

# The body is a supercomputer, but have we read the user manual?

*Next week, World Yoga Day will be celebrated for the first time across the world and Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be leading a high-profile event in Delhi to mark the occasion. Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev, yoga guru and spiritual leader, tells Sagarika Ghose why a day isn't enough and that it's India's responsibility to deliver quality yoga*

## FOR THE RECORD

### What do you think of the Modi government's yoga event on June 21?

It is obvious the world was ready for it. Never before have 177 countries agreed upon anything so readily (the India-sponsored resolution at the UN was adopted unopposed). This shows that whoever put this idea to the PM did the right thing. But it's not just about one day. It's a phenomenal responsibility now for India. We must deliver quality systems of yoga, not some phoney stuff that goes out and gives us a bad name. We must invest in people and infrastructure.

### What is the relevance of yoga in our times?

The body is a supercomputer that has been given to us. But have we read the user's manual? Spirituality means start reading the user's manual.

### Have we failed to communicate our heritage to the world?

There has been a serious failure. We failed to understand that the nation is not just a piece of geography but an idea which has to be built into peoples' minds and hearts. I am not pitching for nationality, but nation-

ality is the next best thing to universality. **But isn't imposing yoga on citizens an infringement of fundamental rights?**

Half our people — 600 million — are malnourished. In this situation, to debate nuances seems to me to be criminal and cruel. Isn't getting out of poverty a fundamental right?

### Some Muslim leaders have objected to yoga being imposed on their community.

These are just a few leaders who don't have traction even in their community; they win traction only when the community is insecure and fearful.

### So would you say that yoga is not exclusively Hindu?

What is Hindu? This land that is protected by two geographical features — the Himalayas and the Indu sagara. If there's an earthworm here, it's a Hindu earthworm. Now the political discourse has made Hindu into a religion. But there is no fixed belief system to be a Hindu. This is not a land of believers. This has been a land of seekers. And yoga as a science of inner well-being became a possibility here only because we are a land of seekers.

### But isn't the BJP trying to politicize yoga?

Some fringe groups may think like that. But if the practice of yoga becomes widespread, sectarianism will go away. Looking up (towards god) has divided humanity in the most horrible

way. Looking out has meant we've ripped the planet apart. The only way human well-being will happen is by turning inwards. And that's yoga.

### But is it important to keep yoga away from a majoritarian agenda?

How has that happened? It's the UN that has declared World Yoga Day. It's above religion, nationality and politics. It may have been initiated by the PM but it's no longer in his hands. I am not a political person, I never take sides. My nationality is in terms of people not in terms of political structures.

### Are you a critic of religion?

I don't have to criticize religion. On one level, it's been a disaster. On another level, it's mass psychiatry. If it was not there, the psychological well-being of humanity would be in great danger. The question is: are you looking for solace or are you looking for a solution? If you're looking for a solution, you look for truth; if you're looking for solace you look for sweet words. Today, the human intellect is sparking like never before in history. You will see a great shift in the next 25 years, people will want something that makes logical sense to them, something they can approach scientifically and systematically, something that will not depend on somebody else's benevolence. Yoga fits in perfectly.

### So god is not a sustainable idea anymore?

There's never been an idea of god in our land. This is a godless country. All the gods that we worship whether it's Shiva, Rama or Krishna are all people who walked this geography. People who were born here, had troubles and tribulations, fought wars, married, bore children. We worship them because they stood out with their inner balance and the way they conducted their lives. We worship them as exalted human beings, we call them devas, not gods. God is an imported word. Today Tendulkar is a cricketing god, that's part of our dialectical culture. Krishna was a god in his time, Rama was a god in his time, Shiva in his.

