

VEV 732—Special Module on Inner Development—II

SUBTITLE

Decision making based on self-discovery

RESOURCE PERSON

Prof. Ramesh Bijlani

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PREAMBLE

Students admitted to premiere institutes of India like the IITs are some of the best products of a rather poor school education. In general, these students are intelligent, but their intellect has been trained more for recall of factual information than for original, creative and critical thinking. Secondly, the focus of education has been on making a living rather than living a life. Thirdly, the students leave school without intimate knowledge of the most important aspects of timeless Indian wisdom which can help a person live consciously a life that brings joy, peace and fulfillment to the individual while also contributing meaningfully to the society. Finally, the students may be biased against the Indian culture without knowing enough about it. Even students who went to exceptionally good schools, which addressed some of these issues, may not be entirely free from some of these lacunae because of environmental influences and pressures, and the teenage rebellion that dominates the psyche during the final years of schooling. With the sense of security that comes from admission to IIT, and greater maturity than during the school days, these highly intelligent students are likely to be receptive to the ideas that will be presented in this course. The course will be based on ancient Indian wisdom, which will be presented in a language that the student of today can appreciate and understand. The presentation, besides being contemporary, will encourage curiosity and critical thinking. The aim of the course would be self-discovery for the sake of living a life based on giving what the person is best equipped to give to those who need it. That is the key to a good, happy and successful life.

OBJECTIVES

At the end of the course, the student should:

- Understand that the purpose of life beyond physical comforts, and emotional and intellectual satisfaction
- Have a general formula for managing stressful situations with minimum pain and maximum personal growth
- Have a general idea of the latest advances in modern medicine, which have once again reinforced the value of a healthy lifestyle, the mind-body relationship, and the valuable role of self-healing mechanisms of the body in recovery from disease
- Understand the value and validity of interrelatedness that goes beyond relationships based on blood or marriage
- Be able to narrate different parts of the being that constitute the totality of a person, and their interplay and interrelationship
- Know the process and technique of meditation
- Understand yoga in its most comprehensive terms
- Understand the historical context behind the high receptivity to ancient Indian wisdom in the western countries today

CONTACT TIME

Lectures: 8 x 1 hour 30 minutes each = 12 hours

Practicals: 4 x 1 hour each = 4 hours, considered to be = 2 hours

T o t a l 14 hours

THEMES AND TOPICS

Lectures

1. Introduction to one another and the course; getting introduced to yoga
2. Schools of yoga
3. The process and technique of meditation
4. Who am I
5. The purpose of life
6. Stress management
7. Mind-body connection in relation to health and disease
8. Ancient Indian wisdom in the global context

Practicals

4 sessions of 1 hour each for practice of Asanas and Pranayamas

MAXIMUM NUMBER OF STUDENTS: 50

EXPECTATIONS FROM THE STUDENTS

- Attendance: at least 12 hours out of 14 hours
- Sincerity
- Desire to learn, and willingness to unlearn

ASSESSMENT

The course is an audit-only course. Hence the grade awarded will be only **Pass / Fail**.

Pass criterion: at least 12 hours of attendance out of 14 hours.

BRIEF PROFILE OF THE RESOURCE PERSON

Dr. Ramesh Bijlani (b. 1947) is a medical doctor, writer, teacher, scientist, and above all a person committed to using his unique blend of talents for touching the hearts and lives of his fellow beings. He was educated at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi, where he did his MBBS and MD, and at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Cambridge MA, USA, where he did a master's course (SM) in nutrition. Dr. Ramesh Bijlani joined on the faculty of the Department of Physiology at his alma mater in 1977, became a full Professor in 1987, and Head of the Department in 1996. While at AIIMS, the focus of his research was on nutrition in relation to cardiovascular disease and diabetes. In 1992 he started going into the depths of yoga, specially the integral yoga of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. His personal and professional life converged in the year 2000 when he initiated at AIIMS a patient care facility for providing lifestyle modification courses based on yoga in tune with the latest developments in mind-body medicine. In the year 2005, he took voluntary retirement from AIIMS to find more

time for dissemination of yoga. Prof. Bijlani was elected a Fellow of the National Academy of Medical Sciences (India) in 2005, and conferred an honorary doctorate in yoga by Swami Vivekananda Yoga Anusandhana Samsthana, Bangalore in 2006. Besides his more than 200 research publications, he has written extensively for children, medical students and non-technical adult readers. He has to his credit 17 published books, more than 50 popular articles, and more than 200 blogs on spiritual subjects on the spiritual networking website, *The Speaking Tree*, managed by the Times of India group. Currently he stays and works at Sri Aurobindo Ashram – Delhi Branch, gives inspirational talks, conducts spiritual retreats, runs courses on yoga and mind-body workshops, edits the Ashram's on-line magazine *The Call Beyond*, and continues to write.

For more about Dr. Bijlani, you may see his profile on www.speakingtree.in/ramesh-bijlani or http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ramesh_Bijlani

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BOOKS by Dr Ramesh Bijlani

1. Bijlani RL. *Eating Scientifically*. New Delhi: Orient Longmans, 1974, 176 pp. ISBN 08612-5049-4. (Out of print)
A popular book on nutrition.
2. Bijlani RL, Nayar U (Editors). *Teaching Physiology: trends and tools*. New Delhi: All India Institute of Medical Sciences, 1983, 200 pp. (Out of print)
A book on medical education.
3. Bijlani R. *Our Body: a wonderful machine*. New Delhi: National Book Trust (India), 1986, 32 pp. ISBN 81-237-1104-2. Fourteenth Reprint 2011. Continues to be in print.
A read-aloud picture book for 5-8 year olds. Translated into several Indian languages. Adopted by Operation Blackboard. Adapted for neoliterates. The highest selling title published by the NBT for the decade 1995-2005.
4. Bijlani R. *Hum Kya Khayen (What should we eat)*. New Delhi: National Council of Educational Research and Training, 1989, 70 pp. (Out of print)
A popular book in Hindi, specially addressed to 10-15 year olds.

5. Bijlani RL, Manchanda SK. *The Human Machine: how to prevent breakdowns*. New Delhi: National Book Trust (India), 1990, 235 pp. Revised editions 1995, 1999. Twelfth Reprint 2011. ISBN 978-81-237-1584-1
A popular book addressed to the lay adult.
6. Bijlani RL. *Nutrition: a practical approach*. New Delhi: Jaypee, 1992, 195 pp. 2nd edition, 2007, 179 pp. ISBN 978-81-844-8112-9
A book for medical students and teachers, suitable for conversion into a tape-slide programme.
7. Bijlani RL. *Understanding Medical Physiology*. New Delhi: Jaypee, 1995, 1997. 3rd edition, 2004, 948 pp. ISBN 978-93-80704-81-4
A textbook for medical students and teachers that stimulates enquiry and encourages critical thinking.
8. Bijlani RL. *B.K. Anand: easy to admire, difficult to emulate*. New Delhi: Jaypee, 1997, 115 pp. ISBN 81-717-9515-3
The biography of an eminent medical physiologist, Prof. B.K. Anand.
9. Bijlani RL. *Fundamentals of Physiology*. New Delhi: Jaypee, 2001. 2nd edition, 2013, 424 pp. ISBN 81-8448-752-7
A textbook for undergraduate students in health sciences, which although concise, encourages thinking and the faculty of reasoning.
10. Bijlani R. *The Return of Ram*. Gurgaon: Scholastics, 2006, 32 pp. ISBN 978-81-765-5579-1
A highly simplified version of the Ramayana in the form of a read-aloud and activity book for 5-8 year olds.
11. Bijlani RL. *Medical Research: all you wanted to know but did not know whom to ask*. New Delhi: Jaypee, 2008, 326 pp. ISBN 978-81-8448-363-417-5
A book on research methodology which cuts across medical disciplines, addressed specially to postgraduate students.
12. Bijlani R. *Back to Health through Yoga*. New Delhi: Rupa, 2008, 329 pp. ISBN 978-81-291-1397-9
A book on yoga as a lifestyle, and its application in the prevention and management of lifestyle disorders.
13. Bijlani R. *Essays on Yoga and Related Subjects*. Bangalore: Swami Vivekananda Yoga Prakashan, 2010, 352 pp.
A compilation of articles written, and published individually, over a period of about 15 years. The essays cover a wide range from the purpose of life to the significance of death.
14. Bijlani R. *Eating Wisely and Well*. New Delhi: Rupa, 2012, 132 pp. ISBN 978-81-291-1997-1
A book on nutrition for the general public, based largely on the modern science of nutrition but incorporating also the ancient wisdom enshrined in ayurveda and yoga.
15. Bijlani R. *Kavya Makes Up Her Mind*. New Delhi: National Book Trust, India, 2014, 32 pp. ISBN 978-81-237-7218-9
KavyakaFaisla (Hindi translation by the author). New Delhi: National Book Trust, India, 2015, 32 pp. ISBN 978-81-237-7639-2
A children's book, which delivers, without sermonizing, through the medium of a story, two messages: one on career choice, and another on living a meaningful life.

16. Lal A, Bijlani R. *The School Called Marriage: how to graduate with flying colours*. New Delhi: Hay House, 2015, 328 pp. ISBN 978-93-84544-71-3
Starting with the significance of choosing the right partner and going on to the secrets of becoming the right partner, this popular book looks at the entire spectrum of intimacy, parenting, work-family balance, and much more from a psycho-spiritual angle, and is enriched and illustrated by a large number of case studies.

17. Bijlani R. *A Primer on Yoga: theory and practice*. New Delhi: National Book Trust, India, 2015, 132 pp. ISBN 978-81-237-7641-5
An overview of yoga, including the major traditional schools of yoga and Sri Aurobindo's integral yoga. Includes answers to about 30 frequently asked questions, and a DVD on the physical practices of yoga.