Promoting Yoga and Spirituality- Role of Media

*Justice C.K. Prasad

I am delighted to know that the Brothers and Sisters of Brahma Kumaris organization and Media wing of the Rajyoga and Research Foundation have organised, All India Media Conference cum retreat on ‘Promoting Yoga and Spirituality and Role of Media’. I, congratulate you for organizing this magnificent conference, I am indebted to you for giving me this opportunity and to address this august gathering.

Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa once said-

“You speak of doing good to the world.
Is the world such a small thing?
And who are you, pray, to do good to the world?
First, realise God, see Him by means of spiritual discipline.
If He imparts power you can do good to others;
otherwise not.”

You, the esteemed Brothers, Sisters and Grandmothers of Brahma Kumaris Ishwariya Vishwa

*Speech delivered by Hon’ble Mr. Justice C.K. Prasad, Chairman, Press Council of India on 6th June 2015 at Brahma Kumaris’ Gyan Sarovar Academy, Mt. Abu, Rajasthan in All India Media Conference cum retreat on “Promoting Yoga and Spirituality- Role of Media”.*
Vidyalaya are the pearls of wisdom, who can do good to others. Years of devotion to the Almighty, mental and physical discipline, spreading the message of love and peace entitle you to do so.

Spirituality and mystical charm have always drawn people from all over the world to India. The multifaceted culture and deep rooted values of Indian traditions have led to the evolution and growth of spiritualism in India. Its unity in diversity, in religion, culture and beliefs are exceptional qualities that this country can legitimately be proud of. Hundreds of people have come to India since ancient times to experience its spirituality. It is the birthplace of the major religions of the world and is home to the world’s oldest religion that is *Hinduism*. Buddha gave to the world a religion based on universal peace and brotherhood. Mahavira laid emphasis on austerity, strict discipline and inner purification through hard practices for the attainment of Nirvana. In the history of the growth of the Indian civilization several spiritual leaders and saints have given the message of peace, brotherhood and co-existence. These are so deep rooted in our culture that the Constitution of
this country guarantees the freedom of conscience and the right to freely profess, practice and propagate religion. With open arms we welcome new people and new beliefs.

Spirituality is a part of Indian culture, it plays a role in every civilization and no culture can claim a monopoly for spirituality. Indian culture has recognized spirituality as the ultimate occupation of mankind. It is believed that every individual has been created by the almighty for a specific purpose and that purpose is to be compassionate, caring and respecting towards one-another. Spirituality has influenced the entire spectrum of Indian culture, may it be, polity, economy, ethics, philosophy, literature and the social construction.

This country of ours has been the seat of many cultures and given to the world six schools of philosophy or Sastha-darsana. One of those philosophies is ‘Yoga’. The word ‘Yoga’ is derived from Sanskrit word ‘yuj’ which essentially means to unite. It refers to the unity of the individual self to the cosmic consciousness or the universal spirit. It is a comprehensive system of concentration, passive and dynamic.
Yoga has played an important role in the evolution and existence of spirituality in India. Yoga can be traced back to the ancient times, although historically it was codified in the form of Yoga Sutras by Patanjalli. According to mythology Yoga surfaced in the ‘Sat Yuga’, the period known for its everlasting peace and abundant blessings, filled with seekers of the eternal truth. It is one of the reasons why we relate Yoga with sages. One of the most remarkable yoga scriptures is the Bhagavad-Gita, which was composed around 200 B.C. The prime preaching of Gita is, “one should perform the duty without being attached to the fruits”. The Yoga Sutra lays down a progressive scheme of attention in order to avoid distraction. Yoga says that the human mind is constantly swayed by thoughts of greed, deceit, pain, torture, sex, etc. and for the Yogi it is necessary to control the mind by cultivating habits of Ahimsa, Satya, and Brahmacharya.

Yoga today is being practiced as a cure for problems that are eating into the very vitals of our society. The addiction to drugs of the younger generations is disturbing and the Yoga therapy is considered as one of the best
methods of cure. Those appearing for competitive examinations are advised to practice yoga not only as a stress release mechanism but also because it enhances concentration. Recognised medical colleges and hospitals now use the indigenous methods of cure or Ayush and Yoga is an important component of healing. For general health and well being, for a disciplined life, Yoga has become a way of life. It is not religion specific, brothers and sisters of other religions are also practicing Yoga today.

In the late 20th century the popular media showcasing serials based on the Vedas and Indian mythology which continues even today have influenced the social norms, helped in building inner peace and in spreading the message of compassion and positive living amongst the masses, particularly amongst the youth. Narration of Gita in spiritual channels is quite common these days. Generally, these channels have audiences of all age groups. Today, when life has become hugely complicated and complex, people hardly have time for families, competition is at its peak, propagating yoga or spirituality through the media, the easiest medium for disseminating information, does play a
significant role in constructing a compassionate society. It helps in implanting the ancient values of Indian culture and traditions, and peace building.

Promoting spirituality and yoga has become imperative, nowadays; even schools and colleges are including Yoga in their curriculum. Mediation, a form of yoga, helps in gaining inner peace and in overcoming the negativity in oneself. Yoga and gaining spirituality is directly linked with self-contentment and self-development. It helps in the development of a healthy society. With the positive and constructive contribution of each person in the society a nation is bound to be a happy and successful nation.

Today, in the age of globalization and urbanization, the quest and urgency for spirituality is growing fast. Media whether print, broadcast or social play very significant role in promoting world peace and harmony. It is the most common source which plays a significant role in re-molding our cultures; it helps us to stay connected to our values and roots of our origin, culture, traditions and heritage.
Currently different forms of media have contributed strongly in promoting India’s rich heritage of Yoga and spirituality for holistic development. Practicing Yoga is not only confined to India, but has become global. Most cultures have adopted this art as a way of living stress free life. Different religious organizations have used media for promoting peace through spiritual talks and scriptures. On December 11, 2014 the United Nations General Assembly declared 21st June as the ‘International Day of Yoga,’ recognizing that “Yoga provides a holistic approach to health and well-being”. This resolution by the United Nation shows global respect for India’s universal values, tradition and harmony. In the words of U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon Yoga can bring communities together and promote peace and development. However, like every aspect has a positive and negative side, in media, promotion of spirituality sometimes lead to promotion of extremism, superstition and consumerism which is again menacing to our country. I take this opportunity to appeal to the media to play a significant role in promoting spirituality and peace, use it in a positive and a constructive way so as to achieve global peace and harmony.
It gives me immense pleasure to know that Brahma Kumaris organisation has set a benchmark of merging science with spirituality, where through the use of communication and technology they have been able to enhance the moral quotient in society and spread happy living. I am glad to know that to enable and ensure the holistic benefits of yoga; the Bharma Kumaris have decided “Easy Raj -Yoga for Healthy and Happy Society” as the canopy theme for the year 2015-16.

As said by Swami Vivekananda - Real happiness is not in the senses, but above the senses; and it is in every human being. Brothers and sisters, here I can see all happy faces which inspire me to visit this place again and again.