

Vaidyajaraj of Oz

Mark Bunn, former Australian sports star, authors a new book inspiring people back to the age-old wisdom of Ayurveda, says **Alan McDonald**



"I am puzzled that so many Indians dismiss the timeless wisdom of Ayurveda and prefer 'quick fix' Western treatments and drug-based approaches." **Mark Bunn**

It is said that a prophet is not easily recognised in his own land. The same probably applies to healing systems from lands that have undergone colonisation. Mark Bunn's book on Ayurveda titled *Ancient Wisdom for Modern Health*, which was released recently across India, is a case in point (see *Revelations*: pg no. 82). Bunn is a professional footballer, who at 19 played in the AFL, the premier Australian football league, which enjoys a passionate fan following that rivals that of cricket. In his book, Bunn challenges modern-day health practices and proposes rather boldly that the way forward for all societies that care for Individual as well as societal health is through the ancient wisdom of Ayurveda.

Bunn, now a successful corporate speaker and natural health exponent, learnt Transcendental Meditation at the same age as he entered the AFL and credits the calmness and clarity that the practice brought into his life with his superior performance in football.

During his football playing years, Bunn read a book on Ayurveda which explained how yogic asanas create enjoyable, exhilarating and even blissful peak experiences. Bunn went on to incorporate the Ayurvedic/yogic approach to exercise into his training regime. He continues to preach and practice deep diaphragmatic nasal breathing, yogasanas and meditation through his talks and training programmes.

There is no escaping the reality that AFL football, especially at the highest level, is a very physical game.



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Rigorous training, the physical intensity of games, and frequent injuries (small and large) all take their toll on players. Right at the start of his AFL career, Bunn was clear that he did not want his football career to be detrimental to the remainder of his life.

Yoga over bhoga

At the end of each football season, when other players went off on wild end of season trips, Bunn would attend meditation and yoga retreats, which eventually brought enduring changes in his health and overall well-being. It also sparked an interest in the wisdom of ancient cultures in him and this went on to become the foundation of his post-football life.

Bunn travelled to South-East Asia when his football career came to a close. There, he wondered how people with nothing beyond the roof over their heads and the clothes on their backs laughed so freely. He found them genuinely happy despite the distinct lack of material possessions, challenging life circumstances and limited access to modern medicine.

Back home, he found affluent Australians who supposedly had the best health system in the world drowning in conditions like depression, anxiety, stress and obesity.

His research led him to investigate why certain groups in places like Hunza, Vilcabamba, Abkhasia and Okinawa manage to live for as many as 100 years with little or no incidence of widespread modern-day conditions like cancer, heart disease, osteoporosis, diabetes, obesity and arthritis. "We spend billions of dollars on drugs and ever more expensive surgical treatments that cripple our economies, and barely spend a cent looking into cultures whose people have lived long, healthy lives for generations with relative absence of both physical and mental disease. These populations have never heard of good fats, bad fats or low carbohydrate diets or antioxidants. Westerners are drowning in such information and yet have the highest rates of cancer, heart disease, diabetes, obesity and stress!"

Mark began to question the efficacy of modern health care. He visited Cambodia where he spent three months working for an aid organisation. Part of this involved travelling to remote villages and helping an Indian vaidya treat sick patients with local herbs.

In 2000, Mark completed his studies in Maharishi Ayurveda, a modern-day restoration of Ayurveda initiated by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi – who brought Transcendental Meditation to the West.

At the end of his studies, Bunn travelled around Australia for almost two years with an international team of Maharishi Ayurveda vaidyas, and also learnt first-hand much of ancient practice, including the ancient art of pulse diagnosis.

"Patients would come in with chronic conditions that had been plaguing them for weeks, months, even years. Time and again, they would experience profound improvement in their symptoms. Many shed excess kilograms they had not been able to budge in years. Some began sleeping again after months of insomnia. Others experienced significant relief from – or even overcame – longstanding medical conditions," explains Bunn.

Promoting Ayurveda

In his career as a popular corporate speaker, Bunn actively promotes yoga, meditation, and simple living and emphasises health over bulging biceps and washboard abs.

For the past 15 years, Bunn has spoken to leading corporate, educational and health professional groups of over 10,000 people a year on topics like health, work/life balance and stress management. From January 2012, he will also be available to speak to groups across India.

“Successful businesspeople know that the key to productivity lies in optimising the performance of one’s mind and body. Ayurveda’s knowledge of natural ‘peak performance cycles’ and its understanding of our unique body types is critical,” says Bunn.

In February 2011, Bunn and his wife Karen spent a month in Delhi, at the clinic of renowned vaidya Dr JR Raju, who is among the world’s greatest exponents of pulse diagnosis. Bunn says he gained much valuable knowledge on the preventive value of Ayurveda from Raju. This, he says, is something that he intends to incorporate into his work in Australia. “I am puzzled that so many Indians dismiss the timeless wisdom of Ayurveda in preference to ‘quick fix’ Western treatments and drug-based approaches,” he says. “They don’t see that Western countries have the best that contemporary medical systems have to offer and yet it is not really helping them at all. Ayurveda and its wonderful v aids possess solutions to many of our modern-day health problems like obesity, heart disease, diabetes, anxiety and stress. All we need to do is reconnect to this timeless knowledge.”



His faith in the timeless wisdom of Ayurveda has inspired him to write *Ancient Wisdom for Modern Health*. “Western health-science is so complicated that you need a science degree and a dictionary to keep up with all the different types of fats, analyse GI (glycemic index) foods or to simply pronounce lycopene or polyphenols! Ayurveda, on the other hand, sheds light on the fundamental ‘natural wisdoms’ of health and those are all you need to remember. The seven core natural wisdoms form the heart of my book,” explains Bunn.

Noted Marathi writer Rajendra Kher recommends Mark Bunn’s book. “We live in times when people have lost peace of mind. My friend Mark has extensively studied ancient scriptures and teachings, which forms the basis of his book. *Ancient Wisdom for Modern Health* reminds us of the age-old wisdom of the Ayurvedic tradition and its power to restore to wholeness our mental and physical being.”



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Beyond Medicine.....

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Permanent Cure

in Maximum Patients Suffering from Incurable Diseases

ENABLE

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PROMOTE

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Holistic MediCARE is based on the ‘synergy’ of Western, Chinese & Indian philosophy of health care.

TESTIMONIAL

“As I am visiting Dr. Tuli’s clinic today along with a patient of mine, I am pleased to share that I had brought my bed-ridden mother here more than 15 years ago as she suffered from Severe **RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS** with Multiple Crippling Deformities. She had also developed serious side effects to drugs including heavy dose of prednisolone prescribed to her at AIIMS, New Delhi. I am highly obliged to Dr. Tuli’s team and the drug-free holistic method of treatment for total cure of my mother from the very cause of disease, recovery from all the deformities and her freedom from heavy toxic medication. It was a medical miracle that stands proven till today! My mother has now crossed the age of ‘80’ years and she continues to smoothly manage her entire household including my “handicapped” sister!! Long live Holistic Medicine!!!”

-Dr. A. K. Gupta, Dermatologist, New Delhi

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