

# Health is not everything, but everything is nothing without health!

*“Health is not everything, but everything is nothing without health!” With this thought, attributed to a Western scientist, the Indian spiritual master and author of the system “Yoga in Daily Life”, His Holiness Vishwaguru Mahamandaleshwar Paramhans Swami Maheshwaranda, simply called “Swamiji” by his disciples, opened his lecture on Wednesday in a completely sold-out Slovene National Theater in Nova Gorica.*

NOVA GORICA

That Swamiji should explain how to attain and maintain health could be expected, considering the title of the lecture “Yoga in Daily Life - the Healthy Way of Living”. However, those of us who heard him for the first time, could not have guessed that the words coming from the mouth of the charismatic, orange clad, world known Ambassador of Peace would be so simple and at the same time so very convincing.

## Health is the first happiness

Everyone probably agrees that “health is man’s first happiness”, as Swamiji expounds or “our greatest treasure” as is usually said in our parts. The Indian spiritual master explained that the first medical system was brought to our planet by god Danmantri along with Ayurveda’s message. “Ayurveda is a science and wisdom of life. Danmantri’s message was that every individual can be his own physician”.

And that is the essence of it all, should we fail to take care of our health, we will loose happiness, as well as wealth. “Our health is

mostly influenced by the food we eat, our way of thinking, our relationship towards ourselves and the world, and the influence of the environment.”

“What we eat and how we eat is of the utmost importance. It is not just a matter of filling the stomach, or of eating delicious

food. Our health and our attitude will be such as the food we eat. That is why it is so important that the food we eat is healthy.”

It goes without saying that Swamiji is not in favour of eating meat. He recommends that once a year, we should go on a special detoxifying three-week diet consisting of only fruits and vegetables (raw or

cooked), but without potatoes and bananas. During this diet it is advisable to practice asanas (physical exercises). With a smile, Swamiji remarked that it could be said this a rejuvenation diet.



### Positive thinking

The way of thinking has a special place in Yoga. "Our mind is like an elephant. It can also be as a difficult monkey. You must realize that the worst pollution is mental pollution. Modern psychology teaches that with negative thinking we are actually polluting ourselves."

Furthermore, how we act also plays an important role in our health.

"It costs us nothing to be kind, polite and respectful towards others. "As we behave to others, so they will treat us", he said. He also warned about our treatment of nature: "A tree should never be cut down without need, it would be better to protect it". With modern technology, high buildings can be built in a very short amount of time, but it is impossible to force a tree to grow quickly to an equivalent height. As an American Indian once said: "When the last fish dies, and the last tree is chopped down, Oh white man, only then will you realize that you cannot eat your dollars. Hence, respect our trees and be kind to forests. Let us be respectful and humble to our planet. We should leave it unsoiled to our descendants, just as we have received it from our ancestors.

The system Yoga in Daily Life is a science of body, mind and consciousness. It's goal is physical, mental, social and spiritual health, care for the environment and all creatures, world peace, respect and understanding between religions, nations and cultures, as well as spiritual development and God realization. The most important spiritual principle of Yoga is Ahimsa - non-aggression in thought, words or actions. This is the motivation, for Swamiji's work on World Peace.

### Gift of time

Swamiji also brought to our attention the shortage of time that is afflicting our society. "I came to you, to offer you my time, as you seem to have none" he exclaimed to the evident approval of the assembled listeners. He then continued: "The day has 24 hours. Eight of these you have reserved for work. I can tell you that if everyone in Slovenia worked 8 full hours, without frequent

coffee breaks and private telephone calls, the economy would be in excellent shape. Eight hours are set aside for sleeping, which is very important for our health, body and digestion. Of the remaining eight hours, one could be used for personal hygiene, another for cooking and half an hour for eating. At most one hour will be spent shopping. An hour or two, you should spend with your family: talk with each other and be happy. We should be aware of how much the environment and atmosphere in which we live influences our health. After all this, three hours are left over and these we should use for ourselves. This time could be used for yoga exercises, prayer, meditation, relaxation ... If all of you, present here today, were to practice Yoga three hour daily, Nova Gorica would soon be named the healthiest of cities.

### Willpower and discipline

"Without need, not even a shoe is pulled on", says an old Slovene expression. Likewise, Swamiji has pointed out that all of the above requires discipline. "It is up to you to decide whether you want to be healthy. If the answer is positive, you need to be very disciplined about the food you eat. When I arrived in Europe, 40 years ago, there was no talk of organic food, as all food was organic. At that time, very few people drank bottled water, as water in streams, rivers and lakes was clean. See how much pollution has been created in such a short time.

Swamiji arrived in Europe in 1970 and chose Vienna as his permanent place of residence. His system of Yoga in Daily Life, which he developed expressly for Westerners is practiced in 35.000 locations all over the world, including Slovenia. In the past 20 years, over 50,000 people have started to practice in the organization of one or the other of the eleven local societies of Yoga in Daily Life in Slovenia. Primorska was no exception. Koper was first to establish a society (1992), which was followed by Nova Gorica and Popetre. Yoga in Daily life is thus practiced in Koper, Izola, Lucija, Piran, Škofije, Nova Gorica, Tolmin, Postojna, Idrija, Sežana, Ajdovščina, Ilirska Bistrica, Pivka and Kozina.

### 16 years of Yoga in Nova Gorica

Alongside the Yoga Union of Slovenia, Swamiji's visit was prepared by the Yoga in Daily Life Nova Gorica society which is active in the Primorska region for already 16 years. As explained to us by its president, Dušan Škulj, more than 3000 people have since participated in Yoga classes. The "responsibility" for this, can be attributed to Angelca Škulj, the mother of Dušan Škulj. "After meeting His Holiness Swamiji at a seminar in Hungary, I was so taken that I decided to introduce Yoga classes in Nova Gorica". And we managed. "To start out, the Koper society sent us two Yoga teachers," remembers Mrs. Škulj. Soon, Nova Gorica had their own instructors and a society was formally established. The number of regular practitioners slowly grew from the initial 8 to the current satisfying 300. Regular practice is organized every day at two locations in Nova Gorica, at the Medical Center Vid at Komberk and the Central Kindergarten in Nova Gorica. Practice is organized in seven groups which begin at 17h and 19h. Free classes are held outdoors, starting at the end of the school year. Beginning this year, special attention is given to the students of the

#### Free lessons outdoors

Yoga in Daily Life Nova Gorica is very active in summer months, as we are now in the fourth year of providing free Yoga classes outdoors. In other parts of Slovenia, such lessons are mostly held in parks (at seaside towns even on beaches), whereas Nova Gorica practitioners meet every Saturday in July and August in the playground of the Central Kindergarten (in case of bad weather, in the kindergarten sports hall). "Last year, 270 people participated in these programs over a total of 9 days. We expect a similar response this year. We begin practice at 7h in the morning, to avoid the summer heat" explained Dušan Škulj.

Nova Gorica Grammar School. "Aware of the stressful period leading to exams, we very much wished to help them. We prepared a short anti-stress therapy under the English-language slogan "don't be depressed, be in deep rest"". School management responded favourably and practice rooms were made available twice a week. "We are very happy with the response of the students" comments Škulj

#### "Yoga really has much to offer"

Despite her 82 years, Angelca Škulj still practices daily. "Well, due to health problems, I am no longer able to do the physical exercises, however, I take two hour each day for meditation and pranayama, the breathing exercises. I can true say that Yoga gives you much personal happiness, harmony and a different

outlook on life. Although illness has dealt me a heavy blow, I can truly say that I am happy" commented the satisfied oldest member of Yoga in Daily Life Nova Gorica.



