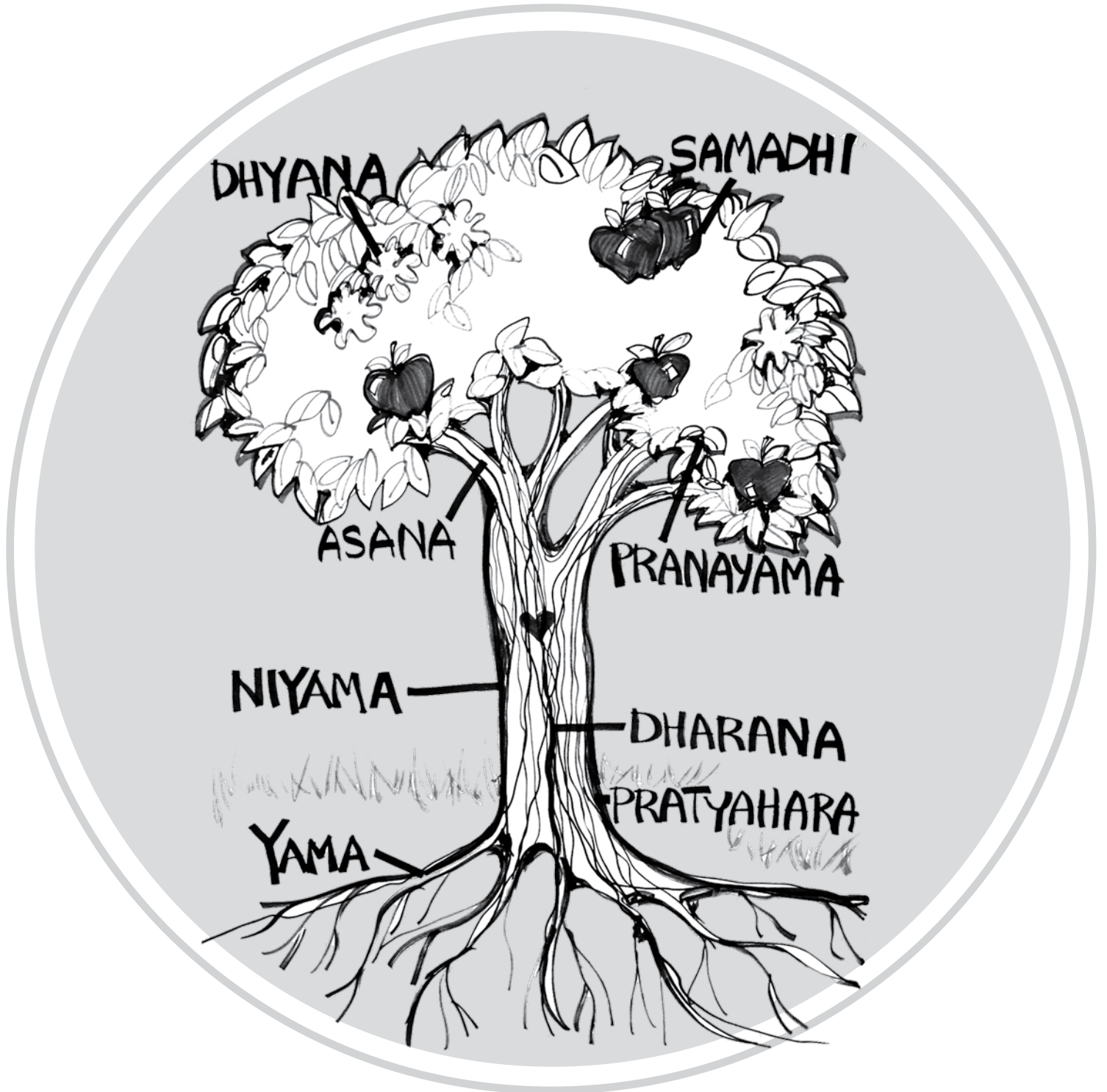




IYENGAR YOGA  
CENTRE of VICTORIA

N E W S L E T T E R  
W I N T E R 2 0 1 0



## IMPORTANT NOTICE TO ALL MEMBERS

The ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the  
IYENGAR YOGA CENTRE OF VICTORIA  
will be held

**Saturday, February 19, 2011, 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm**

at 202-919 Fort Street, Victoria, B.C.

2:00 ASANA PRACTICE

3:00 ANNUAL MEETING FOR ALL MEMBERS  
with tea and refreshments

As a non-profit society, we meet annually.  
All members have a voice and are welcome to attend.

Business will include the election of board members and  
the review of annual reports.

The past year's financial statement and reports will be  
available at the front desk prior to the meeting.

If you are interested in serving on the board, please contact  
the front desk for application forms.

## In the Light of Yoga

**Join us in the celebration  
of the 92nd birthday of  
Yogacharya B.K.S. Iyengar  
at this special benefit  
workshop.**



Sunday, December 12, 2010, 2:00 pm - 5:00 pm

2:00-3:30 pm asana & pranayama with Ann Kilbertus  
3:30-5:00 pm tea, cake & movie

Cost: \$25. Please note: payment of the ticket price does not  
qualify as a donation. Tax receipts will be issued for donations  
of \$20.00 or more, to the BKS Iyengar Scholarship Fund.

All proceeds from this workshop go to the B.K.S. Iyengar  
Scholarship Fund which assists teachers and committed  
students to attend classes at the institute in Pune.

To register, drop in to or phone  
Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria,  
202 - 919 Fort Street, Victoria, B.C.  
(250) 386 - YOGA (9642)  
[www.iyengaryogacentre.ca](http://www.iyengaryogacentre.ca)

Refunds will be offered  
only if your space can  
be filled and are subject  
to a \$10 cancellation fee.

IYENGAR YOGA CENTRE OF VICTORIA  
PRESENTS

## *The Heart of Yoga*

**January 21-23, 2011**

**An Intermediate Workshop  
with Shirley Daventry French  
and Ann Kilbertus**

**For Level 2, 3 and 4 students**

Friday, January 21, 2011, 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm

Saturday, January 22, 2011, 11:00 am - 2:00 pm,  
3:30 pm - 5:30 pm

Sunday, January 23, 2011, 12:00 noon - 3:00 pm

Shirley is a direct student of B.K.S. Iyengar. Since her first visit  
to Pune in 1979, she has returned regularly for further study. The  
founder of the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria, Shirley has been the  
driving force in making the Victoria Iyengar Yoga community one of the  
strongest and most viable in Canada. Students from across Canada and  
around the world have studied with her.

Ann has been a student in the Iyengar tradition for over twenty years.  
She continues to study with Shirley Daventry French and has been teach-  
ing since 1988 locally and nationally. Ann began going to Pune, India in  
1992 and returns every few years to study with the Iyengars. Her prac-  
tice and training as an occupational therapist offer a valuable contribu-  
tion to further understanding of this work.

Fees: \$200 + HST members  
\$220 + HST non-members

Registration opens:  
December 1, 2010 for IYCV members  
December 8, 2010 for non-members

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

Refunds will be offered only if your space can be  
filled and are subject to a \$50.00 cancellation fee.



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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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The editor/newsletter committee hold the right to publish or edit all articles at their discretion.

### 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:

**Drop in:** 202-919 Fort Street,  
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**Phone:** (250) 386-YOGA (9642)

### Please visit our website:

[www.iyengaryogacentre.ca](http://www.iyengaryogacentre.ca) for full information on classes and workshops.

# REFLECTIONS

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## REFLECTIONS

Winter 2010



By Shirley Daventry French

THIS COLUMN IS A REPRINT FROM A PREVIOUS  
REFLECTIONS FROM THE WINTER OF 2007.

The first of Patanjali's 196 *sutras* announces the beginning of an exposition of yoga. Four chapters later, for those who have shown the discipline and perseverance to follow the thread of wisdom contained in this celebrated treatise, the journey culminates in freedom or liberation (IV-34). To reach this destination requires sober reflection, courage and constant vigilance as you observe body, mind and self ever more closely. Most likely it will involve turning one's life upside down (literally and figuratively) by questioning one's most cherished beliefs and habitual ways of reacting to the phenomenal world.

What is reality? That is one of the questions posed in all spiritual texts. In Canadian society you often hear people dismiss the idea of putting spiritual values into their life by saying: "Well, that's alright for those of you who don't have to deal with the real world." I was in a workshop with Swami Radha when one of the participants, an engineer by profession, voiced that disclaimer. A constant refrain of Swami Radha's was that if you were serious about yoga, it was important to make all of your life spiritual life. This man protested that in the real world where he worked this was impossible. Looking him straight in the eyes, Swami Radha shot back: "Which one is the real world?" — a question

which has to be pondered by everyone on the yogic path.

Many people have heard my story about how easy I found it to focus on my spiritual life at an ashram or spiritual centre, but on my return home, when confronted by the demands of my family and in particular three teenaged children, this idealism went out of the door almost as soon as I entered the house. It took a sustained struggle to overcome this obstacle, but I could see a goal well worth the effort. And the struggle did not end there; it just metamorphosed into another form. The ego does not give up easily, and will intensify its efforts to distract and divert you when it sees you making some progress!

For most of us it is impossible to be with our teacher all of the time, unless we renounce our family; and there are many stories of people who have done this and become great teachers. I am judging no-one, because it is all a question of priorities, goals, *karma* and levels of consciousness; there are many ways to enlightenment. Most of us, however, choose to follow the path of a householder for this life's journey.

When we spend large periods of life distant from our teacher, we must draw on our experience, memory and, of course, our own insights from our practice. We are also likely to rely more on the written word when the spoken one is not available to be heard. I love language

in all its forms with reading high on my list of favourite activities. I have many books on the *sutras*; three well worn favourites are B.K.S. Iyengar's *Light on the Yoga – Sutras of Patanjali*, I.K. Taimi's *The Science of Yoga*, and Swami Vivekananda's *Raja Yoga*.

The *sutras* are divided into four chapters. The first chapter is called *Samadhipada* (on contemplation), the second *Sadhana-pada* (on practice), the third *Vibhutipada* (on powers), and the fourth *Kaivalyapada* (on emancipation and freedom). As Guruji points out in his commentary, the first chapter is directed towards those who are already highly evolved, who have "an advanced state of cultured, matured intelligence and wisdom."

In sutra 1.22 Patanjali speaks of levels of aspirant as feeble, average and keen. Not surprisingly, how quickly they move towards their goal of emancipation depends on the intensity of their practice. Earlier he has listed certain practices which lead to stagnation; to move from stagnation to emancipation demands that we redouble our efforts (1.19 & 20).

Once upon a time a student would not receive any of these teachings unless he or she had reached a high state of consciousness. Today, anyone can come into yoga classes off the street with little or no knowledge of what yoga really is. Some are ready for its message; for others, with no spiritual foundation in their lives, it will be difficult to accept responsibility for an unaware body and an undisciplined mind, and far more difficult to sustain a disciplined practice. Discipline is a scarce commodity these days. It is entertainment that many are

*Few beginning students are looking  
for a spiritual path.*



seeking when they come to yoga, or a fitness workout. Few beginning students are looking for a spiritual path.

Of course, everyone has to begin somewhere and many of the most distinguished yogis had an inauspicious start to their journey (read *Tibet's Great Yogi Milarepa* by W.Y. Evans-Wentz).

After doing some yoga, you may be inclined to explore the philosophy. If you are lucky enough to have a teacher who is familiar with the *sutras*, she or he is likely to direct you to the second chapter which is where most of us need to focus in the beginning. There we find certain practices such as Kriya yoga (the path of action)<sup>1</sup> in the first *sutra* of the second chapter, and Astanga yoga (the eightfold path)<sup>2</sup> which comes towards the end.

Some years ago, I was thinking of starting a study group on the *sutras*, to encourage students to make use of them in their daily lives. I wanted them to discover, as I had, that they were not some esoteric text but practical wisdom containing a healthy dose of common sense: that they are as applicable in the Canada of today as they were in the India of old. When I was in Pune, I spoke to Gururji about this, and he said “Start with *The Bhagavad Gita*; *sutras* are too difficult at first. Then, when some understanding has been developed, move on to the *sutras*.” So this is what I did. The wisdom of the *Gita* is as timeless as the *sutras*; the knowledge these texts contain is vast.

In the early days of my teaching, the majority of students who came to class were stuck on the physical aspects.

1 Kriyayoga: *tapah* (self-discipline), *svadhyaya* (self-study) and *isvara pranidhana* (devotion) are the acts of yoga.

2 Astanga yoga: *yama* (universal ethical disciplines), *niyama* (individual ethical disciplines), *asana* (posture), *pranayama* (expansion of vital energy), *pratyahara* (withdrawal of the senses into the mind), *dharana* (concentration), *dhyana* (meditation), *samadhi* (absorption or profound meditation).

A further obstacle was that we were running our program out of the “Y” where others were suspicious about what they saw as a strange Eastern cult. There was some basis for their caution as this was the 1970s when many people purporting to follow Eastern disciplines were using sex and drugs rather than disciplined practice as their preferred method of “raising consciousness.”


In fact, I had attended what were grandly called “Consciousness Raising Groups” with a man who had been a Christian minister but who had given up the church, along with his marriage, to lead these groups. He was helpful to me up to a point in that he was very strong and pitted his will against mine showing me how I tended to use my strengths and emotions to impose my will. The problem was that having opened up a Pandora’s Box of issues, we were not given any guidance about what to do next. Many of the people I met in these groups ended up changing jobs, changing spouses, and although most were well educated, foul language and uncouth behaviour were commonplace. Some of them were ‘high’ on drugs much of the time. Whether they continued along this destructive route, I have no idea, because — thank God — I stumbled into yoga.

Under Swami Radha’s tutelage at Yasodhara Ashram, my mind and behaviour continued to be under close scrutiny. Clearly some major changes were required, but I was given tools to use to establish new patterns of consciousness and trained in their use. I was also introduced to the philosophy of yoga and shown how to make this a framework for living my life; how to use my energy to overcome the obstacles in my path, rather than shore them up. I was encouraged to discard everything which weakened me. I was taught that practice is essential, and encouraged to establish a regular practice — an essential step towards maintaining these changes when I returned home.

Patanjali defines yoga as cessation of the fluctuations of the mind (*sutra* 1.2) then goes on to speak about the various aspects of the mind. After which, in *sutra* 1.12, he states that *abhyasa* (practice) and *vairagya* (non-attachment) are the means to still this restless mind.

Later, in the second chapter Patanjali speaks of the *gunas* or qualities of nature which have three attributes: *tamas* (inertia), *rajas* (vibrancy) and *sattva* (luminosity). On one of my visits to Pune, while sitting at his desk in the library, Gururji addressed this topic. He was speaking of a student of his who was a dedicated practitioner, very regular in his practice, but he kept hurting himself. Gururji stated the problem was that his practice had vibrancy but no illumination. Vibrancy is seductive, and I returned to Canada thinking a lot about this and how it pertained to my own nature and my practice.

At the “Y”, a few of us persevered in our efforts to offer more than just the physical, and eventually earned sufficient confidence from the “Y”’s management to introduce some of the spiritual aspects. After all, as we took care to point out to them, the “Y”’s motto is to promote health in body, mind and spirit. It was a relationship that worked well for many years but eventually outlived



Iyengar Yoga Association of Canada

**ASSESSMENT DATES**

January 21-23, 2011  
Intermediate Junior I/II  
Vancouver, BC

February 18-20, 2011  
Intermediate Junior I  
Toronto, ON

its time so we moved into our own space where we experience far more freedom to vary our program.

As students of Iyengar yoga, one of our primary tools is *yogasana*, but we endeavour to use the form of the *asana* to teach yoga in its fullest sense including body, mind and spirit. The teachers we train have to study the yogic texts and learn to apply them in their own lives before their training ends. In fact, in their assessment they are examined on yoga philosophy along with their practice and teaching of *asanas* and *pranayama*.

New teachers often find it strange and difficult to bring yoga philosophy into their classes, but the assessment is only a first step; at our centre teachers on our faculty are expected to attend monthly meetings which begin with a practice and go on to consider some aspect of philosophy. One of the things which inhibits teachers from introducing philosophy is the feeling that students may be uncomfortable. 'What matters, of course, is that the teacher is comfortable within him or herself in presenting these teachings. Besides, one never knows who likes, or does not like, such teaching.

I often give talks on some aspect of philosophy at the beginning of my classes. Usually some ordinary event during the day has triggered certain thoughts: I may have been reading a text which was relevant to my experience, or listening to the CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) on my drive into town. Or I may have developed fresh insight from my *asana* and *pranayama* practice, or from a discussion with my husband. I endeavour to pass on to the students the idea that their lives are also packed full of these teachable moments if they care to observe this, that the teachings are relevant all day every day. Some students fidget and feel this is a waste of time and wonder why I don't get on with the class. But I am teaching the class! Others tell me how much they

value these talks. One never knows!

One of my colleagues, Carole Miller, a certified Iyengar yoga teacher and a professor in the Education faculty of the University of Victoria, has established yoga as a credit course at the university. Each year she invites some of us from the Iyengar Centre to teach as guest teachers. Last year, when I taught one of these classes, as I entered I asked Carole if she was doing the Patanjali Invocation at the start of the class. She said she hadn't done so yet, but why didn't I introduce it. So I did. This group of young and largely fit students did not respond much to my call, so I found myself both calling and responding to myself along with Carole. Well, I thought, that didn't go over very well. But at the end, when most of the students took the time to come up and thank me for the class, quite a few of them told me how much they had enjoyed the chant at the beginning. One never knows!

There are a variety of doors which open to deeper learning giving the student a choice according to her or his nature and level of maturity. As teachers we have to be careful not to give too much too soon, but never to underestimate the student. Apart from exceptional cases, the possibility of learning is always

there. How well we can transmit this fount of ancient wisdom depends on the quality of our own practice and learning, and whether we can teach without being attached to a particular result or response. As students, how well we can receive teaching and guidance from qualified teachers depends on the quality of our practice. As seekers on the path of yoga, the manner and style of our journey, and how close we will come to the goal of liberation in this lifetime, is entirely up to us.

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

*Practice is the steadfast effort to still these fluctuations.*

*Long, uninterrupted, alert practice is the firm foundation for restraining the fluctuations.*

*Renunciation is the practice of detachment from desires.*

— Chapter I, verses 12-15,  
*Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*  
by B.K.S. Iyengar ॐ

## Scholarships and Bursaries

**Members' Scholarships are available  
for all long workshops and intensives.**



Please apply in writing prior to the workshop in which you are interested.

Scholarship applications for weekend workshops are due one month prior to the workshop. Scholarships for special events and intensives are due two months before the event.

Student bursaries are available to all students presently enrolled in classes. To subsidize your term fees please apply three weeks prior to term.

Applications and details for both are available at the reception desk.

# The Eight Limbs of Yoga

Leslie Hogya

In the *Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, near the end of the second chapter, Patanjali introduces *ashtanga* yoga, *ashta*, eight, *anga*, means limbs. The eight limbs of yoga are represented on our cover as the tree of yoga, drawn beautifully by Lauren Cox. B.K.S. Iyengar used the metaphor of the tree in his book *Tree of Yoga* to explain the eight limbs of yoga. A tree grows with all its parts and they are interdependent. Each part is essential.

When one wants to plant a tree, a seed must be sown, and from it, first a root must grow. In this metaphor, the roots of the tree are the ethical foundations of yoga; they give us a guide about how to live in the world. In Sanskrit these are called the *yamas*. These *yamas* are often compared to the Ten Commandments.

The first *yama* is *ahimsa*, *a* means non, *himsa* means harm. So it is translated as non-harming. B.K.S. Iyengar in the introduction to *Light on Yoga* says, "It is more than a negative command...it has a wider positive meaning- love. This love embraces all creation."

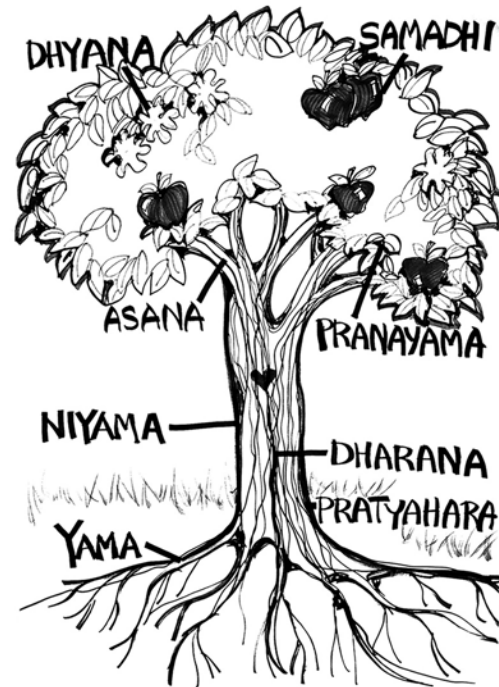
*Using the metaphor of the tree helps us to understand that yoga is more than asana.*

The next limb is the *niyamas*. They are shown as the trunk, and are the personal observances such as cleanliness, contentment, and devotion.

The root and the trunk then support the limbs of the tree. These are the *asanas*. The branches are different shapes and angles. To feed the tree there must be healthy green leaves. *Pranayama* is the next limb. *Prana* means, breath, energy, life, vitality. This is one practice where Patanjali says the practitioner should perfect the *asanas* before attempting *pranayama*. In our classes, we introduce simple breath awareness and lying *pranayama*, which gives a taste of this practice.

The bark of the tree protects it from the elements, from invasion of insects. This is *pratyahara*, the fifth limb, and it means withdrawal of the senses. The path of yoga leads inwards.

Next comes *dharana*, or concentration. In the image of the tree it is the sap. The sap runs deep inside to every part of the tree from the roots to the farthest tip.



*Many people begin with the asanas, the postures, but traditionally, the ethics would be understood as the foundation of any practice.*

When all the parts are healthy, then the tree will start to flower; *dhyana*, is meditation.

The final of limb of yoga produces the fruit of the practice, the fruit of the tree. *Samadhi* is the fruit of the practice, when body, mind and spirit are in complete union.

Using the metaphor of the tree helps us to understand that yoga is more than *asana*. The limbs cannot live without roots, without a trunk, without leaves, without sap. The next time you practice *vrksasana* (tree pose) feel the steadiness of the feet rooted into the ground, the strength of the leg and torso, the flow of the breath, withdraw your senses from the classroom and notice how you must practice concentration to stay stable. ॐ





# Footsteps of Patanjali 2010: A Personal Perspective

By Krysia Strawczynski

August 23, 2010

I returned from the Footsteps of Patanjali retreat about an hour ago. Shirley Davenport French and Leslie Hogya led the retreat. I believe I have been to every one of these retreats since they began four years ago.

The setting at the Salt Spring Yoga Centre is peaceful and beautiful as is the space where we do yoga. I have enjoyed each retreat although I found each very different because the group was different each time. One of the nicest aspects of these retreats is that there are plenty of opportunities to get to know the unique and interesting people who come or, if you prefer, to spend time alone.

The schedule gives the time needed to truly relax and re-energize. Early every morning (7:00 am) Shirley or Leslie led us in *pranayama* for an hour. I am always surprised at how quickly the time goes. A fabulous healthy breakfast follows and a break until 10:00 am. Shirley and Leslie then teach *asanas* until 12:30. Because they are both master teachers, the class is neither too easy nor too hard but pitched just right for the students.

After lunch, there is nothing scheduled until 4:00 pm. You can book a massage. You can walk through the woods. You can swim in a nearby lake. You can poke around Ganges and go to the Saturday market there. Or you can sit in the orchard and read or walk through the flower gardens. Or go to a winery or a lavender farm or a cheese producer. Lots to do in the afternoon.

The thread running through the retreats is of course the *sutras* of Patanjali. (Give yourself a bonus point for spotting the word play.) The *sutras* are the taking off point for wide ranging discussions. We gather for this purpose every day for



two hours at 4:00 in the afternoon. We mostly focussed on the *yamas* and *niyamas*. What a luxury to have the time and space to think about universal concerns. The topics I particularly remember from this year were truth and perception, greed and contentment. It is always interesting to learn how others see these matters and even more interesting to see your own views change.

The evening schedule varies. One evening we had *kurtan*, which is Indian chanting. Another evening we continued our afternoon discussion. Every year, the last evening is devoted to presentations prepared by individuals or small groups on some aspects of the *sutras* we



had studied in group discussion. This last evening has always been fun and funny. It has also had some very moving moments. It is never boring.

I remember I was a little disappointed in my first retreat. I thought there would be more time spent on *asanas*. I'd been to the Heart of Yoga taught by Shirley at Salt Spring and I expected more of the same. But the following year, I realized I didn't really want that intense an experience. The slower pace of the retreat suited me. It is not everyone's cup of tea but I like it. I always learn something new. I make friends. I eat great veggie food. And most of all, I am taught yoga every day by Shirley and Leslie. What's not to like?

The cost of the retreat (over \$700) is very reasonable considering that it includes accommodation and food from Wednesday to Sunday AND daily yoga taught by great teachers. One of this year's participants said she had saved up to give herself this treat. Start saving now and it is almost painless. It is even more painless to be given a gift certificate to offset part of the cost. The yoga centre will also be offering a layaway plan for this retreat. ॐ



# Guruji responds to Children

*The students of the children's class at Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute, aged 9 to 12 years, had a chance of asking one question each to Guruji. A selected few of these questions were put forth to Guruji and here are his responses.*

REPRINTED FROM YOGA RAHASYA, VOL.17,  
NO.1; 2010

## **Why did you take this task of yoga?**

I don't know why I took this task. Maybe it was the hands of God that made me do this. In the beginning, it was uninteresting. Initially I practised due to the force of my guardians. Secondly my health was also not good. I used to be on the bed for days together because I was sick. Then I continued the task of Yoga to make a living out of it.

## **What is the secret? Why do you know yoga so well?**

Hard-work is the first secret. The second was a sense of responsibility, as I was dealing with living beings. Third is the sense of observation while practicing. In those days, people were very hostile towards this subject. This attitude of people pushed me into learning, unlearning and relearning because I had faith in this subject. I wanted to create interest in the minds of people.

## **When you were learning yoga as a child, did you practise every day early in the morning?**

When I was young, my Guru made me practise *asanas* at odd hours — sometimes morning, sometimes evening. Sometimes, he would call me at any time and ask me to be present. He also made me do difficult *asanas* at any time, sometimes immediately after lunch. This developed the power in me to do any time.

## **How can you perform such difficult asanas?**

I wanted to attract people to yoga, hence I started learning the difficult *asanas*. It

*What is the secret of you being this fit at this age? – My devoted, dedicated, sincere and honest practice.*

did not come in a day. Repeated practice and introducing the life force to express dynamism even in the tips of my toes took years to reach finest levels in difficult *asanas*.

## **Why is yoga so important?**

Why is yoga important? Why is food important? Yoga is important so that the food we take gets properly digested, assimilated and integrated in our blood. *Asanas* help in distributing the energy evenly to each and every part and polishes the inner body for the outer body to glow.

## **Why don't you take our yoga class?**

If I take your class, what about members like you who have to grow and shine like me? I have taught for more than 50 years. Now it is your turn. Young and budding teachers should now come up and take this forward.

## **How many asanas have you done?**

See *Light on Yoga*. You will get an idea of how many *asanas* I do.

## **What is the secret of you being this fit at this age?**

My devoted, dedicated, sincere and honest practice.

## **How are you so flexible?**

I have to practise everyday to maintain

the flexibility as we can trim a sapling and not a tree. At this age, God has blessed you with a mobile body. Make use of it and trim it so that even after you grow old, you maintain the body movement. As we need food, clothing and sleep everyday, yoga should also be practised everyday. As food, clothing and sleep is a MUST, yoga practice should also become a MUST for all so we can live in peace and not in pieces.

## **How do I do asanas that are hard for me?**

Ask your teachers for tips. You will then realise that the *asanas* are not hard, but the mind is hard, the mind is unco-operative and unwilling. Rigidity in mind brings rigidity in body.

## **How much memory power do you have?**

I do not know. But I have the power to transform the rigid body and mind to a fresh body and mind. If you maintain and retain your practice, you experience what is a fresh body and a fresh mind.

## **What is yoga?**

What is sleep? Can you explain? So, what you enjoy in sleep, you enjoy in yoga.

Body has inertia. The body should be made to become vibrant like the mind, and then the body and mind together mingle with the Self for all the three to live in serenity. Yoga is to blend the intellect of the brain (*vidya*) with the intelligence of the heart (*buddhi*) so that these two rovers of intelligence unite as one river. Senses of perception uniting in the sea of life is yoga. It makes one to live in a lively and lovely way. ॐ

# Sva-bhava Dharma to Sva-dharma: Our Inherent Nature and the Nature of the Soul

Geeta S. Iyengar

REPRINTED FROM YOGA RAHASYA. THE BRACKETED TRANSLATIONS HAVE BEEN ADDED BY THE EDITOR AND TAKEN FROM *LIGHT ON YOGA* WHENEVER POSSIBLE.

Every human being is born with some inherent qualities or characteristics called *sva-bhava dharma*. **A simple translation of *sva-bhava* is the nature of a person.** There are many people sitting here and everyone has his or her own nature. That is called *sva-bhava*. It is the inherent characteristics. Some people are very good by nature. They see you and just come and help even if you have not asked for it. There are some who are non-cooperative and who create problems; they quarrel for no reason. It is the nature that speaks. We are supposed to study this nature — ours and not others'. Why do we quarrel? Why do we fight? Why do we hate someone for no reason? Why do we love or why are we compassionate or passionate?

One's own varying nature and the differing natures from individual to individual, the *sva-bhāva*, and the behaviour depends upon the qualities that one imbibes from the cosmic nature. We appreciate the beauty of the nature outside — the rivers, the mountains, the ocean etc. We also see nature in its terrifying form and furious nature such as hurricanes and tornadoes which frighten us. The *prakṛti* [nature] that exists outside also exists within us. We inherit our characteristic behaviour from the cosmic nature and the cosmic nature provides it in turn, according to our karma which again depends upon our nature. We do the *karma* according to our nature of behaviour. However, all this depends upon *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. These three qualities are known as '*tri-guṇa*'.



*Every human being is born with some inherent qualities called sva-bhava which is imbibed from cosmic nature.*

*Sattva* nature, which is the illuminative nature, brings the luminosity — it shines and clears. If the sunlight is strong, everything becomes clear. Sometimes, when it is cloudy, we can't even see the sun. So this *sattva* is indicated with the word luminosity because of its illuminative nature — *prakasha*. The light is inherent in it.

The second type of nature is *rajas*. *Rajo guna* is of active nature. It makes us move. It creates vibrancy within. You need that luminosity and you also need this kind of activity. The action and motion are inherent in *rajas*.

Then, the third is *tamo guna*, which is inertia. Even that inertia has two facets. Sometimes you need that inertia just

to relax yourself. If you decide to relax, then you need to be, to some extent, inert. You imbibe that inertness through the *tamo guna* so you become quiet. Again, it has its own quality. This inert feeling can lead towards laziness and dullness where people don't feel like doing anything. There are people who just don't want to do anything because of *tamo guna*. Stupor, dullness is inherent in *tamas*.

So, *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* reflect on behaviour, thoughts, actions, movements, intelligence, emotions as well as the out-going mind and the in-going mind. That is why we need to know this nature of ours. We have to find out what type of category we belong to and that is called as *sva-bhāva dharma* [path]. *Sva-bhāva* is the nature of a human being. You say somebody is a very kind-natured person. That kind-naturedness has come to them through that *sattva guna*. To simplify and put this into a very gross form, I can say the person of *tamo guna* will be alcoholic, *rajoguna* workaholic and *sattva guna* yogaholic.

*"A person of tamo guna will be alcoholic, rajoguna workaholic and sattva guna yogaholic."*

These *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* interact with each other. They play as well as fight with each other. Sometimes, they show dominance over each other and their ratio will be changing all the time in our consciousness. We need not worry about how it happens, but we have to study our nature. As we study, we know that these *tri-guṇas* [three *gunas*] are influenced by food, karma, behaviour,

character and the way of living. Sometimes, we suddenly feel dull. We just don't want to do anything and we don't know the reason behind the dullness. So, we pick up certain projects like cleaning the room and make ourselves active.

Sometimes, when you read a book, you think that nothing goes into your head although you are reading. You find that you have read 15 pages but nothing has entered your head. For no reason, you find that nothing has registered. At that time your mind, which you call disturbed, has been diverted. You have gone far away from *sattva guna* and that is why you could not concentrate even though you have read 15 pages. The *rajo guna* disturbs you. That is how the *gunas* play tricks on us. When you are tired fatigued, then nothing goes into your head and you go to sleep. That is *tamas*. We need to study this nature because everyone undergoes these feelings and changes.

We can then find out what kind of *sva-bhava* or nature we have. Some people

are lazy and some people are active. Some are overactive. Some are cruel and some are kind-hearted. Watch this changing, modifying and varying nature. It reveals your *sva-bhava*, because you will be experiencing all the shades of this nature existing in you and you will be matching to some extent with others in whom you notice this nature.

So, Patanjali says, "Through the practice of *yama*, *niyama*, *asana*, *pranayama* and *pratyahara* [withdrawal of the mind from the domination of the senses] you have to change and tame this *sva-bhava* — the nature. You have to train this *sva-bhava*, the nature, so that it will be in tune with the soul. To be in tune with the soul, we have to culture this nature through the practice of yoga, through these first five aspects of yoga. We have to cultivate a certain nature within us so it is conducive to the practice of yoga. This leads us to go from *Vyuthana citta* to the *samahita citta*, so that *dhāraṇa* [concentration], *dhyāna* [meditation] and *Samādhi* [becoming one with the

Supreme Being] becomes possible. The *samahita citta* begins to surface and reflect. It says, "Yes. Now I'm establishing myself to go inside." That mind or that consciousness becomes more penetrative inwards. This *sva-bhava dharma*, I would call as *sva-dharma*. This *sva-dharma* is strengthened by *dhāraṇa*, *dhyāna* and *Samādhi*.

*"As we train and cultivate our sva-bhava, we go to the original state of our consciousness."*

As we train the *sva-bhava* that we have — and begin to cultivate it, culture it, shape it properly — we go to the original state of our consciousness. That is *sva-dharma*. *Sva* means one's own and *dharma* means religion. Consciousness or *citta* is termed as *sva* since the soul possesses the consciousness. Soul is the owner who owns the consciousness. The soul is *svāmi* and consciousness is *sva*. The *sva-dharma* means one's own

## Congratulations!

The following candidates achieved certification at the October 15-17 assessment in Montreal:

### Intermediate Junior II

Ginette Dion, Montreal, QC  
Sylvie Lapointe, Mascousche, QC

### Intermediate Junior I

Leigh Anne Milne, Chester, NS  
Lisa Towson, Winnipeg, MB  
Drew Perry, Winnipeg, MB  
Mona Keddy, Montreal, QC  
Susanne McAdam, Montreal, QC  
Christine Michaud, Montreal, QC

The following candidates achieved certification at the October 15-17 assessment in Edmonton:

### Introductory II

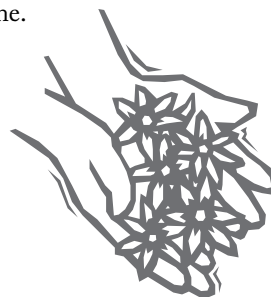
Joann Kalantzis, Calgary, AB  
Janette Hook, Edmonton, AB  
Julie Mah, Calgary, AB  
Corinne Milroy, Edmonton, AB  
Pamela Nelson, Christopher Lake, SK  
Isabel Oliveira, Calgary, AB  
Grant Richards, Vancouver, BC

### Introductory I

Tom Levery, Toronto, ON

### Summer Omission:

Grace Thompson of London, ON, received Introductory II certification at the Courtenay, BC, assessment in June.



religion. So the religion of the consciousness, the religion of *sva* is to have self realization, which in simple words is sometimes expressed as peace or serenity. What is that which feels the serenity? What is that which feels the peaceful state? Something from inside feels and experiences that serenity is the *sva*. If *sva* is serene, then we experience the soul — the *svāmi*, who is originally, eternally and inherently serene.

In simple words, when you have a good sleep at night, you don't wake up every moment and say, "I'm having good sleep." You get up in the morning and say, "I had a very good sleep because it was not broken." You were not disturbed at any moment. You were deep inside that sleep. Only after waking from that state you say, "I had a very good sleep." As sleep is experienced in that manner, so the *sva-dharma* is also experienced in the same way.

All your energies flowing from your body right up to the consciousness are concentrated. They are almost purified, cleansed in such a way that they are almost equal to the luminous soul. If the consciousness is full of light, the soul, whose obvious nature is full of light, remains face to face at that moment.

**That is what yoga teaches — to have this union of consciousness and soul in an absolutely pure and clear form.**

That is what *Astanga* yoga teaches and expects from its *sadhaka* — the practitioner — and that is why we have to be very clear about the *sva-bhāva dharma* and *sva-dharma*. Patanjali uses the words, *sva* and *svāmi* in *Sadhanā Pāda* [the second part of Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, dealing with the means.]

***Sva svami saktyoh svarupapalabdhī hetuh samyogah.* 11.23.**

[The powers of *purusa* (the Soul) and *prakṛti* (Nature) are intended for self-realization. The purpose (*hetuh*) of the

contact between the two (*samyogah*) is the unfolding of their inherent powers (*saktyoh*), and the seers discovery of his own true nature.] – Ed.

*Sva* means one's own nature and that is *prakṛti*. *Svami* is the master — the soul. *Sva-bhāva* means our own nature, our own feel. *Sva dharma* means our own characteristic, original nature. *Dharma* also means duty and virtue. Our nature depends upon *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* and therefore differs from each other but *sva-dharma* does not differ.

Our *dharma* is self realization. Our *dharma*, our duty and virtuous act is to know the *Atman*, [the Supreme Soul] to be as pure as the *Atman*. And, yoga *sādhana* changes our *sva-bhāva* in order to embrace *sva-dharma*.

***Our dharma is self realization. Our duty is to know the Atman."***

Through the practice of yoga, we need to have first the *sva-bhava darshana* [seeing or vision] and then *sva dharma darshana*. We need to know what we are; what we need to be, and finally have the crystal clear vision of our self.

Yoga is like a mirror. It reflects our *sva-bhāva*. If there is something wrong with us, it shows in the practice that there is something wrong with us. It shows not only our physical defects but also psychological, emotional, intellectual and egoistic defects. We need to correct ourselves and for that Patanjali uses a good word. When we look at ourselves in the mirror, we look at our face, our hair, we look at our dress; we try to see if something is wrong and then we want to change it. It could be an eyebrow or it could be our face which needs cream. You also do your hair properly if it is untidy. You give proper curls to it. We do all this in front of the mirror. You see how the dress is beautifying you. If it's

not, then you immediately say, "Let me change the dress it doesn't look nice, the colour is not suitable". This is how the mirror is talking to you, and according to that talk you change your look. You bring the change in you.

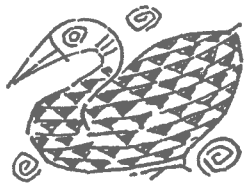
***Yoga is like a mirror. It shows not only our physical defects but also psychological, emotional, intellectual and egoistic defects.***

The mirror of yoga exposes you completely — the good and the bad aspects of yours, the ugliness as well as the beauty, your nature, your behaviour, your inner mind, your inner thoughts and your inner conspiracy too. You need to cleanse, touch and purify it. You have to embellish it. That is what Patanjali calls *citta prasadanam*. The Sanskrit word he has used is *prasādanam*. *Prasadana* means decoration, adornment. It is the process of taking off the dirt and cleaning oneself. He offers us these cosmetics to beautify our consciousness which begins from the body. However the beautifying of the body is not for the external purposes but for the internal purpose to go towards the soul. The soul doesn't need external beauty. The inner beauty is different from the outer beauty and that is the real nature we have to clear; and that is called purification. If this background is known to us then it makes sense to us as to why and how we have to adopt it, why and how to practice, and this brings clarity.

We now know the body, the organs of action, the senses of perception and the mind. I'm repeating this so that the whole picture of you as an individual has to stand in front of you — the mind, the intelligence, the consciousness, the I-consciousness and the conscience.



The conscience differentiates between *sat* and *asat*, the real and the unreal; it discriminates between what is correct and what is incorrect; what is eternal and what is not eternal. We have to develop this kind of conscience that has to keep on reflecting on the mirror of yoga. In fact, it has to become a habit for consciousness to look into the mirror of conscience. In order to develop this special sense of 'looking in' we have to do a lot of cleansing on all levels such as body, senses, mind, breath, energy, *samskāra* — imprints, memory, intelligence, I-ness, consciousness and conscience. ॐ



## NEW YEAR'S DAY All Levels

### Timed Practice

With Robin Cantor

January 1, 2011  
12:00 pm - 2:00 pm

Free for 2010 IYCV members  
\$40 + HST for non-members

Pre-registration is required by  
Thursday, December 23, 2010

To register, drop in or call  
Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria  
250-386-YOGA (9642)

Refunds will be offered only if your space  
can be filled and are subject to  
a \$10.00 cancellation fee.

## Guruji's Prescription for Staying Young

The Times of India, *Mumbai edition* did a feature called 'long live longevity.' They spoke to many people amongst whom was our Guruji. This is an extract from that article by Kamini Mathai.

"The grand old man of yoga, B.K.S. Iyengar is 91. His face is wrinkle-free (even though the flowing hair is silver), spine is straight and chest is spread wide. India's famous yoga instructor devotes four hours to yoga every single day. And that's his secret to a healthy and long life. "I wake up at six, and do 'pranayama for an hour. Then it's time to pick up the newspapers to know what's happening around the world. From 9 am to about noon, I do *asanas* nonstop. There was a time when I'd do a number of *asanas*. But now, although I do a lesser number of these, I hold them for a much longer time – till I am able to penetrate into my inner self and feel my body getting refreshed,"



says the yoga legend, who began his yoga practice in 1934, in Mysore. Post-yoga, it's time for a bath and lunch, after which Iyengar heads for his yoga institute where he sits in the library to work on his new book. By 10:30 pm, one of the world's most famous yoga guru is fast asleep.

## Rx

- Disciplined lifestyle
- 30-minute *sirsasana*, *sarvangasana* and other inversions
- Live in the present. Live life moment to moment.

Besides following a disciplined lifestyle, Iyengar also vouches for a 30-minute headstand, besides the shoulder-stand and other inversions which, he says, are the poses that postpone the onset of old age. "Even today, my feet don't swing even slightly when I do the headstand," he says. Iyengar's prescription for staying young, apart from practising yoga regularly, is never to dwell on the past. "I live in the present. I live life moment to moment. I reflect – do this specially when I am holding my *asanas*, and that's what keeps me refreshed." ॐ

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# Being Set Free

Deborah Lomond

"What will you take home with you?" asked Shirley at the end of the Junior Intermediate Intensive in Victoria. There were many thoughtful responses but the ones from the French Canadian contingent resonated with many of us as we wiped away our tears. "People here have such good hearts, I feel like I have been set free." "I have discovered something new in myself that I want to carry on with, not sure how I will do it but I will."

I have been attending teacher intensives at the Victoria Yoga Center since 1988, and every year I come away with a growing sense of community and renewed purpose. It is an enriching five days working with colleagues with that one-pointed (*eka grata*) focus that Patanjali talks about in the yoga *sutras*. We bear witness to the evolution of each other and the bigger yoga community.

I have also seen Shirley's evolution. Her teaching is still as dynamic and as precise as it was in 1988, but now it is evident that her own journey has provided her not only with a wealth of knowledge but also with a wellspring of stories and experiences that serve to create a teaching/learning environment that is rich, fun and safe for her students.

Her lightness of being encourages everyone to take risks, to explore and to develop their potential. Someone put it well when they said that "making a mistake is just another way of being." I felt that Shirley's leadership brought us closer to what the Buddha called "the divine abodes," the states of *maitri*, *karuna*, *mudita*, and *upeksanan* as is written in sutra 1:33, "consciousness settles as one radiates friendliness, compassion, delight and equanimity towards all things, whether pleasant or painful, good or bad."

The teacher intensives have changed for me over the decades. In the early years of study and practice, there would be huge light bulbs going on as my awareness expanded but now it is more like those tiny Christmas tree lights where all the connections have to be made for the entire circuit to work. The same connections have to be made and maintained to keep the light of the community strong. This year's intensive was a shining example of building community from coast to coast.

The intensive culminated with an Indian feast at Shirley's house. I was struck, as usual, by everyone's radiance. This is how people look when they are nourished by yoga's gift of union. Embracing a life of evolution and learning, which is a hallmark of Iyengar yoga, allows the light within to shine forth. ॐ

*I have been attending teacher intensives at the Victoria Yoga Center since 1988 and every year I come away with a growing sense of community and renewed purpose.*



## The 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Retreat at the Salt Spring Centre

**Coming June 3-5, 2011**

With Shirley Daventry French

This is your opportunity to attend the annual retreat on beautiful Salt Spring Island and participate in a weekend of Iyengar Yoga with Shirley Daventry French. Renew your Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria membership so you can be in the front of the line for an opportunity to participate in this wonderful event.

Fees: IYCV Members  
\$340.00 + HST – shared accommodation  
\$310.00 + HST – camping  
\$285.00 + HST – commuting

Fees: Non-members  
\$375.00 + HST – shared accommodation  
\$345.00 + HST – camping  
\$320.00 + HST – commuting

Registration opens February 14, 2011 for members and February 21 for non-members.  
Refunds will be offered only if your space can be filled and are subject to a \$50.00 cancellation fee.

# Sutra Study: The Introductory Teacher Training Intensive

July 2010

By Leslie Hogya

Each year during the introductory teacher training intensive, we study a section of the yoga *sutras* of Patanjali. The goal is to gain some deeper and more personal understanding of these ancient teachings. Most days, after a lunch break, we chant a section of the *sutras*, taking turns with the pronunciation, and then reading English translations to help us learn the meaning of the Sanskrit. We always rely on the *Light on the Yoga Sutras* by B.K.S. Iyengar as our main source.

In July 2010, we focused on the *sutras* in Chapter 2 from verse 30 to the end of the chapter, with emphasis on the *yamas* and *niyamas*, which shed light on universal moral observances and ethical guidelines. Patanjali devotes 16 *sutras* to the *yamas* and *niyamas*; this is very significant. It is more than any of the other eight limbs of yoga, except *samadhi*. “They are a crucial and indispensable prerequisite of yoga.” – Edwin Bryant.<sup>1</sup>

The first *yama* (moral observance) is *ahimsa*, which means non harming, and compassion. *Ahimsa* is the tap root of all the others. If we do no harm, then we will be truthful and not take from others. Sutra II, 31 then states that these vows (the *yamas*) are universal, irrespective of age, class, place or time.

Sutra II, 34 further elaborates on the importance of non-harming, it says that *himsa* (harming) can come from greed (*lobha*), anger (*krodha*) or delusion (*moha*). All these must be counteracted with correct knowledge and self-study.

On Friday afternoon at the end of the week, participants shared with us some-



Ann Kilbertus teaching pranayama



thing they learned from this study. Ann and I are always overwhelmed with the creativity and inspiration that comes during these presentations. I can’t summarize them all, yet each person’s willingness to present what they had learned added to the whole of our understanding.

Some people present things that are deeply personal, inspirational, touching



and/or serious. Others are informative, and some fun and uplifting. One year we had a cello performance, another year a game show.

This year, we had a lesson on the phonetic pronunciation of Sanskrit from Soo. Ken led us through a description of his journey to understand how he had suffered many injuries over his life, and how through yoga this is now changing.

<sup>1</sup> *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, Edwin Bryant, North Point Press, 2009, p. 283.

From Jane we had the linking of the words *satya* (truth), *sadhana* (practice), and *Ahimsa* (impartial love), that tied into the meaning of the word *asana*.

From Ann and Cathy, we were treated to a menu from the Tapas bar, located at 2, 43 Sutra St. and how we could choose one item from each column, which gives daily nourishment for the body, mind and soul.

Morgan Rea and Cheryl Joseph, sang to us. Here are the words to their song:

This is the tale of Patanjali,  
His *sutras* have been here for a long,  
long time,  
We have to learn our best from them,  
The *sutras* are our guide,  
The *sutras* are our guide.  
There's *ahimsa*, and *satya* too,  
*Asteya* and *brahmacharya*  
There's *aparigraha* and the *niyamas*,  
Here in Patanjali's *sutras*,  
Here in Patanjali's *sutras*.

All sung to the tune of the well-dated but ever loved theme song from Gilligan's Island.

Twenty-one participants gave us very different interpretations, with charts and lists, concrete lessons; others used storytelling, music, or art. We even got a *yama* cookie! Jana brought in a beautiful mobile with each bead representing the many facets of the *sutras*. Michele told a children's story with the *yamas* and *niyamas* being there to help a young child adjust to starting school.

Each person's courage to present these projects and willingness to share their understanding inspired us all, and helped us gain a deeper understanding of how the *sutras* are alive and relevant to us today. ॐ



Ann and Leslie going over the sutras





## a member's practice

by Glenda Balkan Champagne

If only the summer lingered through the fall... The days are long and my obligations consist of leisurely walks with Roger and our dog Rufus, casual dinners with friends, and plenty of time to practice yoga at any hour and for as long as I wish. It's not unusual to spend two hours at a session exploring new discoveries in familiar poses, or being inspired by words written by Mr. Iyengar, while sweet, balmy summer breezes lull me into *savasana*.

Then – BAM – it's September. School begins. Meetings are held. Work-related social gatherings are obligatory. Week-ends are called off. My husband and my dog forget who I am.

Yoga? I need it more than ever, but where will I find the time?

I've learned to solve the problem by preparing my yoga t-shirt and tights the night before so that rolling out of bed at an early hour won't wake everyone up.

My yoga space downstairs is warm and the lighting, subdued. I begin my practice with the three poses that I've been told Geeta often opened her classes with.

*Adho mukha virasana,  
adho mukha svanasana  
uttanasana.*

It feels like a good way to begin when I am not yet fully awake. Many teachers and practitioners use the early morning for *pranayam* practice. As a voice professional, much of my day is spent practicing and teaching the action of the breath as it relates to singing, so generally I choose an *asana* practice. The chest opening and stability of *asana* help prepare me for my voice work.

Lately I've been looking to Mr Iyengar's sequences at the back of *Light on Yoga*. Many begin with *sirsana* and *sarvangasana* and variations. In my experience headstand usually follows standing poses. Shoulder stand is often saved for the end of practice or prior to sitting forward bends. However, if time is plentiful, I find doing inversions first in my practice a lovely way to start. Early in the morning when time is limited I save inverted poses for later doing them on their own, sometimes after work or even occasionally at work if I have a break!

Most recently I've been following the three day cycle at the end of Course One in *Light on Yoga*. This cycle sequences many groups of poses, for example *asanas* that focus on the abdomen such as *jathara parivartanasana*, *paripurna navasana* and *ardha navasana* with twists and then back-bends later in the practice. He has also included timings with each pose. Most of these practices can be performed in 45 minutes to an hour and yet at the end of each I feel awake and serene.

Practicing early in the morning before anyone else in my house – even perhaps in the world – is awake has been a journey of resistance for me. I had always been convinced that I worked most effectively later in the day and preferred to begin my morning with a good strong cup of coffee and the *Globe and Mail*. Now my energy feels more balanced throughout the day and the 4:00 pm lag that I took as a given for most of my life seems to have disappeared! This is reward indeed and inspiration to continue life upon the mat. ॐ

## Thank You

A huge thank you to all the volunteers who made our September Open House a success: organizers, teachers, bakers, cleaners, Bhavantu Sound, decorators, meet-and-greeters, and at least 150 visitors! Thank you Monika Eilerman, Steven Alpert, Marion Wess, Chuck Cohen, Chris Peterson, Janet Strauss, Shauna Johnson, Andrea Brimmel, Laine Canivet, Margo Kobly, Adia Kapoor, Jill Williams, Cathy dePont, Anna Wren, Boni Hoy, Ann Nolan, Haik Miller, Krysia Strawczynski, Jane McFarlane, Keiko Alkire, Johanna Godliman, Wendy Boyer, Britta Poisson, Corrine Lowen, Ann Kilbertus, Glenda Balkan-Champagne, Gary Wong, Shirley Daventry French, Charles Campbell, Lucia Guindon, Ty Chandler, Chris Simmons, Tia Benn, Matthew Balchin, Jayne Jonas and Jo Anna Hope.

Thank you, Theron Morgan, for your accounting assistance.

Thank you, Simon Ainsworth, for your contribution to the High Tea Fundraiser.

Thank you, Jo Anna Hope, for organizing and updating the newsletter ads and announcements for the last four years.



# Ahimsa: Delving into the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali

Leslie Hogya

THIS ARTICLE WAS ADAPTED FROM A SPEECH LESLIE HOGYA GAVE OCTOBER 1, 2010 IN QUERETERO, MEXICO FOR THE OPENING CEREMONIES OF THE CONVENTION FOR THE ASOCIACION MEXICANA DE YOGA IYENGAR.

A *himsa* (or love, compassion) is the foundation of yoga. It is the keystone; nothing is possible without love and compassion for all people. The *asanas*, or postures are the route of Iyengar yoga but the road is closed if we don't practice the moral observances, *yamas*, like *ahimsa*.

In the second chapter, verse thirty, of the yoga *sutras*, Patanjali lists the *yamas*. In verse thirty-one, he says that the *yamas* are essential, they are the universal truth: "*jati desa kala smaya anuvicchinna sarva bhauma maha vratam.*"

This *sutra* reminds us that the *yamas*, or moral observances are for all people, at all times, in all circumstances. They were true 2000 years ago. They are true for you and I today here in Canada. They are true for people everywhere now and always. *Maha vratam* means great or mighty vow. *Maha* means great, or most important. It is most important for all time, *kala*, to follow these vows.

The first *yama* is *ahimsa*, and it is the one that helps us understand all the others. *Ahimsa* means non-harming and compassion. The idea of non-harming may seem fairly simple at first. You and I are not likely to be going around hitting others, or throwing rocks at them. But this *sutra* also means to practice this ideal in thought, word and deed. So while we may not hit another physically, what about with unkind words? Even when we eliminate unkind words, then there are the thoughts, which only we can know. Yet those thoughts are harmful to others and, probably even more so, to ourselves. Our unkind thoughts can take root in our hearts.



Leslie teaching in a strange mixture of Spanish and English at the second conference of the Asociacion Mexicana de Yoga Iyengar in Queretero Mexico.



Oct 1-3, 2010 the Association Mexicana de Yoga Iyengar held their second convention in Queretero, Mexico. The theme was the yama *ahimsa* (no violence).

B.K.S. Iyengar inspires us by saying that friendliness and compassion cannot be felt by an unquiet mind. His way to help us achieve a quiet mind is to work with determination on our *asana* and *pranayama* practices. These will bring mental equipoise and inner peace.

The Dalai Lama says something very similar to *sutra* II, 31, about the great vow, *maha vrata*. He says:

Compassion, loving kindness, altruism and a sense of brotherhood and sisterhood are the keys to human development, not only in the future but in the present as well....Thus, we find that kindness and a good heart form the underlying foundation for our success in this life, our progress on the spiritual path and our fulfillment of our ultimate aspiration, the attainment of full enlightenment. Hence, kindness and a good heart are not only important at the beginning but also in the middle and at the end. Their necessity and value are not limited to any specific time, place, society or culture.<sup>1</sup>

Let us spend the next few days together in this spirit, and let us grow in compassion so that these ideals are what is rooted in our hearts and minds.

*Namaste. ॐ*

<sup>1</sup> Georg Fuerstein, *The Deeper Dimensions of Yoga*.

## IYENGAR YOGA: An Overview

**Adia Kapoor**

ADIA KARPOOR IS A STUDENT TEACHER IN HER FIRST YEAR AT THE IYENGAR CENTRE OF VICTORIA.

SHE WROTE THIS PAPER AS PART OF HER COURSE WORK AND HAS GRACIOUSLY AGREED TO ITS PUBLICATION IN THE NEWSLETTER, ON THE OCCASION OF MR. IYENGAR'S 92 BIRTHDAY.

**B**ellur Krishnamachar Sundararaja (B.K.S.) Iyengar was born in 1918 in Bellur, Karnataka, South India. He came from a poor family and suffered from ill health most of his young life. In 1934, at age 16, he went to Mysore to stay with his sister who was married to Professor T. Krishnamacharya, a renowned scholar and yoga adept, who directed a yoga school for the royal family of Mysore.

Although B.K.S. Iyengar did not come to Mysore initially to study yoga, his brother-in-law shortly thereafter initiated him into yoga and, through hard work, B.K.S. became proficient in a very short few years. He began giving yoga demonstrations and classes, which led him to an opportunity to teach yoga in Pune, where he came in 1937.

His initial career as a yoga instructor was challenging and he struggled financially. However, by 1944, his reputation began to spread and eminent persons sought his guidance. In 1952, Yehudi Menuhin, the celebrated violinist, learned yoga from B.K.S. and then brought B.K.S. and his teachings to the west in 1954. Since then, he has repeatedly travelled abroad to teach and promote yoga.

In 1975, he and his students opened an institute in Pune, which has become the foremost seat of learning for Iyengar yoga and a centre of pilgrimage for students around the world. B.K.S. continues to

practice and teach today, and his family and his students all over the world continue his work.

Since B.K.S. began teaching yoga in 1936, he evolved and perfected his unique system of imparting yoga. He developed this method, which we call Iyengar yoga, through his devoted and diligent personal practice and the study of the needs and problems of his own students. Although his is a unique interpretation of the classical yoga of Patanjali, it is true to the spirit of the yoga *sutras*. His style is unique not in the postures themselves, but in the interpretation of how to execute them. As he himself has said, "Yoga belongs to a civilization which is 3,000 years old. It cannot be my yoga or somebody's else's yoga, but as everything has to have a common brand, my yoga has a brand."

What distinguishes his "brand" is his flair for precision. Precision and alignment, the search for perfection in each movement, the constant awareness of every cell and muscle of the body, and the meticulousness in observation are what characterize Iyengar yoga. Students work continually at refinement in an effort to achieve perfection. B.K.S. instills in his pupils that nothing less than total involvement is required to discover true alignment, not just in the body, but also in the mind. Iyengar yoga is not performed casually or mechanically, but consciously and deliberately, so that awareness is present, even at the cellular level. This awareness in every pore of the body is in itself meditation.

Intense self-study, discipline, and personal practice are cornerstones of this method of yoga. To this day, B.K.S. continues to perform *asana* and *pranayama* every day. He is continually learning, and there is no

*Precision and alignment, the search for perfection in each movement, the constant awareness of every cell and muscle of the body, and the meticulousness in observation are what characterize Iyengar yoga.*

end to the vast subject of yoga. But he does not encourage students just to seek knowledge of yoga. He encourages his students to practice and observe in themselves, to seek and find out the truth in their own bodies. Though his students benefit from his years of work and knowledge of yoga, Iyengar yoga classes teach technique to students so that they can do their own practice more effectively. Iyengar yoga students are taught to approach their practice with eagerness, enthusiasm, energy, and passion, but most of all, constancy. There is nothing that can take the place of a continuous and regular personal practice.

To the uninitiated, the emphasis appears to be on *asana* (postures) and *pranayama* (breath control). However, Iyengar yoga also emphasizes the morality of yoga in the *yamas* and *niyamas*, and the Iyengar institute, teachers and students are known for discipline and good conduct. B.K.S. believes that the higher forms of yoga and, ultimately, *samadhi*, can only

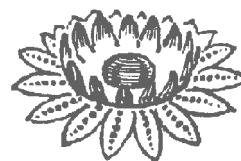
*The practice demands regularity, punctuality, cleanliness, purity, courtesy, modesty, and morality.*

be taught to those who are proficient in the first limbs of yoga. Hence, these are the focus of intense study and practice. The practice demands regularity, punctuality, cleanliness, purity, courtesy, modesty, and morality.

Many people think first of props when they think of Iyengar yoga. B.K.S. Iyengar has developed simple and effective techniques to help students take and also retain postures for lengths of time with greater ease. He has developed methods of using walls, window ledges, chairs, ropes, blankets, straps, planks, bars, weights, benches, and stands to better aid in alignment. Though *asanas* are best done without aids, props

simplify the process of learning and to enable students to gain some benefit and understanding from the practice. Props are one of Iyengar yoga's gifts to the world. Even those who are adept at yoga can achieve greater heights of learning through the use of props.

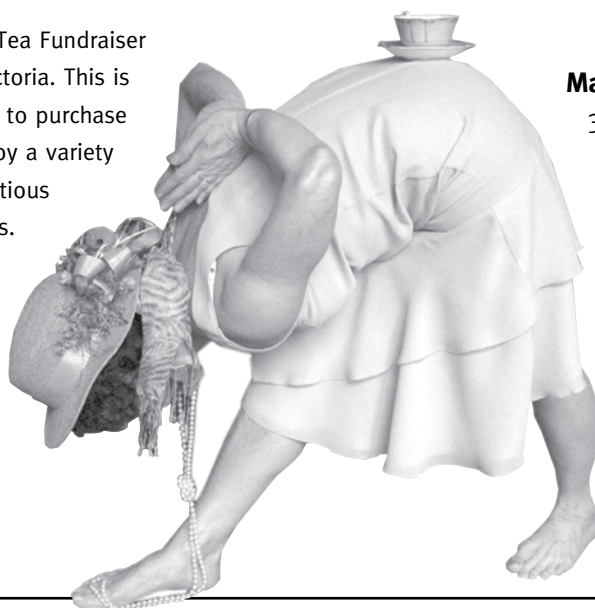
Yoga also has tremendous possibilities for curing or alleviating ailments and disease, and Iyengar yoga has developed therapeutic and medical techniques for helping those suffering from physical, physiological, and psychosomatic problems. In particular, the use of props serves in yoga therapy, and Iyengar yoga has been a leader in these techniques. Indeed, the innovations that have grown out of B.K.S.'s work make him a pioneer in this field. ॐ



## Please Join us for our 4th annual HIGH TEA FUNDRAISER

Welcome to our fourth annual High Tea Fundraiser at the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria. This is THE event where we raise funds to purchase new props for the Centre. Enjoy a variety of delectable teas with scrumptious homemade sweets and savories.

The tea will be followed by a video presentation of Dr. Geeta S. Iyengar teaching therapeutic yoga at the Iyengar Yoga Teachers' Convention held in Portland, Oregon, May, 2010.



**March 25, 2011**

3:00 – 5:15 PM

Arbutus Studio

Cost: \$20,  
free for children

**Feel free to wear  
your favorite hat!**

*Please note: payment of the ticket price does not qualify as a donation. Tax receipts will be issued for donations of \$20.00 or more, to the IYCV Props Fund*



## Greetings and Thank You from Shirley

As many members of the yoga centre are already aware, I had an accident recently and fractured my kneecap. It happened in Montréal where I had flown to act as moderator at an Intermediate level assessment. Most of the candidates would be teaching in French; we had to mark exams written in French and would be required to offer oral feedback in this language. I knew this was going to be a challenge—one I had accepted freely and gladly. It was an incentive to make an extra effort to refine my knowledge of the French language.

As it happened, the real challenge for me arrived just as the assessment was about to begin when I had an accident and fractured my kneecap. This catapulted me into another area of learning which I was not so eager to pursue.

Yoga has two aspects: practice and renunciation. Action comes more easily to me than inaction. Since the accident I have had to surrender my independence and accept help and support from a variety of people. Given no choice, I am finding it is not as bad as I thought it would be!

Something which has helped immeasurably is the community support I received, much of it direct and physical. First in Montréal from the assessment team and the Montréal Iyengar yoga community. Secondly from Air Canada who made the long journey home as comfortable as possible. Once I arrived on the west coast my husband, daughters and son provided more support on many levels. And when the surgery was over and the recuperation process began, the Victoria Iyengar community provided support by covering my classes and offering food, service and well wishes.

One of Mr. Iyengar's wishes has always been for us to work together in fellowship and friendship. I can confidently say that in Victoria and across our country, there is a vibrant, caring, loving community of teachers and students. I am honoured to be part of it, and most grateful for this outpouring of love and concern.

In gratitude to all of you,  
With love and Light,  
Shirley Daventry French

October 29, 2010

*Just knowing about yoga is not going to give relief from sorrows, anxieties and depression. Daily persistent practice alone makes you face the turmoil of life.*

– B.K.S. Iyengar

## Short WORKSHOP

### Winter Solstice Workshop

With Ty Chandler

December 20-21, 2010

6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Fees: \$66 + HST for members,

\$66 + HST for non-members.

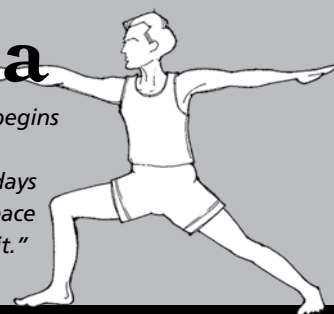
To register, drop in to or phone the  
Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria  
250-386-YOGA (9642)

Refunds will be offered only if your space can be filled  
and are subject to a \$10.00 cancellation fee.

**CANCELLED**

## Sadhana

*"At winter solstice the light begins to lengthen again. Invite the light into your life with five days of morning yoga; a gift of peace for your body, mind and spirit."*



with  
**Corrine Lowen**

**December 19-23, 2010**

**6:30 - 8:00 am daily**

Refunds will be offered only if your space can be filled and are subject to a \$15.00 cancellation fee.

Fees:  
\$98 + HST IYCV members  
\$108 + HST non-members

Registration opens:  
November 1, 2010  
for IYCV members

November 8, 2010  
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)  
[www.iyengaryogacentre.ca](http://www.iyengaryogacentre.ca)

# A Therapeutic Workshop: Stephanie Quirk in Winnipeg

By Ann Kilbertus

Stephanie Quirk worked as a psychiatric nurse and graduated from art school in her native New Zealand before beginning Iyengar yoga in 1987. She made her first trip to Pune in 1991 and, inspired by the Iyengars, returned several times. She eventually moved to Pune, and has spent many years studying daily at RIMYI and assisting in general and therapeutic classes.

In Canada, the second part of a six-part series took place September 30-October 3, in Winnipeg, Manitoba, at Yoga North. Participants came from coast to coast to attend the four day intensive. This is the first time IYAC (the Iyengar Yoga Association of Canada) has sponsored a workshop series, and it has provided a very successful opportunity for teachers to work and study together to deepen our understanding of this vast subject.

We practiced together, observed, learned to make new adjustments on our peers, and listened to Stephanie's instructions based on her years of experience at the institute in Pune.

One note-taker and one photographer volunteered to collect the teachings of each half day, and these will be compiled and disseminated to the group so that the material can be reviewed by participants during the subsequent year.

Part three will take place next year in Ottawa and will be open to those who have attended the previous two sessions.

The opportunity to experience the breadth and depth of Iyengar yoga through Stephanie's workshops adds yet another dimension to our yoga instruction across Canada. For this we are most fortunate; not only for Stephanie's teaching but for those teachers who have made the six year commitment across the country to deepen their work. ॐ



## Workshop and Teacher Training

with Corine Biria

April 22-25



Sandhya Corine Biria began the practice of Iyengar yoga in 1981 with Faeq Biria. She is a close disciple & student of Sri B.K.S. Iyengar. Her numerous journeys to India since 1983 to study closely with her teacher and renowned yoga master have immensely enriched her experience in terms of technique, teaching pedagogy, and therapeutic application.

In France, she teaches regularly at the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Paris, and for the last 15 years she has conducted teacher training courses in France and in Israel.

She shares this art of yoga with her students with strength, vigor and generosity. Her love of yoga, her ethic and her constant concern with clarity and precision make her a respected teacher and excellent educator.

### WORKSHOP

Friday 9:00 am - 12:00 pm  
3:30 pm - 6:00 pm

Saturday 9:00 am - 12:00 pm  
3:30 pm - 6:00 pm

Sunday 9:00 am - 12:00 pm

*Open to Iyengar Yoga students able to hold headstand and shoulderstand for five minutes. Ask your regular teacher if you are wondering about attending.*

### Workshop Fees:

\$330.00 + HST for IYCV members

\$360.00 + HST for non-members

### TEACHER TRAINING

Monday 9:00 am - 12:00 pm  
3:30 pm - 6:00 pm

*Open to certified Iyengar Yoga teachers and teachers in training*

*Times subject to change*

### Teacher Training Fees:

\$130 + HST for IYCV members

\$145.00 + HST for non-members

### Registration opens:

February 21, 2011 for IYCV members

February 28, 2011 for non-members

### To register, drop in or phone the Iyengar Yoga Centre.

202-919 Fort Street, Victoria, BC V8V 3K3  
(250) 386-YOGA (9642)

[www.iyengaryogacentre.ca](http://www.iyengaryogacentre.ca)

[www.facebook.com/iyengaryogacentre](https://www.facebook.com/iyengaryogacentre)

Refunds will be offered only if your space can be filled and are subject to a \$50.00 cancellation fee.

## All memberships expire Dec. 31. 2010 Renew now!



IYENGAR YOGA  
CENTRE OF VICTORIA  
SOCIETY

### 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 \$40.00 + HST, 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.

☐ Receipt required.



## 2010-2011 CALENDAR

### DECEMBER 2010

- 12 Guruji's birthday celebration
- 19-23 Sadhana
- 20-Jan 3 Holiday break

### JANUARY 2011

- 1 New Year's Day practice
- 4 Classes resume
- 8 Teachers' Meeting
- 21-23 Heart of Yoga
- 21-23 Intermediate Junior I Assessment, Vancouver, BC

### FEBRUARY

- 12 Teachers' Meeting
- 17-19 Intermediate Junior I Assessment, Toronto, ON
- 19 Victoria Yoga Centre AGM

### MARCH

- 12 Teachers' Meeting
- 24 High Tea Fundraiser

### APRIL

- 9 Teachers' Meeting
- 22-24 Corine Biria Workshop
- 25 Corine Biria Teacher Training

### MAY

- 27-29 IYAC AGM in Saskatoon, SK

### JUNE

- 3-5 Salt Spring Retreat
- 11 Teachers' Meeting
- 17-19 Introductory I/II Assessment, Montreal, QC

### JULY

- 4-8 Teacher Training Introductory Intensive

