned into our PanchKosh, we can miss out on these signals, and get to know only when they’ve snowballed into major dis-eases
- We can make the choice to listen to the signals we receive and take corrective action, as we know what works best for our body. We can also reach out to appropriate people to support us in our journey – doctor, wellness practitioner or health coach, yoga therapist, etc
- What is our purpose – to make our body an ally in life? Or to hate and fight our body for the challenges it creates in our life?



## **Chapter 6**

# **“From Aadhi to Vyaadhi”**

## **What is the cause of my dis-ease?**

### **Meaning**

Aadhi means mental disharmony. Vyaadhi means physical dis-harmony, i.e. a disease

### **Importance**

In order to address the root cause of our dis-ease, we need to know how mental dis-harmony manifests in our body as disease. This will also provide us a pathway for disease reversal



## **Step 1: AWARENESS**

*Closely examining our current beliefs on genesis of dis-eases*

Let us think of a few diseases, which we have experienced ourselves or with our near and dear ones.

- Chronic (e.g. diabetes, hypertension, obesity)
- Acute (e.g. malaria, typhoid, tuberculosis)
- Common symptoms (e.g. acidity, pains, cough and cold)

What are possible causes of these diseases? Let us categorize them into internal and external (to us).

### **Internal – In Our Control**

- Wrong eating habits
- Wrong sleeping habits
- Lack of exercise and sedentary lifestyle
- Habits such as alcohol and tobacco
- Our genes (our family members had the disease)
- Stress
- Low immunity

### **External – Out**

- Pollution – air, water, land, sound
- Chemicals in our food, processed or outside food
- Bacteria / Virus / Fungi
- Changing seasons
- Lack of contact with nature (e.g. limited exposure to sunlight)

On the first glance, this list is overwhelming because there are so many reasons – both within and outside us – so what all can we control? “Fighting” diseases may seem to be a cumbersome process, and a battle we are likely to lose. But let us examine this in more depth.

**External reasons** seem outside our control. Yet, if we observe carefully, we will notice that even though almost everyone is exposed to these factors today, not everyone gets a disease. E.g.

- We all take in the same pollution, and yet some manage to lead healthy lives. Likewise, with contact with nature
- When we eat unhygienic outside food with others, all people do not land up with an upset stomach
- Malaria is caused by a micro-organism carried by mosquitoes, but not everyone in the same residential area gets malaria, even though the mosquitos have bitten several people. Likewise, TB bacteria is present in most of our bodies in a latent form, it becomes active only in some.
- When the weather changes suddenly, not everyone comes down with a cough and cold

This means that while outside factors can increase the chances of us getting a disease, it is not necessarily a strict cause and effect. Sometimes, we loosely categorize this resistance to external disease-causing factors as an internal factor called “immunity”, which we will discuss in detail later. What is clear, though, is that while the external factors are not in our control, we can take control and avoid diseases by building our internal “immunity”.

**Note:** *This does not mean that no external factor can harm us if we reach a certain internal state of immunity. Consuming poisons, toxins, radiation, deadly exposure to viruses, an accident, or wear and tear due to aging, will certainly affect us!*

Let us now see **internal factors** – genes, food, sleep, exercise, habits, immunity and stress. Here too, let us first look at genes, as we often associate this with many modern, non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, cancer, obesity and hypertension.

**Genes:** In many ways, heredity is accepted as a modern equivalent of fate! But, does everyone with these genes get the same disease as their ancestors? No! Let's see this another way. Genetic diseases have to have a beginning. I may have inherited a disease from my father, who inherited from his father, and so on and so forth. Where did this chain start? Someone would have commenced the deformation in genetic expression. If someone could start the chain, why can someone down the line not put an end to it through corrective action? The emerging field of Epigenetics is finding that we can regulate our gene expressions. Dr Dean Ornish, a pioneer in this field, found that nutrition, stress management, exercise and psychosocial group support can affect gene expression within three months! "We are how our genes are", is only half the story. **Genes are a dynamic code, and hence "our genes are how we are" is also true.**

**Lifestyle:** Let us now come to the broad category of lifestyle choices, comprising food, sleep, exercise and habits. This is linked to almost all non-communicable diseases. Poor lifestyle choices reduce our immunity to infectious diseases and also make us susceptible to chronic health issues. Multiple research studies have established the impact of poor lifestyle on health. This includes, but is not limited to:

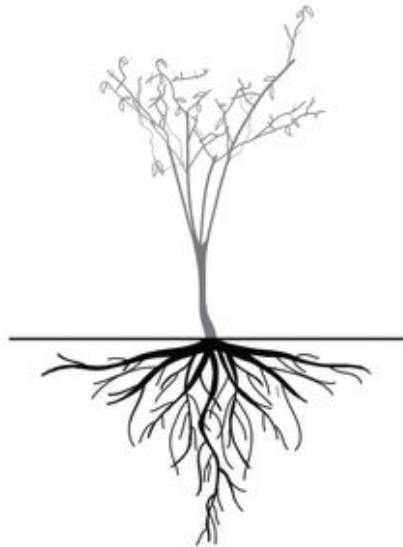
- Improper sleep (less quantity or poor quality)
- Sugar (which suppresses the immune system within 30 minutes of ingestion!)
- Food-like substances, such as saturated fats, commonly found in processed foods
- Caffeine in beverages such as aerated drinks, coffee, tea.

But what causes poor lifestyle, which then lower immunity?

*We all know we should consume fruits and vegetables, rest properly, exercise more, meditate, take less stress and build our immunity. Yet, why are we unable to control ourselves when we see or smell our favourite snack? Why do we find it hard to meditate? Why are we up till late at night with TV or Social Media or Messaging platforms? Why do we not feel like exercising?*

Our mind, i.e. Mano-may Kosh. The mind gives in to stress, resulting in greed for food, laziness and inertia, and not following most of the healthy lifestyle tips we generously dole out to others. In modern times, the field of Psycho-endo-neuro-immunology has established the link between stress and lowered immunity through our endocrine and neural systems.

Thus, through a process of elimination, we have pruned the list of causes for almost 90% of diseases, whether acute or chronic, to a single root cause – **stress**, i.e. disturbance in Mano-may Kosh. Let us now understand the pathway of disease.



## Genesis and Pathway of Non-Communicable Dis-eases

*Slow progression, long duration, non-contagious ailments*

### Part 1 - Yogic Understanding

The classical text “Yog Vashishth” talks of two kinds of ailments – adhij / आधिज (stress-borne) and anaadhij / अनाधिज (non-stress borne). As our living conditions have improved, most of the ailments we see today belong to the first category, i.e. stress borne. This includes diabetes, hypertension, high cholesterol, musculo-skeletal pains, gastro-intestinal disorders, hormonal imbalances (e.g. menstrual irregularities, PCOD, PCOS, thyroid, infertility), asthma, arthritis, auto-immune disorders, and various mental and emotional disorders (e.g. neuroses, depression, anxiety, obsessive behaviour, personality and eating disorders).

While the Yogic and scientific names mentioned above may be new to us, we all would've seen the practical implications of these in our lives. Let's reflect - *when did diabetes, hypertension or obesity start manifesting in us or around us?* In most cases, this happens a few months or years after a life altering event such as death of a loved one, a financial crisis, retirement, conflict within the family, dissatisfaction at work. Our Mano-may Kosh gets disturbed by these events, and the resulting thoughts and emotions significantly reduce our internal “immunity” thus accelerating the onset of disease. The classical text “Yog Vashishth” further explains the pathway of disease, i.e. disharmony in our PanchKosh:

- **Aanand-may Kosh and Vigyaan-may Kosh** are always present in their undisturbed natural state. We may lose connection to our inner wisdom and bliss, but that does not mean they are not present. Aanand or total harmony and perfect health is our true nature and original state. We are designed to be perfectly healthy. Aanand-may Kosh is a state of perfect stillness and no disturbance is possible. However, it gets veiled by “Avidya” (ignorance of our true nature).

Likewise, the Vigyaan-may Kosh is present but our connection with it becomes weak, leading to actions deviating from our inner wisdom. This state is called “*Pragyaa-Aparaadh*” in Ayurved, i.e. transgressions against one’s own conscience.

- **Stress, i.e. mental disturbances and imbalances in Mano-may Kosh (Aadhis)** are the foundation of poor lifestyle and low immunity. The disturbance is caused by various thoughts and emotions, which keep rising and falling in us like waves in an ocean. When we get carried away and submerged in these waves, our connection to our true self gets broken. The text *Bhagwad Geeta* details how thwarted desire leads to anger, leading to delusion – veiling our working memory (database) and rational brain (processor), leading to irrational behaviour. This is called the “amygdala hijack” by modern science.
  
- **Praan-may Kosh** – is the next stop. When the Mano-may Kosh is disturbed for long, dis-ease then moves to the Praan-may Kosh. Now, the disease is moving from subtle to gross, and functions of key organs start getting disturbed and we start getting symptoms. We mostly ignore this vital, transitional phase, but there are two key aspects to it:
  - Arousal of the master system – the nervous system – which is the root for arousal of all physiological systems. The balance between our sympathetic and parasympathetic systems gets disturbed.
  
  - The flow of vital energies through our subtle channels (Naadis) is affected. Some Naadis have excess Praan and some are depleted of it – breathing becomes arrhythmic, digestion and bowel movement is impaired, blood pressure rises, muscles remain stiff, headaches abound, and there is fatigue without much activity

- **Ann-may Kosh** – the last stop. As per Ayurved, a disease first manifests in the body in the digestive system. We are made of what we eat. But now, what we eat doesn't nourish us.
  - Digestion becomes more or less or disturbed, leaving toxins in our tract, which then affect various organs. These states are called *A-jirnatvam* (indigestion), *Ati-jirnatvam* (excessive digestion or appetite or both) and *Ku-jirnatvam* (erroneous digestion). One common symptom of all these is irregular bowel movement. We no longer purge at a stipulated time (early morning) every day (or twice a day) like clockwork. We can relate this with the importance of the gut brain and gut health, as being stated now by modern science.
  - As the disease progresses, organs are impacted at a gross level, the specific organ depending on factors such as heredity, weakness and injury of an organ. Thus, while the root cause is the same (*Aadhi*), it manifests as a variety of diseases across individuals. Now, the doctors will declare us as diabetics, hypertensives, etc. We finally get a certificate! These physical ailments are called *Vyadhis*. In some cases, the body is also impacted at a cellular level, leading to auto-immunity, a condition where our aroused immune system starts attacking our very body. This haphazard functioning is just a physical manifestation of our loss of intelligence at a mental level.

**Mano-may Kosh →**

**Praan-may Kosh →**

**Ann-may Kosh: Digestion →**

**Ann-may Kosh: Others**





## Part 2 – Modern Scientific Understanding

What Yogis understood thousands of years ago has become evident to modern science only in the last few decades. Why?

- **Allopathy** means “treatment of disease with drugs having effects opposite to symptoms”. So, if hypertensives have constricted blood vessels, “vasodilator” drugs address the symptom by opening them up. Allopathy is for **disease-care, not health-care**. Hence “once a diabetic, always a diabetic”
- Consequently, non-communicable diseases have been labelled as **idiopathic**, which means “a condition that arises spontaneously, or for which the cause is unknown”
- Modern science primarily applies a **left-brained, reductionist approach** of dissection and analysis of parts. This may have worked for infectious diseases but missing the subtle layers and big picture has led to today’s crisis with chronic ailments.
- Pharmaceuticals are now a trillion-dollar industry, second only to petroleum! Huge **economic interests** have led to corruption in ethics across research, academia and medical practice.

That being said, modern science has now also recognized these as psychosomatic ailments (psycho = mind, soma = body), i.e. physical ailments with origin in the mind. The Yogic disease pathway has been corroborated by modern research, and articulated as the below psychosomatic pathway, from mind to body.

Stress is an inbuilt mechanism that triggers necessary changes in our physiology to cope with situations that threaten our survival. Our fight-flight response evolved over thousands of years to protect us from dangers such as wild animals in the forest. This response equipped us to take appropriate action – fight a danger or run and escape it. Stress (disturbance in *Mano-mayKosh*) triggers the “Amygdala hijack”. A part of our brain (amygdala) signals another part of the brain called hypothalamus which sends signals through the spinal cord to the adrenal gland, releasing the hormone adrenaline. The hypothalamus also signals the pituitary

gland, which then gets to the adrenal cortex, releasing the hormone cortisol. These prepare our body to deal with threats by

- increasing the amount of **sugar** in the blood, so that energy is available to our muscles
- increasing **breath rate** so that more oxygen is available to convert sugar to release energy
- increasing **heart rate** to pump oxygen to the body
- making our **muscles** stiff and prepared for action
- dilating our **pupils** and making our **brain** hyper-aware
- In this process, the functioning of our **digestive, excretory** and **reproductive** systems is disrupted – as these are less critical when faced with a threat to life!

After this flight-flight response was completed, the sympathetic system would relax and the parasympathetic system would take over, bringing back all functions to balance, harmony, Yog.

While this response was designed for our survival, it gets triggered by modern-age stressors, as our brain does not distinguish between a physical threat and an emotional or ideological one. Now, even though we live in safe houses without dangers, our body still has the same response to stressful situations. Whether it is conflict at work, at home, with friends or inside us, our physiology still responds as above. The higher functions of our brain are suppressed and the most primitive part of our brain, that works for survival takes charge.

Even then, this fight-flight response can serve us, enabling us to take necessary corrective action to rectify our situation. But direct, physical reaction is no longer appropriate in our current context. We cannot run away from tough situations, or physically fight them, or even vent all our emotions as it is not socially appropriate. Thus, these physiological changes are not utilized in our body. Unable to deal with our external situations, we resort to suppressing our stress response or excessive expression, neither of which solve the underlying problem.

## **Impact of long-standing stress in Mano-may Kosh**

As we continue living with our stress, our body stays with higher level of sugar, breath rate, heart rate, muscular contraction, hyper-awareness etc. while some systems work sub-optimally (digestive, excretory, reproductive). Over time, this leads to diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, PCOD/S, infertility, obesity, asthma, digestive disturbances). It is important to note that:

- In some cases, the stress does not percolate to the Praan and Mano-may Kosh, as in the case with psychosomatic ailments. Here, mental health itself is affected through anxiety. In still others, the stress may vegetate within, causing depression, like kinetic energy getting converted to packed up speed
- In most psychosomatic ailments, the sympathetic nervous system stays stimulated. In hypertension, baroreceptors stop giving feedback to the brain to reduce the blood pressure, after long stress, with a progressively higher benchmark to signal.
- But sometimes, the parasympathetic nervous system becomes over-activated, causing a fundamental mix-up within! An example is gastritis, with excess acid secretion in the stomach, which usually happens only when we are relaxed. Another example is asthma, where the airway gets constricted, as is usually the case when one is relaxed. Relaxation is helpful, but excessive relaxation is not! The key is to maintain balance.
- This hyper-arousal and hyper-relaxation can manifest in our immune system as well. Frequent colds and allergies are two contrasting examples – in the former, the immune system does not act when needed, and in the latter, it acts unnecessarily. Imbalance in hormones leads to contrasting cases of hypothyroid and hyperthyroid.



## Questions for Reflection

- What are my most common “symptoms” at a body level?
- How did these symptoms manifest in the functioning of my digestive system (appetite, digestion, excretion, acidity etc)?
- Before these symptoms manifested at a bodily level, how did they manifest at a “praanic” level?
- Before the praanic level, what was the root of these symptoms at a mental and emotional level? What external situation triggered the above? What was my stress response to the external stressor?
- What will I stop doing, or start doing, or doing differently, in order to enable your healing?

## Step 2: POWER

*We have the power to make wise choices*

So, our body’s number one enemy is stress! But what or who causes stress? Potholes and traffic on the roads? Aggressive boss? Selfish family members? By now, we know that on the path of Yog, all roads lead inwards! **We are responsible for our health, our stress, and therefore, our diseases also.**

The scientist Hans Selye who coined the term “stress response” in the 1930s understood this too. **“Stress is Response”, not the situation itself.** While we may not always be able to change the situation, we can change our response to it. As the Yogis said, we all have the freedom *“kartum akartum anyatha kartum”* (to do, to not do, or to do differently). This is how authentic, internal **power** is defined in ancient Indian wisdom.

We can make the choice to continue believing that our health is driven by genes, the environment, or stressors around us.

Stressed by all this information we just read and taking full responsibility for our situation, we can get caught up in the sophisticated world of modern medicine, with an ever-expanding list of diseases (gluten intolerance, corona virus, AHDD) and cutting-edge, multispecialty treatments.

Or, we can sit back and take a deep breath. Tap into our Vigyaan-may Kosh and realize that if our disease is in our hands, so is the key to our wellbeing! Trust that simple, inexpensive tools such as breathing, eating and exercising appropriately can cure us, irrespective of the “specialty” of our condition. Why? Because they address the internal root, instead of grappling with innumerable external manifestations.

### **STEP 3: PURPOSE**

The choice we make now will define our relationship with our PanchKosh in the times to come, and therefore, our relationship with our own self. We can continue to be driven by our compulsive patterns, or we can see this as an opportunity to be truly free. To stand in our internal power, making aware and purposeful choices.



#### **Questions for Reflection**

How do you want to live the above statement, in the context of Aadhi (mental disturbance) and manifested Vyaadhi (dis-ease)?



## Key Points

- External reasons for diseases seem outside our control. Yet, if we observe carefully, we will notice that even though almost everyone is exposed to these factors today, not everyone gets a disease. This means that while outside factors can increase the chances of us getting a disease, it's not necessarily a strict cause and effect.
- Let us also apply our judgement in understanding this statement – this does not mean that no external factor can harm us if we reach a certain internal state of immunity. If we're consuming poisons, toxins, deadly viruses etc, we will certainly be affected!
- As per Yogic philosophy, the root cause of these ailments is in the mind – i.e. Mano-may Kosh. The mind gives in to stress and anxiety, greed for food, laziness etc, which prevent us from living a healthy life.
- Modern science has recognized these as psychosomatic ailments (psycho = mind, soma = body), i.e. ailments of the body whose origin is in the mind. This includes diabetes, hypertension, high cholesterol, musculo-skeletal pains, gastro-intestinal disorders, menstrual irregularities/PCOD/PCOS, thyroid imbalances, asthma, arthritis, and various mental, mood, personality and eating disorders.
- Disease pathway: Mano-may Kosh → Praan-may Kosh → Praan-may Kosh → Ann-may Kosh: Digestion → Ann-may Kosh: Others

**ANNEXURE  
FROM AADHI TO VYAADHI**

What are my most common “symptoms” at a body level?

How did these symptoms manifest in the functioning of my digestive system (appetite, digestion, excretion, acidity etc)?

Before these symptoms manifested at a bodily level, how did they manifest at a “praanic” level?

Before the praanic level, what was the root of these symptoms at a mental and emotional level? What external situation triggered the above? What was my stress response to the external stressor?

What will I stop doing, or start doing, or doing differently, in order to enable your healing?

## Chapter 7

# “In Yog with My Rog”

**How is my  
dis-ease helping me?**

### **Meaning**

Rog = disease. Yog = Harmony.  
I'm in harmony with my disease

### **Importance**

We can restore our body's health if we understand the true purpose and mechanism of our disease and make it an ally in our healing journey.



The last chapter offered an alternate paradigm for the cause of diseases and a choice to define our relationship with our PanchKosh. Building on it, this chapter explores an alternate paradigm for symptoms that our body experiences during a disease, opening up alternate ways to deal with them in future.

## **Step 1: AWARENESS**

### **Superpowers of our Body**

Our body has many sophisticated “superpowers”, such as

- Our nose can recognize and remember 50,000 unique scents
- Our eye can distinguish 10 million different colors
- In our lifetime, our heart creates enough energy to drive a truck to the moon and back.
- We are made up of 7,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 (7 octillion) atoms! Huh!

All its elaborate superpowers are geared towards one purpose – to stay Swasth – and to aid us in living our potential in life. It does it by maintaining Yog, i.e. harmony, also called “homeostasis” by modern science. We read about some of these mechanisms in the last chapter – sympathetic (stress response) and parasympathetic (relaxation response) systems to maintain balance.

Let us now see “Elimination” - another harmonizing mechanism to deal with internal and external stressors such as undigested food, thoughts and emotions, and environmental chemicals.

Our Praanic system works continuously to eliminate the toxins that accumulate as a result of these stressors through channels such as urination, defecation, crying, sneezing, farting (flatulence), coughing, belching, yawning or breathing heavily on exertion, vomiting, menstruation, mucous in our eyes, nose and genitals, and sweating. The body does not keep anything it does not need, case in point being involuntary breathing out. Even sleep is a mechanism to enable internal cleaning up processes.

Ayurved has identified most of the impulses above as “Adhaarneya Veg” (अधारणीय वेग), i.e. an urge that should never be suppressed. And how many judgements do we have as a society, on these elimination processes! How many sneezes and yawns have we suppressed, during meetings?! It’s an irony how we all understand the importance of cleaning our homes and offices, but in that quest, fail to do this our own bodies.

When our stressors do not find a resolution through our Praan-may Kosh, they manifest as toxins at an Ann-may Kosh level. Even then, the body works to eliminate these through pain, fever, loose motions, skin rashes. When these toxins are not eliminated, the symptoms cross their threshold, and more severe “diseases” present themselves. Let’s examine how we deal with them.

### **Our current response to our disease and symptoms**

#### **Ignoring:**

- Feeling stressed, anxious, sad, irritated or guilty has become an acceptable and common phenomenon, hence we often tend to ignore our Mano-may Kosh.
- The disease then progresses to our Praan-may Kosh resulting in disturbances in sleep, breathing, excretion, low energy levels, menstruation, etc. However, these disturbances also appear “normal” to us as almost everyone around us seems to have these issues. Many times, we are also not aware of these, e.g. *how many of us are aware of our breathing rate?* Hence, these also stay ignored.
- By now, the disease has reached the Ann-may Kosh. Often times, digestive disturbances (the first point of entry of disease in the body) are also ignored. *How many of us pay attention to the quality of urine and stool excreted by us?* By now, the disease has reached and affected a specific organ. The signals have now become symptoms.

**Suppressing:** What do we normally do when the signals have become disruptive symptoms? Sometimes, we try to correct the issues ourselves by measures such as food, exercise, home remedies. A more common response from our side has become suppressing symptoms.

The most common action that we take these days is consuming medicines e.g. painkillers, antacids. For many medicines, we do not even need to visit a doctor – we can simply talk to the chemist and purchase the “over-the-counter” medicine, or we may find some lying at home from a previous episode of illness and consume it. Medicines have proven to be a boon to us in many ways, as they provide us immediate relief, making symptoms disappear quickly, whether is fever or pain or acidity. But, do we really understand how they solve the problem, and the new problems they create?

Let us consider painkillers. We can use the same painkiller for aches and pains in various parts of the body – teeth, muscles, stomach, head, etc. *Who tells the painkiller know which part of body to act on, every time we consume it?* No one! The painkiller does not act on the specific part of the body. It works with our nervous system, where the sensation of pain is felt and numbs it out. Thus, any pain gets solved with the same medicine. It does NOT solve the root cause, but simply cuts the signal coming to us, leading us to believe that all is well.

Medicines come with side effects, the full list of which is too long to be written on the packaging. We may have observed that often times, we are prescribed 2-3 medicines for 1 dis-ease. Generally, of these, 1 is for our dis-ease and the rest are to manage the side effects of the medication. E.g. Anti-biotics create acidity and along with killing harmful bacteria, they also kill helpful bacteria in our body. So, we are prescribed antacids (for acidity) and lactobacillus (to replace the good bacteria killed). Hence, now, we have to deal with the side effects of 3 medications instead of 1!

While the knowledge of how medicines work may be new to us, many of us are aware of the side effects and long-term damage of medicines. What causes us to take medicines despite our knowledge? Practically, medicines help us to carry on our daily activities and lead productive lives. They also save us from unpleasant symptoms such as pain, acidity, insomnia, etc. However, let us also understand that while medicines help us in the short-term, they are likely to compound our problems in the long-term, drastically reducing productivity and increasing pain.

### **Impact of our current choice**

Nature cure system has outlined this progression of diseases, each step coming when the previous is ignored or suppressed:

1. **Enervation:** Depletion of vital energy
2. **Toxaemia:** Accumulation of un-eliminated toxins (signals - fever, flue, pain, loose motions, skin rashes)
3. **Irritation:** Obstruction of required assimilation in body's cells (signals – nausea, depression, anxiety, headaches, insomnia, weight gain, bad breath, body odour, coated tongue, dark circles under eyes, sallow complexion, irregular menstruation)
4. **Inflammation:** Acute pain, typically in concentrated area (signals - 'itis' such as arthritis, colitis, gastritis)
5. **Ulceration:** Eruption through skin to expel destroyed cells
6. **Induration or Hardening:** Toxin is contained through a sack of hardened tissue (signals – tumour, growth, fibroid)
7. **Fungation or Cancer:** Anaerobic processes triggered.

Many of us now manage our pains by consuming a medicine or getting an injection every few days. What will happen if we consume them repeatedly? We are cutting the signals of our PanchKosh to us, and moving on with life without taking action to address the root cause of our dis-ease or giving the body rest and time to repair and re-harmonize itself (i.e. bring itself back to Yog, and therefore to health). Repeated cutting of this signal results in smaller dis-eases snowballing into bigger ones.

Note how multiple episodes of suppressed fever, flu, loose motions and skin rashes can appear in completely unrecognizable and unlinked symptoms at progressive stages.

It is important to note that a disease progresses from one stage to another only when it has been suppressed or ignored for long. By ignoring the signals, we are making the disease more deeply rooted in our body. By suppressing the signals, we are further disrupting the harmonizing mechanisms of the body, and sometimes creating additional side effects through medicines. By holding “negative” emotions towards our dis-ease, we are seeding a new dis-ease in our Mano-may Kosh.



### **Questions for Reflection**

- Recall the last acute or chronic episode of illness that you had, and list down the actions you took. Categorize your actions into (a) ignoring (b) suppressing (c) enabling the body to heal
- Which of these strategy for dealing with your symptoms have you generally used more so far – ignore or suppress?

## **STEP 2: POWER**

An implicit belief underlying our common action of suppressing symptoms using medications may be that our body is helpless.

But, at every stage, the body is working to re-harmonize itself. Reversal is possible at any stage, except advanced cancer! In fact, the body deals with many “cancers” inside us on a daily basis, without us even getting to know. **All we need to do, is to not become a barrier for our own healing.** We have a third choice, other than suppressing and ignoring.

**For that, let us explore a different paradigm for a disease.**

*If a news anchor delivering bad news on TV of a terrorist attack, or a Postman delivers us a letter with bad news of a relative passing away, or a newspaper reports about the destruction caused due to floods, do we blame and fight the news anchor, or postman or newspaper reporter? No. Why not? Because they are not the cause of the bad news, they are just the messenger.*

*If we are out on a picnic and carelessly about to fall off a cliff or get drowned in water, and a friend shouts at us as a warning, do we shout back with anger at the friend? No. Why not? Because the friend is shouting to catch our attention and to save us.*

Our dis-ease and symptoms are exactly that! They are not the cause of the bad news, they are just the messenger. They are a friend who is signaling to us to catch our attention and to save us. The signal is telling us all is NOT well. It's a way for PanchKosh to communicate with us, and draw our attention for relevant action.

### **An Alternate Paradigm to Theory of Infectious Diseases**

Historically, the belief that infectious diseases came were caused due to micro-organisms or pathogens was propounded in 1864 by Louis Pasteur. This “germ theory” quickly took root, due to the immense commercial potential it offered, and has since then, shaped our fear of germs and need for excessive sterilization.

It’s interesting to note that was an alternate theory propounded around the same time by Antoine Béchamp called the “terrain theory”. It proposed that the terrain of a diseased body will attract germs as scavengers of the weakened or poorly defended tissue. Hence, **germs are not the cause of disease, but its effect**. They are not the enemy to be massacred through pharmaceuticals.

We can look to nature for inspiration on how to deal with these signals, as there is no system of medication, tests and medical practitioners in other species!

Dogs and cats are often around at home as pets or on streets as strays. If a dog/cat has fever or stomach upset, it stops eating for a few days. It stops playing. Instead it retreats into a corner, rests and sleeps. After a few days, when it has recovered, its hunger and playfulness is back.

If our bone is fractured or skin is cut, it self-harmonizes in some time. All we need to do is to support it in the process by restricting movement of the bone, or protecting the skin from water, etc.

**Innate power to re-harmonize and be in Yog exists in nature.**

### **Step 3: PURPOSE**

By understanding the purpose of signals, we can choose our response wisely.

- *Some symptoms indicate that the body is harmonizing itself:*  
Fever - When the body is infected by a micro-organism, its internal defence mechanisms (lymphatic system) jump to action. The temperature of the body increases in order to fight and kill the micro-organisms which cannot survive beyond a particular temperature. The rise in temperature indicates that the harmonizing is on. (Our typical response is to take a medicine which brings the temperature down)

Diabetes - When the blood sugar level in the body increases beyond 180, the kidneys start filtering out the extra sugar through urination, hence the increased frequency of urination in diabetics. If it was not for this, the sugar in the blood would start harming the organs (Our typical response is to feel upset and embarrassed at the increased urination frequency)

- *Some symptoms indicate that we should not strain the affected part, to support the body in self-harmonizing:*

Injury – After an injury such as fracture, sprain, cut, burn etc, the pain in the affected part stops us from using that part excessively, and instead give it rest, so that it can harmonize. (Our typical response is to have a painkiller or put a balm/spray and carry on)

Stomach infection – Our hunger reduces drastically. On an ordinary day, our stomach starts growling if not given food for a few hours, or acidity starts. But in such times, it gives no signals of hunger for 2-3 days. This protects the stomach and conserves Praan, which can be used to fight the infection and repair the digestive tract. The body also has enough reserves of fat which can be used to feed us in the absence of food.



After it's harmonized, the hunger returns and the stomach starts growling and asking for food 😊 (Our typical response is to consume an antibiotic and eat food fearing we will get weak)

- *Some symptoms indicate that we should refrain from actions that take the body's resources away from harmonizing*

Fever – We have associated symptoms such as body pains, loss of hunger, not enjoying the taste of food, feeling low. This is our body's way of asking us to rest – physically & mentally! So that our resources go in recovery. (Our typical response is to take a medicine and work)

- *Some symptoms indicate that the body needs other external support to address the situation!*

Hypertension and Diabetes – Most symptoms indicate that the disease is impacting other organs also, such as feet, eyes, kidneys and this is an alarm bell. We need to make drastic changes in our habits and lifestyle or start medicines, or both.

Fever – After the fever increases beyond a certain temperature (different threshold for different ages), the body needs external support through medicines, cold compress, etc

Various Ayurvedic and nature care home remedies can support the healing process at early stages, such as:

- Cold compress for fever
- Steam and warm water for flu
- Gargling for throat issues
- Drinking water and staying hydrated during diarrhoea

There are some common, underlying guidelines at each stage – which is to provide adequate rest to the PanchKosh.

- Ann-may Kosh (physical): Reduced physical activity, Sleep
- Praaan-may Kosh (physiological): Eating less

- Mano-may Kosh (psychological): Thinking less, meditating. Remember, excessive stimulation is a root cause of diseases, and hence, rest is the best remedy.

Let us not forget the amazing mechanisms and “superpowers” of our body. If it has the ability to create another life, to grow physically, to convert an apple it has eaten into a part of itself, to learn, to walk, to talk, then harmonizing itself is a simple enough function! As we become more in tune with ourselves, we can respond at the early stages itself - Mano-may Kosh, Praan-may Kosh, digestive system. By listening to and understanding our symptoms, we can respond appropriately – not be worried, take rest, refrain from certain activities, start home remedies, or get external support in the form of medicines when the situation has gone outside the body’s capacity. We can also use this knowledge to re-harmonize if a disease has already reached Ann-may Kosh.



### **Questions for Reflection**

- In future, how do you want experiment with the third way to deal with your symptoms?
- What will you stop doing, or start doing, or doing differently, in order to enable your body to re-harmonize?



## Key Points

- Our current response to our symptoms – ignoring or suppressing
- While medicines help us in the short-term, they are likely to compound our problems in the long-term, drastically reducing productivity and causing much pain.
- Our dis-ease and symptoms are not the cause of the bad news, they are just the messenger. They are a friend who is signalling to us to catch our attention and to save us. The signal is telling us all is NOT well. It's a way for PanchKosh to communicate with us, and to draw our attention so that we can take appropriate action. By ignoring the signals, we are making the disease more deeply rooted in our body. By suppressing the signals, we are further disrupting the harmonizing mechanisms of the body, and sometimes creating additional side effects through medicines. By holding “negative” emotions towards our dis-ease, we are seeding a new one in our Mano-may Kosh.
- We can look to nature for inspiration on how to deal with these signals, as there is no system of medication, tests and medical practitioners in other species!
- By understanding the purpose served by signals, we can choose our response wisely. Some symptoms are indicators that the body is harmonizing itself. Some symptoms are indicators that we should stop straining the particular part affected, to support the body in self-harmonizing. Some symptoms are indicators that we should refrain from other actions that will take the body's resources away from harmonizing. Some symptoms are indicators that the body needs other external support to address the situation!

- Let us not forget the amazing mechanisms and “superpowers” of our body. If it has the ability to create another life, to grow physically, to convert an apple it has eaten into a part of itself, to learn, to walk, to talk, then harmonizing itself is a simple enough function!



## **Chapter 8**

# **“An Integrated Treatment Paradigm”**

## **What is an Integrated Approach to Treatment of Disease?**

### **Importance**

Keeping in mind today’s context, we need to take an integrated approach to treatment of diseases, which harmonizes the best of the East and the best of the West.

## **Our Paradigm**

Today, we have a problem of plenty. With a large population having access to health and healthcare services for both acute and chronic ailments, we are often confused by a plethora of choices. Broadly speaking, there are two types of choices:

- **Therapeutic approach:** This can be any of the “pathy’s” or medicine-based treatment- allopathy, homeopathy, Ayurvedic or Unani or Siddha drugs, to name a few. Other treatments such as surgery, massages, acupressure, acupuncture, some naturopathy interventions also fall in this category as they require external intervention. They usually provide quick relief, and enable us to carry on with our routines, but may have certain side effects or induce dependency.
- **Preventive-promotive approach:** This includes modalities that we can use ourselves, such as diet, exercise, sleep and rest, meditation, to name a few. They usually provide a more sustainable cure and build internal vitality and independence in the long-term, but can take time to show impact.

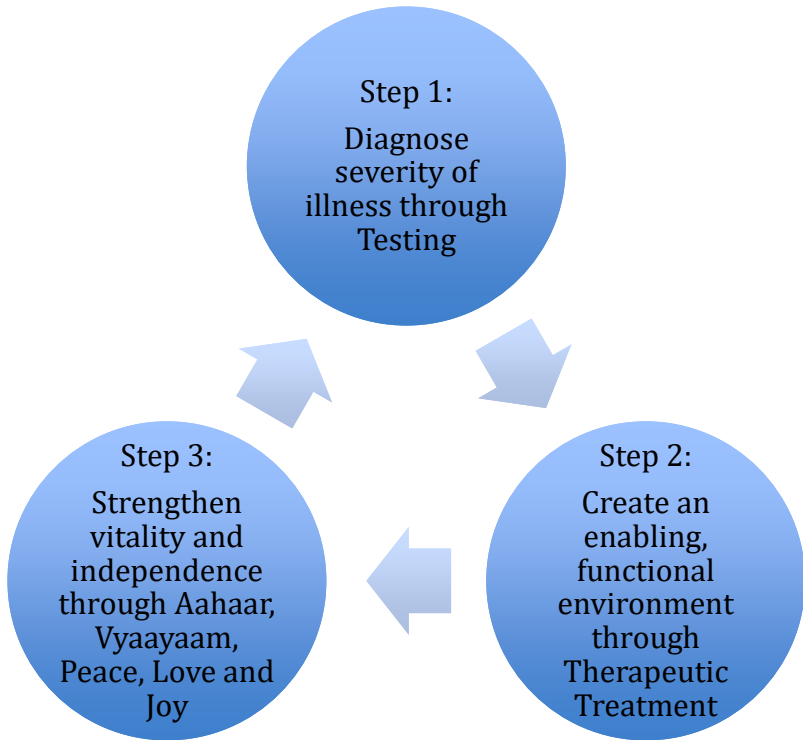
At Swasth Yog Institute, we believe that in today’s times, there is no single right or wrong approach. Yogis did not live in times with high levels of external stressors like ours. They also dedicated their life to their practices, that enabled a lot more vitality within. At a time when 60-70% of the global population is succumbing to non-communicable diseases, we need to adopt both strategies.

This applies even if we were to segment the approaches into two categories - Western Allopathic and Eastern Holistic modalities. As Dr Nagendra of S-VYASA says, we need to approach diseases like a football team approaches a match – we need an offense (therapy) as well as defense (preventive-promotive).

Our Integrated Treatment Paradigm is based on 7 key elements:

1. Diagnostic / Testing
2. Treatment / Therapy
3. Yogic Aahaar (Food)
4. Yogic Vyaayaam (Exercise)
5. Peace (a Yogic approach to Vichaar, i.e. mind and emotions)
6. Love (a Yogic approach to Vichaar, i.e. mind and emotions)
7. Joy (a Yogic approach to Vichaar, i.e. mind and emotions)

These come together into the following 3 step framework:



Let us examine each of these steps:

### **Step 1: Diagnose severity of illness through Testing**

Why: This will help to determine the extent of therapeutic treatment required in Step 2. In the onset stages, such as borderline cholesterol, Step 2 can be skipped entirely and focus put on preventive measures. In early stages, such as Stage 1 Hypertension, milder treatment is required and one may start with



Ayurvedic drugs. In later stages, such as Stage 2 Hypertension, we may need to visit an MD and take second line Allopathic drug. In advanced stages, such as Stage 3 Cancer, one may choose to undergo a surgical intervention or chemotherapy.

How: The testing may be done through invasive or non-invasive methods, or even a self-examination or filling of the Swasth Scale.

### **Step 2: Create an enabling, functional environment through Therapeutic Treatment**

Why: Though the effect may be short-term or come with side effects, it will enable us to be functional, and initiate Step 3. For instance, a broken bone has the ability to heal itself, but a cast or splint will immobilize the bone and encourage it to align. This step also minimizes risk of a further decline in our well-being. For instance, we may understand the emotions or food habits underlying our high blood pressure levels or high fever, but unless we take medications, we are at a risk of stroke or brain damage.

How: Any therapeutic approach may be used. We can determine the choice depends on the advice of medical professionals, and our confidence in our own ability to seriously implement Step 3.

### **Step 3: Strengthen vitality and independence through Aahaar, Vyaayaam, Peace, Love and Joy**

Why: These will re-harmonize our PanchKosh, by activating or enabling our self-healing mechanisms. They will also prevent disease recurrence or onset of other health issues in future by building our immunity and vitality, and addressing the root cause of disease – our Mano-may Kosh.

How: A wide range of tools is available, such as diet, exercise, sleep and rest, meditation, affirmations, sound resonance, breathing practices, dealing with our emotions, grounding.

### **And Repeat...**

Note that this is a cycle. After Step 3, we should go back to Step 1 to diagnose our new level of health. Based on it, we can re-adjust the nature and intensity of therapy being undertaken in Step 2.

This tapering down or increasing drug dosage based on extent of issue is called “titration” and is a part of standard protocols of most therapies. Not doing testing regularly can be risky, as both higher and lower than necessary level of treatment can be harmful for the body. E.g. A diabetic’s blood sugar level may have increased, and not increasing drug dosage will harm his/her internal organs. On the other hand, through vitality-building practices, the blood sugar levels may have dropped, and continuing with past drug dosage puts the person at the risk of a coma due to hypoglycemia

*It is also important to note that while we have talked extensively about the issues with medications in the previous chapter, the purpose of the discussion was NOT for us to go off medications. Without a medical degree, patients or wellness practitioners are not qualified to decide when to start or stop medicines. In fact, doing so suddenly may harm our body. This decision needs to be taken in consultation with a doctor.*

*However, with this knowledge, we can be more discerning in our use of over-the-counter medications which have become a way of life now. We can also have an open discussion with our doctor to understand when a medicine is really needed and how medicine dosages can be tapered over time as our health improves through other corrective actions by us. There are many cases of hypertension and diabetes patients whose prescribed medicine dosages have gone down gradually and even eliminated completely through this step-wise, circular approach.*



### **Questions for Reflection**

- Which of the 7 elements of the Integrated Care Paradigm do I want to focus more on, or less on, or re-adjust focus on?
- Which of the 3 steps of the Integrated Care Paradigm do I want to focus more on, or less on, or re-adjust focus on?

## **Chapter 9**

# **“Swaasthya”**

## **How will Yog restore my well-being?**

### **Meaning**

The Sanskrit word Swaasthya refers to the state of being Swasth, i.e. the state of well-being

### **Importance**

Understanding how Yog restores our state of Swaasthya, will help us to choose our path wisely and walk the journey without fear or doubt

## **The Potential of the Human Body**

The human body is the most advanced machine on Earth, designed to last for over a hundred years, and support us in our quest to achieve our highest potential, and to be the best we can be. This tool has been used by great luminaries to reach unprecedented heights in their respective fields.



## **The “Secret Sauce to Well-being – Yog**

The miracle of life has given our body the ability to recover and heal itself. Ailments can be reversed, state of health restored, immunity built for future well-being. It IS possible to reverse the effects of aging, to be healthier than we were 10 years ago, and to stay healthy with the passage of time! Not only this, our body can move from being an obstacle, to our biggest supporter as we become the best that we can be.

Yogic recommendations covering our PanchKosh work support with management (and even reversal in many cases) for a range of ailments - Diabetes, Hypertension, Arthritis, PCOD, Thyroid, Back pain, Chronic Acidity, to name a few. At Swasth Yog Institute, we have tried and tested this extensively through “Sanjeevani” – our course on Yog. 95% of the course content is

the same, irrespective of the nature of ailment, or income segment, age or any other differentiating factor. Yet, participants have experienced, on an average, a 60%+ reduction in symptoms at the end of 7 weeks.

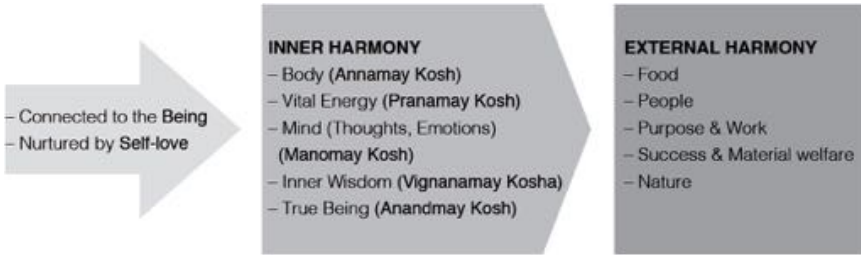
The principle behind the power of Yog is simple – to **identify and remove the root cause behind our “dis-ease**. Ancient Indian researchers (rishis) in the Yogic tradition traced back the root cause of “dis-ease” to loss of harmony within our PanchKosh, which moves us away from our true Self. They had identified how the disturbance starts in the Mano-may Kosh and then percolates through Praan-may Kosh till it reaches the Ann-may Kosh. If the root cause of dis-eases is the same, the solution, or the cure is also the same – restoring harmony in our PanchKosh.

A “Yogi” is one in whom these five sheaths of existence are in Yog, i.e. in Harmony. Yogis also insightfully understood how as we come into Yog internally, the harmony will percolate into our external world as well – relationships, work, success, lifestyle. This is contrary to our current direction of striving – we are constantly trying to change our external circumstances for our well-being!

The “secret sauce” to well-being is Yog. **Yog is NOT Yoga**. Yog means “union” or harmony. “Yoga”, the “modern” oversimplified version of Yog, is a set of physical contortions. Yog is the science to remove the root cause behind “dis-ease” and restore harmony. Well-being and harmony in our external reality is a natural outcome of this state.

Yog is a system for living, not practices for wellness. Its power can be compounded with aligned modern tools such as mindfulness, life coaching, body wisdom, somatics, affirmations, art-based therapy, non-violent communication, to name a few.

## An “inside out” approach to well-being



### What can I do, to get to Yog, to be in Yog?

Yogis not offered us profound wisdom on how to be in a state of Yog, but also practices and tools that can support our journey towards this state. These are aligned with our PanchKosh.

These tools are

- **Yogic Aahaar** (what we call Nutrition)
- **Yogic Vyaayaam** (what we call ‘Yoga’)
- **Yogic Vichaar** (cultivating Peace, Love and Joy)

### How do Yogic Tools restore internal harmony?

As we read previously, disturbances in the mind manifest as physical ailments, if ignored or suppressed for long. Physical and mental ailments are signs that the body’s self-harmonizing homeostasis mechanisms are off-balance. Either the sympathetic nervous system is over-stimulated (e.g. hypertension, allergies, anxiety) or the parasympathetic nervous system is (e.g. colds, asthma, depression). Sometimes, the system swings between extremes (e.g. Irritable Bowel Syndrome, Bipolar disorder).

Yog restores the internal harmony by aligning our PanchKosh with our internal, balancing rhythms. For instance, our Ann-may Kosh

has a natural balance of sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous system activity.

In order to achieve this balance, Yogic tools are designed to have alternate relaxation and stimulation.

- In Yogic Vyaayaam practices such as Aasan, one relaxes into a posture that locally stimulates internal organs, and the Aasan Sthiti (stimulating posture) is followed by a Shithil Aasan (relaxation posture)
- In Yogic Vichaar using the tool of Bhakti (prayer, faith), intense emotions such as love and gratitude for a subject are evoked, and then released through surrender and silence.
- In Yogic Vichaar using the tool of Meditation, we focus intensely on a subject (called “Dhaaranaa”), and gradually de-focus with effortlessness (called “Dhyaan”)

Having understood disturbances in the Mano-may Kosh as the cause of diseases, the importance of relaxation is evident. Consider a container with muddy water. Till the time the water is agitated, we will not be able to see the bottom of the container. Relaxation helps the dirt to settle down, and enables us to see the bottom, as well as the dirt. Thus, sleep, relaxation techniques, and grounding can be hugely impactful. In fact, slower the pace, higher the impact. This is also being corroborated now by the emerging field of somatic experiencing for trauma release.

One may wonder why stimulation is necessary. This is because there is a stagnation of excessive speed at the level of body, energy and mind, which cannot be countered merely by relaxation. Now, consider an overhead water tank with sedimentation on its floor. To remove the unwanted accumulation, we will need to stimulate the water and then purge it out.

Our system too, with accumulated stress, needs a controlled stimulation followed by relaxation to diffuse itself. Repeated relaxation enables the system to slowly return to its original ground state. In fact, relaxation that follows planned stimulation



induces a much deeper state of rest (and thereby, greater healing) than just relaxation. This has been corroborated by a wonderful series of studies at SVYASA:

- 6 hours of sleep (relaxation without awareness) produced a 9% reduction in oxygen consumption
- Just 22.5 minutes of shavaasan (corpse pose, to create relaxation with awareness) produced a 10.1% reduction
- Cyclic meditation (cycles of planned stimulation and relaxation in awareness) produced a 32.1% reduction

Thus, regulated stimulation and relaxation help the system in getting re-harmonized with its original cycles. It is important to note that the relaxation mentioned here is conscious and planned, not something happens when we plonk ourselves on the bed and go to sleep out of sheer exhaustion. Also, one should remember the importance of stimulation, as a way to move towards deeper relaxation



### **Questions for Reflection**

Reflect on each of the practices below, and try to understand its mechanism of action in restoring harmony (Yog):

- Breathing practices
- Loosening practices
- Meditation
- Grounding
- Yogic Relaxation techniques
- Adequate sleep
- Aasan
- Praanaayaam
- Sound resonance (chanting)
- Journalling
- Affirmations

Finally, let us remember that over-stimulation can cause more harm than good! Two common examples of over-stimulation are:

- Vigorous physical activity such as running, gymming, weightlifting. While it expends physical energy, it reinforces stress and does not support us in breaking through our patterns. Have you ever noticed how bodies of people engaged in such activities become overly rigid? This rigidity is also likely to manifest in the Mano-may Kosh. The flexibility of the physiology too, to deal with ups and downs goes down. This is resulting in the inexplicable deaths of many runners in their early 30s, even people without hypertension.
- Excessive expression of emotions in a bid to get relief from what is bothering us. Repeated recollection of our mental and emotional trauma actually adds to our stress in the long-term. Have we ever noticed how such people can become mentally and emotionally rigid, believing that their needs are of primary importance, and trying to change everything and everyone around them, to fit their world view? Instead of their stress dissipating through expression, it only becomes more.



### **Questions for Reflection**

How do I want to balance stimulation and relaxation in my overall approach to healing and specific practices?

 **Key Points**

- It is important to note that the purpose of this discussion is NOT for us to go off medications. We are NOT suggesting doing that at all! Without a medical degree, patients or wellness practitioners are not qualified to decide when to start or stop medicines. In fact, doing so suddenly may harm our body. This decision needs to be taken in consultation with a doctor.
- Yogic recommendations covering our PanchKoshs work support with management (and even reversal in many cases) for a range of ailments - Diabetes, Hypertension, Arthritis, PCOD, Thyroid, Back pain, Chronic Acidity, to name a few.
- The principle behind the power of Yog is simple – to identify and remove the root cause behind our “dis-ease.”
- Yogis not offered us profound wisdom on how to be in a state of Yog, but also practices and tools that can support our journey towards this state. These are aligned with our PanchaKosh, and using them together for the purpose of well-being constitutes an “integrated” Yog Therapy.
- These tools are (a) Yogic Aahaar (what we call Nutrition) (b) Yogic Vyaayaam (what we call ‘Yoga’) (c) Yogic Vichaar (what we call ‘Emotional Intelligence’)

## **Chapter 10**

# **Healing Pathway**

## **The road to wellbeing**

### **Meaning**

Healing Pathway refers to how the pathway that our PanchKosh are likely to take as we move from illness to wellness, and well-being

### **Importance**

Understanding the path to our well-being will help us to navigate the confounding factors that we face along the way with love, peace and joy

Congratulations to all of us on coming so far on this journey to heal ourselves! The fact that we've reached this point means we're ready to take several courageous and loving steps for our well-being. Since this journey is unique for every person who walks the path, we will come across some confounding factors along the way. Understanding the nuances of this journey will help us to navigate it with love, peace and joy.

**Confounding Factor #1:  
Why are there no disease-specific recommendations?**

Yogic recommendations covering our PanchKosh work support with management (and even reversal in many cases) for a range of ailments - Diabetes, Hypertension, Arthritis, PCOD, Thyroid, Back pain, Chronic Acidity, to name a few. This is quite unlike the allopathic drug-based system where each ailment has a separate set of medications to be prescribed.

Have we ever wondered how the same set of recommendations, with very little customization works for all ailments?

The answer lies in the principle outlined in Naturopathy, which also holds true for Yog – *“Unity of Disease, Unity of Cure”*. This means that the root cause of all diseases is the same (as per Yog - disturbance in the Mano-may Kosh – in other words dis-harmony in our PanchKosh). Hence, the solution, or the cure is also the same – restoring harmony in our PanchKosh.

The power of Yog lies in its simplicity. It is convenient, affordable, ease to understand, requires no elaborate equipment, and most of all, can be done all by ourselves. The simplicity reflects the profound understanding of Yogis.

In the words of Dr Vasant Lad, father of modern Ayurveda:

*Illness does not suddenly appear. There is a direct causal link between the factors that influence us and the effects they*

*produce. The cause is the concealed effect, and the effect is the revealed cause. The cause is like a seed, in which the as-yet-unmanifested tree is concealed. The tree is the expressed value of the seed. Health is the effect of a healthy lifestyle and healthy habits; disease is the “tree” sprouted from unhealthy habits.*

Yog is about cutting off the diseased tree from its roots, and replacing it with a simple seed with the power to create a massive, stable, healthy tree.

### **Confounding Factor #2:**

#### **Why is the pace of healing different across people?**

We may often find ourselves comparing our progress with others on the same path – why has someone’s weight reduced so quickly, and ours stayed the same despite full efforts? Why are some people reducing medicine dosages within 2 months, and there’s no difference in our case? By now we know that the Yogic path is of being fully with our unique self, and not comparing with others. Our healing journey will be unique, due to many factors, some of which are:

- **The nature of body signals:** We may feel a tangible difference in our level of energy within a few weeks, but clearing of our clogged arteries will take much longer.
- **How much damage has been inflicted on our bodily system:** Some of us may have been dis-eased for decades, while for some, the health issues had just started. A pre-hypertensive is likely to recover faster than someone who has been on insulin injections for 20 years.
- **Individual constitution of each participant:** We often want to come to perfect values – the perfect weight, BP, pulse,

blood sugar level – without realizing that each of our bodies is very different. While there are “average” values of parameters, there is no one-size-fits-all answer. Some people are naturally broad-shouldered and heavy built, while some are naturally thin. In Ayurved, these types, i.e Prakriti-s are broadly classified as Vatta, Pitta, Kapha, and their permutations-combinations. Unfortunately, in today’s world, certain body images are promoted – e.g. girls should be thin and fair, or boys should have muscles and be tall – which leads us all to hanker for these traits. Yog will NOT bring us to the body that we desire. It will bring us to the body that we’re designed to have. For one person, the optimal weight may be 50 kgs, and for someone else, it may be 60 kgs.

- **Our Samskaar:** Samskaar is a mental impression, recollection, or psychological imprint left by all thoughts, actions and intents that we have ever experienced. It is below the level of normal consciousness and is said to be the root of all impulses, as well as our innate dispositions. Our samskaars from this birth, or past Samskaars that we are born with also govern our bodily ailments.
- **Quality of practice:** The regularity, constancy and quality of our efforts determines our progress. Waking up early every day is likely to be more healing than fluctuating between 2 routines of waking up at 6am on one day, and at 9am the next.

### **Confounding Factor #3: Why have my health issues aggravated?**

As our body’s natural, self-healing mechanisms take over, some of us may experience one or more of these symptoms: freshness, ability to be more present during the day, higher energy levels, feeling of lightness, new ideas...

On the other hand, some of us may find that as we move on this path, sometimes, problems may get compounded for some time, or new issues may surface. It is not uncommon to experience one or more of these symptoms: cold, fever, diarrhea, vomiting, fatigue, feeling sleepy, mood dropping...

We may be tempted to bucket them into positive and negative symptoms, celebrate the former and be anxious due to the latter. But we can be at ease if we listen to our body signals and see them for what they are.

Both types of symptoms are often our body's attempts to heal itself by expelling toxins accumulated inside for long. As the effect of stimulants, refined foods, sedentary lifestyles and restless minds wear off, PachKosh will go through some ups and downs to self-regulate and find its new state of homeostasis, harmony, Yog.

This is good news for us, as it means recovery, detoxing and healing is on! If you remember the seven stages of disease build-up (from enervation to cancer), the healing process also follows the stages in reverse order.

We need to remember at these times that a dis-ease, an ill-ness is NOT our enemy. Instead of a fight, flight or freeze response, we can see it as our friend, listen to its message in our interest and take relevant action. The best medicine at this time is to listen to, and honor these signals and support the body in its healing efforts by taking the appropriate food, rest, relaxation that our body has been deprived of, for so long! We can remind ourselves of the Ayurvedic recommendation to never suppress impulses such as vomiting, yawning, crying and belching (called "Adhaarneey Veg").





# Chapter 11

## “Swa-raaj”

### How do I prepare for the journey?

#### Meaning

“Swa-raaj” means self-rule or self-mastery. The term usually refers to Mahatma Gandhi's concept for Indian independence

#### Importance

In order to achieve true freedom for ourselves, we need to take responsibility for ourselves

## **The Paradigm Shift**

The biggest paradigm shift needed, in order to be successful is to assume power and responsibility for our well-being. It is important to know that the two go together – Power and Responsibility.

So far, most of us have been operating in a completely different paradigm – the power is with our doctor, nutritionist, therapist or medicine! We have given them the power for our well-being – they tell us what to do, we blindly follow. We hope a pill does the magic. Along with power, we have also given away responsibility. If the treatment works, our healthcare provider was good. If it doesn't, the provider was not good! To a large extent, this is a very convenient system for us – we don't have to take responsibility! Like a company outsources certain tasks to vendors, we have outsourced our health to these providers

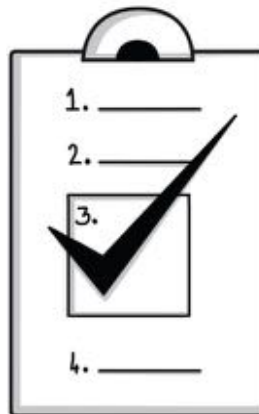
The Yogic paradigm requires us to own the power AND the responsibility. We empower ourselves, find the correct information from various sources, listen to our body and decide what suits us and what doesn't. But this also means we take responsibility – we commit to our body for our well-being. It is in our hands to act upon what we have committed to. If what we do works, we get the credit! But if it doesn't, we know there is no one external to blame.

If you are reading this or undergoing a program based on this philosophy, it means that you have made a choice to experiment with the 2<sup>nd</sup> option. Congratulations, for this courageous choice and for reaching this point! This reflect the reverence you have for your body, and your commitment to exploring a Yogic approach to your well-being. This itself is half the journey! The rest of the journey to well-being is walkable with ease and joy.

## Step #1: Setting Purpose and Goals

Purpose and intention setting is the precursor to goal-setting. As with any great change in our life we need to start by setting ambitious yet realistic goals. Becoming healthy is ambitious but the path to health needs to be filled with realistic, small, milestones. We can start off by listing out what our ultimate outcome is and then work backwards from there. Or start from where we presently are, by taking one small step at the time.

What is important is commitment, sticking to our plan with “Anushaasanam” discipline and continuing with it. In Yog there’s the concept of Mandala or a 40-day cycle. Every time we create a new habit we need to give our system 40 days (roughly 6 weeks) for it to set in, and become integrated in our nature. So, for each small milestone we need to allow ourselves at least 40 days of continuous work. A great place to start is a replacement plan where you commit to replacing processed, sugary foods heavy on animal products. If it seems difficult to let go of all at once try one item at a time for 6 weeks at a stretch.



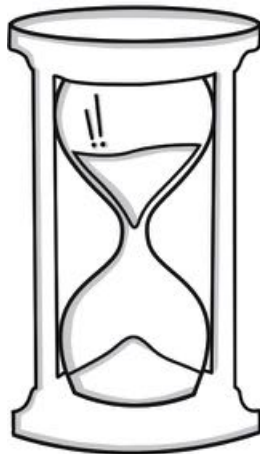
### **Practical Tip**

*Creating a vision board with our wellness goals, and seeing it every morning helps us stay motivated, by connecting us to our deep desire behind the steps we’re taking for our well-being*

## **Step #2: Ath (The Power of Now)**

The time to act is NOW. Transforming our life requires investment from our side. One of the scarcest resources to invest is our time. It seems that in today's world, the old adage – “Time is Money” no longer holds true. Time is money, yes, but it's much more than money. Many of us have money to invest in ourselves, but not time! And yet, without time, NOW, there is no journey. Hence, we need to “find time”, before starting this journey.

Taking out 30-45 minutes for ourselves every day can seem a lot at first. After all, if we had so much time, there are many other pending things we would finish! So, yes, let us not add anything extra. Let us first de-clutter! Before filling our almira with more and more clothes, let us remove what we don't need. We can identify many places where time is wasted, or small gaps available to us to be used judiciously – e.g. time on Facebook or Whatsapp, watching excessive TV, right before going to sleep, right after waking up in the morning, travel time to work, evening break, lunch break, etc. Even if we identify 6 such segments of 5 minutes each, we suddenly have 30 extra minutes in a day!





### Questions for Reflection

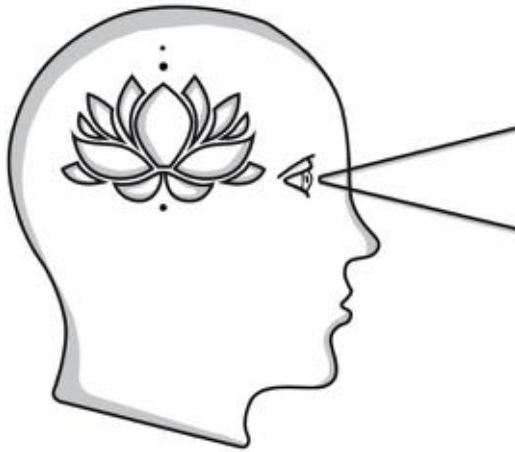
- Identify where you can cut out time and use for your well-being. Find at least 30 minutes
- Identify times of day when we can do implement some of the Yogic tools along with your regular work (e.g. time spent in travelling, during commercial breaks on TV). Identify at least 30 minutes
- Identify chores that your family, friends and colleagues could help you with, to help you have time. Identify at least 15 minutes

After doing this activity, you would've identified 75 minutes. Even if you use 50% of this free time for your well-being, you would've invested 37 minutes in yourself every day. And if you do this for 6 weeks, you will see the unparalleled returns on this investment!

### **Step #3: Anushaasanam with Jpy (Self-Mastery)**

Let's go back to the 1<sup>st</sup> verse of Patanjali Yog Sutras – “Ath Yog Anushaasanam” and reflect:

- Ath (Now) – Why do we need to do this now? Now is all I have. Now is the best time
- Yog (Harmony) – What makes us believe in the path of Yog? Yog solves the root cause.
- Anushaasam (Self-Mastery) – What is the need of Anushaasanam to meet our goal? To take our health in our own hands, we need to take our life, our PanchKosh in our hands.



Anushaasanam itself lies in our own hands! If we look at the life of any person who reached their potential, we will find Anushaasanam at every stage in their life. We may feel their life is different from ours, and it is. What techniques worked for them may not work for us, but the common thread of Anushaasanam remains.

## Chapter 12

# “Sah-Parivaar”

## How do I prepare others for the journey?

### Meaning

“Sah-Parivaar” means along with our “family”. For this purpose, family refers to our larger community of relatives, friends, colleagues and neighbours

### Importance

Our community is a core part of our journey to well-being. Engaging effectively with them can get us their support in the journey ahead



## **Gaining Support from key loved ones**

While the changes in our lifestyle may seem gradual to us, because we are going through a thoughtful and experiential journey, they may take our loved ones by surprise. Some changes may impact them (e.g. the ingredients in our food), and some may not (e.g. doing our Yogic practices silently). But they will definitely see us becoming a new person – our true self – that they may or may not have seen for a long time. Hence, including them with love at the start of our journey will go a long way.



### **Tips for a conversation to enlist support from our loved ones**

- Sharing our intention and purpose behind the changes – the dream we have for ourselves, and our well-being. Sharing the pain of our current situation too. This will make them understand that this is important for us
- Sharing our need for their love and support – telling them that their support will make our journey much easier and joyful. That we want them to be there as we walk this path. This will make them feel loved
- Preparing them for specific changes that might start happening –

sleep and waking timings, what we eat and drink, time for ourselves, expressing our emotions more, doing things that give us joy. This will not take them by surprise later.

- Sharing that most changes are for ourselves only – that we don't expect our family to do the same, unless they wish. This will give them the assurance that you are not trying to change them, and make them feel free to do what they want. This is VERY important. Let us first Be the Change, instead of trying to change others!
- Asking for specific support for some time – explaining that a few changes may impact them – e.g. food ingredients, timings - and requesting support for a few weeks/months (at least till program ends), to see impact. Sharing our openness to going back to the original routine if it doesn't work. This will give them comfort that we are open and appreciate the effort they will put in.

A great conversation will happen if we are embodying the 1<sup>st</sup> Yog sutra during the conversation itself:

- Ath: Acting quickly, acting now! Being fully present – sharing our truth, and listening to them
- Yog: being in harmony with our loved ones too! Understanding that this may be sudden for them, and being in a state of peace, love and joy when we have this conversation.
- Anushaasanam: being committed to doing this, and sharing our resolve



## Key Points

- The biggest paradigm shift that we need to make, in order to be successful is to assume power and responsibility for our well-being. If you are reading this or undergoing a program based on this philosophy, it means that you have made a choice to experiment with, or live with this new paradigm
- **Goal setting:** Start by setting ambitious yet realistic goals. Every time we create a new habit we need to give our system 40 days (roughly 6 weeks) for it to set in, and become integrated in our nature.
- **Appreciating Ourselves:** Keeping ourselves motivated through our journey of transformation is a very important enabler in setting new habits. we can feel motivated by appreciating our every success, however small.
- **Anushaasanam:** What is the need of Anushaasanam to meet our goal? To take our health in our own hands, we need to take our life, our PanchKosh in our hands. And ansushaasanam itself lies in our own hands!



## Activity

- Step 1: Reflect and identify - who are the people whose support would be helpful in your journey?
  - Family
  - Other relatives
  - Friends
  - Colleagues
  - Neighbours
  
- Step 2: For each person identified above, reflect upon
  - How can that person support you in your journey?
  - What changes in your lifestyle are likely to impact the person?
  - What are likely concerns the person will have about your journey?
  - How can you address those concerns with love, respect and care?
  - What do you need to take care of, during your conversation with that person?
  
- Step 3: Have the conversation



## **Chapter 13**

# **Ready, Steady, Go!**

- **Ready:** If you've read the chapters so far, reflected upon them, and done the activities, you're ready to go!
- **Steady:** You've now got a strong foundation in place to be steady in your journey over the next 3 months. And we know that once you've done the 3 months sincerely, you'll be ready to choose this path for a lifetime!
- **Go:** To go, pick one, two or all three Yogic tools through the following books in the series –Aahaar, Vyaayaaam, Vichaar

### **How to maximize the impact of these tools: Holistic lens and Awareness**

Each of these tools for well-being can be thought as narrowly impacting one Kosh that seems most direct. For instance, food seems to impact only the Ann-may Kosh (body). However, Yog considers the impact of this on all PanchKosh. Hence, awareness and engagement of each Kosh in the act of purchasing, preparing and consuming food is also important!

The difference between Yogic and non-Yogic approaches is not just a difference in terminology but fundamentally in the approach!

For instance, Nutrition typically has a very narrow lens:

#### **What is included?**

**Nutrition:** The food we consume

**Yogic Aahaar:** Entire journey of food from how it's grown till it's assimilated by our body

#### **What is consumed?**

**Nutrition:** Individual food items

**Yogic Aahaar:** Combination of various food items in a meal

### **What is food?**

**Nutrition:** The physical aspect of food

**Yogic Aahaar:** The following aspects also (a) Praan (b) Thoughts & emotions (based on how it was treated before it became food) (c) Extent of evolution (based on its position in the food chain)

### **How does food nourish us?**

**Nutrition:** Give nutrients (a) Proteins (b) Carbohydrates (c) Fats (d) Vitamins & Minerals (e) Micro-nutrients

**Yogic Aahaar:** Based on above aspects of “what is food”. The nourishment from food is more than the sum of the nutrients. Also considers assimilation and wisdom of our body

The Yogic approach is holistic, and based on the principle that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

Below are illustrations of how to engage PanchKosh effectively to compound the power of Yogic tools:

### **Illustration on using PanchKosh for Tool – Yogic Aahaar**

- Ann-may Kosh: Taking care of our posture at the time of eating food and afterwards to support digestion and assimilation
- Praan-may Kosh: Considering the Praanic composition of what we eat, listening to our praanic signals to understand what is appropriate for our body
- Mano-may Kosh: Consuming food in a peaceful manner without distractions, working through our food cravings by identifying when we're eating due to physical hunger and when is it due to an emotional disturbance
- Vigyaan-may Kosh: Listening to our inner wisdom to determine when we are full, trusting our inner wisdom and consuming what gives us joy (e.g. selecting fruits that we're naturally inclined towards)



- Aanand-may Kosh: Preparing food with love and joy, finding joy in what we consume, approaching Yogic aahaar joyfully rather than as dieting and suppression of cravings

### **Illustration on using PanchKosh for Tool – Yogic Vyaayaam**

- Ann-may Kosh: Learning how to keep our body in a state of “sthiram” and “sukham” during an Aasan, knowing how much to stretch beyond our body’s capacity
- Praan-may Kosh: Being mindful of guidelines for breathing patterns accompanying all practices, observing the pace of our breath during practice and adjusting course accordingly
- Mano-may Kosh: Mindfully observing the macro and minor changes in various parts of our body while doing practices, instead of being distracted
- Vigyaan-may Kosh: Understanding practices which support us, and which don’t
- Aanand-may Kosh: Doing practices joyfully and peacefully, rather than driven by obsessions such as losing weight and fears such as gaining weight

### **Illustration on using PanchKosh for Tool – Yogic Vichaar**

- Ann-may Kosh: Being mindful of the impact of emotions on our body, conversely, learning to observe and communicate with our body to bring hidden emotions to the surface
- Praan-may Kosh: Being mindful of the impact of emotions on our breathing, and conversely, using breathing practices to overcome difficult emotions
- Mano-may Kosh: Understanding our needs (unmet or met) underlying our emotions, identifying strategies to meet our

needs while maintaining external harmony, re-wiring our brain and creating new patterns to replace old, compulsive beliefs and ways of thinking

- Vigyaan-may Kosh: Overcoming difficult emotions through connection to the universe through practices such as gratitude, faith, trust, prayer and surrender
- Aanand-may Kosh: Cultivating practices that enable us to align with our truest selves and can replace our self-limiting beliefs, expressing our Self through Art

### **How to choose a tool for this journey?**

You can choose one or two or all three of these tools towards your journey. Each of these tools is powerful in itself! You may choose something that appeals to you and your disposition, or something new that you feel called to explore for yourself. Further, you can undertake this journey by using these tools sequentially, or undertake all of them simultaneously.

Our recommendation is to use all tools simultaneously, and creating ease by gradually implementing the practices within. This is because each tool complements the other, compounding the collective impact. The whole created is much greater than the sum of its parts. For instance, we are likely to find a reduction in our cravings for unhealthy food, as we start doing Yogic Vyaayaam. Hence, switching to Yogic food is no longer a challenge!

But, more than the choice of tool is your resolve to stay committed to the path. Habits and patterns cultivated over months and years take time to change! So, give yourself, and these tools time!

Wait a minimum of 3 months in order to see significant impact of your journey on your well-being. You will start seeing tangible

changes within the first 6 weeks itself, but the body needs time to heal itself and restore its original state of well-being.

### **A Reminder – The Journey will come with challenges!**

Yogi Swami Vivekananda said: *As the organization becomes finer and finer, it will be found in the beginning that the least irregularity throws one out of balance. One bit of food more or less will disturb the whole system, until one gets perfect control, and then one will be able to eat whatever one likes.*

The above statement applies not only to food, but also how we process other external stimuli. Just like our thoughts and feelings accumulate in the body as dis-ease, they can also get an outlet and be sublimated through the body.

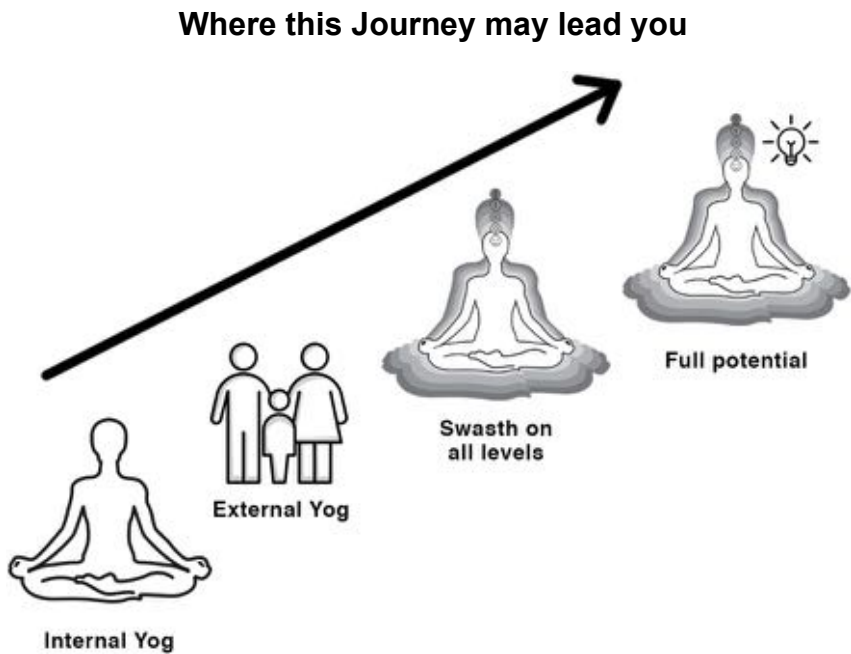
- We may find long-suppressed emotions unexpectedly coming to the fore, during a Yogic Vyayaam practice, or meditation, or in our dreams, or during a conversation.
- Our accumulated “samskaaraas” can get released through our body. Meditators experience this regularly through pain, heat, sensations such as electric currents in organs such as their back and neck, during meditation.

This is all part of the detox process, which will happen at a PanchKosh level! The process of coming into alignment with our true self, and of reaching internal harmony from a state of disharmony means a major re-alignment, turn or change needs to happen. As our Mano-may Kosh shifts, accordingly the Ann-may Kosh will also shift, and vice versa. In fact, resisting these internal shifts can lead to more pain.

One way to understand the reason for this phenomenon is that as we're coming to Yog, characterized by stillness, awareness, courage and ease, our internal systems feels it is safe, and no

longer needs a stress response of fight-flight or freeze. In this safety, old accumulated stresses buried in our subconscious or toxins accumulated in our system start come to the fore, to be addressed, and removed from their root. Isn't this why we've adopted this Yogic approach?!

These statements may seem hard to comprehend now, but the deeper we go into our awareness and practice, the more we will realize their truth from our personal lived experience, rather than words in this book.



This is just the start of our journey towards harmony in our Internal PanchKosh and in our external world. Yog can not only reverse our physical ailments, but revolutionize our experience of life, by uncovering our true potential. This will lead to our true well-being at many, many levels – physical, mental, social, spiritual and universal. An end-point of this journey, the potential for which lies within all of us, is this Jivaatma (finite Being) coming into Union (Yog) with the Parmaatma (infinite Being) – in other words, realizing the divinity within all of us.

And remember - let us not rush this beautiful journey, instead let's take time to enjoy the sights and smells on the way. To do this, let us learn to be in Yog, rather than "do" Yoga. One powerful tool to help you on your journey is the "Words of Self-Love" affirmation.

Read it at least **every day** for 6 weeks, and see the difference. It works! To know more about the science, read the book "Yogic Vichar". But better still, don't trust what you read. Trust your own experience, that's what Yogis have taught us. Read the affirmation every day for 6 weeks and assess the impact for yourself. ☺

*May you be in Yog.*

*May you live fully and freely*

*May you be in peace, love and joy.*

*May you be Swasth at all levels –*

*physical, mental, emotional, social, spiritual and universal.*



## **Words of Self-Love**

I am at **ease** and experience **stillness** within my Self.

I am **aware** and draw **courage** from my Self.

I am **strong** and feel **connection** with my Self.

I have **power** and discover **compassion** within my Self.

I am responsible to **act** in **flow** from my Self.

I am blessed with a **purpose**, for which my Self is in **gratitude**

I am established in my Self. I am **Swasth**.

I am **free** to be my Self. I live my **life fully and freely**.

My body, energies, mind and emotions are in **Yog**.

My home, finances, work and relationships are in **Yog**.

I accept the **past**.

I embrace the **future**.

I live in the **now**.

Every moment brings me **peace, love and joy**.

I allow myself to fully experience **peace, love and joy**.

I free myself to fully express **peace, love and joy**.

I receive **peace, love and joy**.

I am **peace, love and joy**.

I am **Swasth** at all levels –

physical, mental, social, spiritual and universal.



## **Additional Resources and About Us**





# About Swasth Yog Institute

## Our Vision:

For all to live fully and freely

## Our Mission:

To create an ecosystem  
which enables a state of internal harmony (Yog)  
within each individual's body, vital energies, mind and emotions,  
thus freeing them to be their true, full Self,  
and reach their potential.

## **Current reality**

A state of internal harmony within our body, vital energies, mind and emotions, enables us to be our true self, and reach our potential. Today, one or more of these are misaligned, within many of us. e.g. we are great problem solvers, but our ability to deal with emotions is limited. We are focused on creating a conducive external environment for us, but our inner landscape gets lesser attention. The result of this widespread internal misalignment is visible in the form of “dis-eases” across individuals, families, organizations and society.

Some indicators of “dis-eases”, i.e. absence of natural ease are: Increasing incidence of mental and psychosomatic (“stress-born”) chronic ailments in *individuals*, strain in relations in *families*, *depression* amongst youth resulting in suicides, disengagement and attrition in *organizations*, damage to the *environment*, and increasing *crimes rates* and *inequities in society* (such as income and gender)

## **What makes the situation persist?**

An individual is directly touched by a range of other individuals and institutions across one's lifecycle – parents, school, college, employers, media, healthcare and wellness providers, to name a few. A conducive ecosystem with many pieces in the puzzle – education, professional growth, organizational development, healthcare and wellness – can enable harmony over the entire lifecycle of an individual.

Sadly, the ecosystem today is far from its potential. Our education includes language, science and math, but does not teach us how to handle ourselves. Employers invest more resources on strategies and skill-building than culture building, role-modeling and supporting staff to be their best. Incentives of healthcare providers are not aligned to health. There is limited formal support for life changing transitions such as starting work, getting married, becoming a parent, and retiring.

Many issues prevent stakeholders in the ecosystem from contributing effectively – settling to address symptoms rather than the root cause, silo-ed approach with little cross-sectoral collaboration, misaligned incentives, to name a few.

## **How will we create a new ecosystem?**

We will build and nurture a community of leaders, who can support a range of individuals, institutions and communities to reach their potential, living their own potential in the process.

Based on a harmony-centered approach (Yog), the leaders will operate with

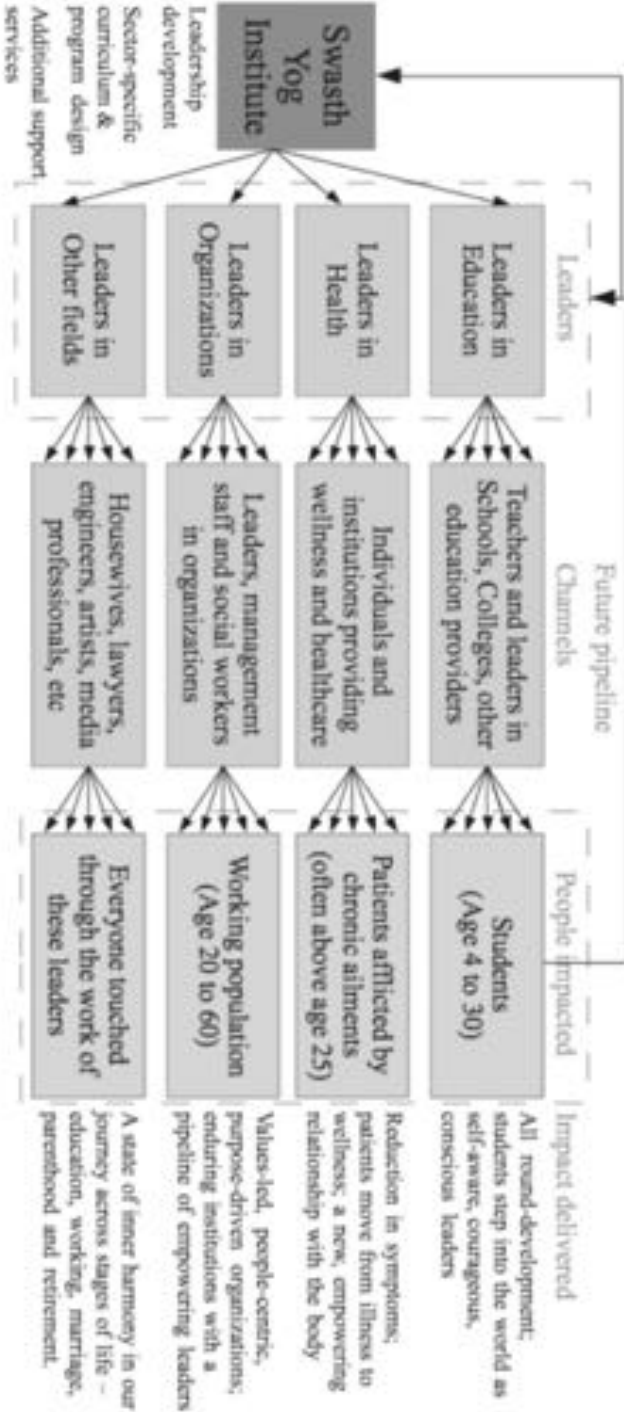
- Internal harmony (with our true 'self' by aligning all dimensions of our being)
- External harmony: Driving social transformation in a way that

allows us to stay true to ourselves while also bringing forth the potential in others

This will be achieved through

- **Leadership Development programs** to build self-led leaders who embody being the change they wish to see in the world. We will focus primarily for 3 sectors – health and wellness, education and running organizations especially in the development sector. The programs will be customized to meet leaders of leaders with varying contexts and skill-level, catering to management as well as grassroots leaders.
- **Sector-specific Curriculum & Program design** to enable leaders to tangibly integrate the learnings in the sector of their work. The in-house curriculum will support practical application of Yog in the above sectors. Leaders will be certified to conduct these programs for social transformation
- **Additional support services** such as consulting, research, quality monitoring and entrepreneur incubation to establish new enterprises.

From Treatments for Illness to Yog for Wellness



## **Key principles behind program design and resulting decisions**

**Affordable:** Developing our Intellectual Property (IP) instead of using expensive existing IPs; disruptively affordable pricing; range of price points to meet the needs of various segments

**Accessible:** Offered in regional languages; usable across sectors (e.g. organization development, education, wellness); Open source model for IP; modular programs to suit participant need

**Sustainable:** Fee-based delivery; cross subsidization models; remuneration for staff; expanding internal talent pipeline; based on time-tested Yogic wisdom of inside-out transformation

## **Our Secret Sauce – Yog**

**The Potential:** History is replete with examples of luminaries realizing their potential as individuals and as leaders of social transformation - Mahatma Gandhi, Swami Vivekaananda, Albert Einstein, Maya Angelou...We believe this potential lies in people from all walks of life - managers and entrepreneurs, teachers, social workers, doctors, housewives, artists, media professionals, lawyers and engineers.

The “secret sauce” to build stronger ecosystems enabling us to thrive and reach our potential is Yog. Yog is the science to restore internal harmony within all dimension of existence – our Body, Vital Energy, Mind & Emotions, Inner Wisdom and Joy. Yog is a system for living. Its power can be compounded with aligned modern tools such as mindfulness, life coaching, body wisdom, somatics, affirmations, art-based therapy, non-violent communication, to name a few.

Adapted to today's context with aligned modern tools, Yog can make us achieve far more than reversal of dis-eases. Yog can

bring us closer to our true potential – as individuals, organizations, and societies. This is a universally applicable approach needing minor local customizations.



### First area of focus – health and wellness

Our focus post conception in 2017 has been to establish a solid proof of concept in one sector – health and wellness. We are building Swasth Yog Institute as an action research center focused on building a community empowering health eco-system that integrates knowledge of the west and wisdom of the east.

This is enabled through the following key activities:

- Knowledge building and research
- Integration of knowledge into standards & processes (SOPs)
- Conducting training
- Monitoring quality of health and healthcare services and service providers to build accountability
- Providing Certifications

### Highlights of first two years

- **Well-being Curriculum Design:** We designed “*Sanjeevani*”, a 55-hour course\_for patients suffering from various chronic

conditions. ~100 participants across 8 cohorts underwent the program and experienced an average 67% reduction in symptoms over an 8-week period. The multi-disciplinary research resulted in a documented standardized curriculum and program design which is modular, customized and scalable with quality audio-visual content.

- **Clinic-in-a-box Design:** Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and Standard Treatment Guidelines (STGs) to deliver accountable primary care services, piloted through our network of 24+ Swasth India Medical Centers.
- **Training of Health Professionals:** Primary care physicians certified to treat key non-communicable diseases – hypertension and diabetes. A pilot undertaken to develop a new cadre of health coaches who can deliver the Wellness Curriculum, enabling communities to take charge of their well-being.
- **Early pilots of Leadership building:** Emotional intelligence workshops facilitated and personal coaching delivered to ~75 leaders across levels in Swasth with a panel of 20 life coaches over a 3-6-month period. The program received satisfaction ratings of 88%, and 92% of leaders reported an increased sense of their leadership potential – increase in confidence, better interpersonal relationships and clarity on vision for themselves.
- **Quality Monitoring:** An accountability system designed for ongoing measurement of quality of service delivery by a health system. The system was piloted with over 200 staff members of Swasth Foundation, simulating a range of players in the health ecosystem – medical professionals, clinical assistants, health coaches, warehouse, pathology lab, back-end services.
- **Certification and Key partnerships:** Affiliation from VYASA (mother organization of India's only Yoga University) to offer Yoga Instructor Certification courses.



## **Journey ahead**

From 2019 onwards, we intend to build on the foundation in health through the following areas of focus:

- **Research & Knowledge Building:** A Randomized Control Trial (RCT) to assess and establish impact of the wellness program “Sanjeevani” on chronic ailments. Knowledge Building in additional domains such as women’s health, dentistry, acute diseases, child health, other chronic diseases, cancer.
- **Development of Integrated standards:** Standard Treatment Guidelines (STGs) integrating Allopathic & Ayurvedic drugs. Standard Operation Procedures (SOPs) for various players of a health system (simulated internally at the mother organization, Swasth Foundation)
- **Community Empowerment:** Development of additional consumer warranty products and designing other interventions to enable communities to hold healthcare providers accountable
- **Training a wide range of leaders:** Building self-led leaders equipped with key skills to Lead from the Self - coaching, training, partnering and management. This will maximize their potential and enable them to create a multiplier effect at their workplace. Various programs will be designed and offered, such as building the first cadre of Health Coaches with women from low-income communities, and training doctors on self-leadership and prevention modalities
- **Quality Monitoring:** Develop a comprehensive accountability system to measure quality of processes and medical protocols
- **Additional Partnerships to offer certifications** to Life Coaches, Trainers and in Nutrition

Additionally, we will take our first steps in education and organization building by

- Training middle level managers and supervisory staff in a non-profit
- Piloting a leadership building intervention with school leaders in education

**The Dream:** As Vivekaananda said, each soul is potentially divine. We believe these seekers are everywhere – as teachers, housewives, social workers, doctors, lawyers, engineers, artists, media professionals, managers and entrepreneurs. We aim to ultimately be accessible to anyone who wishes to access their divinity to reach their potential, and enable others to do the same.

# About our Well-being Programs

## **Programs to support our journey to Well-being**

The flagship program conducted by Swasth Yog Institute is “Sanjeevani” - a 55-hour course over a 7 week period for anyone suffering from conditions such as Diabetes, HTN, Arthritis, PCOD, Thyroid, Back pain, Chronic Acidity. Well-being is addressed through a group course and personalized health coaching.

## **SOME TOOLS USED**

- Ayurvedic & Yogic Food
- Body Wisdom & Awareness
- Mindfulness & Self-awareness
- Aasans & Praanaayaam
- Creative / Art based therapy
- Life & Health Coaching
- Sound Resonance
- Affirmations & Mirror Work
- Emotional release & handling

## **RANGE OF INTERVENTIONS**

- Group Sessions
- Health level measurement
- Self-learning resources
- Personal consultation
- Diet & Lifestyle assessment
- Assessment of Learning
- Whatsapp Support Group
- Cooking demos & pot-lucks
- Participant-led celebrations at end!

### **What does the course offer?**

- **“Swaasthya” (Wellness):** A tangible, measurable difference in health which YOU can perceive. A feeling of well-being, being active and energetic.
- **“Swaraaj” (Independence):** All the knowledge, motivation and skills you need to be able to continue on your journey to reversing your ailment independently, over time
- **“Sah-Parivaar” (With family):** Tools to impact and influence the health of your family, friends and larger community

### **Impact of intervention**

Batches covering a wide range of participants – age groups, ailments, levels of severity, geography and cultural backgrounds have undergone the course and experienced the following results:

- **High engagement** - 98% satisfaction, 85% attendance, 85% successful completion rate ( $\geq 70\%$  marks in theory & practical assessments).
- 60% **reduction in symptoms** on a self-reported scale covering over 50 parameters.
- 95% of the participants reported **feeling empowered** to take charge of their health.
- **Reversal of many ailments** such as PCOD, Infertility and Hypertension post the course.
- In a **long-term impact** survey administered 6-12 months post course completion, 95% participants reported to be in a better state of well-being than a year ago, and 56% felt that the course had made a significant impact on their life.

## **What makes the program unique**

- **Sustainable solution** for long-term health – addresses the root cause of ailments
- Interventions at **multiple levels** – body, mind, vital energy, inner wisdom & being
- Grounded in a **holistic understanding** of Yog & Ayurved, but adapted to today's context, using relevant modern tools
- Meets the needs of a **wide range** of participants – age groups and background, type of ailments and levels of severity
- In-depth understanding of concepts through a **combination of theoretical and experiential learning** and practice
- Extended course duration, so that participants can **experience measurable changes** in state of health (previous batches of participants have experienced a 30-50% reduction in their symptoms)
- **Empowers participants** to take health in their hands, and walk their path independently after program completion
- A **joyful journey!** Participants discover their inner child, hidden talents, and dreams in the process...

## **Innovations in the delivery of program**

- **Use of a Wellness curriculum:** The curriculum is **holistic, modular** (deliverable in a range of formats, levels and modules), **customized** (to target conditions) and **scalable** with quality (audio-visual content).
- **Financially sustainable model for course delivery:** The program has been primarily delivered to low-income communities served by Swasth Foundation. A user-fee based model can ensure recover ongoing operating costs of conducting courses (rent, trainer salaries, marketing, learning material)
- **Course Delivery:** Multiple formats can be created to suit the

needs and interests of participants. People can choose from a variety of **modules** as per interest or relevance for their health **condition**. Each Module can be broken down into **levels**, making it easier to integrate changes gradually, and also building motivation to move up levels over time.

### **Illustrative formats of modular courses which can be derived from the main course**

- **Module-wise**: E.g. Nutrition, Healthy Cooking Alternatives, Understanding Diabetes, Yogic Aasan and Praanaayaam, Emotional release techniques, Art-based therapy (e.g. Performing arts)
- **Condition-wise**: Diabetes, Child Nutrition, Hypertension
- **Timing formats**: Daily, Bi-weekly, Weekly, Fortnightly, Monthly
- **Duration of engagement**: 1 Day, 1 week, 6-8 week, ongoing wellness journey

**Note**: These are “courses”, not workshops. Courses follow best practices of teaching to maximize engagement and learning outcomes for the participants, facilitate in-depth understanding of concepts through theoretical and experiential learning, consist of rigorous theoretical and practical assessments, and ultimately equip participants to continue walking their path independently post the intervention.

### **Why does this approach work?**

1. **Multi-dimensional** approach to well-being
2. **Addresses root cause of ailments**
3. **Measurable** impact on health outcomes
4. **Cuts through the clutter of conflicting “tips”** by integrating traditional and modern sciences
5. **Participant-centric** intervention design

### **Key success factors and how they manifest in program design**

#### **Multi-dimensional** approach to well-being –

The program integrates interventions for the PanchaKoshs, the 5 Yogic sheaths of existence - Body (Ann-may Kosh), Vital Energy (Praanaamay Kosh), Mind (Thoughts, Emotions) (Mano-may Kosh), Inner Wisdom (Vignanamay Kosh), Inner Bliss and Joy (Aanand-may Kosh)

#### Addresses **root cause** of ailments –

Takes an “inside out” approach by addressing underlying stress/emotions, which are the root cause of ailments. This has been established by Yogic sciences. The field of Psycho-endo-neuro-immunology too, has established the link between emotions and health, for chronic ailments.

#### **Measurable impact** on health –

Over 50 parameters are tracked regularly, enabling participants and health coaches to see progress, and course correct accordingly.

**Cuts through the clutter** of “tips” –

Integrates time-tested traditional wisdom (such as Yog, Ayurved) with modern sciences (such as Allopathy, Psychology, Mindfulness, Nutrition)

**Participant-centric design** –

- Focus on simplification and practical application of knowledge
- Participants empowered to take health in their hands, and walk their path independently
- Wide variety of offerings and formats available
- Personalized lifestyle modification planning, individual prescriptions for Aasan/ Praanaayaam
- A joyful journey! Participants discover their inner child, hidden talents and dreams along the way...



# About our mother organization – Swasth Foundation

Swasth Foundation ([www.swasth.org](http://www.swasth.org)) is a not-for-profit social enterprise founded in 2009 and committed to health and joy for all. Swasth’s mission is to build and demonstrate a sustainable and accountable health eco-system with joy. Towards this mission, Swasth Foundation operates 2 programs in addition to Swasth Yog Institute:

**Swasth India Medical Center:** India's largest non-governmental clinic network comprising 24 neighborhood one-stop-shop primary health centers offering comprehensive health services in 2 departments – family medicine and dentistry. Each as a one-stop-shop, each clinic treats infectious diseases like fever, malaria, dengue and also manages chronic diseases like hypertension and diabetes. The clinic also performs dental procedures from extractions and root canal, to oral surgeries and dentures. Swasth’s clinics offer innovations, the first of the kind in the healthcare space - like the lowest price guarantee and reporting time guarantee on Pathology Lab Services; 3-year warranty on dental treatment and a safety warranty on family health treatments. Each of these, is an enforceable quality assurance, designed to deliver a patient-centric experience.

**Aanand Aalaya (“Abode of Joy”):** A wellness center operated by a health coach – a new cadre of health professionals who harmonise the wellness disciplines of Yog and Life Coaching, thus empowering the community to take charge of their own health. The center conducts various workshops and screening camps in the community and offers wellness services like yoga classes, yoga courses, nutrition courses, etc at the center. At Swasth, our impact and outcome metrics reflect our commitment to delivering high-quality, patient-centric, affordable

services at scale to the urban poor. Our programs are designed to deliver high-quality at low cost (half of market rates), in a scalable and self-sustaining manner. As of 2019, Swasth has served 800,000+ patient visits, delivering direct savings of ~INR 10 crore of patients, with a 4.2-star rating.

*At Swasth Foundation, we aim for all to be in Self and experience health and joy. This is reflected in our motto - 'Swasth Raho, Aanandit Raho' (Be in Self, Be in Joy)*

## My Journey

by **Garima Gupta Kapila, Founder of Swasth Yog Institute**

*Garima graduated from IIT Delhi in 2005 and started her career as a management consultant at McKinsey & Company's India practice. She joined Teach For India (TFI)'s core start-up team in October 2008 and setup operations in Mumbai and managed its subsequent scale-up. She moved to Swasth in 2012, heading multiple verticals over the next 3 years focusing on improving performance & productivity, institutionalizing systems & processes as well as training staff for scale. In 2015, she took up the role as the COO of Swasth, overseeing Operations & Quality Improvement.*

*Garima has an avid interest in Yoga, and established the Swasth Yog Institute, after obtaining a Post Graduate Diploma in Yoga Therapy (and Yoga Instructor's course) from S-VYASA, India's only Yoga University. She is also a Certified Professional Coach from the International Coaching Federation (ICF) and completed her ACC accreditation from ICF in 2018. Additionally, she obtained a Plant-Based Nutrition Certificate with a scholarship from the T. Colin Campbell Center for Nutrition Studies in 2019. A life-long learner Garima is currently pursuing an MS in Yoga from SVYASA, studying Integral Somatic Psychology and has commenced her journey in research as a Lown Scholar selected by the Harvard School of Public Health.*

I have a deep desire for seeing a world where we can all live fully and freely, where each of us can feel – “I’m free to be me”. A world where all of us can reach our highest potential, with the full

support of our body, in our endeavors.

*This is my belief:* The human body is an advanced machine, designed to last for over a hundred years, and support us in our quest to achieve our highest potential, to be the best we can be. The miracle of life has given our body the ability to recover and heal itself. Ailments can be reversed, health restored, immunity built for future well-being. It IS possible to reverse the effects of aging, and to be healthier than we were 10 years ago!

This belief is not born out of reading books and having intellectual conversations, but by living this truth. As I look back, I see three distinct chapters unfolding simultaneously in my life.

## **Chapter one – From Yoga to Yog**

At the age of 23, while living my professional dream, as a consultant in India's premier management consultant firm, I had to reluctantly go to a Yoga ashram for a month, due to a debilitating back-pain, not solvable through any form of western or a range of alternative treatments including Ayurvedic massages, Yoga Aasanas and even Hypnotherapy. It was here that I discovered "Yog" (now known as Yoga) preserved in its true form. I learnt that Yog (literally meaning "union" or "harmony") is not bodily postures & contortions – but being connected to the body, vital energies, emotions, thoughts and inner joy. This connection took me to the root cause of my ailment – misalignment between my corporate work and my interest in the social sector. The way my body responded as I connected with this underlying cause was nothing short of miraculous. Since that time in 2007, my backpain has never returned, whether I'm swimming, running, trekking or working late. In the process, I also discovered a way to dissolve the conflict between my skills and interests – becoming a consultant in the social sector practice of the Firm where I worked.

I also got to know of thousands of cases of successful disease reversal through Yogic practices, documented & validated by modern scientific research. Over the next 10 years, this interest in well-being led me to dozens of explorations and readings. I also got trained formally and completed my Yoga Instructor's Course, followed by a Post Graduate Diploma in Yoga Therapy from S-VYASA, India's only Yoga University.

## **Chapter two – From Diets to Ayurvedic & Yogic Aahaar**

Along the way, I also discovered the importance of *Yogic Aahaar* (food) in today's context. All around – there were so many diets being proposed – high-carb, low-card, high-protein, low-protein, paleo, keto, fruit, vegan... While these diets looked at the body's need for nutrients, it was rare to find practitioners who saw *Aahaar* in a yogic manner – i.e. considering the food's vital energies, the effect of combining foods in a meal, the role of our mind and emotions in Aahaar. I found the answer in Ayurvedic principles, with some tweaks in application, given our context today.

Applying these in my life led to gradually shedding the excess weight I had put on, my skin clearing up, and a feeling of freshness and lightness through the day. The result - today, I feel 10 years younger and 10 times happier! My belief became rock solid when I found my family members also reversing many health issues they had come to accepted as part of life, by applying the learnings. There was a gradual reduction in medications for hypothyroid, high blood pressure, diabetes and nutrient deficiencies which being taken for several years by my mother-in-law (our first patient, who whom I'm forever grateful!).

Also, I understood the failures of prevalent approaches towards well-being - traditional sciences have been oversimplified today – yog has become “yoga” and Ayurved has become “Ayurveda”. Yoga is understood as a series of asanas and pranaayaams, and

Ayurveda is associated with Panchakarma massages and medications. Further, pure practitioners of these sciences have sometimes failed to adapt their “language” and practices to the modern context, or have retreated into secrecy to preserve the purity of their practice. On the other hand, “modern” western science suffers from an overload of information, conflicting research, mounting evidence on the damaging “side” effects of medications and surgical interventions and multiple retractions of widely accepted “modern” research after being disproved by long-term studies.

### **Chapter three – Harmony within Mind and Emotions**

One more piece in my journey needed to be aligned – my personality led by my mind and emotions

The story of the first 33 years of my life had been a struggle of finding, and trying to attain my highest potential. For the longest time, I believed the way to do that was to become **free and perfect**. This quest for perfection drove me to become an over achiever at a young age – top 100 All India Rank in IIT, get the dream job as a management consultant, and head teams of 100+ people in my 20s. At a personal level, my desire was always to be “strong, confident, independent”, unlike the stereotypical women. This made me rise above “feminine” looks and emotions, take charge of my life, live life at my own terms and not as per societal norms.

Until I realized, that even after doing and getting all the above, I wasn't happy. The more I achieved, the more worthless I felt. The more I fought norms, the more I felt imprisoned. Externally, I had all the freedom and validations I needed – supportive parents, spouse, in-laws, friends, colleagues as well as resume value achievements to die for. But none of it made me feel perfect and free. As I cut needs, desires, relationships and external measures

of success, by giving up the corporate sector and transitioning to a simpler life in the development sector, I was healthier and happier, but still felt imprisoned and unworthy. Until I realized the person holding myself back was me. And then I started fighting myself. Trying to change myself. Become a better human being. I meditated, travelled, attended workshops, read, tried to give importance to relationships, did whatever I could to “find myself”. The process was tough! It was so hard to become a yogi – the more I tried, the harder it seemed!

And then I realized, where these 2 intense needs were coming from:

- The need for freedom, was actually the need to be free from my self-limiting beliefs, and to step into my Being, like a child. But I did not recognize that my need for freedom had become so intense, that I had become bound by it!
- The need to achieve my highest potential, which often manifested in a manic drive for perfection, stemmed from the insecurities I had developed myself, in my early childhood years and reinforced to myself throughout life.

I realized that to break this vicious cycle of wanting freedom and to be perfect – I had to step away from “wanting” to “being”. I am, right here, right **now**, free and the best I can be. I have that choice at every instant. The free child I want to find again, lives inside me. To access it, the place to start is **LOVE**. Love and acceptance for myself – my mistakes, wrong-doings, shortcomings, life choices, past, present, future.

#### **Chapter four - Domino effect**

Suddenly, the pieces started fitting together. I was doing the same activities, but the feeling and therefore the outcome changed. Writing became a way to facilitate a dialogue between my inner child and critic, workshops became an avenue to test out small

changes in my being, work became a means to be connected to my fellow human beings, meeting family and friends became an avenue to share and exchange ideas, music a means to access and express the whole range of my emotions, reading a way to receive messages from the universe.

And then small changes in **outcomes** began to emerge – prose changed to poetry, restricted movements to freely dancing, doing to being, later to now. In the process, I re-discovered many **parts** inside me – the innocent inner child, my feminine part, my masculine strength, the parental critic who actually wants the best for me.

I began to **feel** things I had forgotten –

- Love for all parts of me, and others
- Joy at the lightness of being, externalized through creative expression
- Harmony within (mind, body, soul, emotions, masculine-feminine) and outside (relationships, nature)
- Freedom from myself
- Gratitude

Most of all, I learnt to get truly connected to the source of answers to all questions – my inner self / voice / wisdom / intuition. I was no longer alone, I always had a companion inside!

## Chapter five - Unravelling the mystery

With this being, I could unlock the secret which I had almost given up on being able to understand! Yes, I found the purpose of my life. *Ma raison-d-etre*. The reason for the birth of this earth-bound visitor, I. The most liberating part of this knowledge, was that I was but an instrument in the hands of God.



It started as designing a well-being program based on the principles of Yog and Ayurved, but adapted correctly in today's context, combined with relevant modern tools & research. In doing so, I feel blessed to have been able to combine all the skills in my palette – engineering a well-being program, delivering measurable impact through management principles, incorporating best practices in adult learning techniques, knowledge of yog therapy, nutrition and life coaching. This led me to Swasth Yog Institute.

Now the goal for me has shifted. I'm no longer looking to be perfect, and free. Because I AM perfect. I am a child of God. And knowing that has made me free. Knowing my purpose, which seemed burdensome for a while, doesn't seem so anymore. My purpose exists, with or without me knowing it. My purpose, like my life, is not mine! I am an instrument of God or whatever other name we wish to give to the universal force that creates, sustains and destroys us. if I can enable the universe to meet its will through me, then I will have lived fully and freely, and also reached my highest potential.

# Resource People and Institutions

Sharing, not hoarding is the spirit of yog, of union. In this spirit, we have created the following YouTube channel with resources for well-being: <https://tinyurl.com/swasth-yog-institute>  
[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzP\\_q2xogzk4Zf7J56Mkn\\_g](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzP_q2xogzk4Zf7J56Mkn_g)

The channel contains videos of recipes as per Yogic Aahaar guidelines, Yogic practices (such as Praanaayaam, Asan, Loosening Practices, Dynamic Practices), Guided Audios for Meditations, Talks on Spirituality, to name a few. All are welcome to use and refer these resources. Also, feel free to email us to get access to the templates and checklists used in the book.

Following organizations and people could be potential resources for you, as you chart out your journey. Their work has been a great support to us in re-discovering Yog, and we are forever indebted to them.

## **Yog, Ayurved & Body Wisdom**

- Isha Foundation
- Kaivalyadhama (Lonavala)
- The Yoga Institute (Santacruz, Mumbai)
- Swami Vivekaananda Yoga Anusandhana Samsthana
- Dr Robert Svoboda
- Dr Claudia Welch
- Suzanne Scurlock-Durana

## **Life Purpose Work**

- Mission Impossible Leadership Program

## **Emotional development**

- Leadership That Works (LTW)
- Indian Society for Applied Sciences & Behaviour (ISABS)
- Dr Wasundhara Joshi (*Changeworks*)
- Louise Hay
- Manav Sadhana
- Sukhvinder Sircar (Joyous Woman)
- Vikram Bhatt (Leadership That Works)

## **Yogic Aahaar - Food, Nutrition**

- Vaidya Atreya Smith
- Dr Vasant Lad
- PHC Clinic and Nutrition Science (*Bengaluru*)
- Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine (*PCRM*)
- Sanctuary for Health and Reconnection to Animals and Nature (*SHARAN*)
- The Health Awareness Center (*THAC*)
- T. Colin Campbell Center for Nutrition Studies

## **Spirituality**

- Art of Living
- Chinmaya Mission
- Isha Foundation
- Mukeshaanand (<http://www.mukeshaanand.org/>)
- Ramana Maharshi Ashram
- Vipassana

# References

## Additional Reading – Books

- Course documents of Post-Graduate Diploma in Yoga Therapy, SVYASA University
- Inner Engineering by Sadhguru
- Cancer: A yogic perspective, by Sadhguru

## Additional Reading and Video Links

- Excerpt from an interview with Sadhguru on listening to our body -  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M1mFPoMY\\_aY&t=15s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M1mFPoMY_aY&t=15s)
- Rohit Arya's commentary -  
<https://aryayogi.wordpress.com/2013/12/12/rohit-arya-on-yoga-sutras-ch1v1-atha-yoga-anushasanam/>
- Sadhguru's commentary -  
<https://isha.sadhguru.org/in/en/wisdom/article/classical-yoga-the-influence-of-patanjali>
- Animated film introducing stress -  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7S\\_BB7R8NMU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7S_BB7R8NMU) - 1 min
- Scientific explanation to stress -  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RyP8L3qTW9Q>
- [Cancer - An Eradicable Epidemic – by Sundeep Kapila](#)
- Akshay Kumar and discipline -  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KSf3vde-odQ>
- Technology of Spirituality (Full Version), on Vigyaan-May Kosh - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I9aR\\_xfm-gE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I9aR_xfm-gE)