



AYURVEDA TO INTEGRATIVE HEALTH

A WHOLISTIC PATH TO WELL-BEING

A SPECIAL TALK BY DR ISSAC MATHAI

9 JULY 2025

THE REPORT



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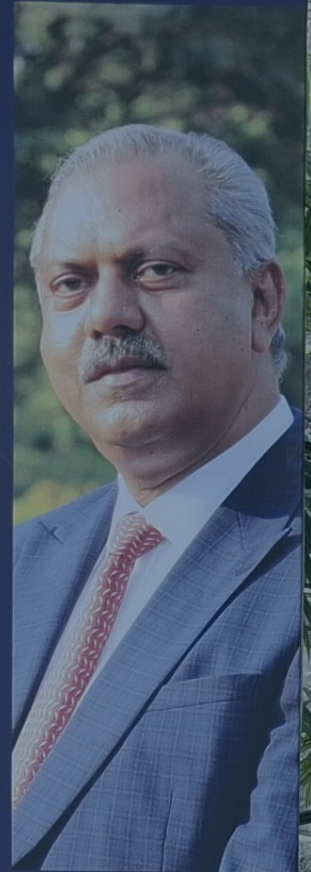
A SPECIAL TALK BY DR ISSAC MATHAI

WEDNESDAY, 9 JULY 2025, 6:30 PM

SEMINAR HALL 1 & 2, KAMALADEVI COMPLEX
INDIA INTERNATIONAL CENTRE
MAX MUELLER MARG, NEW DELHI

Explore how ancient systems like Ayurveda and Naturopathy, backed by science and rooted in holistic wisdom, offer powerful tools for modern health, longevity, and well-being.

Dr Mathai is the Founder and Medical Director of SOUKYA, the world's premier holistic health centre, and an internationally acclaimed physician in the field of Integrative Medicine. His patients include wellness seekers, leaders, and individuals from over 120 countries.



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INTRODUCTION

On 9 July 2025, Ritinjali hosted a talk by Dr Issac Mathai on 'Ayurveda to Integrative Health: A wHolistic Path to Well-Being', in collaboration with SOUKYA, the Centre for Escalation of Peace and the India International Centre. Over 240 participants joined the session, both in person and online.

As the world grapples with a rising tide of chronic illnesses, lifestyle disorders, and mental health challenges, there is a growing sense that something fundamental is missing from our approach to health and well-being. While modern medicine has made extraordinary strides in the treatment of disease, it often falls short of addressing the root causes of illness and the deep need for balance and wholeness in human life. In this context, the concept of integrative healthcare, which combines the wisdom of traditional healing systems with the precision of modern medicine, is gaining unprecedented relevance.



Inaugural address by Mr Arun Kapur, Founder and Chairman, Ritinjali

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The talk explored how age-old systems such as Ayurveda, Naturopathy, and Homoeopathy can be thoughtfully integrated with modern medicine to create a truly wholistic healthcare model. Drawing on his vast experience and decades-long practice, Dr Issac Mathai offered not only theoretical insights but also practical applications, compelling anecdotes, and evidence-backed research. His talk was both a personal reflection on his journey in the field of integrative medicine and a visionary call to action for a healthcare system that nurtures the body, mind, and spirit in unison.

Dr Mathai shared his personal journey and presented an integrative approach that brings together Ayurveda, Homoeopathy, Naturopathy, Yoga, and modern medical systems.



ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Dr Issac Mathai is a globally recognised wholistic physician and the Founder and Medical Director of SOUKYA, an international residential centre for integrative health and wellbeing. His journey began in 1985 in the hills of Wayanad, Kerala, inspired by his mother, a dedicated homoeopathy practitioner. What began as a personal mission to become an exceptional homoeopathic doctor evolved into a pioneering career that has redefined the essence of wholistic healthcare.

A significant early milestone in Dr Mathai's career was an internationally acclaimed research paper on integrating yoga with homoeopathy for the treatment of respiratory disorders. This was followed by advanced training at the Hahnemann Postgraduate Institute of Homoeopathy in London, where he earned his M.D. and became a Member of the Royal College of Homoeopaths (M.R.C.H). His professional journey took him to the Hale Clinic in London, where he served as a Consultant Physician and treated several high-profile individuals, earning widespread recognition.

Dr Mathai has also trained in Chinese Pulse Diagnosis and Acupuncture at the WHO Institute of Traditional Chinese Medicine in Nanjing, China, and completed a Mind-Body Medicine programme at Harvard Medical School, USA.

Through SOUKYA, Dr Mathai leads a team of experienced practitioners from multiple disciplines, promoting a shift from symptomatic treatment to the prevention and root-cause approach to healthcare. His philosophy underscores the importance of balance across body, mind, and spirit, advocating natural healing and conscious living.

He is the author of *Holistic Healing: A Doctor's Guide to Rediscovering Health and Happiness, Naturally*, which chronicles his journey and offers insights into integrative wellness.



THE TALK

Dr Mathai's Wholistic Journey

Dr Mathai began the talk by recounting his upbringing in Wayanad, Kerala, where his mother practised Homoeopathy and his father served as a priest in the Indian Orthodox Church. These early influences, he explained, laid the foundation for his understanding of healing as both a physical and spiritual process. His mother's packed medical practice taught him compassion and precision, while his father's spiritual depth instilled in him a meditative discipline that he continues to practice daily.

His transformative journey began in medical college, where he discovered meditation at the age of 23. While others dropped the practice, Dr Mathai persisted and credits meditation as the single most important contributor to his personal and professional success. His vision of healing extended beyond clinic walls, leading him to imagine a residential retreat in the hills near his hometown, where patients could immerse themselves in nature and reflection.

Core Philosophy and Principles

At the heart of Dr Mathai's philosophy lies the belief that health is a dynamic balance of body, mind, and spirit. Healing, he stressed, is not an isolated event but a wholistic process that unfolds over time. He described SOUKYA as a model for this approach - a residential wholistic health centre where therapies are tailored to individual needs and delivered in a natural, serene environment.

Dr Mathai introduced the WHO's definition of health - not merely the absence of disease, but a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being - and expanded it further by including spiritual and environmental well-being. He laid out the interconnected nature of healing, noting that healing the body, mind, and spirit each requires different levels of awareness and participation. Healing the body involves lifestyle corrections, detoxification, and physical

therapies; healing the mind necessitates self-awareness, emotional regulation, and mental resilience; while healing the spirit demands a focused inner journey of self-reflection, meditation, and forgiveness.

He emphasised the importance of identifying root causes, believing in the healing process, making positive lifestyle changes, and adopting a proactive attitude towards prevention and well-being. Illness, he noted, often arises from imbalance caused by poor diet, stress, sleep deprivation, lack of exercise, and emotional turmoil.

Integration of Traditional Systems with Modern Medicine

Dr Mathai's experiences abroad, particularly in London and the United States, exposed him to integrative practices in established clinics. He worked with influential figures like George Harrison of The Beatles, taught yoga to celebrities, and explored Chinese pulse diagnosis in China in 1987. His return to India was driven by the conviction that a truly effective healthcare model must bring together the strengths of multiple systems.



Talk by Dr Issac Mathai, Founder, Chairman, and Managing & Medical Director, Soukya

He elaborated on India's traditional medicine legacy - AYUSH: Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, and Homoeopathy - and how SOUKYA brings these together under one roof. His emphasis was on understanding individual body types (Vata, Pitta, Kapha) for personalised treatment, which could include Ayurvedic therapies such as Panchakarma (five-fold detoxification), Shirodhara (oil streaming on the forehead), Pizhichil (oil squeezing and massage), and Kizhi (herbal or rice poultices).

He highlighted naturopathic therapies like hydrotherapy, mud therapy, fruit and vegetable packs, as well as the role of yoga, breathing exercises, and meditation in destressing and maintaining internal balance. He reiterated that homoeopathy - though often misunderstood - remains highly effective in both acute and chronic illnesses.

Insights on Health, Lifestyle and Prevention

Dr Mathai repeatedly highlighted that chronic illness often stems from emotional disturbances, poor lifestyle habits, and disconnection from nature. He urged the audience to focus on daily routines - adequate sleep, stress reduction, whole-food nutrition, and emotional balance. Healing, he emphasised, starts with acceptance and a desire to improve, followed by belief and willingness to change.

He stressed the need to prevent illness before it arises, arguing that prevention and early intervention are far more powerful and cost-effective than reactive treatment. He shared practical suggestions for incorporating herbs and nutrients, such as turmeric, tulsi, lemon, mint, and omega-3 fatty acids, into daily life to support immunity, digestive health, and detoxification.

Research and Evidence-Based Practice

A significant portion of the talk was dedicated to ongoing research at SOUKYA. Dr Mathai shared details of a study involving 100 participants that is examining the potential of integrative treatments to reverse ageing at the cellular level. The study focuses on changes in DNA methylation and telomere length - a bold step toward validating wholistic approaches using

molecular science. Preliminary findings showed improved coagulation, reduced inflammation, and restored immune markers.

Impact of SOUKYA and Community Work

Beyond individual care, Dr Mathai also spoke of SOUKYA's social outreach efforts. Through charitable clinics in rural Bangalore, SOUKYA provides free wholistic healthcare to underserved populations. These efforts, he said, are an extension of the belief that true healing must reach all corners of society.

He spoke of SOUKYA's sustainability practices from solar and wind energy to organic farming and rainwater harvesting. The centre, he explained, is not just a healing destination but a self-sustaining ecosystem that models how healthcare can be both effective and environmentally responsible.



Q&A HIGHLIGHTS

Q: How can busy urban professionals incorporate wholistic practices into their routines?

A. Start small. Even ten minutes of deep breathing or meditation in the morning can set the tone for the day. Make sure you're sleeping well, eating fresh food, and getting a few minutes in nature. These simple habits go a long way.

Q: What role does diet play in managing chronic illness?

A. Diet plays a critical role. What we eat determines how we heal. I always recommend natural, organic, and seasonal food. Avoid processed items. Herbs like turmeric, mint, and lemon can strengthen the digestive and immune systems.

Q: Can Panchakarma treatments help with stress and anxiety?

A. Absolutely. Panchakarma is a scientific detoxification process. When properly administered, it deeply relaxes the nervous system and helps manage stress, anxiety, and even insomnia.

Q: How do you address scepticism toward alternative medicine?

A. Through results. When patients experience improvements in energy, immunity, and emotional well-being, they begin to believe. We also support our practices with ongoing research, including studies on DNA and telomere reversal.

Q: What simple practices do you recommend for children and young adults?

A. Introduce yoga and breathwork early. Limit screen time. Teach them to eat well and to rest. These simple routines lay a strong foundation for a resilient mind and body.

Q: Can Ayurveda offer solutions for Parkinson's or multiple sclerosis?

A. Yes, especially if caught early. We've seen measurable improvements using integrated protocols. While not curative, these therapies help manage the condition and slow progression.

Q: What are your thoughts on combining vegetarian and non-vegetarian diets?

A. Food should suit your constitution. I don't believe in being rigid. For some, a little meat works; for others, a plant-based diet is best. It's all about balance and listening to your body.

Q: How do you work with patients who are highly dependent on allopathic medication?

A. We never ask patients to stop their medication abruptly. We work alongside their primary physician and gradually build resilience through wholistic support. If it's safe and appropriate, we taper medication slowly.

Q: How can schools and educators adopt wholistic principles?

A. Start with simple practices like breathwork and yoga. Provide nutritious meals, allow outdoor play, and create screen-free zones. Children learn best when these habits are integrated early.

Q: Can mental health issues be managed through wholistic healing?

A. Yes. At SOUKYA, we support patients through emotional counselling, detox therapies, meditation, and nutrition. Mental health is inseparable from physical health.

Q: Are there any recent breakthroughs in research related to integrative medicine?

A. We're conducting a study on ageing reversal by measuring telomere length and DNA methylation before and after treatment. The preliminary results are promising and show the power of integrative care.

Q: How does SOUKYA balance luxury wellness with accessibility?

A. By serving both worlds. We've treated global leaders, yes, but we also offer free healthcare to over 800,000 villagers through our rural clinics. Healing should be universal.

Q: How does one find a qualified wholistic practitioner in India?

A. Look for proper certification and training in multiple systems. The practitioner should follow an evidence-based, individualised approach to treatment.

Q: What are some daily prescriptions you write for yourself, and which one is the hardest for you to follow?

A. I prescribe myself meditation, yoga, eating mindfully, getting enough sleep, and walking in nature every day. The one I struggle with the most is rest. My days are often full with patients, research, and travel, and sometimes I find it difficult to prioritise adequate downtime. But I remind myself that rest is also a form of medicine.



CONCLUSION

Dr Mathai's talk served as a compelling exploration of integrative health - a powerful reminder that true healing lies in nurturing the human being as a whole. The talk offered a compelling overview of integrative health, blending ancient healing systems with modern medical insights. Through real-life examples, scientific research, and practical lifestyle suggestions, he illustrated how wholistic approaches can effectively address chronic illness and promote long-term well-being.

The audience responded enthusiastically to Dr Mathai's insights, and the session closed with a sense of curiosity, reflection, and eagerness to integrate wholistic practices into daily life. to reflect, realign, and renew their understanding of what it means to truly be well. Health is more than the absence of disease, it is the harmonious functioning of the body, mind, and spirit. His life's work, as embodied by SOUKYA, stands at the intersection of ancient wisdom and modern science. As healthcare systems worldwide seek more sustainable and inclusive models, his message is clear: healing is not just about curing, it is about nurturing the human experience in all its dimensions.

The audience left inspired to reflect, realign, and renew their understanding of what it means to truly be well.



SUMMARY

On 9 July 2025, Ritinjali hosted a talk by Dr Issac Mathai on '*Ayurveda to Integrative Health: A Holistic Path to Well-Being*', in collaboration with SOUKYA, the Centre for Escalation of Peace and the India International Centre. Over 240 participants joined the session, both in person and online.

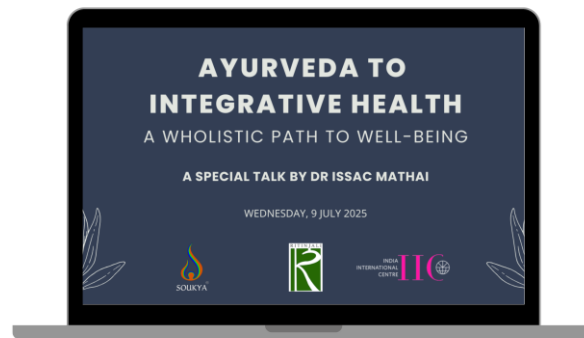
Dr Issac Mathai delivered an inspiring talk on the evolving landscape of wholistic healthcare, drawing from over four decades of experience in integrating Ayurveda, Homoeopathy, Naturopathy, and yoga with modern medical systems. He shared the story behind SOUKYA, his globally renowned residential centre for wholistic healing in Bangalore, and outlined its patient-centric, multi-disciplinary approach.

The talk emphasised the importance of viewing health through the interconnected lens of body, mind, and spirit. Dr Mathai shared case examples that highlighted the effectiveness of combining conventional diagnosis with lifestyle-based therapies, including meditation, nature-based healing, proper nutrition, and emotional wellbeing. He cautioned against over-medicalisation and emphasised the power of early intervention, sleep, stress management, and daily mindfulness in preventing chronic disease.

Dr Mathai also spoke about his ongoing anti-ageing research study and how simple lifestyle changes—such as the use of turmeric, lemon, and organic foods—can have profound health benefits. The session concluded with a call for more integrative doctors and health systems that prioritise prevention and personalised care.

A lively Q&A session followed the talk, with active participation from the audience. Attendees raised thoughtful questions and shared reflections, making for an engaging and interactive event.





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