ON SEPTEMBER 23, 1982, his life was completely transformed when he encountered a spiritual epiphany that lasted for four and a half hours.

Twenty-one per cent of the water per capita than we had in 1947. And it is expected that twenty-five per cent of India's land will be unsuitable in five years. That means we will lose the ability to grow food. Without addressing the soil and water condition of this land, we cannot take this nation ahead.

The science of hydrology is such that if you don't hold the water in the soil, then it will flow away. Water has to fall where there is vegetation so that it can percolate into the land and not run away.

The only way is to increase the green cover. There is no question of increasing forests because our population pressure is so tremendous. The only way we can go ahead is through agroforestry and horticulture—essentially tree-based agriculture.

From morning to night what is your daily routine like?

If I sit for twenty seconds with my eyes closed in the morning, I am all charged up and ready—that is all the yoga that I do. Only if I am trying to manifest something, if I want to concentrate on something, then I sit with my eyes closed. Otherwise, I am constantly involved in an activity.

For 25 years, I managed with just about two-and-a-half to three hours of sleep a day. These days, I'm getting a little lazy—I'm sleeping four to five and a half hours. But seven days of the week, 365 days we (at the foundation) work non-stop, simply because we are creating something we care for. If you are doing something you care about, then your entire life is a vacation. Even if you work 24 hours a day, it is not burdensome because you are doing something you love to do.

How important is it to condition one's mental and physical being? Are they connected and do they run concurrently?

In yoga, we do not look at the body and mind separately, because there is a physical body and a mental body. When we say 'mind' it is not in any particular place. Every cell in the body has intelligence. This is referred to as the manomaya-kosha or the mental body. Today, doctors are telling us that you are psychosomatic. That is, whatever happens in the mind naturally occurs in the body. For every thought that you generate, chemical changes are happening right across your body. So they are not really separate.

There is also substantial scientific evidence to prove that when you are joyful, your body and other faculties function at their best. Now if you were given a choice between being joyful or miserable, which would you choose? Joyful! I know! So if your choice is joy, why is misery happening? It's only because your body and mind are not happening by choice, they are happening compulsively.

What should a wholesome diet consist of?

Do not make food into some religion. If it is a question of survival, eat what is available. But when survival is taken care of, there is a choice. When you have a choice, you must eat sensibly, which is best for your system. The ideal fuel for your body is what leaves you alert, agile, and active. So, with what kind of food will your system function with minimum struggle and maximum impact?

At least forty to fifty per cent of the food you eat should be in its raw form. That means it should be alive. It can be a vegetable, fruit, nut, or sprouted grain—but it is a living cell. If you eat food in its live form you will see your sleep quota will go down dramatically and it will also have a significant impact on your health and well-being.