



SPEECH

**His Excellency Mr Dharambeer Gokhool G.C.S.K.,
President of the Republic of Mauritius**

**EVENT: LAUNCH OF BOOK – ELIMINATING DRUG
ADDICTION THROUGH MEDITATION - BY
ATMA GYAN MEDITATION SOCIETY**

VENUE: GYMKHANA CLUB, VACOAS

DATE: 31 OCTOBER 2025

TIME: 14:30 HOURS

Protocol

Mr. Samioullah Lauthan, M.S.K., Chairperson of the National Agency for Drug Control

His Holiness Swami Paramananda ji, Spiritual Master and Author

Mr. Romesh Bonomally, President of Atma Gyan Meditation Society

Esteemed Members of Atma Gyan Meditation Society

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen,

All Protocol Observed

Introduction

Namaskaar and good afternoon to all.

I am very pleased to join you for the launch of the book “Eliminating Drug Addiction through Meditation”, authored by Swami Paramananda ji, Spiritual Master, and for the opportunity to make an address.

Allow me to begin by thanking the organisers for their kind invitation.

Meetings and Interactions

Since my assuming Office as President of the Republic in December 2024, I have held regular interactions with a wide cross section of socio-cultural, religious, and spiritual organisations.

And I very much value their contributions in nurturing a healthy and harmonious social fabric, and in fostering unity, peace, and a deep sense of patriotism among our citizens.

Their endeavours resonate with my own mission as Head of State in fostering a society of peace, harmony and unity.

In my meeting with Mr. Narad Dawoodarry and his collaborators, at State House, we reflected upon the multiple challenges that our society is facing. and the ways and means that need to be deployed to deal with them.

I strongly believe in the philosophy that there are moments in the life of a society when citizens should not ask what the country can do for them, but what they can do for the country.

It is in this spirit that earlier this year, I had the honour of addressing the Council of Religions at the launch of their book on the “Bio-psycho-social-spiritual approach to counselling victims and perpetrators of violence.”

That initiative proposed a comprehensive and compassionate model for addressing human suffering.

Likewise, today, Swami Paramananda ’s book - Eliminating Drug Addiction Through Meditation - is an inspirational example of a citizen’s responsibility not only to a community or society but to humanity at large, as the problem of drug addiction knows no geographical barriers.

Addictions

As stated in the book, the drug situation is alarming and in spite of all the efforts of the authorities, the problem is far from being solved.

I am particularly pleased to note that this book offers a comprehensive understanding of addiction, not merely as a problem of drugs, but as a crisis of consciousness.

A view that is true to the spirit of every religion, which shares the universal message of nurturing a healthy, conscious, and awakened human being.

Addiction today takes many forms: escapism through alcohol or narcotics, obsession with wealth or pleasure, and increasingly, digital dependency- the compulsive use of social media that undermines self-esteem and distorts relationships.

The shocking incident of a 13-year-old girl who took her life this week, after her private photos were leaked on social media, stands as a painful reminder of how vulnerable our youth are to the misuse of technology, and a deeper loss of self-worth and direction.

In such a context, parents, families, and schools have a transformative role to play by adopting a restorative approach rather than a retributive one, to build trust, dialogue, and accountability.

We must also confront the gendered roots of addiction.

For example: boys are often taught that expressing emotion is weakness, that “men don’t cry.” As a result, many suppress pain until it manifests as aggression or dependency.

Emotional literacy and self-education from an early age must therefore become an integral part of how we raise our children if we are to nurture balanced, empathetic, and peaceful adults.

There are many other profound insights in this book, which I invite you to read and reflect upon.

Meditation as the Solution

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my conviction that governance and faith are not adversarial, but major partners in providing the compass between good and evil.

It is heartening to see our spiritual leaders, thinkers, and change-makers converging towards the same purpose to propose solutions that heal the individual, strengthen families, and uplift society.

Swami Paramananda's approach is anchored in a holistic vision: one that unites the biological, psychological, social, and spiritual dimensions of life that can help to fight against all forms of addiction.

I therefore thank, commend, and congratulate Swami Paramananda and the Atma Gyan Meditation Society for this timely and meaningful contribution to deal with one of most urgent challenges of our time from a spiritual angle, that is through the practice of meditation.

Government Programme

The Government Programme 2025–29, which I had the honour to present on 24th January 2025, already affirms that happy, supported families and inclusive communities are the bedrock of national stability.

Through the Ministry of Health's protocols, the Drug Users Administrative Panel, and institutions such as the National Agency for Drug Control, we now treat drug addicts not as criminals, but as individuals in need of care, dignity, and support.

Our Digital Transformation Blueprint 2025–2029, which I presented on 26 May this year, also addresses emerging challenges in online safety and the responsible use of social media to combat digital addiction.

In our nation-building journey, the work of organisations like the Atma Gyan Meditation Society emerges as a powerful ally.

This is where meditation comes into play as a practical, inclusive, and cost-free path that directs energy toward mind transformation and the discovery of life's deeper joys, which do not depend on substances, compulsions, or external validation.

Guided meditation, as outlined in the book, can be integrated across society: in schools, families, workplaces, hospitals, and especially in

prisons, offering rehabilitation, restoring self-control, remorse, and hope.

In fact, last Saturday, I attended the National Conference on Mental Health hosted by the Abhyas School of Yoga, and the statistics shared by the Prisons Welfare Officer are alarming:

- Of a total of 3,000 detainees in our prisons, 49% are aged 18 to 30 years;
- More than 65% of the total prison population are chemically dependent or have an addiction problem;
- Our prison population shows a disproportionately high rate of mental illness compared to the general community;
- This includes prison officers, who work in hostile and violent environments.

Mental awareness of these situations is important to bring about meaningful changes, and for that to happen, self-education is essential.

And it is through the practice of meditation that self-education and self-awareness can be nurtured.

Neuroscience actually shows that focused breathing reduces stress, while focused attention enhances the prefrontal cortex, improving decision-making, impulse control, and empathy.

In this way, meditation helps individuals transcend psychological and spiritual barriers, responding to life with clarity, calm, and compassion.

Closing Remarks

We cannot solve these complex challenges alone.

This is why it is essential for everyone - government officials, health and social care providers, school staff, and community organisations - to come together.

As the President of the Republic, I can assert that the vision and mission of the Atma Gyan Meditation Society and that of the Presidency go in the same direction.

We must therefore work hand in hand - la main dans la main - as One people, as One nation, as One humanity, in peace, justice, and liberty.

The book to be launched today

holds a lot of hope for society and humanity; it can be a real game changer in our fight against drug addiction and any other forms of addiction.

Allow me to congratulate Swami Paramananda ji and the Atma Gyan Meditation Society once again for this precious gift, a book full of wisdom, profound insights and guidance on how to live a good and happy life.

As the author puts it: Just meditate. It costs nothing, but sitting silently, following one's breath for at least one hour a day.

I am confident that it will inspire reflection, guide action, and contribute to a society that is more mindful, compassionate, and resilient.

May God bless our Republic. Merci et bonne continuation.