

# Speech for the Valedictory Session of the International Yoga Festival

Parmarth Niketan, Rishikesh | 15th March 2025

## 5 core points:

### 1. Yoga: A Cosmic Union of Self and Universe

Yoga bridges the finite and the infinite, aligning the individual soul (atma) with the universal consciousness (brahmand). It's not just physical exercise but a path to self-realization and divine connection.

### 2. Uttarakhand: The Spiritual Cradle of Yoga

Rishikesh, the Yoga Capital of the World, and the sacred lands of Uttarakhand amplify spiritual practice, serving as a living manifestation of India's ancient wisdom, where countless sages meditated and attained enlightenment.

### 3. Prime Minister's Vision for Global Well-Being

Hon'ble PM Narendra Modi's leadership brought Yoga to the world stage through International Yoga Day and the Fit India Movement, emphasizing Yoga as a tool for personal and societal transformation, moving from "Aham to Vayam" — from self to collective consciousness.

### 4. The Trishul of Yoga: Body, Mind, and Spirit

Yoga strengthens physical health, brings mental clarity, and awakens spiritual purpose. Practices like Surya Namaskar and Chakra meditation align our inner energies with the cosmic rhythms of the universe.

### 5. Yoga as a Universal Force for Harmony In an era of digital stress and global challenges, Yoga offers a timeless solution — a practice that transcends

borders, uniting humanity in peace, compassion, and the shared pursuit of enlightenment.

Respected spiritual leaders, dignitaries, yoga practitioners, and our audience from across the globe,

1. It is both an honour and a divine blessing to stand before you today on the sacred banks of Mother Ganga, in the holy city of Rishikesh, as we conclude the International Yoga Festival 2025. It is not just a geographical location — it is a spiritual powerhouse, a cradle of ancient wisdom where countless sages and seers have meditated, attained enlightenment, and gifted humanity, the transformative science of Yoga.
2. As we come together in this Devbhoomi — the Land of the Gods, we are reminded of the timeless connection between the individual and the infinite, the atma and the brahmand. The teachings of Yoga show us that the Brahmand — the vast expanse of the cosmos — exists within us. As Swami Vivekananda said, "Each soul is potentially divine." The path of Yoga helps us awaken that divinity, guiding us to see the interconnectedness of all life, to transcend our limitations, and to become vessels of peace, health, and harmony.
3. **We are part of something much larger than ourselves.**
4. Yoga is not just a practice of physical postures — it is a science that bridges the finite and the infinite. It is a tool for self-realization, a journey inward

that unites us with the cosmos. The word Yoga itself means union — the union of body and mind, of the human and the divine, of the individual soul with the universal consciousness.

5. Here in Rishikesh, the Yoga Capital of the World, we are blessed to practice this ancient science in its purest form. This land, where Lord Shiva himself is believed to have meditated, carries a spiritual energy that amplifies our practice, making it easier to dive deep within ourselves.
6. Over the past seven days, we have immersed ourselves in the many facets of Yoga — from Hatha and Kundalini to Raja Yoga and Bhakti Yoga. We have learned not only the techniques but the philosophy, the essence, and the life-transforming power of this sacred science.
7. We owe immense gratitude to our Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Ji, whose vision and relentless efforts have brought Yoga to the global stage. Under his leadership, June 21st was declared International Yoga Day by the United Nations, a historic moment that recognized Yoga as an invaluable gift to humanity.
8. The Prime Minister's personal dedication to health, wellness, and spiritual practice is reflected in his words: "Yoga is a way of life. It is not about exercise but about discovering the sense of oneness with yourself, the world, and nature."

His commitment to promoting Yoga as a tool for global well-being aligns with India's ancient ethos — the belief that the health of the individual is

intrinsically connected to the health of society and the planet. Through initiatives like the Fit India Movement, the Prime Minister has encouraged millions to embrace healthier lifestyles, recognizing that physical fitness and mental clarity are essential components of nation-building.

9. He has said that Yoga is a journey from "Aham to Vayam; Sva to Samasti" — from 'I' to 'We'; from the self to the universe.

10. In a digitised world where rapid technological advancement, environmental challenges, and rising mental health concerns are taking centre stage, the wisdom of Yoga becomes more relevant than ever. Yoga offers a holistic solution; a way to heal not just our bodies but our minds, our relationships, and our collective consciousness.

11. As a reverence to the Trishul, yoga offers 3 important truths –

**Physical Vitality:** Regular practice enhances strength, flexibility, and immunity, preventing lifestyle diseases and promoting longevity.

**Mental Clarity:** Pranayama and meditation calm the mind, reduce stress, and enhance emotional resilience, helping us navigate life with grace.

**Spiritual Awakening:** Yoga connects us to our inner self, awakening a deeper sense of purpose, peace, and compassion for all beings.

Armed with this powerful force, we awaken an inherent Cosmic Connection, through practices like Surya Namaskar and Chakra meditation, Yoga aligns our energies with the rhythms of the universe, reminding us that we are microcosms of the Brahmand.

And in the end, Yoga transcends cultural and national boundaries, uniting humanity in a shared pursuit of well-being, peace, and enlightenment.

12. It is no coincidence that this festival is held in Uttarakhand, a land gifted with divine energy. The Char Dham Yatra, the sacred shrines of Kedarnath, Badrinath, Gangotri, and Yamunotri, and the countless ashrams and meditation caves are spiritual sanctuaries. This state is not just a physical space, it is a living, breathing manifestation of India's spiritual heritage.

In the words of the Bhagavad Gita:

“Yoga is the journey of the self, through the self, to the self.”

May we all walk this path with dedication and humility, inspiring those around us to embrace the infinite possibilities that Yoga offers.

I extend my deepest gratitude to Parmarth Niketan. The guidance and blessings of Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, President of Parmarth Niketan, whose vision of "Yoga is not just about touching your toes, it is about touching your heart and transforming your life" continue to inspire us, and the leadership of Pujya Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji, Director of the International Yoga Festival, whose dedication has nurtured this festival into a light of global harmony. My appreciation to all the spiritual leaders, teachers, volunteers, and participants who made this festival a resounding success. And to each of YOU - thank you for being part of this cosmic dance, for adding your energy to this collective vibration of love and unity.

**Namaste!**