

**Dr. Swami Shankardev Saraswati**

***Yoga Psychology and Psychotherapy - Theory and Practice***

**Date: October 1, 2016**

**Time: 1615 hrs – 1700 hrs**

This lecture will cover an overview of yoga psychology and yoga psychotherapy, which are branches of yoga therapy. Yoga psychology is the theoretical basis for yoga psychotherapy, which is a vast branch of yoga therapy. It plays a vital role in the successful treatment and management of physical, psychological and spiritual conditions. This is because a physical approach alone (for example, drugs) or a psychological approach alone (for example, CBT) can only give limited and often short-term benefits.

Yoga psychology is a modern term that is in evolution. Dr. Swami Shankardev defines it as “the science of the embodied relationship between consciousness and mind”. In one sense it is the science of the “subtle body”, which can be imagined as lying sandwiched between the physical body and the spiritual or causal body.

He will propose that in order to gain a larger vision of the theoretical basis of yoga psychology, we need a 3 dimensional approach that draws from a number of Indian philosophical traditions including Yoga, Samkhya, Tantra and Vedanta.

These systems store a vast amount of information about the inner workings of the body, mind and spirit, especially the organs of the mind and the various energies or currents that animate these organs. It also gives a detailed account of how the organs of the body and mind interact with each other.

Yoga psychology describes both how the idealized healthy body and mind function, and how that imbalance can occur and which may lead to pathology.

Yoga seeks to actualize a conscious relationship with the vast cosmic forces that lie outside the normal socially conditioned awareness. It also has the capacity to give us information on how each of us has individual karma that creates strengths and weaknesses, harmony and strain within body and mind. This can occur at birth or due to life circumstances, especially in early life.

Yoga psychotherapy can be defined as the application of yoga psychology into a clinical setting. As it evolves it will eventually incorporate Western concepts and methods into a more holistic approach that works for clients in a Western setting.

Two main levels of psychotherapy will be described: (a) Behavioural changes, and (b) Deep psychotherapy that supports the journey from limited socially conditioned material consciousness to the awakening of the deeper authentic Self. You will be introduced to several meditation techniques used in yoga psychotherapy. These include a grounding, breath and mantra, and mindfulness meditations.