YOGA DAY
IN CELEBRATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF YOGA, JUNE 21

Is yoga a religion?

YOGA THROUGH THE EYES OF A UGANDAN

By Shamim Masembe

I am a Ugandan Muslim lady and 2008 was the roughest
patch of my life. I was going through a tough time with
my business. I felt like these were my bleakest years and
could not see the light at the end of the tunnel. It was a lot
of stress and I felt like I was going nowhere. As a result, I
developed ulcers and many other health complications.

Around that time, an Indian (my friend of mine
introduced yoga to me. I was initially skeptical about
it, as I had always thought yoga and meditation were
my kind of things to practice, but as I started yoga, thing
started changing. I began to feel more relaxed and at ease,
which helped me think clearly, and solve problems with a
positive outlook. My health complications also started to
subside. My problems never ceased to happen, but now I
feel stronger and confident in facing new challenges.

Most importantly, I am more spiritual and a better practising
Muslim. I enjoy life at its best and I am always happy. Yoga
is not for any particular tribe or religion; it helps to give
faith and strength to people to overcome challenges in life.
It is a way for all humans being to connect with themselves.

I would strongly suggest every Ugandan to do yoga. It
is not a religion and will not
make anyone change his or
her religion. Instead, it will
generate more faith in your
own religion. Today, I am
not only practicing yoga and
meditation regularly, I also
help others to learn yoga.

Yoga is not about
making you an Indian

By Dr. Shihiba
Chiragani (BHMS)

The word ‘yoga’ comes from a Sanskrit word, which
means to join or to unite. It is
the union of a person’s
consciousness with
the universal consciousness.

Yoga is not a religion. It is
a science of wellbeing,
youthfulness, integrating
mind, body and soul. It is a
holistic package for happy
living. Yoga provides a
technique to unite body, mind
and breath and to connect to
the inner core. The mind often
oscillates between the past
and future causing worry and
anticipation. Desires, fear
and craving grips the mind. To
drop the conflict in the mind,
it is essential to bring the
mind to the present moment.

Yoga takes us to the present
moment. It is not about
self-improvement, but about
self-acceptance.

Benefits

Yoga practices improve
circulation, stimulate the
abdominal organs and put
pressure on the glandular
system of the body.

Yoga helps increase
flexibility, stamina, core
strength and immunity.

For the mind, it improves
immunity, balances stress,
improves memory, awareness,
confidence and balances
the brain’s hemispheres.

Yoga is not about making
everyone Indian, but
about understanding the
fundamentals of wellbeing.

Yoga is a journey of self, to
the self and through the self.

The writer is a yoga
teacher

Sadhguru’s message on
International Day of Yoga

At the end of 2014, an
unprecedented 177 out of
a total 193
nations of the United Nations
pitched behind the resolution
for an International Day of
Yoga.

Yoga essentially means
that in search of wellbeing,
you do not look up. Because
if you look up, you will
hallucinate, you will start
imagining things which are
not in your experience. And
above all, you do not know
which is up and which is
down.

In the last 150 years, most
of humanity has looked
up, and a small segment
has looked out — gathering
wealth and building palaces.
But today, a large part of
humanity is looking out
instead of up. If we look out
for human wellbeing, we will
destroy the very basis of our
existence, which is what we
are doing. We have different
names for this — ecological
problems, global warming,
climate change, but human
beings are just looking out
in pursuit of wellbeing.

That is all it is. The only
ultimate solution and the
only way human beings will
truly know wellbeing, is by
turning inward. This is what
yoga means. Not up, not out,
but in. The only way out is
in.

And now, a situation has
come, where the leaders of
nations are speaking
about yoga. Not just in
India, but in the highest
international body — the
United Nations. We definitely
want to do something for the
International Day of Yoga
that will make a big impact
on the planet.

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What is Yoga?

By Sadhguru

What is Yoga? I think it is better if I tell you what it is not yoga. So much misinterpretation of the word has happened that speaking about what is not yoga is more relevant.

Standing on your head is not yoga, holding your breath is not yoga, twisting your body is not yoga. Yes, these are various yogic practices, but when we say “yoga” we are referring to a certain state—a certain way of being.

The word “yoga” means union. Union means you begin to experience the universality of who you are. For example, today, modern science proves to you beyond any doubt that the whole of existence is just one energy manifesting itself in various forms. If this scientific fact becomes a living reality for you, that you begin to experience everything as one, then you are in yoga.

Once you experience yourself as everything, or everything as yourself, nobody has to tell you how to be in this world. If you experience all the people here as yourself, does anybody have to teach you morals as to how to be? Does anybody have to tell you “do not harm this person, do not kill this person and do not rob this person”? So, when you are in yoga, you experience everything as a part of yourself and that is liberation, that is freedom, that is ultimate freedom.

Yoga is not a religion. Yoga is a science. As there are physical sciences to create external well-being, yoga is the science for inner well-being. Yoga has nothing to do with any particular religion; it is a science for inner well-being. This yogic science is of utmost importance, now, like never before, because today we have tremendous power in our hands.

With modern science and technology, tomorrow if we want, we can flatten a mountain or build a dam. When we have this much power in our hands, it is very important that we have an inner sense, an awareness of life, and that we experience life and everyone as part of ourselves. Otherwise, we can create a calamity for ourselves and the world around us—which right now we are doing to some extent. This happens because we have not attended only to the external science. We have never looked at the inner science within us.

Just as there is an external science to create external well-being, there is an inner science to create inner well-being. So, the whole science of what we refer to as yoga is an inner science.

Yoga can be transmitted on many different levels. One is towards one’s physical and mental well-being, which includes health and other aspects. Or it could be transmitted as a tool for ultimate well-being—a science that you can use this system as a stepping stone to go beyond. You can use this yoga just to get rid of your backache if you want, or you can use this yoga to get better mental focus and a little peace of mind and happiness in your life, or you can use this yoga as a way of climbing up to the highest possibility within yourself.

Using yoga just for health is not wrong, but it is a crime, because it can take you to places where you have never imagined. It is a way of approaching the Creator through Creation. It can be a ladder to the divine.

Now you get up at six o’clock to go to the office, work, come back home, take care of the kids, eat until whatever time you go to bed, you have a busy day. Where is the time for Yoga? You have time to eat, to go to work. You have the time to take care of everything, but you have no time to take care of yourself. This attitude comes about because you try to act like a martyr all the time.

“I have no time for myself. I am giving myself totally to everybody.” What is it that you are giving? Your aggravations, irritations, and anxieties are being passed on to children.

If you are truly concerned about your children, creating a joyful and loving atmosphere for their growth on a daily basis, moment to moment, is more important.

If you invest even 30 minutes a day into yoga, you will enhance your capabilities and you will gain immensely, even in terms of time. The first thing is your sleep quota will come down. If you are sleeping eight hours a day, that means you are just sleeping off one third of your life. If your body and mind are more energized and active, your sleep quota will naturally come down. So if you gain three, four hours a day, just in terms of wakefulness, that is a huge benefit.

Apart from that, with a simple process of yoga, your body and mind get more organized. You would see that your level of performance becomes such that whatever you are doing in eight hours, you will very easily be able to do in three to four hours. This is simply because if you observe yourself through the day, you will notice how many unnecessary movements, words and activities are happening in your life.

If your mind becomes more organized, these unnecessary words and movements will disappear. Once they go away, you feel more energetic and you also have a lot of time. You have 24 hours in a day. If we are organized and focused human beings, we can do plenty in 24 hours. If you are disorganized and unfocused, you think there is not enough time. Most people are not busy, they are just preoccupied.

It is just too much preoccupation in the mind. If one makes time and brings yoga into their lives, suddenly the quality of their life will be very different.

Indian Association welcomes Sadhguru to Uganda

By Dave Chirag

On behalf of the Indian Association of Uganda, which represents the Indian community, our Board of Trustees and the Executive Committee, it is my privilege to welcome Sadhguru to Uganda “The Pearl of Africa”. He is a great mystic person. I have personally heard and read some of his conversations and find him to be enlightening in a contemporary way. He is easy to understand and embrace and relevant to many of us today. It is indeed a great opportunity for the members of the Indian Diaspora that such a spiritual personality is coming to Uganda.

I am thankful to the Uganda and others who have supported in organizing this event. Engineering course on the occasion of the International Day of Yoga.

Chirag is the chairman of the Uganda Indian Association.

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THEY WILL EXPLORE OUR DESTINIES AS INDIVIDUALS, BUSINESSES AND AS A NATION – ARE WE DRIVERS OR PASSENGERS TO OUR OWN AND UGANDA’S DESTINY?

Alan Kasujja in conversation with the Mystic

By Lulu Sturdy

Sadhguru is a contemporary mystic and yogi, a living archive of knowledge, who probes the farthest realms of illogic, and yet is unfailingly rational and pragmatic.

In his approach. The result is a unique perspective on a world you know, or thought you knew.

He arrived in Uganda yesterday for the first time and can be encountered at a free public event, this Sunday at Munyonyo entitled: ‘In Conversation with the Mystic: Defining Destiny’.

This is an intriguing event with Sadhguru, one of Africa’s most prominent journalists — Newsday presenter for the BBC World Service — and well- known within Uganda for previously hosting Capital FM’s leading breakfast show, and for co-moderating the first televised Presidential Debate earlier this year, in January.

Kasujja and Sadhguru will be exploring our destinies as individuals, as businesses, and as a nation — are we drivers or passengers to our own and Uganda’s destiny? Whilst together, they will be negotiating the challenges of “getting there” in Uganda.

The event is being hosted by the Ruparelia Group, in association with the High Commission for India in Uganda as a celebration of International Day of Yoga. Film director and actress, Juhi Chawla, will be present as a special guest.

Sadhguru’s talks have brought clarity and perception to leading intellectuals, business leaders and policy makers around the world.

His ability to put across quantum leaps in ideas in a down-to-earth pragmatic manner has attracted many to invite him as a speaker time and again.

Meanwhile, Kasujja is sought after as a conference speaker and moderator, regularly participating in high level panels around the globe, such as at The Africa Development Bank Annual Meetings, The New York Africa Forum, Delhi GOALS and the Global Entrepreneurship Forum.

Sadhguru’s vision is to offer the science of Inner wellbeing to every human being.

To this end, he founded the Isha Foundation, and has established multiple social outreach projects covering education, healthcare and the environment.

Given the profiles of both Kasujja and Sadhguru, we have a feeling this public talk may turn some of our ideas about ourselves upside down and inside out: so be prepared for a lively evening. Anyone who wants to delve a bit deeper should watch this space or go to www.ishaAfrica.com to book their free ticket.

Kasujja is in conversation with the Mystic. Sadhguru at Speke Resort Munyonyo this Sunday at 5:30pm.

For more information, go to: www.ishaAfrica.com

Who is Sadhguru?

By Tina Jay

A fearless rebel from the start, Sadhguru’s childhood in Mysore, India was punctuated with solitary forays into the jungle for days at a stretch. In youth, his blunt clarity into life made him an unofficial counsellor to his problem- ridden college mates.

His love of adventure led him on motorcycle expeditions, and his early business endeavours into poultry farming and construction were met with success.

Years later, after an overwhelming experience that left him transformed, we see him at the helm of a non-profit organisation with aims to improve the quality of life of people of all walks of life. Today, he is dubbed “India’s most rational mystic” by the country’s media, with over seven million admirers around the world.

But Sadhguru is not your typical guru; a living breathing paradox. He is a mystic who keeps it real. Expressing himself in a contemporary vocabulary and engaging storytelling, grounded in everyday experience, he wins over some of the most educated and skeptical minds on the planet.

Internationally recognised for his scientific approach to inner wellbeing, Sadhguru leads the Isha Foundation, a non-profit organisation with over two million volunteers worldwide. They spearhead programmes that impart ancient and transformational yogic technology with a distinctly modern orientation.

Sadhguru’s deep understanding of the inner sciences is accompanied by an incisive vision of global issues.

He has created and inspired numerous award-winning and path-breaking initiatives in the fields of health, education, environment and rural uplift, including the new Sadhguru Schools being inaugurated near Fort Portal on Thursday next week.

Sadhguru is as irreverent as unorthodox, engaging with a healthy dose of hypothesis and clichés. Instead, his teachings are secular, open to all and require no faith, just disciplined practice. His talks have earned him the reputation of a speaker and opinion-maker of international renown.

Sadhguru is on a mission to transform the way we manage our inner lives. For too long, now, he argues, we have failed to tap even a fraction of our full potential.

Despite all the external comforts we enjoy, with standards of living that would have been unimaginable a century ago, we are insecure and stressed out, missing out on the power of being human by focusing exclusively on the material aspects of our lives.