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Miraculous Yoga - Master of Pranayam, Swami Ramdev to Visit Houston

By KALYANI GIRI

HOUSTON — In 2002 when Parul Rawal was just 31 years old and pregnant with her first child, she developed mysterious symptoms that perplexed her doctors. Every breath she took was agonizing, her fingertips turned blue, and her joints stiffened. Advised that she needed a change from the New Jersey climate by her doctors, Rawal traveled to India. The flight was harrowing to her declining health. By the time she reached India, her lungs were failing and she was rushed to hospital where she was diagnosed with pulmonary fibrosis. Upon return to the USA she moved to Houston where doctors suggested a lung transplant, as no other treatment was possible. But she was denied the surgery because her heart and lungs were in very poor condition. One day as providence would have it a relative in India mailed her a DVD of the illustrious guru of yoga, Swami Ramdev. Rawal attempted to try the breathing exercises. The first few times, she bled out of her nose and mouth. But her persistence paid off; after several days of yoga, her breathing improved. Just last year, she was taken off the oxygen, her energy level went up and her symptoms diminished.

"My doctors, who had lost hope, thought it was a miracle. I told them it was Swami Ramdev ji's DVD that saved my life," said Rawal with quiet conviction of a true survivor.

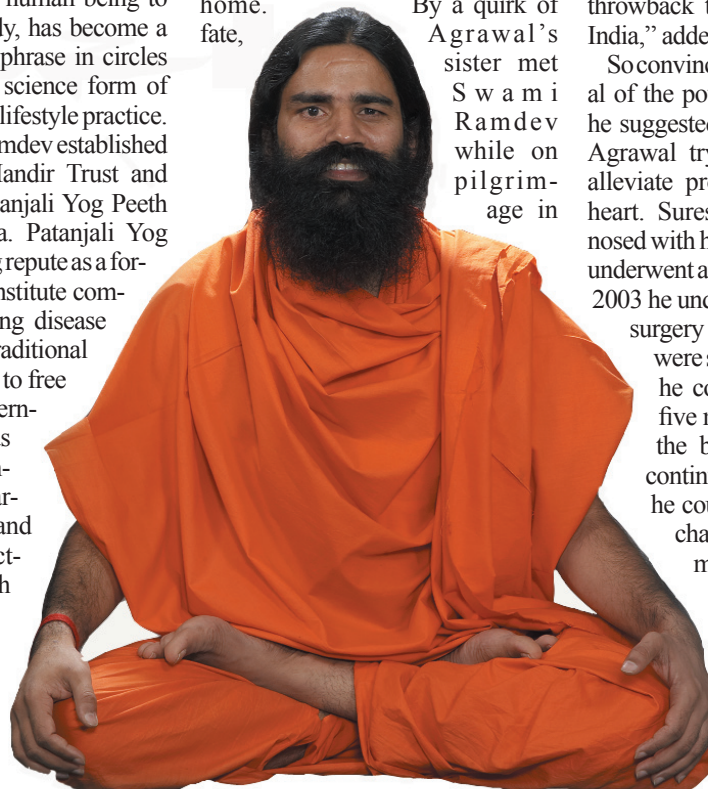
Rawal was referring to the miracle-worker and revered sage from Haridwar, India, Swami Ramdev, who will be in this city conducting a Yog Science Camp at the George R. Brown Convention Center July 16 through 20, 2008. Internationally known by a legion of disciples for his groundbreaking and valuable work in teaching the ancient breathing practice known as pranayama, Swami Ramdev's intensive studies of Vedas and Yog led him to the realization that the divine science nurtured

a healthy body and positive thought. It is this gospel that he demonstrates through his educational DVDs and the Astha Television programming that offer hope, health, and peace of mind to millions of his followers globally, many of who, like Rawal, have not even met him personally. His messages of wellness, health, and humanity have spread to the masses, and his doctrine that it is the birthright of every human being to have a healthy body, has become a well-known catch phrase in circles where the ancient science form of yoga has become a lifestyle practice. In 1995, Swami Ramdev established the Divya Yog Mandir Trust and established the Patanjali Yog Peeth in Haridwar, India. Patanjali Yog Peeth is fast gaining repute as a formidable research institute committed to eradicating disease through yoga and traditional herbs. His vision is to free the world of modern-day diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, arthritis, Parkinsons disease, and cancer by conducting core research into the knowledge base of the great saints and sages such as Patanjali, Charak, and Sushrut. Swami Ramdev's vision includes forming an integrated system of treatment primarily using the techniques of yoga as well as ayurveda and acupuncture. He reaches the masses by conducting training camps in cities all over India. His educational televised demonstrations of the breathing techniques are shown on national networks and globally.

About nine years ago when Swami Ramdev was relatively unheard of, the President of India House and a longtime resident of Houston Durga Das Agrawal had his life touched by

the sage on a very indirect but personal level. Agrawal's 80-year-old mother had a severe kidney infection and doctors treating her in India offered varying opinions on treatment. Some suggested a tube be inserted to drain the infection, but a close family friend, an eminent doctor at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences advised against it. The family took Agrawal's mother home.

By a quirk of fate, Agrawal's sister met Swami Ramdev while on pilgrimage in



Haridwar and he offered an herbal medication that cured the infection. Agrawal's mother lived for many years after and only passed away earlier this year.

The second center of Patanjali Yog Peeth and the only one outside of India will be established here in Houston at a venue that is yet to be decided, said Shekhar Agrawal, a disciple of Swami Ramdev and a tutor of the Ramdev style of yoga at the Arya Samaj of Greater Houston. The institute will sit on 30 acres of

land and expected to be built in 2009, added Agrawal who will oversee the construction. "I have had the good fortune to meet Swami Ramdev ji many times and I am always awed by his wealth of knowledge of holistic medicine, and of the ancient scriptures," confided Agrawal, "He believes passionately in a healthier happier world. That is why he is such an inspirational master, a true throwback to the ancient rishis of India," added Agrawal

So convinced was Shekhar Agrawal of the power of pranayama, that he suggested that his friend Suresh Agrawal try the practice to help alleviate problems with an ailing heart. Suresh Agrawal was diagnosed with heart disease in 1995 and underwent angioplasty four times. In 2003 he underwent multiple bypass surgery but his heart muscles were so damaged by then, that he could not work for over five months. When he began the breathing practices and continued for several months, he could discern a noticeable change. He walks up to five miles a day today and is very content with the pranayama that he believes saved his life.

"It is my belief that anyone who does pranayama with faith will be able to overcome any disease," said Suresh Agrawal who does the breathing exercises five days a week.

A major donor funding the Patanjali Institute, businessman and philanthropist Ramesh Bhutada in July this year attended Swami Ramdev's pranayama camp in Chicago along with a couple of colleagues and friends. He found that the breathing techniques lowered his high blood pressure and his LDL cholesterol levels, and cured the chronic back pain that had plagued him for years.

"The swami ji is very inspiring

and makes you feel upbeat about yourself. I practice his techniques twice a day and I must say that the pranayama helped me the most," said Bhutada. "People of all ages have something to benefit from this. If you're healthy, the breathing will help you stay healthy. If you have health issues the breathing techniques will effect a cure at a cellular level," added Bhutada.

Social activist from the local community Vijay Pallod has been an avid practitioner of yoga for many years. He injured his leg while playing a game of Kabbadi in May 2004 and had knee surgery a couple of months later. Things were not same after the operation as his muscles were not developing properly. Then he was diagnosed with degenerative arthritis in his right shoulder and could not engage in sporting activities. In July this year, he too attended Swami Ramdev's pranayama camp in Chicago.

"Swami Ramdev ji advised me that yoga is 85% pranayama, and 15% asanas. I never imagined that breathing exercises could make such a difference," enthused Pallod, whose LDL cholesterol level dropped dramatically. He confided that he is able to jog again, an activity that was virtually impossible before he began pranayama.

The Swami Ramdev's teachings have drawn him recognition from the United Nations Organization that invited him to New York to address the facilitators of the program to eradicate world hunger in 2006. His upcoming yoga camp in Houston is already garnering response from local communities and from other cities within the US, and is expected to draw a full house on all five days.

For more information or to register for the Yog Science Camp, visit www.yogacamp-houston.com. If you would like to share your experience please email to yogacamp-houston@gmail.com