



IYENGAR YOGA
CENTRE of VICTORIA



Jawahar Bangera at the IYCV Workshop, April 2014

Newsletter

S U M M E R 2 0 1 4

Iyengar Yoga Teacher Intensives



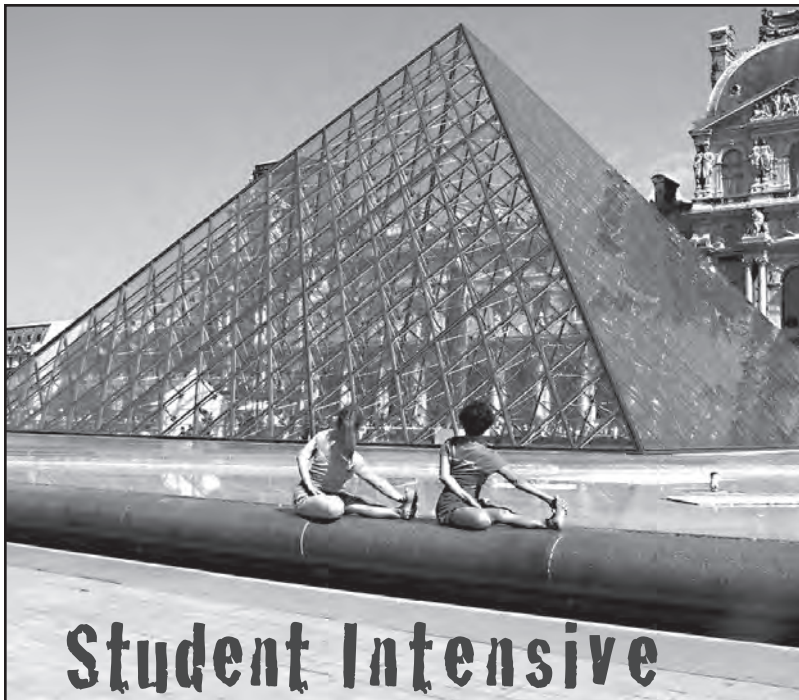
JULY 7-12, 2014
Introductory I and II
Syllabi for uncertified
Iyengar yoga teachers

AUGUST 11-15, 2014
Intermediate Junior
and Senior syllabi
for certified Iyengar
yoga teachers



Fees for each course:
\$610 CDN + GST IYCV members
\$650 CDN + GST IYCV non-members
Refunds will be offered only if your space can be
filled and are subject to a \$50 cancellation fee.

To register, drop in to or phone the
Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria,
202-919 Fort Street, Victoria, B.C. V8V 3K3
(250) 386-YOGA (9642)
www.iyengaryogacentre.ca



Student Intensive

ALL LEVELS – Learn how to establish and deepen your practice.

With Lauren Cox and Ty Chandler
August 25-29, 2014,
9:30 am – 12:30 pm

Each day there will be an introduction to
pranayama along with philosophical and
spiritual discussions. Two hours of yoga
asanas, including a timed practice, yoga
kurunta work, restorative poses, and
inversions follow.

Registration opens April 24, 2014
Fees: \$235.00 + GST for IYCV members
\$260.00 + GST for non-members

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Correction to Spring 2004 newsletter photo credits

Donna Fornelli took the photo of Leslie Hogya with Guruji on page 18.

George Dovas took the photograph of Guruji arriving at his birthday on page 6.

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IYENGAR YOGA CENTRE OF VICTORIA

SOCIETY is a non-profit society incorporated under the *Society Act* of the Province of B.C., whose purpose is "to encourage the physical, mental, and spiritual growth of its members and other interested persons of the society at large by the study and discipline of Yoga." The Society owes its inspiration to Mr. B.K.S. Iyengar.

The Newsletter, published regularly by the IYENGAR YOGA CENTRE OF VICTORIA SOCIETY, provides current information on events concerning Iyengar yoga in the Victoria area.

Send contributions, articles, photographs (high resolution), drawings, information or suggestions to: the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria Newsletter, 202-919 Fort Street, Victoria BC V8V 3K3.

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Newsletter Advertising Policy

(Adopted February 20, 2004)

In keeping with the mandate of the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria Society Directors, 2004, to update, review and document policies and procedures, the newsletter committee submitted a policy which is a revision of the 1996 policy and has been adopted by the Board of Directors as follows:

1. Advertisements must not conflict with the aims of the newsletter of the IYCV.
2. Advertisements must be only for Iyengar yoga.
3. Priority will be given to advertisements regarding IYCV events, IYCV sponsored events, and IYAC events.

REGISTRATION

Please visit our website:

www.iyengaryogacentre.ca for full information on classes and workshops.

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Reflections

By Shirley Daventry French

“Trigger Warnings: the latest threat to academic freedom.”¹ This was the title of an article in the *Globe and Mail* last month. Trigger warnings are disclaimers or advance notice about course material which may disturb or distress some students. Apparently such a custom is becoming more prevalent in universities throughout North America. It is generating a backlash of concern from liberal minded people and publications. Hopefully this backlash will modify or even put a stop to some of the puritanical political correctness which seems to abound these days and trigger a resurgence of common sense.

For me it also prompted the thought that perhaps there should be a trigger warning about Yoga. These practices are dangerous to your ego. They may trigger fear and anxiety, chaos and confusion. They will give you a clear picture of yourself, and allow you to see yourself as you really are—without airbrushing. They are likely to strip you of your illusions and challenge your most cherished beliefs. Yoga is a difficult and demanding process which may make you extremely uncomfortable on many levels!

Why on earth would anyone want to go through this? And yet yoga has become mainstream and more popular than ever. How has that happened? Take a random look though a series of yoga websites! Strength, stamina, flexibility. Poise and balance. Well-being. Relaxation. Freedom from Stress. Peace, enjoyment and positive energy. This was a sampling of local yoga studio websites this morning, most of which also

Yoga is a difficult and demanding process which may make you extremely uncomfortable on many levels!

prominently promote their teacher training courses as well as training to become a yoga therapist.

The last two paragraphs both contain many elements of truth; but it is the upbeat claims of the second which form most of yoga’s promotional literature.

At the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria we want to attract students too, so we always choose a positive slant whilst adhering to principles and without distorting the truth. But we do not reveal everything to everyone and particularly right away. First of all, to derive any benefit from yoga you have to put your foot inside the door. Second, for lasting benefits beyond superficial ones, you actually have to practise what you’ve learned. If you’re considering teaching in the Iyengar tradition, you need a minimum of three years’ experience with a qualified teacher before being eligible to apply for teacher training. For specialised work such as training teachers or teaching therapeutic yoga, you are required to have considerable experience as a teacher. And on top of all this, Iyengar teachers are required to do a considerable amount of professional development to maintain their certification.

Traditionally yoga students had to earn the privilege of becoming a student, and while I know yoga cannot remain

bogged down in traditions of the past and must adapt to the laws, culture and customs of today, these days the criteria for acceptance are sometimes so minimal as to be absurd. In contrast to this, at our centre we are seen as too strict, our teacher training too long. However, several recent trainees have returned to us from other yoga teacher trainings because they had learned enough to see how vast this subject is, how much there is to learn.

It was Swami Radha who gave me my first real glimpse of the philosophy behind the practice of yoga, its purpose and traditions, when she came to Victoria to give some public talks. I was impressed by her steadfast adherence to the premise that yoga is a fascinating but perilous journey into the unknown. A wise person takes time to strengthen body, mind and resolve before venturing on such a journey, and it is prudent to find a guide who has already undertaken this quest.

I was fortunate to have Swami Radha and B.K.S. Iyengar as my guides on this tortuous path, guidance that continues to counsel me daily and enabled me to continue this journey into old age. Like all traditional yoga masters, they did not accept students casually; you had to prove your sincerity first.

At my first meeting with Swami Radha I did not have a chance to speak with her personally, but later, after she discovered my teacher had begun a small teacher training course she suggested that all of us who were considering teaching would benefit from a small group experience called a *Straightwalk*. Curious, I attended along with my friend and mentor, Carole Miller.

¹ “Trigger Warnings: the latest threat to academic freedom” by Geoff Smith, *The Globe and Mail*, Friday April 4, 2014.

Carole was nervous and uneasy. I was confident, a state of mind which was soon to be challenged.

The workshop was being held at a spiritual education centre called Queenswood House of Peace; but rather than peaceful, this weekend was a chapter from the *Book of Revelations*. We gathered in a room with a small cluttered table at its centre. Shelves at various levels were laden with objects, large and small. We were instructed to walk towards this table from four different directions and then list the objects and write a few words about our experience.

Of course, most of us assumed that having a long list would have more merit than a short one, with the result that some objects which weren't actually there on this table were described in detail. Papers were to be written in duplicate, Swami Radha would be given the top copy and we would read from our carbon copies. When we had all completed this task, we gathered together with Swami Radha to take turns in reading our papers aloud.

I had enjoyed this process, was curious to see where it was leading and eager to read my paper. There were about a dozen of us taking this

Difficult and demanding as we were finding this process, at the same time we were getting glimpses of something really worthwhile: something Swami Radha would sometimes call a "pearl beyond price" and which both she and Guruji spoke of as true liberation or freedom from all limitations.

workshop and I ended up having to wait until the very last. Enthusiastically I read my paper. Swami Radha asked me a question. Eagerly I answered, to be surprised by her response: "You are very quick with words!" Fortunately I had enough sense to wait and see what would happen next. More questions from her! My responses became less rapid and more thoughtful, interspersed with pauses for reflection. Her questions were penetrating, her observations apt. What a fascinating evening! And so I began to take my first steps along a steeper less well defined path.

This *Straightwalk* was the first of many courses with Swami Radha both in Victoria and at her Ashram in the Kootenay region of British Columbia. There, in 1976 I had my first experience of *asana* taught in the tradition of B.K.S. Iyengar by a teacher who had

just returned from Pune. Her name was Norma Hodge and she enabled Derek and I to travel to Pune and study with Mr. Iyengar in 1979.²

After a few more trips, Mr. Iyengar became Guruji, and the path took a more challenging route. To continue beyond this point required consideration, courage and commitment. Both Swami Radha and Guruji guided us through myriad experiences which challenged us to our core. There was encouragement and restraint, practice and learning.

Why were we doing this? We asked ourselves this question frequently. Difficult and demanding as we were finding this process, at the same time we were getting glimpses of something really worthwhile: something Swami Radha would sometimes call a "pearl beyond price" and which both she and Guruji spoke of as true liberation or freedom from all limitations. Chief among these limitations was mistaking the unreal self for the real self, the phenomenal world for the real world.

They did not entice us with empty promises. In the same way that Winston Churchill inspired the British people during World War Two, by calling for "blood, sweat and tears," Swami Radha and B.K.S. Iyengar demanded that we follow the two main tenets of yoga: practice and non-attachment with nothing less than maximum effort! Yoga is often called skill in action, and we received training in a variety of skills we have

Summer Sadhana

July 7-12, 2014, 6:30 am - 8:00 am

All levels workshop with Robin Cantor

We must learn in our performance of asana to express the outer form and beauty of the pose without losing our inner attention.

— B.K. S. Iyengar, *The Tree of Yoga*

Begin your practice with a philosophy discussion

Explore a new focus on the asanas each day: standing, forward bending, inversions, twists, back bending, pranayama

Learn to maintain inner attention while expressing the outer form & beauty of the asana Enjoy a review of your poses invigorated by sun salutations on the last day



Members \$115 + GST /
Non Members \$125 + GST

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² Carole Miller, my fellow student in that first *Straightwalk* with Swami Radha followed us to Pune two years later in 1982.

continued to hone for forty-five years.

Before I immersed myself in yoga, I had already become aware of the necessity to make changes in my life, and participated in Encounter Groups: sometimes more grandly called Conscious Raising Groups. They awakened me in many ways and opened my mind to the possibility of living my life differently. However, they had one huge drawback.

Having tapped into all kinds of emotions and revealed many ill-adapted ways of dealing with them, they did not provide any practical direction or follow up on how to integrate this new understanding into life as a mother of three young children, wife of a busy physician transplanted from living and working in one of the world's great capitals to a small Canadian town half a world away. Many of my companions in those encounter groups simply walked away from their responsibilities to live the

freestyle hippie life popular on the west coast in those days. Knowing that did not fit well for me, where could I go without stifling my energy and bottling everything up again? Shortly thereafter the solution appeared in the form of yoga where you do open up but at the same time develop strength, strategies and stability to face whatever emerges. And hopefully acquire some wisdom along the way!

Have I lived happily ever after? Definitely not! Happiness is not the purpose of yoga. Rather I seek purpose, contentment and the wherewithal to remain strong and steady in the face of whatever comes my way. Without a doubt, it has been and continues to be a life worth living.

Om namah Shivaya,
Shirley

Practice Enrichment Series

Friday afternoons 3:15 pm - 6:15 pm

October 17, November 7,
December 5, 2014 & January 23, 2015

Commit to this series to advance your personal practice of *asana* and *pranayama*. The series is designed for serious intermediate and advanced students in the Iyengar Yoga tradition. Students will be guided in a strong practice over each three hour session. Each month will build upon the previous month's work to unlock individual challenges.

With Ann Kilbertus and Ty Chandler

Note: Instructor permission is required to attend.

\$45 each session, \$180 for the series

IYCV Potluck Picnic at Shirley's Labour Day Weekend

Sunday August 31
Noon - 4 pm
3918 Olympic View Dr.



Sri B.K.S. Iyengar, Honourary President

is pleased to present

STEPHANIE QUIRK

Seeing, Understanding and Reflecting from the Base

Part six of a course for teachers October 2-5, 2014
For information, call Ann Kilbertus (250) 598-0976.

Summer Solstice Kirtan with Bhavantu Sound

Chanting is not an obscure musical ritual – it is an important tool used by people everywhere to heal their bodies, quiet their minds, and bring the sacred into their lives.

– Don Campbell, *The Mozart Effect*

Saturday evening, June 21, 2014, 7:30 pm - 9:30 pm

By donation

Guruji's message on his 95th birthday

My children, grandchildren and great grandchildren in the field of yoga,

I do not know how to thank my children and grandchildren; though we know how to thank our parents. I am touched by your love and affection that so many people, so many students are here today to celebrate my 95th birthday.

Actually, in my early days, I don't think I remember to have celebrated birthdays. The first one I celebrated was my 60th birthday and it is going on.

What amazed me today was that my students who are very sincere, those who started with me in the 1950s used to address B.K.S. as one who beats, kicks and shouts. And today on the platform I heard the younger generation from various countries; the younger generation stated that B.K.S. stands for beauty, knowledge and serenity. What a transformation!

Even in the papers they had written that Mr. Iyengar stands for beating, kicking and shouting. And today, the same B.K.S.'s works has been appreciated, which has transpired and transformed millions and millions of people all over the world. I was suffering from various illnesses from childhood. I took yoga just to improve my health, and I never thought that this seed of yoga, which was planted in me by my Guru Sri T. Krishnamacharya, would make me to become a missionary in the field

I am still a student of yoga. God has made me to reach a certain stage in the field of yoga and that has kept me alive, alert and active.



Gururajji at an earlier birthday.

of yoga and take this subject in all the six continents of the world.

I am grateful to my students and children who are responsible to make this yoga popular today. At this age admiration does not have any weight on me. I am still a student of yoga. God has made me to reach a certain stage in the field of yoga and that has kept me alive, alert and active.

We can see death but we cannot experience death. We can experience time but we cannot see time.

Similarly, those who call my system physical yoga do not know anything as they can see it but have no experience of it.

You have also reached a certain level in the fineness in the art of presentation; now I want to tell you that all our attention up to now was on how to spread, extend and expand the inner layer of the body on the somatic layer where we use our mind, intelligence for the body to expand and extend. Today, I request you that when you are practicing you should not think of the extension and expansion of the body; the extension and expansion of your intelligence and consciousness;

you should make your body to spread more than what it is spreading now.

So use your consciousness, use your intelligence and see that these two inner vehicles of the soul makes the fibres, the cells of the body to feel the existence to live intellectually, consciously and conscientiously. I am sure that if you use your intelligence as an actor, as an instrument to make the body to spread; you are one with God; you are one with your soul; you are one with your body.

Body is a support of the self. Body is the prop of the Self. So if the prop is not there you and I cannot communicate at all or commune with each other. So the body being the support of the self, it is the duty of each and every one; morality has to begin there where you have to keep the body in a stable and sound health so that the inner mind, the inner consciousness, the inner intelligence and the inner self moves freely by detaching itself from the attachment of the body so it moves towards the attachment of the soul.

This is my message to you all and may God bless you all.

I revere you all so you need not come individually to express your reverence. I love you all. I have got reverence to you all as you have reverence to me. I am devoted to you as you are devoted to me. So please all of you accept that you and me, I and you are all one 'We'. ॐ

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RAHASYA VOL. 21 NO. 1, 2014

Savasana Before Pranayama

by Geeta S. Iyengar

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A question that we are always asked is, “Why don’t we start *pranayama* on the very first day? You always make us to lie down and do *pranayama*. We are very enthusiastic and we want to sit and start. But you don’t allow us!”

Why does *pranayama* as taught in our system begin with *savasana* and that too with the help of support for the back?

Today people are suffering from many problems – physical problems, mental problems, family problems, emotional problems, financial problems. All these problems put together makes the human being absolutely restless; full of stress, full of strain and in such a state one cannot start *pranayama*.

To give you an example, when Arjuna, as we read in *Bhagavad Gita*, sits back and says that, “Now I am not going to take any weapons in my hands, I don’t want to kill my kith and kin. I am completely down. My body is shivering; I can’t even hold the weapons in my hand.” That is the state of Arjuna at that point of time. He is one who is very courageous who wanted to face the enemy; yet that is his condition when he is on the battlefield.

For us, we are on the battlefield on a day to day basis. That is life. If Lord Krishna has to explain 18 chapters to Arjuna to make him calm down, quieten and become positive; who then says, “Now I am ready for the battle whatever may happen!” And then he is very sure now that since the Lord is with him he is going to win. That

faith, Patanjali says, is *ishvara pranidhana*. Arjuna surrenders himself to Lord Krishna when the Lord shows him the whole picture. There is a total transformation in Arjuna and that is how he stands on the battlefield.

If that is the state of Arjuna then you should know what is our state! How much we need to understand to be calm; and that is why we start from *savasana*. It is a blessing for us to be able to do *pranayama* in *savasana*. All these *pranayamas* like *Ujjayi Abhyantara Viloma*, *Bahya Abhyantara Viloma* and also to some extent *Brahmari* can be done in *savasana*.

When you are restless, when you are unable to sleep at night, you sometimes get up at midnight and take some tablets to sleep. That is the state of many people. There are many conditions when the persons cannot even sit straight. For them it is a blessing that *pranayama* is also possible in *savasana*. That is the answer for those when people question you as to why we teach or do *savasana* before *pranayama*.

Now when in *savasana*, ninety percent of the people who are not accustomed to doing *pranayama* will fall asleep when they lie down in *savasana*. That is the next obstacle. What do you do when you go to *savasana* and fall asleep? You miss and then no *pranayama* happens. Your *tamasic* nature puts you into a sleepy state. Why does that *tamasic* nature come to you also has to be understood only by you.

Ninety percent of the people who are not accustomed to doing *pranayama* fall asleep in *savasana*.

This 20 minute sleep is different from the six to eight hours of sleep.

there are lots of things to be understood even in that sleep. That is why *nidra* is a *vrutti* and from that *vrutti* you have to understand many things that happen.

For instance, we sleep six hours or seven hours. But when you get up in the morning you want to do *pranayama*. Since it has been said that you have to start with *savasana*; you sincerely follow it and you will go to sleep. That sleep of 20 minutes or half an hour is quite a different sleep from that six hours or eight hours you had earlier. What is that? Have you ever tried to analyse and find out? In spite of sleeping for eight hours and possibly after doing some morning chores and then lying down in *savasana* for *pranayama* and you fall asleep again. That means that though you slept, the stress in the nerves did not go. When you rightly sleep in *savasana* then that sleep becomes a *sattvic* sleep. That is needed by everyone.

So if you get into a sleepy state in *savasana* then understand that somewhere you were stressed and your sleep was not quiet. Often that sleep is *rajasic*. You might have dreamt; you might have moved. Even at six o’clock people feel; “Oh! Now it is time to get up!” If that is the state then it shows that you are stressed out.

The next questions is when can you really start the *pranayama*, without *savasana*, in the sitting state?

That is possible in the morning when you get up and you are fresh; when everything is okay with you; especially

Now when in savasana, ninety percent of the people who are not accustomed to doing pranayama will fall asleep when they lie down in savasana.

if there is no responsibility. Many of you must have noticed when you get up there is a list of work that is to be done either in the house or outside. You have to plan that I have to finish with this, finish with this and that itself is a stress which makes you restless. If it makes you restless then you should be doing *savasana*. It could be five minutes or ten minutes. I cannot say that. It depends on your own personality. Whether you are stressed out or whether you take too much of responsibility; whether you are over-working or are over-conscious. But if it is possible to sit and do, then the quality of that *pranayama* changes from what *pranayama* you do after *savasana*. So every sadhaka – every practitioner has to understand this difference between two attempts. What happens when you sit for *pranayama* after a few minutes of *savasana* or if you sit straight away and begin *pranayama*?

If you sit straight away and begin then it takes a long time for the body and nerves to come back to normalcy but instead of that if you do few minutes of *savasana* then you are more composed.

How you get composed for your *pranayama* is your problem not the teacher's problem. But the teacher will teach. It is our duty to inform you what happens and that's why one has to know why we begin with *savasana* and if you feel sleepy then you have to deal with it.

Pranayama is not just a breathing exercise. Even when it comes to exercise you use the word warming up. You all like to warm up before the class begins. You sometimes walk to the yoga class because you know by walking some warming up takes place. You want to make yourself active. Somebody may do some jogging, running, jumping, something. Or you begin with some *adho mukha svanasana*, *uttanasana*, full arm balance, some elbow balance so that you warm yourself up and then begin.

That means you agree there that even for *asanas* you commence only

*Pranayama is not just a breathing exercise.
Your body and mind need to get composed
before you do it.*

when your body and your mind begins to warm up. You should also know well that even for *pranayama* that starting is required.

Pranayama is not just a breathing exercise.

Your body and mind need to get composed before you do it.

Why do you need an appetizer as a starter before dinner? Then why not a starter before *asana* and *pranayama*? That starter could be *savasana* and if you are sitting it could be from *dhyana*. One can also start with *dhyana*. That is why whenever the prayers are to start you are asked to sit though not for too long.

Today, the mind of the students is accustomed to say the prayers at once. They don't give much time because the prayers have to be said at seven a.m. and the class has to end at eight a.m.! That is today's lifestyle. But, we have to understand as to why does it take such a long time to get settled in the posture; settle ourselves mentally in that posture.

From several thoughts you have to come to that point where you become quiet, go within yourself and you understand yourself how you are going within. All this has to take place. This is the starting point of *pranayama*.

A good *savasana* is when you do not go into a sleepy state. It teaches how really the mind has to be where you do not feel any disturbance as far as the sounds or noises are concerned. This is how our mind also keeps on working around the *vrttis* and *klesas*. That is why when you are doing *pranayama* – it is not a breathing exercise. It is not something that you jump on the breath and try to have a deep breath. Many people have this misunderstanding that *pranayama* means deep breathing.

Your breath has to be deep. If it does not happen then it means that it is not

possible for you. If it is not possible you are a diseased person. That has to be understood by you.

You have to learn to watch your own breath; that is the first object in front of you during the *pranayama*. Watch what that breath is doing in you which normally is not understood. You don't know that normal breath can happen at different places and not only in one place.

The main place might be the diaphragm because the diaphragmatic movement happens. But, it does not stay in that place for a long time. That is what has to be understood in *pranayama*. You have to study what varieties are available in the breathing process and the inner changes that happen in the body, in your mind in response to the breath in different places. That is how the *pranayama* has come into existence.

The *rishis* and *munis* noticed this. If I have to be angry my breath has to be different. If I have to be calm my breath is different. If I have to be in meditation then my breath is different.

You sometimes go deep inside and suddenly your breath doesn't occur and the body shakes and you come out. You don't know how you came out. Either you don't reach that depth or you just do sit superficially; then you don't feel anything. You do a few 'exercises' and then it is over! That is not *pranayama*.

Prana in the body is imbalanced. You need to balance it properly for *pranayama*.

Therefore, an orientation and preparation for *pranayama* is a must before one can start attempting it. ॐ

THIS IS AN EDITED EXCERPT FROM THE
ORIENTATION GEETAJI GAVE TO HER
PRANAYAMA SESSION IN DECEMBER 2014

The Commonwealth Interview

An Interview With B.K.S. Iyengar, Part 3

The Winter 2013 issue of the IYCV Newsletter featured the first part of a re-publication of the 1985 Commonwealth Interview with B. K. S. Iyengar.

This is the third and final part of the interview.

ON TEACHER TRAINING

Peter: I want to ask how we should approach training teachers.

Iyengar: Training teachers has to be considered in a different way altogether. I gave you the clue already – that the mature teachers should come together and have an apprentice course for themselves. Souls are not different, so we should not give much importance to our personalities.

Instead of saying, “I am better than he,” say, “Let me see what I can learn.” I don’t believe in a teachers’ training course as it happens in the academic field such as Bachelor of Education. They give a class, and marks are given. You cannot take yoga that way because yoga is subjective; you are in contact with the person. As you come into the contact with the student whilst teaching so in an apprenticeship course the teachers should come together. You have to chart what is missing, what is not missing; how to link your teaching and their teaching together and form a uniform method which will act as a guide for those in training who will teach later. With yoga you can’t just give a teacher training course and say, “I have trained you, now go and teach.” Where is the base for them? You have to give the base; and then build up from there. Give freedom in that base. Go at any angle, but always come back to the base. Train teachers who will be the cream.

First teachers of experience should come together and work themselves, then junior teachers should be called for a workshop and asked to conduct the class. “I give you a base, can you conduct a class within this base?” Then you can measure whether they are going beyond the fundamentals which you have given. If so, bring them back and remind them, “No, you are going too far away. I told you to teach from this base.” When a musician is teaching, he says, “No, you can’t jump there; come here, come to the scale.” You have to find out whether they are coming to that scale. Then when they go, they go with clarity and without fear complexes.

It is an apprenticeship course when senior teachers come together and guide junior teachers. After guiding them, make them



conduct classes; see how they conduct, then wait. In the West they want to become teachers quickly. You have to tell them that there are pitfalls from becoming a teacher too soon before you have learned these things. After one year they will be a better teacher than if they began teaching immediately.

So teachers’ training course has to take place like that. Teachers first coming together, then potential teachers conducting classes in the presence of these teachers, then the teachers asking the potential teachers to

assist in the class. Observe how they are assisting – whether they are touching accurately or not. Then they can go out with no fears as teachers.

Next question?

ON THERAPEUTICS

Shirley: I’ve observed that a lot of teachers want to do therapeutic work very quickly.

Iyengar: This is not good at all. They don’t know the diseases. They don’t know the names of the muscles. Symptoms of the diseases should be known. I’m not speaking about medicines at all but about the cause of disease. You have to think, “If this is the cause, from such and such a source in the body it has started, what are the *asanas* which touch that part?” When you know this, then you are able to teach something. For me it is quick. I say, “Alright try this, try this, try this.” For you people...

Leslie: It would be very dangerous.

Iyengar: That’s what I said; don’t jump into therapy. First take minor cases where even if you go wrong the complaint will not be too big. When you get confidence in handling minor problems, then you can tackle something a little more complicated. There are so many different types of problems. If somebody has a heart problem you cannot teach them immediately. If you make them do standing poses, the heart becomes worse. In such cases you have to depend on people like us because we have experience.

We can guide, and you should not go beyond that. You can't use your intelligence to try things out when life and death diseases are involved— how to handle them is vitally important.

When I began therapeutic classes I took a chance. I said, "God save them, God save them." I did not know anything then. When I worked with therapeutic problems I moved according to their bodies – I always used to stretch a half centimetre or one centimetre more than their actual body could take. That's how I learned. Now just by looking at you I can see the maximum you can do, but first I did not know the maximum. I used to ask them, "Can you stretch a little more? Try, try." While they were trying I would touch them, and from that touch I would know whether or not to say, "Ah, try again." The moment the area refused to move I knew that was their maximum. If they co-operated, co-ordinated, I kept going. The moment the area hit back, I used to hold there very firmly – not allowing them to come back – to educate so that at least it may not retard next time.

That's how I became a practical doctor. Therapeutic classes should not be introduced by inexperienced teachers.

Jim: One of the problems seems to be that a lot of the people who start to do yoga do so because of some injury.

Iyengar: Yes, correct. It is a fact. Now, if I could not teach, I would say, "Go to somebody who knows more than me". This is my guide. If you can do it, do it, otherwise find a senior teacher who has the experience to handle the case.

Now here in the medical classes Geeta and Prashant sometimes come to me asking what they should do. I look at the face of the patient; I look at their body and say, "Not that way, try this way". I concentrate mainly on the bad cases, leaving the light cases to others because I know it will not be so dangerous even if they go wrong. But I am there in the class; even the light cases could become dangerous if I were not there. When something happens I am right there. I am fast. Sometimes I say, "Don't take so much." My eyes are always looking here, there and everywhere in the therapeutic class, and I move quickly from place to place modifying the poses and making adjustments – because these are experienced fingers which naturally learn quickly. With therapeutic classes, then take only cases where you are confident, where you know that you will not injure people.

Any more questions?

Peter: I'm interested in why people start yoga.

Iyengar: Because they cannot find relief from any other method. The gateway for human health is the respiratory system and the circulatory system. When you do *setu bandha sarvangasana* the lungs expand automatically. In my method the process of breathing increases indirectly even without teaching Pranayama. That's

why pupils find relief. The chemicals of the blood change, which gives them health.

For anything, a motive is necessary. So a cause is there – a cause in the form of pain, a cause in the form of suffering which makes people come to yoga. The real religious practice commences afterwards. First we have to help them find relief, then we have to encourage them to get attached to the real art and science of yoga and to live this art. Ninety-nine percent of the people who come are motivated only to get rid of their pain, and we have to work in that area alone. Don't injure them – even if you don't give relief right away it's all right; still you are safe, because when they can bear the pain that itself is progress. First give them bread, then they are stuck with that.

Yesterday in the general class there was a person from Iran who was complaining of severe pain in the lumbar. I understood this case, and told him, "Don't ask me for a cure, but I can make you do a pose where your big pain will become a small pain." Later I asked him, "Is the pain big or small now?" And he said, "The pain has become a little small," so I told him to be satisfied with that for a few days. Trying to bring about a cure too quickly could cause him severe pain. When we teach yoga we are trying to minimise pain. First we minimise, then we know how to stabilise. If we do not minimise, how can we cure it? In therapeutic classes – this is very important – don't take as a cure, but ask, "Can I minimise their problems?" Just minimise, then you are guarding yourself.

Sometimes fear is very good, because the fear stops you from going too far. You are afraid, so you take the minimum.

I can give quick relief because I know the direction in which each and every cell of the body has to move in the poses. But your knowledge is limited and you should make sure you do not go beyond your capacity. Find out how you can help within that capacity. Many people have taken complicated cases just to make a name and fame, and I was dead against it.

I have seen therapeutic cases in both the East and the West, and in the East it is very difficult to satisfy them. Even if they are better they say no. You can ask all my pupils in the therapeutic class how they are – "So, so," they say; that's all. But in the West even if there is a minimum of relief, they say, "Oh, I'm far, far better"! [Laughter]

Leslie: Why is that?

Iyengar: Because you can't bear pain and emotion. With even the smallest relief a Westerner will say, "Oh what a great relief this is"; but an Indian who has experienced great relief will only acknowledge a little. They make us stretch more and more. [Laughter]

ON ASANA AS PREVENTION AND PREPARATION

Jim: You talk about using your teaching for prevention.

Iyengar: It's a one hundred percent preventive, sir. No question arises at all. It's a hundred percent preventive, physically, mentally and spiritually. Suppose by the grace of God spiritual light falls on you; if your body cannot take it, tell me?

Shirley: Devastating!

Iyengar: Ah, devastating! I have to make sure that my nerves will be strong enough to take the light, the spiritual light, easily. So that comes under prevention.

Take the example of Krishnamurti. He was unhealthy for many years. And Muktananda – now if Kundalini had awakened in him, why did he suffer from diabetes. The light came, the body could not take it so some disease came to him. There ends the matter. He was taking insulin injections every day. Whereas with *asanas*, you develop such a tremendous potential. Nature runs in abundance in the yogis, because every part is clean so it can take this force. We have to do the poses so that the energy is not dissipated in all different directions, but is controlled and stabilised. That's why I have to perform, even today. If I don't perform, this might burn me out completely. Who knows?

Leslie: Do you think in the ancient days there was more of a following of the eight limbs – that asana and as well as all the other limbs were more followed?

Iyengar: Yes, all eight limbs were followed; not one was neglected in those days. If you read the mythological stories you will find they were all practising. For us, the *Puranas* [collection of ancient stories written in Sanskrit verse] are the groundwork, and even the Upanishads contain instructions on how to practice. Their *sadhana* was not neglected at all.

For example, in his fourth chapter Patanjali explains how even after experiencing *samadhi*, a liberated man has to live in the world. Not until the fourth chapter does he explain what is black action, what is white action, what is gray action. Why not before? Why only when that state of freedom and beatitude comes – then he explains, not before. It gives a clue, how one has to live. The liberated soul is not neglected according to Patanjali. He says all your actions should be free from white, black and gray. That's how you have to live. He has not said leave everything. Your action should not produce any reactions at all. No white, no gray, no black. These are the things which give reaction. So act in such a way that you are free from these three types of action. Patanjali explained how although ordinary human beings have three actions, a yogi is beyond these actions. That is how you have to be in the world. No renunciation is necessary. The fourth chapter deals only with the action of a Jnani – the action of a man of wisdom, how he has to live

in the world. When there are no reactions he is a renounced person who does everything for the sake of humanity, and not for himself.

LIGHT ON PATANJALI

Shirley: Guruji, when we were here three years ago you said you were writing a book, *Light on Patanjali*.

Iyengar: Writing, writing, writing... I have not finished, though I have done some spadework.

Shirley: In the brochure of the Institute it mentions that they had produced some notes on this from your discourses but that they had all gone. Will they be reproduced?

Iyengar: Well, I don't know, I am asking Prashant. That's just a translation I gave of the *sutras* for the average person to understand.

Shirley: I was wondering if you had any suggestions – because I think students, and particularly teachers who don't have an understanding of the *sutras* obviously have a great gap in their teaching.

Iyengar: Well, I'm doing another work, by next year I hope to have a summary of all four chapters so that you get a base of Patanjali's Yoga Sutras. I'm summarising all the *sutras* in forty pages or so. Then I thought that my work may be grasped – because I'm writing from the practical side not on the academic side.

Leslie: Which is what we need – the practical.

Iyengar: I've done a lot of spadework, including how Patanjali was born, which many people don't know. I am developing some clues I found in the *Puranas* – *Vishnu Puranas* and others. For example, when everybody says, "Now a new exposition on yoga," it's not a new exposition – the "now" refers to when Patanjali took birth as a dancer.

Lord Siva asked him to write a commentary about grammar. He finished the grammar, and then he wanted to learn dance to please his master, Lord Vishnu, and to understand the movement of the body. He finished his work on speech and on body, and said, "There's one job I've not done – I've not spoken about the mind. Now let me speak about the mind." My interpretation is on a practical not an academical level – how my experiences fit into Patanjali's experience and explanations. Most commentaries took each of Patanjali's Yoga Sutras as if it were a separate entity – as if the second *sutra* had no connection with the first. That caused confusion. Each *sutra* was treated as a new chapter. I thought, "Let me connect them, if possible, one to the other."

This is a terse subject and very difficult to simplify. I am trying to write a practical book for ordinary people – I consider myself

an ordinary man. It is not an intellectual book at all, but how to practically translate Patanjali into our day to day activities. There are many instances where I have gone against the commentaries, which may create friction later.

Jim: Not for the first time. [Laughter]

Iyengar: Later they will call me a wise man or a mad man; that is all. It does not matter to me. Although there are new adaptations of Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, nobody will say it's against tradition. That's how I work – with my poses, with everything. I have proceeded rationally but I have not broken the tradition anywhere. Patanjali gave no commentary at all; so I asked myself, as if I had not read any of translations of Patanjali, how does it relate to my practices? If there was no commentary on Patanjali how would I convey it?

Shirley: Well, this would be the value to your students who are practising your method.

Iyengar: It will definitely be valuable to my students, if not to others, because it comes directly from my experience. I didn't want to take somebody else's word.

I have already rewritten it six or seven times. When it is finished I may become lazy, and not want to touch this book.

Shirley: Do you think that likely, Guruji? [Laughter] Do you think it's likely that you'd become lazy?

Iyengar: Once I had finished *Light on Yoga*, and *Light on Pranayama* I never read them, because I've done so much work there's no need for me to go through them again. I never find it monotonous to work on this book. Even if it takes ten years, even if it absorbs all my time, I'll never feel exhausted or dull or tired or anything. But once I have finished it I will say, "Enough, the job is done."

All: Thank you, sir.

Iyengar: Thank you.

EXTRACT FROM INTERVIEW WITH MR. B.K.S. IYENGAR AT RAMANANI IYENGAR YOGA MEMORIAL INSTITUTE, NOVEMBER 1985

ON PRANAYAMA

For example, even about *prana*. We speak of energy. Now I also have come to the conclusion that I explain more clearly than so far others have done. That is a very good question. What is *prana*?

God is one but he is called different names. Energy is one but it is called different names. It has only just come to me how it is produced in our systems. We are made up of five elements. The

base is the earth, the expansion is the ether, in between are the other three elements – air, water and fire. We cannot live without breath. That is as old as civilisation. This has given me an idea that normal breathing is like water flowing in a river; it has got a current because there is a flow but does it produce electricity? Does any water which has got a current produce electricity? Just ordinary running water?

Group: No

Iyengar: So what do they do to produce electricity? They build a reservoir and then direct the water so that it falls down at a speed on to a turbine and the turbine revolves. Now the spindles of the muscles in our body, they act as turbines. Normal breath cannot produce electricity, although it does produce a current; there is life in running water whereas a lake is stale water. Compared to stale water, running water is better; if there is no movement of the breath in a body, it's dead like a stagnant lake. It is this movement of the breath which helps a minimum production of electricity or nectar of life.

Pranayama makes the air go deep like a waterfall into the lungs, and the air which is drawn in brings the element of fire and the element of water. Fire and water are anti-elements to each other – water cools fire, fire dissolves water – so naturally element and anti-element produce life. When we do *pranayama* this stream of air activates the spindles like a turbine, and in that activation the fusion between water and fire takes place in our body and produces energy which is known as *prana*. Nobody has explained this; it only struck me in 1985 what *prana* is. In *pranayama*, water and fire come together with the help of the air, in a place known as the element of earth. For production there must be a place, for distribution there must be a space. One is the factory, the other one is the distributor; in between are the three important elements called raw materials.

Why should we do *pranayama* – so that it is taken deep so that the iron which works for the air cells to magnetise them can draw them nearer. Unless it is drawn in if the iron is here, if the magnet is here, it cannot grasp. Suppose you move nearer and nearer, if the distance comes to the grasping power it catches it, is it not? So also deep breathing makes the iron to go nearer where the air cells absorb, grip them and produce the life's nectar. That is why *pranayama* is essential. Provided, as I said, the lungs are clear, you should penetrate, and these *chakras* are nothing but the various transformers – how much they can store in various places so that it can be distributed. This meaning has come just now; no books have explained. So what is *prana* and how is it produced in our system, it took me years to know the fusion between water and fire like negative current and positive current brings new electricity. These two coming together produce fire; that's why Kundalini is everywhere. ॐ

A Big Thank You

We had a hugely successful High Tea Fundraiser on March 28, 2014 and raised over \$4,500 for the Centre! HUGE thanks to Robin Cantor for her flare with flowers, hats, people, and balancing cup and saucer in *niralamba sirsasana* with her legs in *padmasana*!

Thanks to Dawn Cox, Patty Rivard, Jaya Malaviarachchi, Laine Canivet, and Laura Johnston for their seamless effort in food presentation and tea service. Thanks to Jayne Jonas for set up and the water urn, Laura Johnston for arranging the flowers, and to Michael Blades for giving up a day on his boat to do the washing up! Thanks to Jane Mcfarlane for her usual quiet backup work.

Thank you to Wendy Boyer for supervision, co-ordination and reporting of this multifaceted event.

Thanks to Patty Kallio, Pauline Linzey and friend for being the meet'n'greet hostesses in the foyer.

Thanks to Laine, Keiko Alkire, Amanda Mills, Bev Kallstrom, and Krysia Strawczynski for organizing the silent auction that resulted in about \$2,400 in bids!

Jaya did a great job on the raffle (and made the best spice cake we've ever tasted)! Brandy Baybutt, Theo and Seamus Stolth were awesome in their performance of *The Giving Tree*.

New to the tea this year was the excellent guitar music and vocals of Daryle Lechinsky.

Finally, thanks to the Special Needs teachers and students from all classes who made all the wonderful food for the event. And to all those who donated items, came to the tea, and helped with all the details that went into making this event such a huge success! ॐ



Robin Cantor's mystery pose introduction; Daryle Lechinsky sets the mood



"The Giving Tree"



From mukta hasta to niralamba sirsasana



Delectables



Rita and Jesse



Niralamba Sirsasana with tea and cake



Tea service

Who Am I Then?

Lessons from the *Bhagavad Gita*

by Tracy Harvey

The *Bhagavad Gita* opens on the battlefield of Kurukshetra where two rival clans are poised on the verge of battle. The *Bhagavad Gita*, consisting of eighteen chapters, is a story within a story as part of the sixth book of the *Mahabharata*. The *Mahabharata* is an epic tale consisting of eighteen books. The first five books provide the background and twists and turns that bring us to this time of the Bharata war and how it is that these two clans have come to face each other at the battlefield.

The rival clans are cousins: the Kauravas on one side and the Pandavas on the other. Arjuna of the Pandavas commands his charioteer: “Krishna, halt my chariot between the armies!” (1:21 Stoler Miller) and the battle that was about to begin is suspended. Arjuna has had a change of heart and he expresses this dilemma to his charioteer, Krishna. Arjuna says, “Krishna, how can I fight against Bhishma and Drona with arrows when they deserve my worship?” (2:4 Stoler Miller) It was Bhishma and Drona who trained Arjuna and his brothers in the ways of a warrior. Arjuna even vowed to avenge Drona’s honour at the end of his training.

On the surface it would seem that the story of the *Bhagavad Gita* is a discourse on whether Arjuna should fight this battle or lay his weapons down. The *Mahabharata* tells us that the battle does carry on and ends with Arjuna and the Pandavas triumphant over their cousins, the Kauravas; however, Arjuna’s choice to fight or not to fight is not the central struggle of the *Bhagavad Gita*.

The story told in the *Bhagavad Gita* is a metaphor for the internal struggle of self-mastery or self-realization. In the story, Arjuna represents ‘everyman’. Like Arjuna, the struggle that each of us faces is what is our *dharma*, our purpose? How do we know what is the right path? Krishna represents the Divine wisdom that is within each individual. In the *Bhagavad Gita*, which is sometimes translated as the Song of God or Song of the Lord, Krishna tells Arjuna of the different paths to liberation through the yoga of devotion, the yoga of knowledge and the yoga of action. “I am the true Self in the heart of every creature, Arjuna, and the beginning, middle, and end of their existence” (10:20 Easwaran).

One could falsely believe that *The Bhagavad Gita* condones war. In fact the opposite is true. If one follows the teachings found in the *Bhagavad Gita* the conclusion would not likely be war. What the story does illustrate is the importance of doing the right thing, following our *dharma*, no matter how difficult that might be.

On page one of *Light on Yoga*, B.K.S. Iyengar states the *Bhagavad Gita* is “the most important authority on yoga philosophy”. The *Bhagavad Gita* tells us what yoga is. The *Bhagavad Gita* has also been described as a practical handbook on how to live one’s life. Paraphrasing Barbara Stoler Miller from her translation, she describes the broader triadic structure that exists in this dramatic narrative. The first six teachings are a series of theoretical and practical teachings on self-knowledge and the nature of action; then the theophany (appearance of God to man) ends in a cadence on devotion and the twelfth teaching develops this idea, and; in the final six teachings, Krishna emphatically recapitulates the basic ideas he has already taught and integrates them into the doctrine of devotion.

Looking specifically at chapter two, Krishna illustrates to Arjuna that his grief is unnecessary because the true Self transcends the material world.

*It is not born; it does not die;
having been, it will never not be;
unborn, enduring,
constant and primordial,
it is not killed
when the body is killed.*
(2:20 Stoler Miller)



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This is such a valuable lesson: to see yourself as you truly are. How much pain and suffering we could save ourselves from this one lesson? If I over identify with my occupation, what happens when I no longer have that occupation? Who am I then? If I see myself as a clarinet player and I no longer play the clarinet, who am I then? Do I allow others to see me as something I am not? If people choose to label me as talented or not talented, is that who I am? If my body is taken over by disease, is that who I am?

Having explained the true nature of the Self, Krishna goes on to tell Arjuna how he must overcome the three *gunas* [qualities of nature] and practice renunciation.

*Perform every action with your heart fixed on the Supreme Lord.
Renounce attachment to the fruits.
Be even-tempered in success and failure;
for it is this evenness of temper which is meant by yoga.*
(2:48 Isherwood)

This is the central theme that runs throughout the *Gita*: renunciation. Do your work. Do the right work but don't be attached to the results – good or bad. A lesson I have learned over and over on my yoga mat.

*Work done with anxiety about results is far inferior to
work done without such anxiety, in the calm of self-surrender.
Seek refuge in the knowledge of Brahman.
They who work selfishly for results are miserable.*
(2:49 Isherwood)

There is such irony in this lesson. When you release the expectations then, more than likely, the results will flow;

however, even then when success is at hand you relinquish that too! I have experienced this transcendent moment in music where you do the work, and you must do the work, but then you get out of the way and let the music rise off the page. If you stop and celebrate about hitting the high note or getting the difficult passage then the moment is lost and boom, you are brought back down to the earthly world.

At the end of the second teaching Arjuna asks Krishna, "What defines a man deep in contemplation whose insight and thought are sure? How would he speak? How would he sit? How would he move?" (2:54 Stoler Miller) Krishna answers Arjuna in verses 55 to 72. In the final verse, Krishna says,

*This is the place of the infinite spirit;
achieving it, one is freed from delusion;
abiding in it even at the time of death,
one finds the pure calm of infinity.*
(2:72 Stoler Miller)

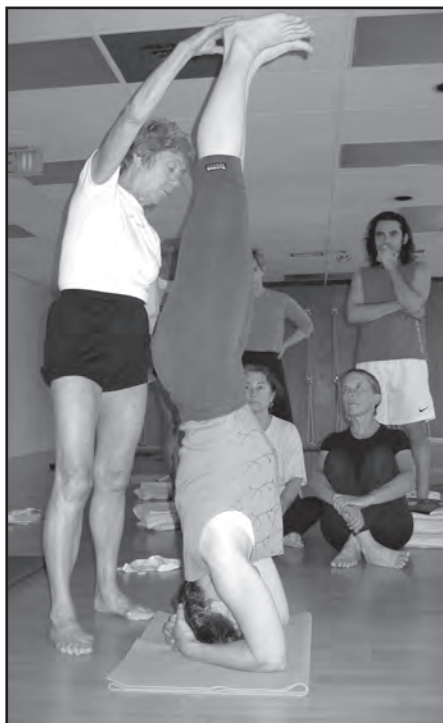
What more could one ask for? All one has to do is choose the path of yoga. ॐ

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On the Sutras...

Jawahar Bangera Talk

THE FOLLOWING IS AN EXCERPT FROM A Q&A SESSION, RECORDED AFTER JAWAHAR BANGERA'S WORKSHOP.

[The Sutras]...show Patanjali was a mind reader, a seer, a psychoanalyst. He understood what the students were going to ask so he had the answer before the student asked the question.

The first sutra:

Atha yoganusasanam [I.1]

Because Patanjali is a mind reader he starts with, "Now starts the subject of Yoga." So now he has you interested, so the first question you will ask is, "What is Yoga?"

The second sutra:

Yogah cittavrtti nirodah [I.2]

Yoga is the cessation of the fluctuations in the consciousness.

What happens if there are no fluctuations?

Tada drastuh svarupe avasthanam [I.3]

Then you sight the soul.

What happens if there are fluctuations?

Vrtti sarupyam iteratra [I.4]

You don't see the soul, on account of the *vrttis*.

OK, now I'm interested. What are the *vrttis*?

Vrttayah pancatayyah klista aklista [I.5]

The movements of consciousness are fivefold. They may be cognizable or non-cognizable, painful or non-painful.

[Sutras I.6 – I.11 list and describe the five *vrttis* or movements of consciousness]

How do I overcome the *vrttis*?

Simple...

Abhyasa vairagyabhyam tannirodah [I.12]

Practice and detachment are the means to still the movements of the consciousness.

He is always preemptively prompting the students' questions.

Read it carefully; the *Yoga Sutras* is the book of answers.

You are asking the question and he answers. He was a great maharishi, he was a seer, and as a psychoanalyst, he understood

Patanjali knew you would wonder what the nine obstacles to mastery of the inner self are.



what the students were going to ask so he had the answer before the students asked the question.

The fastest way to achieve salvation is to surrender to God
Isvara pranidhanat va [I.23]

The student asks: Who is God?

Klesa karma vipaka asayaihi aparamrstah purusavisesah Isvarah [I.24]

God is a very special being; he is unattracted by his own actions or reactions.

Tatra niratisayam sarvajnabijam [I.25]

And he is the unexcelled seed of all knowledge.

Sa esah purvesam api guruh kalena anavacchedat [I.26]

He is the Guru of gurus. He is unconditioned by time, space, mechanisms: he is forever, permanent.

What do I do to such a God?

Tasya vacakah pranavah [I.27]

Call him by the letter *Aum*.

It is such a mystical word, you know, it's the only sound you can make without using your tongue. That's why they say it's the universal sound. For us our language determines where we are from. But when we say *AUM*, it's universal. All come under the same category. That's why it is such an important sound. Because it is mystical and it is not easy to comprehend, it is connected with other words such as '*AUM Namah Shivaya*' [AUM Salutations to Shiva] or "*AUM Namah Bhagavate Vasudevaya*" [AUM Salutations to God Krishna (son of Vasudeva)]. AUM is diffused by the name of God.

Tadjjapah tadarthabbhavanam [I.28]

Take the name of God with devotion and meaning. Like the bible says, 'Thou shalt not take the name of God in vain.'

Tatah pratyakcetana adigamah api antaraya abhava ca [I.29]
All the nine *anatarayas* [obstacles to mastery of the inner self] disappear once you are devoted, once you take the name of God with devotion.

So he tempts you, now start believing!

And that's how he starts unfolding the *sutra*. So if you sit quietly and just read a few of them...don't read the whole book...it's difficult to digest...just read a few and then you will realize how it unfolds. Then you'll find it interesting deciphering the meanings. It's a very deep book.

You'll have to read and re-read, many, many times, then it starts unfolding its secrets to you.

As students of yoga you must know the theory...if you don't know the theory then everything becomes physical. If you understand the theory then it shows you the purpose.

The depth and the exploration never ends. ॐ

THANKS TO JAWAHAR BANGERA FOR PERMISSION TO RECORD THE Q&A AT HIS WORKSHOP.

Congratulations!

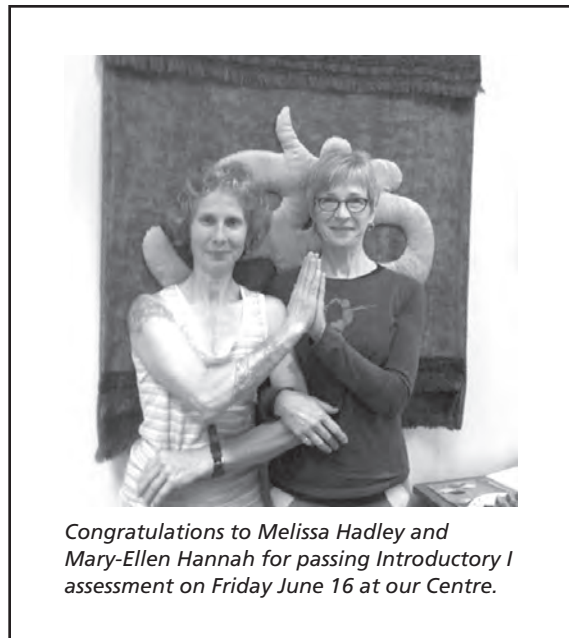


The following candidates achieved Introductory II certification at the March assessment in Saskatoon:

Kari Dul, Edmonton, AB
Brandon J. Overland, Vancouver, BC
Natasha Tousaw, Vancouver, BC
Karina Paradis, Abbotsford, BC
Debbie Nordstrom, Saskatoon, SK
Jo Ann Telfer, Calgary, AB
Nives Vilicic, Calgary, AB

The following candidates achieved Intermediate Junior I certification at the March assessment in Kelowna:

Lily Dos Remedios, Vancouver, BC
Michelle Hagenson, Vancouver, BC
Alisen Stewart-Milne, Vancouver, BC
Photini McCullough, Kelowna, BC
Diana Tsui, Toronto, ON
Stephanie Tencer, Toronto, ON
Zhanna Zeleke, Toronto, ON
Bridget Donald, Vancouver, ON

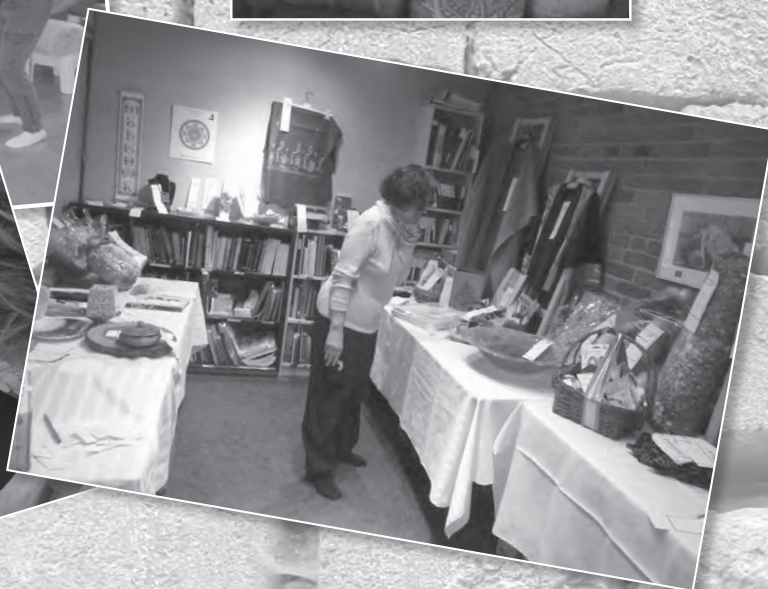


Congratulations to Melissa Hadley and Mary-Ellen Hannah for passing Introductory I assessment on Friday June 16 at our Centre.

The following candidates achieved Intermediate Junior I certification at the April assessment in Edmonton:

Kumar Sukumar, North York, ON
Brenda Ledsham, Toronto, ON
Corinne Milroy, Edmonton, AB
Pamela Nelson, Christopher Lake, SK
Morgan Rea, Vancouver, BC
Cheryl Joseph, Vancouver, BC
Janette Hook, Edmonton, AB
Katalin Szauer, Williams Lake, BC

Centre Happenings



Clockwise from top left: Bolster-stuffing bee; Bee-utiful bolsters for sale; Silent auction fundraiser for props; Brewing chai for Open House; CPR for teachers



IYCV Open House

Saturday, September 6, 2014

12:00 noon – 5:00 pm

202-919 Fort Street, Victoria BC

Free! Come one, come all!
Schedule to be announced.

Check www.iyengaryogacentre.ca

Summer Sadhana

July 15 - 20, 2013

by Valerie Kohut DC

The voice of CBC radio's Kelly Nakatsuka caught my attention as he interviewed a local counsellor promoting the benefits of meditation while active and busy. The counsellor described this form of meditation as mindfulness; our physical, emotional and mental states framed in a non-judgemental mind. Interesting, I thought, but I need to find my way to the Victoria Iyengar Yoga Centre for the first time and I mustn't be late.

It was unusual for me and my motor vehicle to be hurtling through the dim light of dawn toward town, but I was comforted by the thought that I had avoided the morning traffic and my way back to Metchosin would be against the morning rush. While I relished the thought of this week being a welcome boost to my Yoga practice, I was somewhat puzzled over the title, *Sadhana* – was this another spelling for *asana*?

Robin Cantor, the yoga instructor for Summer *Sadhana* greeted the students while I watched, a little unsure of studio protocols. When all had settled she invited us to gather round and listen. To my surprise I learned that *sadhana* meant a spiritual journey, a time for reflection and getting in touch with how we relate to ourselves, our bodies and all that is around us (perhaps similar to mindfulness; meditating while active and busy?).

I learned that the practice of yoga has eight limbs or steps and that we would explore the first three: the *yamas* (universal morality), the *niyamas* (personal observances) and lastly the *asanas* (body postures or physical practice).

July 15: Robin listed the *yamas* (there are five) which are "wise characteristics" meant to guide the attitude we have towards things and people outside ourselves. The first *yama* we learned



From top: Virabhadra forming from a lock of Siva's hair; Virabhadra, the birth of the warrior; Virabhadra's Mission – into the fire

about was *ahimsa* or non violence, and Robin read us a passage stating that as well as being a lack of violence, *ahimsa* implies kindness, friendliness and thoughtful consideration of other people and things. It reaches also into our duties and responsibilities and suggests that in every situation we should adopt an attitude to do no harm. The students broke into a discussion of how the concept of non-harming can be active at the workplace, in the family and in the community. *Ahimsa* really seemed to me to cover everything including our physical practice, which we were soon to experience as we made our way to the mats.

We began with a downward facing dog stretch. I had not taken the pose more than ten seconds when Robin

was by my side encouraging an inactive muscle group into action. I was astonished that this part of me had lacked the awareness to participate fully in the movements I intended! I continued, listening with care to follow each instruction as best I could.

July 16: Truthfulness or *satya*, was the *yama* Robin introduced today. The students participated in a lively discussion around truthfulness relating to their children. The conclusion seemed to be that truthfulness when applied with the wisdom of non-harming would be in the best interest of all relationships. As we made our way to the mats we were reminded to be truthful in our efforts in *asana*; to try our best without reaching beyond our limitations.

The *asana* part of the class focused on standing poses, and my mind was busy with the concept of truthfulness in effort. My mind thus occupied, the class sped timelessly by. On the way home I reflected on the interrelationship of the first two *yamas*.

July 17: *Asteya* (non-stealing), *brahmacharya* (sense control) and *aparigraha* (non-hoarding) were the themes of day three. Robin presented this trio of *yamas* to demonstrate that we use sense control or desire control to refrain from taking that which has not been freely given (non-stealing). And non-hoarding is a function of the previous two, as we try to gain control of our greedy instincts. Again the discussion was lively as we came to realize that there are far reaching positive effects when we employ these *yamas* in our relationship with others and with the planet.

By parallel design the *asana* part of the class dealt with abdominal work and inversion poses: we learned the importance of not gripping our belly, thus allowing the energy to flow freely in the poses. The class seemed to move along rapidly as we listened, experimented and experienced newness.

July 18: Robin next introduced the *niyamas*, or personal observances,

for creating a code for soulful living. These observances require inner thought and reflection. For example *sauca* (purity) requires mastery of all aspects of purity ranging from a healthy clean body to clarity of the mind. *Santosa* (contentment) requires inner peace – joy in the now.

Tapas (discipline) requires we direct our energy to engage life so that we enthusiastically invoke coherence with the *yamas* and *niyamas* to a higher purpose. *Svadhyaya* (self study) means to intentionally find self-awareness in all our activities to the point of welcoming our limitations. I found myself deep in thought as each *niyama* seemed to speak directly to me. Gazing around I noticed the usual buzz of discussion had quietly faded as the students seemed to draw quietly inward.

Robin had planned the *asana* part of this *sadhana* class to include forward bending, the physical action which naturally draws the senses inward. We were assisted in our *asanas* by the ropes and rewarded at the close with the special “Robin’s nest” [special blanket folding for the head] in *savasana*.

July 19: *Isvarapranidhana* (celebration of the spiritual) means to lay all your actions at the feet of *Isvara* (the Creator). If we practice setting at least some part of our day aside to recognize that there is something greater than ourselves, we may gradually approach the goal and intention of yoga and that is to create union with mind, body and spirit in every moment.

Robin led this last class in sun salutations, combining all we had learned from the previous classes and challenging us with some new poses. I found myself at ease with the more difficult poses from earlier in the week and noticed a quality of energetic unison throughout the group. It was an apt closure to a week-long journey of discovery. ॐ

Leslie Hogya Awarded Lifetime Honourary Membership



The following letter was written to support the nomination of Leslie Hogya for Honorary Lifetime Membership in the national Iyengar Yoga Association. I had proposed this idea, wanted to write the letter and knew it would be pleasant to write. However, I was unprepared for the strength of feelings of love and gratitude I experienced as I was writing them. Leslie has been such a steadfast yogi, sustaining her practice through many personal challenges. She has also been a supportive figure on this path for me personally and many others. Leslie is a nurturing person, a quality which does not come so easily to me, and I have learned a great deal from her.

I already knew all of this and valued her collegiality, companionship and friendship; but taking the time to think about her before writing this letter took my appreciation to a whole new level. For those of you who know Leslie, I hope it stimulates a few moments of your own reflection on a generous and courageous woman. We are fortunate to have her in our community.

To the President, Directors and Members of the Iyengar Yoga Association of Canada/Association canadienne de yoga Iyengar,

It gives me very great pleasure to nominate Leslie Hogya for an honorary lifetime membership in the Iyengar Yoga Association of Canada. No-one is more deserving of this honour than Leslie.

First and foremost Leslie is a dedicated practitioner of yoga who honed her skill for many years before considering the possibility of teaching. In fact, she was already a teacher in a public school kindergarten. No doubt as she developed her yogic skills she was able to put them to good use in that career—and vice versa!

Leslie is a consummate community builder, able to bring disparate groups and individuals together, helping them to put aside differences in the light of a common purpose. Like many of us in Canada, Leslie’s initial yoga classes were not Iyengar classes. That came later as Guruji’s work began to influence so many in this country.

In 1972 Leslie emigrated from her native United States to Canada. Shortly after her arrival she became a student in a yoga class I was attending at the Victoria “Y”. Our teacher was a British woman who had grown up in India. She taught what she called *Hatha Yoga* but interestingly enough told us that the best yoga book on the market at that time was *Light on Yoga*. We bought the book, read it and practised the postures as best we could. Little did we know that within a few years we would travel to Pune to study with B.K.S. Iyengar himself!

As groups across Canada gradually became more absorbed in this work we linked up with each other—quite often while studying in Pune. An informal network was created.

Then, in Toronto in 1993, we received a directive from Guruji to implement certification and assessment without further delay. This led to the creation of a formal Iyengar Yoga Association in Canada. Leslie was at the forefront of this work, where she remains to this day. She was chair of what was then known as the “Co-ordinating Committee” which established a framework for carrying out Guruji’s directive. She also served on the Association’s first board of directors.

Leslie was among the “First Wave” of Canadian teachers who received their certification directly from Guruji in 1997 and she became one of our first assessors. Seventeen years later, Leslie continues to serve as an assessor and moderator and train teachers. She has more than fulfilled the mandate given to us by Guruji.

After a brief respite, Leslie agreed to return to the board to serve as President. It was a time of division and discord within our community and her conciliatory skills were put to good use to bring people together and move forward in a positive way. For this alone, we owe Leslie a great debt. Her experience and counsel are invaluable to our local Victoria community as well as on the national scene. And in addition Leslie has forged many international links.

In addition to all these duties, Leslie was a successful candidate at the first senior intermediate assessment to be held in Canada in 2006.

Leslie celebrated her 70th birthday last Christmas season on return from her most recent pilgrimage to Pune. There, she received Guruji's personal guidance for a severe shoulder injury and was able to honour him on his 95th birthday.

Leslie continues to nourish her growth as a student of yoga into her eighth decade.

May we long continue to benefit from her skill and grace—and I know there are many voices behind my words in favour of offering her a lifetime membership of our national association.

I cannot attend this year's annual meeting due to a prior personal event, and have asked Ty Chandler, a colleague from Victoria, to read these words on my behalf.

Written with love and appreciation of a respected *gurubai*,

Shirley Daventry French
Victoria BC, May 2014



Thank you!

- Jane McFarlane and Johanna Godliman for attending a family doctor conference and distributing information about our centre.
- Jan Clark for outfitting the women's change room with a uniform set of stronger hangers.
- Arno De Boer donated five beautiful pairs of Wood Wedges (yoga props) to be sold in our retail area.
- Brandy Baybutt, Josie Duan, and Wendy Boyer for donating books.
- Rosemary Barritt for donating new bolster covers for the Centre.

Thank you for the workshop with Jawahar Bangera:

- To Jawahar Bangera for visiting us and imparting his understanding of Guruji's work in his dynamic intensive!
- To Robin and John Popinski, Ann Kilbertus and Michael Blades, Adia Kapoor and her partner Jeff for helping cook for Jawahar during his visit;
- To Jane McFarlane, Johanna Godliman, and others who helped keep the studio tidy and spread the mats for our sessions each day;
- To Britta Poisson for being on the telephone lines while we were investigating his flight arrival;

- To everyone for their participation behind the scenes, and in front as demonstrators in the workshop to make it a vibrant experience for all;
- To all of you who attended!

Thank you for the new batch of bolsters for sale:

- To Linda Poole who headed the bolster bee;
- To the crew of Barbara Madison, Britta Poisson, Jane McFarlane, Jeannette Merryfield, Johanna Godliman, Kryisia Strawczynski, Laine Canivet, Wendy Boyer;
- To Edie Poole for making the bolster covers;
- Special thanks to Tom Kendall who designed, built, and subsequently donated an ingenious bolster cover stuffing frame.

Thank you for making the April 26th evening Kirtan a success:

- Laine Canivet, for coordinating;
- Bhavantu Sound – Tia Benn, Ty Chandler, Chris Simons, for leading the Kirtan and donating 25% of the proceeds to the IYC;
- Jill Williams, Johanna Godliman, and Jane McFarlane for set-up, clean up, and welcoming all. ॐ

Delving into Yoga 50+



**NOVEMBER 1, 2014, 11 AM - 1 PM
& Restorative 2 PM - 3 PM**

With Leslie Hogya & Wendy Boyer

\$45 + GST for members,
\$50+ GST for non-members

To register, drop in to or phone
the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria,
202-919 Fort Street,
Victoria, B.C. V8V 3K3
(250) 386-YOGA (9642)



Johanna Godliman and Adia Kapoor receive their Intro II certificates from Leslie Hogya.



Members' Practice

All current members of the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria who attend a regular class or have received permission from practice monitor are welcome to participate in an open practice every Sunday afternoon from 12:30-3:30 pm.

There is no instruction given in this self-directed practice session. Props, books and other resources are available for the use of anyone who attends.

Come for 20 minutes or stay for three hours!



IYAC/ACYI ASSESSMENT DATES

June 6-8
Introductory II/
Intermediate Junior I,
Montreal QC

June 20-22
Intermediate Junior II,
Victoria BC

September 19-20
Introductory II, Victoria BC

October 24-26,
Intermediate Junior I/II,
Vancouver BC

November 7-9
Introductory II,
London ON



Membership

For a one year membership, please complete this form and send it with your cheque or money order to:

Iyengar Yoga Centre
of Victoria Society
c/o Hilary McPhail
202-919 Fort Street
Victoria BC V8V 3K3

Membership fee is \$40 + GST,
renewable each January.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

Prov/ State: _____ Postal code _____

Country: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

☐ Please mail me my newsletter as I do not attend classes at the Centre.

☐ Please email me when the Newsletter is available on the IYCV website.

☐ Receipt required.

Membership benefits include a 5% discount on registered classes, a discount on workshops, advance booking for major workshops, borrowing privileges in our library, free members' practice, eligibility to become a board member and eligibility for workshop scholarships!

Calendar



IYENGAR YOGA
CENTRE of VICTORIA

JUNE

- 6-8 Salt Spring Island Retreat
- 20-22 IJ 2 assessment in at IYCV

JULY

- 7-12 Summer Sadhana
- 7-12 Summer Intensive for Introductory Teacher Trainees

AUGUST

- 11-15 Certified Teacher Intensive
- 25-29 Student Intensive
- 31 IYCV Picnic

SEPTEMBER

- 19-20 Intro 2 Assessment, Victoria
- 26-29 Chris Saudek Workshop

OCTOBER

- 2-5 Stephanie Quirk, Vancouver
- 18 Teachers' PD Day
- 17 Practice Enrichment

NOVEMBER

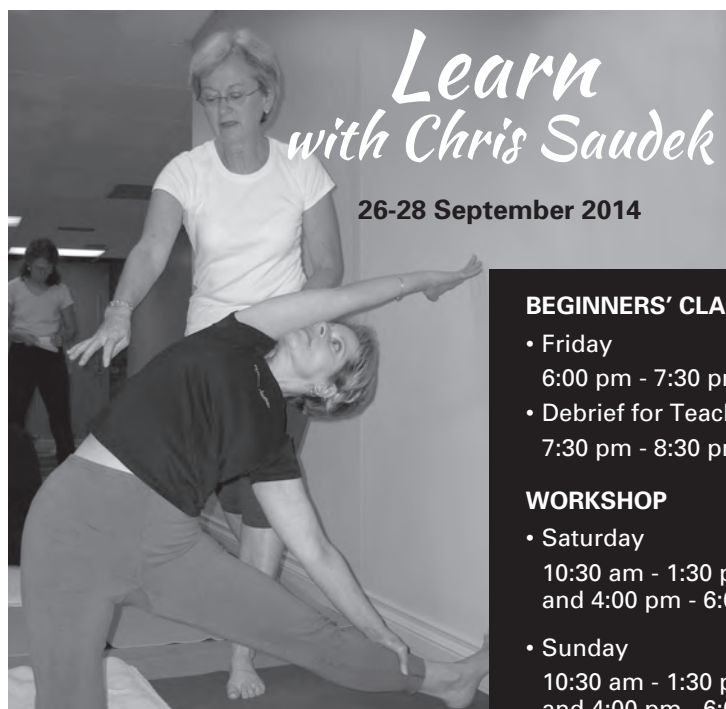
- 1 50+ Workshop
- 7 Practice Enrichment
- 8 Teachers' PD Day
- 21-22 Going Deeper

DECEMBER

- 5 Practice Enrichment
- 14 Guruji's Birthday
- 20-21 Winter Solstice Workshop

JANUARY 2015

- 1 New Year's Day Practice



BEGINNERS' CLASS

- Friday
6:00 pm - 7:30 pm
- Debrief for Teachers
7:30 pm - 8:30 pm

WORKSHOP

- Saturday
10:30 am - 1:30 pm
and 4:00 pm - 6:00 pm
- Sunday
10:30 am - 1:30 pm
and 4:00 pm - 6:00 pm

Open to Iyengar Yoga students, general level and above. Ask your teacher if you have questions about attending.

NOTE: Chris will teach an extended Intermediate class on Monday, Sept. 29, 5:30 pm - 8:30 pm.

REGISTRATION OPENS JULY 2

- Beginners Class \$30 + GST
- Teachers' Debriefing \$50 + GST
(including attendance at the Beginner's Class)
- Workshop weekend (Saturday and Sunday)
\$230 + GST Members,
\$240 + GST Non-members

Refunds will be offered only if your space can be filled and are subject to a \$50 cancellation fee.

To register, drop in to or phone:
the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria,
202-919 Fort Street,
Victoria, B.C. V8V 3K3
250-386-YOGA (9642)