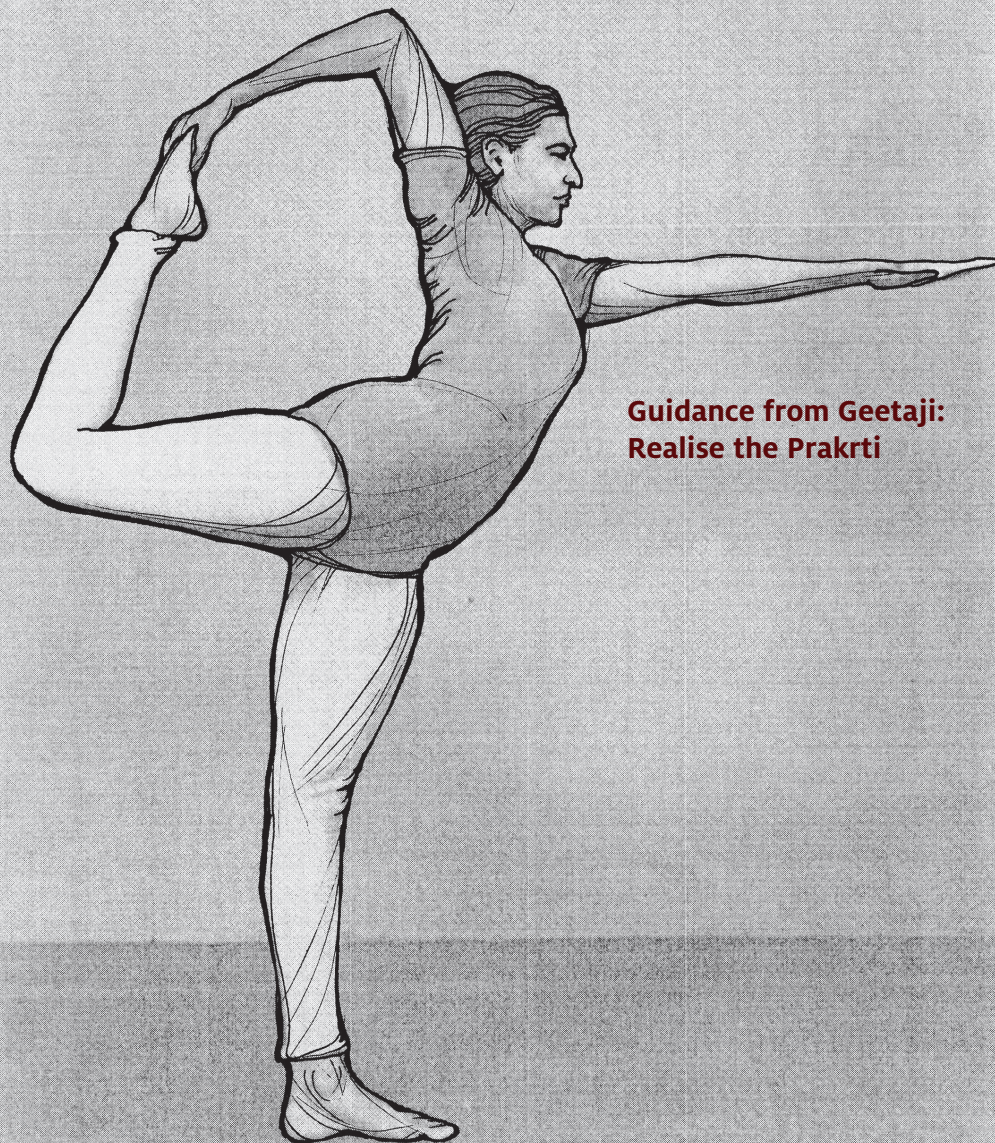




IYENGAR YOGA
CENTRE of VICTORIA



**Guidance from Geetaji:
Realise the Prakrti**

Geeta Iyengar in natarajasana

NEWSLETTER SPRING-SUMMER 2021

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IYENGAR YOGA CENTRE OF VICTORIA NEWSLETTER

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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.

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Screen shot during Jawahar's workshop



Reflections

By Shirley Daventry French

Mind is garbage and in the midst of that garbage is pristine core mind.

– Prashant Iyengar, Pune, December 2003

The above words, were uttered by Prashant Iyengar one evening at the Institute in Pune. To be honest I am not absolutely sure whether this was Prashant's interpretation of Guruji's teaching earlier that day or a direct quote of words spoken by Guruji himself that morning as he concluded an extraordinary week of teaching prior to his 85th birthday. It was December 2003.

From the 1970s onwards, Guruji's approach to yoga attracted students from all over the world. I was going to Pune regularly plus travelling to conferences in the States and Europe as often as I could whenever Guruji was slated to teach. I seized every opportunity and have never regretted a minute.

The course in December 2003 was unique in many ways. Generally notebooks were not allowed in classes except in rare circumstances when someone was specifically selected to be the notetaker. This time we were not only permitted but instructed to bring a notebook and pen into the Institute's main yoga hall. Each day when class ended we were sent away to do our personal practice in our flats or hotel rooms.

Today, as I continue to digest the incredible amount of learning Guruji managed to instill into these classes, the hard cover notebook I used for this purpose is one of my most prized possessions. I have only to pick it up, open at any page and something useful for that moment in time leaps out. At the

heart of Guruji's exposition were the five *vayus* or vital energies and how to access them in *asana*, *pranayama* and life.

An added bonus was that because many of his local students had daytime occupations which prevented them from attending this course, each evening Prashant (who was present throughout the week) went over the thrust of Guruji's teaching that day. Those of us who had been there in the mornings were offered the chance to deepen our understanding, ask questions and fill in some of the gaps in our understanding.

The last evening, full of energy and gratitude for being part of this very special week, we sat and waited for Prashant. He arrived promptly, smiling, and stood there quietly for a while before announcing that he felt like a lame man standing at the foothills of Mount Everest whose task was to act as our guide to the summit! We all laughed gratefully and appreciatively. Prashant did a masterful job, and we savoured every moment: sad that the course was coming to an end, but happy to have been there.

Eighteen years later, I still look upon my notebook from this course as one of my most precious resources. It guides my daily practice and reflection.

During the course Guruji selected a few longtime pupils, most of them Indian, to demonstrate the flow or lack of flow of this vital energy, showing where it was blocked and how to free its flow. Sometimes the energy and the transformation in the student was clear to see and sometimes it was not. It was reminiscent of my first experience of Guruji's teaching when he did his best to show us where energy was flowing and where it was not, first in our own bodies

and then in others. Although I wrote notes soon after class ended and referred to them many times over the years, it was as if they were written in a foreign language. In fact at that time yoga was a foreign language!

As a student it took time and practice to expand my awareness of the flow of this vital energy within my own body: an essential first step in being able to observe this in others. This learning continues to this day.

Guruji never spoke of training teachers. He always spoke of guidance. If you asked about something taught previously you might be told: "I gave you the clue!" Often he would remember where and when (such as "I taught you that last year in London!") and ended with the statement: "but you didn't get it!"

I had my first experience of teaching in front of Guruji when he stayed in my home during a visit to Canada in 1984. It was like an adult experience of *Show and Tell*. One challenge I faced was that since he was staying in my home I had to sharply change roles from hostess to pupil. That day I went ahead leaving Derek to drive Guruji once everything had been set up at the Victoria "Y" for the three simultaneous classes we had organised.

When Guruji arrived I had already begun to teach a large class in the main gymnasium. He entered the room very quietly and stood there listening to my instruction while taking in what was going on. I would not have known he was there were it not for the entourage around him who did not have his skill of becoming invisible whenever he chose to. Becoming aware of this disturbance around him I looked up and paused. "Carry on!" came an instant response.

And so I did! Guruji wasted no time picking up where I was going and in a very short period of time showed me how to line up the students to get the best viewing point, how to scan what was happening, issue general instructions whilst picking out those most in need of adjustment, and how to do this whilst at the same time keeping everyone working. We were almost running from wall to wall, student to student. When he decided to leave there was a collective exhalation from everyone in the room!

Afterwards I accompanied him to other classrooms where local teachers were teaching: the fast pace of learning continued unrelentingly. Like a whirlwind he went through several classrooms, showing, telling, encouraging, and sometimes demanding that teachers refine their previous instructions instead of droning on and on and on. He spoke frequently on the importance of making sure students had some understanding of instructions already given before adding more.

All in all he gave so much to those teachers who were able to open themselves to take advantage of this occasion.

He entered one classroom where around forty students were doing seated forward bends and as they paused strode purposefully over to one male student sitting in *dandasana* and standing behind his back lifted up his t-shirt and announced: "This man has a problem!" On the student's back was a huge circular scar from an old infection restricting the pliability of the skin and limiting his ability to stretch. The teacher of this class along with a few of us had followed Guruji to that spot where we listened and observed as he helped this man release a lot of his holding back. Then he took him into *janu sirsasana* whilst at the same time instructing everyone else in the room. When he felt satisfied he returned to the front of the room, sat on the floor, legs stretched out in front of him alongside the teacher and said: "Well! What are you

going to do next?" Without a pause she answered: "I was thinking of going home!" He laughed heartily and then spent time guiding this teacher and teaching everyone in the room more about this fascinating subject of Yoga.

What a memorable day that was! But what is its relevance for this Spring/Summer 2021 newsletter?

Roger Champagne, our newsletter editor, sent out a series of suggestions around the hot topic of Covid-19 and the unrelenting wily pandemic now over a year old. How has this affected our lives? What have we learned? How has my way of practising changed? How have I coped? He asked us to consider positive as well as negative consequences.

Certainly I am missing contact with close family other than my elder daughter and her husband who live on the same property and are part of our household bubble. I miss the chance to sit around a lunch or dinner table with family and friends and the arguments and counter-arguments which flow freely in such groups.

As a younger sister to a considerably older brother, in my youth most of my early opinions were dismissed as 'rubbish' along with my choice of books. Later on in life, when I started yoga he was ready to dismiss that too telling me he had no time for what he referred to as that "cult of the irrational". Alas he died early a continent away from where I now live and there were few opportunities to debate this issue with him seriously on equal terms.

On one thing though I do agree with him. I feel that much of the presentation of yoga today particularly in social media and promotional material is rubbish (a good olde English word which has been replaced in most of North America by the word "garbage"). Whatever we call it, it has to be disposed of before we can reach our "pristine core mind" which is the main purpose of practising Yoga.

This is particularly sad because there is so much wisdom and common sense

in yogic teachings but it requires regular practice to convert life (whatever its current circumstance) into something worth living.

Certainly I dislike not being able to spontaneously do many things and see people who enrich my life face to face. I do not love the computer although I am forced to use it. But I have no need to Zoom to sustain my practise, although I can see its use as a means of learning and refreshing what to practise.

During this pandemic I have come to value my early morning practices supplemented by reading and reflection throughout the day more than ever. My first response to Roger's suggestions was that I have had a very rich year. Full of reading, reflecting, practising, learning whilst struggling with some personal issues.

Once in a teacher training session with one of my early Iyengar teachers, Ramanand Patel, he spoke of the importance in both practice and teaching of 'ing' words. As you will see my list of what has kept me going last year is full of them. Work in progress!

I have watched very little TV other than the News: BBC World and Canadian Global each day.

Some people say they get too worried or scared by the News, but it concerns me much more not to have some idea of what's going on in the world, what resources I have and where to find them. I also read two daily newspapers and the Economist, a weekly magazine on world affairs.

In addition I am reading a lot of history trying to learn more about my heritage, how it influenced me, and the foreseen and unforeseen consequences it awakened. For instance, the history of Canada I was taught in my youth was almost entirely based on the British perspective. In choir we sang the *The Maple Leaf Forever* in honour of our ally Canada oblivious to the mixed feelings about words like: "In days of yore from Britain's shore Wolfe the conquering hero

came and planted great Britannia's flag on Canada's rich domaine".

One amusing encounter with Guruji in the Library at the Institute in India highlighted how our backgrounds colour our responses. I was sitting at a table reading and Guruji called me over to his desk. Something he was reading had triggered a certain line of thought. As I stood there he looked up and said: "In Yoga today everyone has lost touch with the base!" After a brief pause to give this some thought, I asked if this were true even with Indian pupils. Sadly he continued: "Yes. Yes. Even Indians." Wanting to find out more I enquired: "Why is this Guruji?" It didn't take him long to respond: "It's your fault!" I had no idea how to respond to that and stood there hoping he would qualify this statement, which he did: "The British and Genghis Khan!"

Although I had learned a lot of history of India, again it was mainly British

history slanted towards the Empire's grand purpose and benevolence.

These are just a couple of examples of holes in what I always thought of as a universal education and I sometimes think I am living so long primarily because I need to educate myself with a more balanced less biased perspective. And that is neither a small nor an easy task.

At the same time Guruji's remark about the base of yoga sent me back to read or reread many of the books on yoga in my bookshelves as well as notebooks from studies at Yasodhara ashram and in Pune. I have a rich library right here at home and, of course, I can and do order more books as well as make use of my computer to follow up references.

From my teachers, my practice, reflection and reading I have learned that no experience on the spiritual path no matter how small is ever wasted provided we learn from it. The lack of certain

distractions in the past year has deprived me of some of my favourite people and pastimes, robbed me of a winter vacation in Hawaii and played a leading role in deepening my *sadhana*.

It is only fitting to give Guruji the last words spoken during his 85th birthday celebration: "Practice has to become a perfect weave of action and reflection. As long as there is the clamour of *prakriti* within us there is tumult and the core becomes a recluse." (B.K.S. Iyengar) ॐ

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- News. Go to www.iyengaryogacentre.ca and scroll to the bottom, enter
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Thank you to...

- Our board President, Laine Canivet, who helped write our successful Grant application for the Victoria Foundation, which permitted us to buy new German mats. She and her husband Denis then cut the mats, carried them in batches to and from Scrubby's laundry, set them out to dry, folded, and stored them. Hopefully we will soon be able to use them and the other new props when our health orders permit.
- Wendy Boyer, our intrepid manager who has negotiated with our landlord, the government, and Telus among others, to help keep us afloat.
- Britta Poisson and Wendy Boyer who continually adjust to all manner of scenarios that constantly shift and change as we make our way through the pandemic and producing our Yog-e news bulletins weekly.
- Shirley Daventry French for her words of inspiration.
- Ty Chandler who has helped us set up new technology to broadcast from our studio to the homes of our students across the country and into other places far and wide.
- Ann Kilbertus and Leslie Hogya for bringing Chris Saudek from the USA, Louie Ettling from Vancouver, and Jawahar Bangera from Mumbai, India, to teach from their homes to ours.
- All the teachers and front desk staff for behind the scenes help during these sessions: Bob Maher, Hilary McPhail, Monica Dimofski, Billie Essa, Britta Poisson, Wendy Boyer, Adia Kapoor, Ty Chandler, Gary Wong.
- Bruce Cox for keeping our web site updated and our antiquated building in good shape.

Guidance from Geetaji: Realise the *Prakrti*

Transcription and reflections by Ann Kilbertus
March, 2021

It can often take years to understand an experience or teaching from B.K.S. Iyengar. On my very first visit to Pune in 1992, I was in service as a sample body used to show an unevolved *prasarita padottanasana*. I was adjusted and pulled and spread and photos were taken. Guruji asked Geeta to take the same pose to show the correct actions, and needless to say, I had a lot to learn! At the time, I truly had no idea of what I was supposed to be doing. I trusted the process and at some level knew this experience of being moved and adjusted and expanded would be taking me in a direction of greater awareness and into my blind spots. I think now, almost 30 years later, I have a few glimmers of understanding which keep on surfacing from those few moments of attention in an *asana* class so long ago.

This pandemic time combined with being in this phase of my life has given me the opportunity to delve into notes from classes taken at RIMYI and to listen to some of the audio recordings of classes. It has given me great focus and pleasure to transcribe some of the gems recorded and embedded in the flow of Geetaji's *asana* and *pranayama* classes in Pune. She intuitively merged practicalities and philosophy into the flow of every session. Often this took place so quickly in a live class, my own body and mind could not absorb it all. From taking the time to really listen to the clues she gave in discourse, from the Sanskrit verses which she spontaneously recited, I now have small spaces of time to search various texts for translations, interpretations and meanings. In the discourse which will soon follow, the word *prakrti* is used often.

The philosophy of Yoga is deemed a dualistic philosophy where there is Nature/matter and there is Spirit/soul. One

may choose their own words to describe these mysteries of our existence. In Light on Life Guruji says: "We must take nature seriously as we belong to it and live in it."

Light on Yoga defines *prakrti* as: "Nature, the original source of the material world, consisting of three qualities, *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*." The Sanskrit terminology used here describes three interwoven and inseparable qualities of illumination, activity and inertia. Nature in all her mystery is being brought to our attention whether we like it or not during this global pandemic. As the world has an elemental nature, so too does our body, mind and breath. Watching the qualities of our own Nature, our tendencies, our thoughts – when and how and where they surface is part of the practice of *Ashtanga* (eight limbs) Yoga.

These days, using the internet, I am availing myself of some of the opportunities to work with teachers from RIMYI and from other countries. There are many wonderful learning opportunities on line. At the same time, I have to be aware of where I'm putting my attention and energy to find my own inner sense of balance: Now and Now and Now. These days part of the challenge of my own balancing is to be aware of how much time I am spending in front of a screen. I am aware, that if I allow it to happen, too much virtual time can put me off balance. Is this what I want now? Balancing itself is a continual process. The practice of all aspects of Yoga practice helps me find balance and transform my body and mind in the direction of clearer seeing.

Referring to *parivritta ardha chandrasana* in the middle of an *asana* class in 2011, Geeta said, "You can't just wrongly balance." Further to that, using the body she added: "Question yourself. Why this is happening? What kind of control (do)

you need at the hip region". It is not the points we are given by a teacher "as though point giving is our teaching", but "it is all total work...what happened to your hips, what happened to your buttocks, what happened?" This path of questions using discrimination is all part of the evolution of oneself in the practice of Yoga. It is a living philosophy.

Geetaji's classes were fresh and varied with her philosophical understandings flowing naturally and spontaneously in the rhythm of the classes she taught. She moved from matter to spirit,



Spot many Canadian and local IYCV teachers at the 1992 Canadian Intensive

seamlessly rooted in what she was seeing in front of her...in her presence of mind.

There is much sorrow and suffering in our present world. It has always been there. With the global pandemic and increased societal restrictions, this suffering is harder to hide from or to suppress. The path of Yoga provides a way to stay engaged in it all, as Joseph Campbell succinctly describes with “joyful participation in the sorrows of the world.” In the following discourse of about six minutes from an *asana* class on February 11, 2011, Geetaji brings embodied meaning to Campbell’s words. She has the class sit in *baddha konasana* and then speaks as follows:

“I don’t use the words too much like mind and breath. Still you are not getting the connection of mind with the body as it should be. It’s the first instrument, isn’t it? Understand this. Don’t think that Geeta doesn’t know about the mind and the breath, the *prakrti* or whatever. First, when you are not putting your body in its proper position mind cannot be taught. Because if you have to adjust that body, the mind has to come there. If I am going too much on this side, if I have to come, my mind has to come, and then the breath gets adjusted. I can’t just push myself and then say oh I have gone to the left. It’s just a dead action...it’s a dead action. You understand what I said? Whole mental body if it has to work to come on the left or to go on the right, what I do with my hips and thighs, what outer hips do, what outer thighs do, how much this is touching, how much this is touching? All this is mental involvement which comes because physical body is guiding. Suppose I sit and when I am sitting this thigh is touching here, nicely, and here somewhere I feel no it is not touching well, so how am I going to make that to touch? How I will pound that area? And (then) how my spine gets adjusted. What I do with my shoulder my neck my back? It’s not just this is touching, it’s not touching with ego. It is called involvement. Unless you involve, you cannot just realize the *prakrti*. Self realization is actually not self realization it’s the realization of *prakrti*. Once if you realize the *prakrti*, that means what is not Self, then the Self is realized. Do you understand? Because you don’t realize the *prakrti*, people say...forget your body, forget everything, concentrate on the breath. Breath is what then, is it not the *prakrti*? Tell me. Is the breath something different from the *prakrti*? Already there *prana* exists. You came into the existence because the Cosmic energy vibrated in that manner and that’s why you came into this world. So that you could draw on the energy and you call it breath. Mind is also part of *prakrti*. You have to realise that. That means you have to know where you have to place it, what you have to do, what you have to do with it. Is it coming under control? How can you say you have self realisation when you have no control over anything: senses of perception, organs of action. Can you be self realised? Why it is said that first have a control over senses of perception, have a control over the organs

युक्ताहारविहारस्य
yuktāhāravihārasya
of the moderate in food and diversion

युक्तचेष्टस्य कर्मसु।
yuktaceṣṭasya karmasu
of the disciplined in performance of actions

युक्तस्वप्नवबोधस्य
yuktasvapnāvabohasya
of the balanced in sleep and wakefulness

योगो भवति दुःखहा ॥
yogo bhavati duḥkha-hā
he can mitigate all sorrows by practicing yoga

Bagava Gita 6.17. Winthrop Sargeant (translation)

of action. Why Krisna says *yuktaharaviharasya yuktacestasya karmasu*? Why there should be a complete, [a] correct, a right control over your food, over your movement? Lord (Krisna) has said this, I haven’t said. Why he has to say this? It’s all *prakrti*. Do you understand what I’m talking about? Unless you bring that control you will say, oh, I have no control over the food, I will eat what I want, I will eat whenever I want, even at midnight, I get hungry let me get up and eat and they say oh, I have to have the self realization. How is it possible? When you go on controlling all these things your body, your bones, your muscles your breath, then the self realisation is possible. Along with the *yama* and *niyama* that means all your eating and food habits and all that have to support you. Don’t keep it as something separate. I will eat whatever I want to, but I will do yoga, because my legs can bend in *baddha konasana*, my legs can bend in *virasana* I can stand on my legs I can stand on my shoulders...oh, I am ‘doing’ yoga. OK? Good rest? Now *sirsasana*!”

In this discourse, Geetaji referred to *The Bhagavad Gita* chapter 6, verse 17, in Sanskrit. After tuning my ears to her Sanskrit words, having the time to play and replay the sounds on my computer, then sleuthing out which verse she was referring to, the whole spontaneous discourse is put into a wider perspective with Juan Mascaro’s translation of this verse: “A harmony in eating and resting, in sleeping and keeping awake: a perfection in whatever one does. This is the Yoga that gives peace from all pain.”

May reading and re-reading her words bring you closer to the philosophical underpinnings of this path we are on together. ॐ

Our Teachers Gather: A Pro D Day

By Leslie Hoya

Our teachers gathered online to practice together March 6. We began the time together with readings from several participants. These readings were taken from articles in the winter newsletter see such as the transcript of Geeta's words, article by Ann Kilbertus, and the 1997 interview Shirley French had with Guruji. The third source was the transcript of Birjoo Mehta's course from Ottawa 2018. (Available on the IYAC/ACYI website.)

After the readings, Ann led the group through a quiet practice of their own choosing to calm the mind and body in preparation for a called practice. Following this, Leslie Hoya called a 45-minute practice that Tracy Harvey developed. To finish the day Ty led the group in quiet inversions and *savasana*.

From Brandy Baybutt:

Quote from Shirley's interview with B.K.S. Iyengar.

"Yoga is Yoga. We have to learn not to demarcate an art. Can you tell me when music is physical, when it is spiritual? When painting is physical, when painting becomes spiritual?"

"As I taught in *trikonasana* today: When you do on the right side, the left leg should follow the involution stage, and the right leg is the expressive one. Involution and evolution: where do they meet, how do they meet, so that the intelligence of the soul flows from the bottom to the top and top to the bottom, without any variation in the contact, creating a sensitive contact of the energy with the intelligence and the frontiers of the body."

I chose this part of the writing because it made me think of dancers. From the outside it is easy to think dance is purely physical. I don't think



BIRJOO MEHTA, 2018 GATINEAU, PHOTOS BY BARBARA YOUNG, LYNN BOWSHER

dancers would be able to endure the extreme physical demands of a professional dance career if it was a purely physical act. When Guruji speaks of the involuted back leg of *trikonasana* and the expressive or evolved front leg, he articulates something about my experience with dance. The strongest example of this is working with improvisation. Improvisation works best when you can drop fully into the present moment. This allows for a manifestation of movement to come through the body and express itself to the audience. This mirrors the front and back leg of *trikonasana*, the inward connection (involution) connecting with the outward expression (evolution).

Gary Wong using Birjoo's words as inspiration:

"That sense of evenness, equanimity, poise, is yoga."

Page 4, paragraph 4: "Can you sense every vertebra, every point along the spine. This brings about a sense of composure, the mind becomes still, and you reach a state of thoughtlessness where nothing seems to be disturbing you. In this state, we shall begin with our invocation."

So in that state, he began the class. He then talked about the effect when the mind becomes still and you reach that state.

Page 13, paragraph 4: "You are in the moment between the movements. When that stillness comes, you are in the moment. And what is movement? What is time? Time is the movement of moments. So, you stop experiencing time; then you are in that moment; there is no time; everything stops."

Marilyn Shepherd shared these words from Birjoo Mehta's course:

I chose to read some quotes from Birjoo's workshop as I had attended it in person a few years ago and it was like coming home. Below are a few threads from pages 9-13 of the transcript.

"Stretch! Stretch! Extend! Extend! Why? Why is that repeated?"

"The answer contains the secret of how *asana* have to be performed for making the mind silent. What is the connection with this action and the state of the mind?"

"The mind is a sense as per the traditions of yoga. Where is that sense organ located?"

"The Golgi tendon organ. Heard of it?"
"The Golgi tendon organ is critical for a sense which is called proprioception. The

sixth sense is proprioception, the ability for you to know where your body parts are.”

“These organs are the organs of the mind. “

“If you are alert and conscious about the tendon organs, you will actually be able to experience the mind in a much better manner.”

“Your awareness of the Golgi tendon organs, which are the senses of perception for the mind, can be activated when you are doing a stretch. And when you do that stretch the mind experiences quietness. Are you with me? Right? So now all of you get up?”

So we got up to practice that during which he focused on one area at a time. After that he sums up.

“This is the secret. For you to quiet your mind, you need to activate the organ of the mind, and this action of activating the organ of the mind comes through the tendons. And that is why the stretch is so important.”

Adia Kapoor shared some of Geeta’s words that appeared in the last newsletter:

In this excerpt from the opening of a class with Geeta Iyengar, she guides us into the physical and mental state to begin practice. She describes the positioning of the eyes in *nasagra drishti*.

Yogapedia.com says that “*Nasagra drishti* is a technique used in yoga *asana* practice and meditation to develop concentration and focus. The term comes from the Sanskrit, *nasagra*, meaning “nose tip,” and *drishti*, meaning “gaze.” *Nasagra drishti* is the practice of focusing on the tip of the nose. “She also speaks of *karma* (the path of realization through work and duty) and the *karmendriyas* (organs of action – arms, legs, etc.), and *jnana* (the path of realization through knowledge). Gurujii writes of these paths in the introduction to *Light on Yoga*.

The attention to the positioning of the eyes and the interweaving of yoga

philosophy into the simple act of sitting makes this passage so profound:

Geetaji says: “Your eye position should be such as though your face is going back. And the nose which has got its own protrusion, you have to feel as though nose is separated from your face. When we talk about *nasagra drshti* it’s not just bringing the eyes to the tip of nose. That’s only the direction. But the way of doing is you have to withdraw your face from front to the back of the head which makes the nose to be clear from the face, away from the face. So feel that, the face going back and the nose remaining front.

And then *nasagra drishti* is: Retaining the vision of the eyes backward, inward, you have to look within to reach the tip of the nose. Not to peep out from the eyes forward to look the tip of the nose. Then the flow of energy changes. Look within to reach the tip of the nose. Remain silent, quiet.

My explaining the tip of the nose and the front and back of the torso go a great extent, I dealt with the *karmendriyas*. While explaining the senses of perception again, against this position of *karmendriyas*, I have dealt with *jnanendriyas* where you learn to withdraw.

So now the whole concept is clear in front of you, which you have to apply to find out finally in which position, or which state of the mind you lag. A kind of total feeling has to be understood by you. The words are several. Sentences are many. But your way of experiencing whatever I explained is as though you have brought that whole concept in your adjustment, in your positioning and your mental state. That’s what is expected. Remain silent and quiet.”

De Orrell from Nanaimo: words from Birjoo Mehta, AGM Ottawa 2018.

“The essence of rain is there in whatever touches you, whatever has come into your vessel.”

I am not here to teach. It’s just that, in this very auspicious year, the 100th anniversary of the birth of Gurujii, I’ll be sharing some of the things that I have learned. I cannot dare say that these are the things that he taught me, because he taught a lot. Envision that it’s raining, and if you have a small vessel, how much of the water can you collect? But if you have a larger vessel, with a larger opening, you will be able to collect much more of the rain. So he was like rain, raining upon the vast area, and my capability was based on the vessel that I was, the small vessel. I am a small vessel. So whatever rain I collected, I cannot claim to say that is what has rained; it has rained much, much more.

But my capabilities were such that I could only collect a small portion. So what he taught and what I learned is not the same. What I learned is certainly a function of what he taught, but it was just a very small portion of what he taught. What I learned is a very small portion of what he taught. I dare not say that he taught me this; he taught much more, but my capabilities were such that I could not gather everything.

But yet, do I need to gather everything? The essence of rain is there in whatever touches you, whatever has come into your vessel. That water is no different from other water. And therefore, whatever has touched you, whatever you have learned, and if you have complete confidence in that, then that is the starting point. And from thereon, the teacher is always present. So Gurujii is always there. If Gurujii is a symbol, the essence of learning, then that essence of learning is always there with you. Because in some manner, he has put a seed in you, and if that seed is there it will sprout; it will become a tree. The essence of the tree is already there in the seed. In that sense there is no need to despair; if the seed is there, there is a chance that if you nourish it, it will emerge into a tree.”

Tracy Harvey: To sum up the day: Individual practice is necessary on this path of yoga; however, when we practice together there is a shared energy that brings a different quality to the experience. Many in the world-wide Iyengar Yoga community have embraced this alternative format of connecting through Zoom – a format which I think can continue to be a great complement to studying, learning and practising even when we can gather together again safely. So on March 6, instead of crumpling my stiff body into a gas guzzling motor vehicle and driving back and forth over the Malahat, I merely stepped into my practice space. There I was joined by my fellow colleagues and guided by the familiar voices of Ann, Leslie and Ty. After the practice, I was left with a feeling of joy and connectedness to something greater than myself and grateful for the practice and this community. ॐ



Intensive for Certified Teachers

August 9-13, 2021

Take the opportunity to work online with two senior Canadian teachers, Ann Kilbertus and Louie Ettling.

This course is designed for teachers seeking to refine their skills at junior and senior intermediate levels.

Daily schedule is online
12:30 pm to 3:00 pm PST.

COST: \$199 +GST

IYCV Professional Development Day Practice

Self-selected calming poses

Uttanasana

Adho mukha svanasana

Uttanasana

Adho mukha vrksasana

Tadasana

Utthita trikonasana

Utthita parsvakonasana

Ardha chandrasana

Utthita hasta padangusthasana

Utthita parsva hasta padangusthasana II

Virabhadrasana I to III

Uttanasana

Parivrtta trikonasana

Adho mukha svanasana

Utkatasana – malasana – uttanasana 3x

Malasana II

Prasarita padottonasana

Tittibhasana

Supta swastikasana

Dandasana

Bharadvajasana I

Bharadvajasana II

Ardha matsyendrasana

Upavistha konasana

Dwi pada viparita dandasana

Urdhva dhanurasana

Parvatasana in virasana

Gomukhasana

Upavista konasana

Parsva upavista konasana

Dandasana

Janu sirasana

Paschimottanasana

Urdhva hastasana in Ssupta tadasana

Inversions: self-selected

Savasana



The Seventh Annual International Day of Yoga

Sunday, June 20, 2021

10 am - 12 pm

Are you level 2-4?

Join Ann Kilbertus online to celebrate the International Day of Yoga and the Summer Solstice with your community.

Cost: Pay what you want

Pro D Day 2021: Introductory Words to Teachers

By Shirley Daventry French

Greetings from rural Metchosin which, during this pandemic is an excellent place to ruminate. Welcome to the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria. As my favourite BBC news announcer says nightly; glad to have you here!

As I write this I do not know if I shall be joining you. There are other factors these days which make life even less predictable than it is for the rest of you in this pandemic.

Here are some thoughts on personal and professional development triggered by the format planned by some of our centre's teachers.

Body is a frame. We are not working the frame; we are working the contents which are hidden inside that frame! (B.K.S. Iyengar during the 1995 interview)

Reading the notice for today's meeting, I wondered if anyone would choose arm/elbow balances, jumpings or some very active sequences to calm themselves. That could be just what your higher self requires or the worst possible choice you could make, and that is for you to discover.

In the 1995 interview Guruji addresses the difference between vibrancy and illumination. As was his custom he used the body/mind of the questioner (me) to make his point that the intelligence needs to be trained to move with the body—not before or after but whilst taking the pose, whilst holding the pose and whilst coming out of the pose!

When this is accomplished your yoga becomes spiritual practice. The body becomes a spiritual tool. *Asanas* become prayers.

The discipline of Yoga involves training body, mind and self to function together not just now and then, not just during formal practice time, but *all of*

the time! It is a lifelong quest or possibly the quest of many lifetimes. We are such masters of self-distraction.

All contact with Guruji whether in a formal class setting, in his library at the Institute where this interview took place, during travels by bus, train or air, sitting around a table breaking bread or during a stroll down to the Pacific Ocean, time with Guruji became a spiritual pilgrimage. This was his life. This was his work. This is his legacy.

One of my favourite definitions of God is a statement from Viktor Frankl, the holocaust survivor and noted philosopher: *God is the partner of my most intimate soliloquies!* – When mind and body move in harmony, your yoga practice is your soliloquy with the Divine or God or whatever name works for when you are in touch with your innermost self.

If you didn't get around to reading the transcript of this 1995 interview then I recommend you do. If you have read it, read it again, reflect on Guruji's take on *asana* as prayer and devotion and be grateful. The vicissitudes of life such as living through this pandemic become opportunities to learn, grow, stabilise and use your body, mind and intelligence as tools for knowing your true self.

During this pandemic, neither the classes you are missing nor the Zoom classes many of you have embraced can accomplish this task for you. The essential element here is a personal practice—not directed or led by another but allowing your own body/mind intelligence to emerge and mature into a spiritual tool.

I was recently asked to review a new book by Australian student, Julia Pedersen, *Guruji B.K.S. Iyengar and his Institute in the '70s*. It contains many beautiful black and white photos

of classes with Guruji. For me it was evocative of my early visits. Hopefully, for today's students it will provide a glimpse of the intensity, hard work, discipline and great joy of being taught by a genius in the world of yoga.

Some students took the option of leaving his classes. Those who stayed (and especially those who returned for additional visits) were shown a path of evolution and involution: (to paraphrase Churchill's wartime words) a path of blood, sweat and tears leading to liberation.

As students of Iyengar Yoga, our duty is to follow Guruji's footsteps on the path of Patanjali towards the Light. As teachers of this method it is our duty to offer guidance to our students to make their own journey.

Those of us who returned to Pune very quickly learned to practise what had been taught to us on our previous visit. Guruji would not waste time praising you for having done this but would take this new opportunity to teach what it was you needed now, to build on what you had already learned. Time alone with yourself on your mat practising is one of life's most precious gifts.

Thanks to Guruji we are indeed blessed to have such a gift. ॐ

Link to interview: *A Path to Evolution and Involution*,
<https://iyengaryogacentre.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Yoga-News-Winter-Spring-2021-final.pdf>

Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria 2000 Annual General Meeting

IYCV President's Report

To prepare for this report I reviewed last year's President's report. At that time, I was excited to report a couple of things:

First, we had received a \$15,000 grant from the Victoria Foundation to purchase new bolsters and mats and secondly, we had hosted a brainstorming session where over 70 ideas were generated. I talked about the time and effort needed to implement only one of the ideas. And I exclaimed that we had still 69 more of those ideas remaining to be implemented.

This year's report spans October 2019 to the end of September 2020. Almost half of the year was before the pandemic and of course the second half was during the pandemic. Tongue in cheek, I must report that not one of those outstanding 69 ideas had anything to do with forcing everyone to stay home and take our classes via Zoom.

We started off the year busily spending the grant from the Victoria Foundation. We hired a small firm in Hamilton, Ontario, to custom make beautiful new bolsters for us. We ordered new mats, belts and blankets. As the new props arrived they were processed and put to use. But when the pandemic hit, all that stopped in its tracks. In fact, we still have two rolls of mats that need to be cut into proper lengths.

Luckily, mid-year, we were still under budget on our grant spending. Public health orders forced us to close our doors for a few months which meant we needed to convert our class delivery to an online mode. Using that unspent grant money, with approval from the Victoria Foundation, we purchased the equipment and technology needed to implement a whole new business model. In the early summer when we were permitted to again open the studio for in-studio classes, we implemented a hybrid model with some in-studio and some online classes. It is likely this hybrid model will be the way we operate for the foreseeable future.

Envisioning and implementing each of these new business models took a great deal of time and effort, especially with the complications caused by the need for physical distancing. If it were not for the vision shown by Wendy Boyer along with her unflagging dedication and energy plus the steadfast help of Britta Poisson, along with several staff and teachers, we would not be in the positive position we find ourselves today.

We have received and are truly grateful for substantial financial gifts, donations and grants from almost all of our teachers and students, all levels of government, the Victoria Foundation and the All One Fund organization. We feel that we are in a

position to weather another year of uncertainty and we sincerely appreciate everyone who has helped us.

Thank you to all Board members, teachers, staff, students, volunteers, donors, supporters, and especially Wendy Boyer for your energy, dedication and donations to our yoga centre.

It is an honour and a pleasure to serve on this enthusiastic board.

Namasté,
Laine Canivet, President

IYAC General Manager's Report

Hard to know how wrap-up a year that started normally, then by March, threatened humankind with a virus that sent everyone home for months. The notable hurdle in 2020 is that the Centre survived 10 months of a worldwide pandemic!

I'm grateful for a core team who supported Britta and I through the constant changes and tough decisions of 2020, including a quick transition to virtual classes in May. Thanks to Shirley Daventry French, Leslie Hogya, Ann Kilbertus, Ty Chandler, Adia Kapoor, Laine Canivet and Theron Morgan. A special thanks to Britta Poisson whose unfailing dedication, humour and hard work bring joy to each day. And thanks to Theron Morgan, and many teachers, who volunteered their contract fees to the Centre last year. Monica Dimofski and Billie Essa joined reception in 2020 and helped keep the Centre going during an extraordinary year. Kudos to Bruce Cox, Johanna Godliman and Jim Bratvold for their constancy and support, always serving our beloved Centre in countless ways.

Special thanks to the board for supporting the Centre and meeting virtually in 2020. Huge thanks to our president, Laine, whose consummate leadership was a beacon in a most challenging year. The full board was Carole Miller, Ann Kilbertus, Annie Kitchen, Bev Kallstrom, Jim Bratvold, Melissa Hadley, Roger Champagne, and Laine Canivet. I salute you all!

In March, public health closed yoga studios and gyms indefinitely in BC. For the first time ever we moved classes to the virtual world last May. In many ways, the Centre came into its' own during the COVID restrictions. Events, classes and our two workshops, with Chris Saudek and Jawahar, had to be offered online. To our delight the Centre often reached many more students than we would have done in a normal year face to face in the studio. We honour our beloved teachers who taught online, and in-studio when it was safe to do so, in 2020.

Over 90 people attended B.K.S. Iyengar's virtual birthday practice on December 14th. Thank you to Ann for teaching a beautiful class honouring Guriji with stories from Shirley, Leslie, Sheri Berkowitz, Carole Miller and Marlene Miller. Thank you to Ty for teaching the solstice event to 40 people online, and also for teaching 74 students on New Year's Day in a dynamic timed practice. In August, the stimulating Teacher Intensive with Ann and Louie Ettling was offered online reaching many teachers from coast to coast! Thanks to Lauren Cox and Ty for teaching the Student Intensive both virtually and in-studio in 2020. Kudos to Ty who supported the Centre's transition to virtual classes in 2020.

In consultation with Island Health in May, I developed protocols that allowed us to re-open the big studio in June. Big changes were required to ensure in-studio safety for students and staff. We had to reduce the number of classes offered to allow for the new cleaning protocols. In-studio classes were limited to 15 students spaced six feet apart. Students were screened before entering the Centre and were asked to bring their own props for the first time ever. WorkSafe signage was posted everywhere and in compliance with Island Health we started phone-in registration only, to conform to a contactless office.

In 2020 Wendy and Britta emailed weekly bulletins to our 900 supporters across the country, with contributions from Shirley, Leslie, Ann and our students. Many people emailed and phoned to say our weekly Dear Student bulletins were a yoga lifeline in difficult times.

Thank you to our newsletter editor Roger Champagne, and to Shirley Daventry French, and all contributors, for producing some of our finest newsletters ever in 2020. The three newsletters are posted on the Centre's website. Kudos to Bruce Cox for maintaining our archaic website – we look forward to better days when we can afford a new site. Thank

you to Soo Ham who posted to Instagram and Ty who posted to Facebook.

Just in the nick of time before the March lockdown, we ran the Spring Tea Fundraiser that raised approximately \$9000. Special thanks to Annie Kitchen for coordinating the tea and auction and to Robin Cantor for performing the teacup pose. Kudos to Bev Kallstrom for managing the big silent auction with more items than ever before! Thank you to Joy Illington for coordinating the birthday celebrations for B.K.S. Iyengar over the years. And thank you to Linda Ellen Bosela for managing the Thrifty's Smile card fundraiser.

Kudos to Adia Kapoor for managing the programming document. Thanks to Hilary McPhail who handles membership registration. The Centre had 267 members in 2020, of whom 39 were life members, 11 were international members, and 15 resided outside of BC but within Canada. Thanks to Bob Maher who worked at reception in early 2020.

In 2020, our classes were necessarily reduced because of the pandemic. The feedback we received from students and teachers across the country is that the Centre provided continuity within our method and a safe harbour, often virtually, during this cataclysmic time.

2021, unfolding under the shadow of the virus, demands that we continue evolving and adopting new ways of running our Centre as we did in 2020 when the pandemic struck last March. Looking ahead, we have this year's surplus plus the promise of federal rent and salary subsidies, donations of support from our generous landlords and the All One Kind Trust, class revenues and member donations – all of which I believe will sustain us financially for 2021.

Respectfully submitted,
Wendy Boyer, General Manager

Scholarship Available

Certified Teacher Intensive,
deadline July 23, 2021

Student Intensive,
deadline August 13, 2021

Application forms are available for download from our website under Workshops & Events, Scholarships page.

Email completed forms to iyoga@telus.net



Sunday Sadhana

Are you level 2-4?

Join Ty Chandler on May 30, at 10 am
or join Ann Kilbertus on June 20 at 10 am

COST: Pay what you want

IYAC Treasurer's Report

Year Ending October 31, 2020

Our year end financial statements have been prepared by the firm of Stirling Stanford and were signed off by the IYCV president, Laine Canivet and treasurer, Jim Bratvold on January 23, 2021.

Our annual budget is based on the actual revenue and expenditures of the previous fiscal year and projected changes, with a goal to contain expenses and maintain our revenue through student enrolment in classes, workshops, merchandise sales and donations.

This year we ended with a surplus of \$68,691.00. This surplus is very much needed to help us through the next fiscal year because the pandemic will continue to negatively affect us until the end of the year in that for the first time ever we are anticipating a substantial negative balance. We anticipate government grants for rent and wages to be available for only half of the coming year.

A number of factors in both the revenue and expense areas contributed to our surplus. They are:

1. We received a donation of \$25,000 from "All One Fund".
2. We received a grant of approximately \$14,000 from the Victoria Foundation.
3. Our members and students contributed generously to the Annual Appeal and by donating class fees after the cancellation of all classes as per Public Health orders.
4. There has been a positive response to the classes offered online and we hope this will continue and increase as we adapt to this way of doing yoga.
5. We received approximately \$80,000 in federal subsidies for rent and wages.
6. The lower numbers of classes offered meant a reduction in the overall class costs. Unfortunately, this meant that our teachers were receiving less.

REVENUE

Total revenue for 2020 was \$325,133.00 including gains on investments and foreign exchange. The majority of the revenue is from yoga classes followed by workshops, annual appeal, merchandise and memberships as detailed in the statements. Although half of the year was before the pandemic began, classes and workshops experienced a significant drop (25%) from last year. A comparison to previous year's revenue follows:

2020 - \$325,133
2019 - \$435,967
2018 - \$406,980
2017 - \$407,631
2016 - \$407,111
2015 - \$377,218
2014 - \$391,446
2013 - \$371,324

EXPENSES

Total expenses for 2020 were \$299,630. Our bottom line, as detailed in the statements, includes wages and benefits which were lower due to the reduction in the number of classes after the pandemic began. The reduction in rental costs reflects the subsidy we received from the Federal government. A comparison to previous years follows:

2020 - \$299,630
2019 - \$416,990
2018 - \$418,508
2017 - \$417,780
2016 - \$407,901
2015 - \$378,689
2014 - \$375,706
2013 - \$372,278

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

The Statement of Financial Position documents our assets and liabilities as of October 31, 2020. At year end our short term funds invested in GIC's were \$101,078. Our Marketable Securities account is readily available if required.

The Iyengar Yoga Centre is being carefully managed and efforts are being made to curtail costs and increase fundraising and donations to ensure the financial health of our centre remains as strong as possible.

I must acknowledge Wendy Boyer, our General Manager, our staff and volunteers, (especially Theron Morgan, our book keeper) for all their efforts to adapt to the new business model. Also a big thank you to our teachers who had to reinvent themselves in the online world.

Finally, thank you to this great community of people – our teachers for their inspiration, work, and contributions and to our members and students who support our centre.

Respectfully submitted,
Jim Bratvold, Treasurer

IYCV Slate Submitted for 2021 Board Membership

Wendy Boyer manages the Centre and also teaches.

Jim Bratvold enjoys working with people and being involved with special projects. He brings many years of experience on union executives and has been attending classes regularly at the Centre since 2015.

Laine Canivet enjoys volunteering for various projects and events at the Centre. She has been practicing yoga at the Centre since 2001 and devotes more time to yoga now that she has retired from managing large computer projects for the BC Government. She loves to travel, take photographs and create fibre art.

Roger Champagne enjoys communications and working with people. He has been (and currently is) the editor for the Centre's newsletter since 2009, has been a member since 2007, and has been practicing yoga since 1997. He enjoys painting and making pottery.

Bev Kallstrom enjoys membership in many community organizations including the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria Society and the Iyengar Association of Canada. Bev served on the Board of the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria Society last year as secretary and coordinated the Silent Auction. Bev is a long-time resident of Victoria and other interests include the arts, hiking, gardening, nature, history and travel.

Ann Kilbertus began her studies and later teaching in the Iyengar tradition of Yoga in the 1980s. Shirley Daventry French sowed the seed for Ann's journey into teaching with a simple question after a class many years ago ("Ann, have you

ever thought of becoming a teacher?"). The seed gradually sprouted, and Ann made her first journey to Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute Pune, India in 1992, and returned every few years to study with the Iyengar family until 2019. She has served on the IYCV Board for many years and is a member of the local PD and Program committees. Ann has served in various roles for Canada's national association IYAC/ACYI since its inception and taught a for-credit Yoga course at the University of Victoria for ten years. She continues to learn about Yoga in its fullest sense through these and many other connections.

Annie Kitchen has been practising yoga at the IYCV since 2005. She has retired from a career in risk management in health care and enjoys the time she can now devote to yoga. She has been building her home practice and props, which she finds particularly helpful during these pandemic times! She coordinates the Spring Tea/Silent Auction annual fundraiser and enjoys many other volunteer activities in the community. Her other interests and passions include environmental issues, gardening, live music, and her two wonderful granddaughters!

Carole Miller has been a student of Yoga for fifty years, having been a founding member of the Victoria Yoga Centre. She serves on the Board as Vice President and is presently on the Scholarship Committee. Carole studied with Mr. Iyengar in India at the first Canadian Intensive as well as in North America. Now retired from the University of Victoria she developed and taught Yoga as an academic course for the School of Exercise Science and Physical and Health Education for almost twenty years. ॐ



2021 YCV Board: from top, left to right: Laine Canivet, Ann Kilbertus, Bev Kallstrom, Carole Miller, Jim Bratvold, Roger Champagne, Wendy Boyer, Annie Kitchen

Prashant Iyengar as Motivator

By Leslie Hogya

One of the ways to find motivation in these times, is in the myriad of opportunities to study with teachers around the world. In February, I took a week-long course with Prashant Iyengar, Guruji's son. It was great to be 'with him' in the Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga institute. He was assisted by Abhijata, who often did some demonstrations to illustrate his many and varied ideas. Here are some of the points he made during the third day of the course. These are not direct quotes, but it come from his words.

Study how much posture works on the breath.

Study how the body works on breath and breathing. We are told to open the sternum. However, if we open more and more and more, we can become intolerant, arrogant. After a practice, we should become more sublime, composed. We can puff ourselves up or become magnanimous, with a godly mind.

Asanas don't just give normalcy. Asanas are not the end. (Poses we did during the class with him that day are highlighted in bold below.)

Adho mukha svanasana

Use breath, for formal study. Develop an IQ in *asana*. The mind works on the body through observation and synthesis. If we culture the mind, the body benefits. If we culture the breath, the body benefits.

Supta virasana

While in the pose, study to understand the breath. There is involuntary breath, voluntary breath, and hyper normal breath.

Forward virasana

Virasana

Watch the breath, and observe physiological changes.

In rope 1 and 2

The rope work helps to open the chest. Do a sharper inhalation; notice what is the benefit? Then do slower inhalation; what is the benefit?

Study in different rope movements how does the breath change?

In rope *sirsasana* the pelvic floor becomes a breath organ.

Study the unique qualities in different positions, learn from within.

Trikonasana

Study the breath content of your body, what can we improve?

Parivrtta trikonasana

On same side, how does the breath change?

He showed Abhijata in a poor *trikonasana*, then she improved

the pose. The body doesn't necessarily come with you. The journey is from you to you. Physical distance is nil, but it takes a long time; it is a snail's pace.

Asanas give rich repertoire to explore the breath. In *trikonsasana* we connect from foot to knee, foot to chest, foot to shin.

Sirsasana

This is a pose where one attends to the shoulders. We develop a sense of responsibility. Our brain is carried by the shoulders. The brain is unpredictable, crafty. The shoulders must be responsible. The expression is "shoulder your responsibility." We don't 'leg' our responsibility. We can attend to this idea in *sirsasana*, as we must lift the shoulders to do the pose.

Sirsasana also works on memory. There is increased blood supply to head. We can't be conscientious without memory.

The relationship has to be firm – not fragile, between all body parts. We are not single celled. We are a huge society; each cell is an embodiment.

Sarvangasana

It's a breath conditioner, an exhalation pose where we exhale acidity of mind. (this is not known in science). When there is intolerance, this anger is acidity of the mind. *Sarvangasana* reduces acidity.

Serenity is an alkaline solution for mind.

Halasana

Put the arms in different positions for different effects on the breath, and mind; each position modifies the body's chemical process.

There is anger potential in all of us. Yoga doesn't work one's anger. It works on the potential one has for anger. The breath can help us overcome anger. We can't change other people. We can only work through yoga on the anger potential in ourselves.

From these words of Prashant's, there is much to reflect on in my practice. As you see there are not specific instructions of how to turn the leg, or bend a knee, it is about self-reflection. There is no end to the exploration that can be studied through these myriad cells that make up my mind, my breath, my body. ॐ

Yoga Makes One the Master of Circumstances

By B.K.S. Iyengar

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Yoga is an infinite art as are all other arts. Words are finite. It is very hard to convey the infinite greatness of the art of yoga through finite words in the limited time of a few minutes.

When God created man, He created also the qualities of *sattva rajas* and *tamas*. Man, caught in the web of these *guna* became a prey to the polarities of pleasure and pain, good and evil, love and hatred, the permanent and the transient. In seeking unalloyed bliss, he found our yoga and God. He defined God as a generating force, organising force and destroying force and yoga became the instrument to reach Him.

Yoga is one but it is called by such various names as *raja yoga*, *hatha yoga*, *laya yoga*, *jnana yoga*, *bhakti yoga*, *karma yoga*, *mantra yoga*, *taraka yoga*, *kundalini yoga*, *Sakti-pat yoga* and so on.

I am concerned with yoga. Though Patanjali nowhere mentions that he is dealing with *raja yoga* modern commentators labelled it as *raja yoga* as it speaks of stilling the thoughts and branded *hatha yoga* as physical yoga. Both *raja yoga* and *hatha yoga* are inseparable. United they lead towards *moksa* since they help to experience the state of liberation or aloneness.

Nobody knows when and where the body ends and the mind begins and when and where the mind ends and the self begins.

Yoga is a psycho-physiological and spiritual subject. physiological and psycho-spiritual subject. Nobody knows when and where the body ends and the mind begins and when and where the mind ends and the self begins. The sages divided our body into gross, subtle and causal. *Hatha yoga* starts from the body and ends with the soul whereas *raja yoga* starts from the mind, climbs down to the body and again lifts one towards the soul. Hence for me both are the same, being a psycho-spiritual subject.



B.K.S. Iyengar demonstrates what is possible in any difficult circumstance. (on board the "Raincoast")

Yoga is mainly a spiritual subject, but its by-product of health has assumed a major role and has almost come to the level of a therapy. Due to stress, strain and speed, its utility to conquer these three has gained momentum.

Health is a conscious state of freedom from all shackles of suffering such as one experiences in deep sleep. Yoga works not only on the muscles, but also on the organs and the systems of the body along with mind and intelligence.

The body is like fallow land – uncultivated. Like a farmer who ploughs the land, removes the weeds, waters it sows the best of seeds, tends the crops to get the best of the harvest, man ploughs the body with yogic practices. He removes the toxins and impurities accumulated due to wrong thinking, wrong behaviour and food; he irrigates bio-plasma or bio-energy, which is called *pranic* energy in yoga, and cultivates right logic and reasoning to free the mind from the pastures of worldly desires by sowing the seed of *AUM* prayer, tending the mind as a crop from which to harvest

peace and harmony. Thus, he learns to live in peace within himself and with his neighbours and becomes a master of his circumstances. ॐ

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FROM PUNE SERVICE WHEEL, VOL. 45, NO. 18-211.81. TALK GIVEN ON 12TH OCTOBER, ROTARY CLUB

Our Time on Zoom

By Heather Haxo Phillips

EXCERPTED FROM AN ARTICLE REPRINTED FROM YOGA SAMACHAR E-NEWS FEBRUARY 2021

I love teaching on Zoom. I really do. That might surprise you—it surprises even me! Teaching online has been a wonderful experience, and I hope to have it as one of my teaching mediums for the rest of my life.

The day we started on Zoom, I felt like a blast of fresh air had hit me. I gulped it with such excitement. It was the *prana* of possibility, of opportunity! I had long felt constricted by our small one-room studio. Our faculty had so much more to offer. So, we immediately started many new programs we had been dreaming of: *pranayama* classes three days a week, social justice workshops and a study group, a meditation class, yoga for healing classes, chanting classes, a private lesson program, and an expanded healthy aging program. Over the last nine months we have experimented with a variety of formats, including public classes, workshops, short immersions, long study programs, and an extensive studentship and teacher education program. Each format has unique opportunities for the students to access and strengthen their practice.

Zoom is HOME

Students have a completely new relationship with their own homes—their body as home, and the physical space around them they call home. Over the last nine months I have seen students transform in so many ways. They have upgraded their spaces, cleaning and decluttering for a more welcome abode. Many have even moved to new homes so they could have a dedicated room for practice! This has had a tremendously positive impact on their quality of life. It is as if decluttering their spaces has helped students declutter their minds and their approach to life. And, I love how practice at home includes all the little creatures, whether they be human babies or literal cuddle bunnies. It is so much fun to celebrate the small things that have a big impact on a student's personal life at home—greeting new kittens, christening a new prop, welcoming the first hearth fire of the season.

Zoom is ACCESSIBLE

Students have taken me, and their yoga, with them wherever they go—on a boat, in a campground, or to the grandparent's house for the holidays. I love it. Students who may not feel comfortable in a regular studio do show up to a Zoom class. They have agency over their own experience, to keep the camera on or off, to ask questions or not. This is so important.

Zoom is INTIMATE

For those who want to take advantage of it, students share much more about themselves in a private “chat” than they ever would tell me in person. This has given me a deeper opportunity to be of service, to rise to the occasion for them and for myself. This sense of intimacy has shown them just how much yoga can truly support them through tough times. Students are amazed to hear of the different approaches we have for the physical ailments and emotional challenges all of us go through as human beings. Yes, yoga can help your jaw pain. It can help you get pregnant. It can help you grieve the loss of a child or a spouse, or both. And when you do these practices, you feel so much better, you find the courage and the hope inside to continue on. This gift of *asana* and *pranayama* B.K.S. Iyengar gave to all of us—we always had it, but Zoom has helped us access it in wider and deeper ways.

Zoom is SPACE

Each student in their own space allows me to teach many things I could not do in-studio. I now have as much wall space as I want at any time. And I have been using it! Remember those floor standing poses that Guruji first developed in 1938? Well, now we are all practicing them! I am so appreciative that Zoom has given us more time for actually doing *asana*. We don't have to spend time figuring out the prop situation or negotiating space at the rope wall. This has led to tremendous creativity for me as a teacher and an incredible sense of freedom for the students.

Zoom is CONNECTION

Zoom has been a huge boon in both expanding our community and keeping it together. Our Adeline Yoga community is so close knit, and yet over the years people have had to move away. We have missed these students terribly, hoping to hear their bad puns and great questions again. Now many of us are back together. In any given class, we may span 12 time zones, but the jokes remain the same.

At the same time, our love for the practice is now accessible to so many more people. I also appreciate how zoom has allowed us to support students in places in the world where Iyengar Yoga just is not available. Adeline Yoga has a lot of new students from rural communities in America and places around the world, such as the Middle East and North Africa.

Zoom is EXPERIMENTATION

Obviously, teaching online is not for everyone. You cannot walk around the person. You cannot hand them just the right prop or give an illuminating adjustment. It definitely takes experimentation with Zoom to make the use of all of its capabilities. However, there is so much you can do with Zoom chats, breakout rooms, viewing angles, spotlighting, pinning, and recordings. The capabilities are there for you when, and if, you want to investigate them.

Our students were excited and supportive of our experimentation. It has been a lot of fun, and deeply gratifying for the teachers and the students. We are no longer constrained by time and place. We are now unlimited in possibility—just like the practice itself. We really have Guruji to thank for helping us to feel the joy of spaciousness in our body and to

inspire us to strive toward a similar expansive, open-minded approach in our teaching.

I am eager to see my students in person again—to hear their chanting, to share their birthday cake and hand them a strap. And, at the same time, I am deeply grateful for all that Zoom has given us and will give in the years to come. ॐ

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Guruji on his books

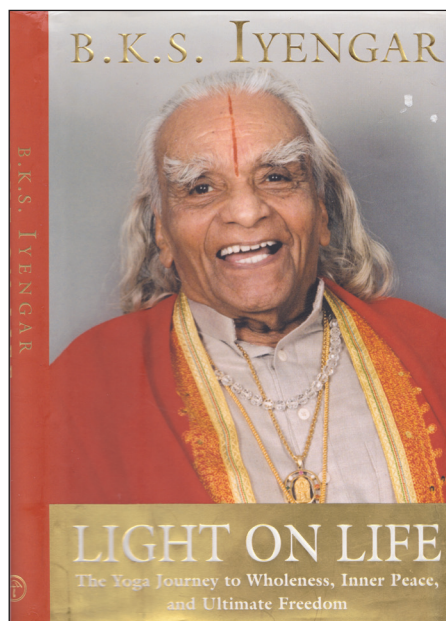
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EDITED TRANSCRIPT OF AN INTERVIEW BY JULIE ADLER

One has to know that I was not born with the gifts of yogic qualities. I had to sweat and struggle to know each and everything of yoga. So naturally when I finished the book *Light on Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, I realized that a man who had known nothing on yoga or philosophy could treat the subject well. So that is the joy which I felt within me: I had no doubt that it was a great work from an ordinary student. Not an academic, but a student who practiced without devoting his time to somebody's interpretations of somebody's readings. Without dependence on anyone, it is a pure, original book

As you go on practicing, new things do crop up, which made me write the other books, including *Light on Life*. But definitely the *Yoga Sutras* are the foundation for these and any future thoughts.

I have brought all the quantities and qualities of nature into *Light*; the properties of nature and the qualities.

When I started yoga, I started only for health. That was the only background I had. And then I learned how the five elements of the body – the breath, breath system, nervous system, psychological system, somatic system – how these



all function, and how they have to be harmonized in the practice of *asanas*. So that is the new light which I got, which I present in *Light on Life*, which I elaborate for ordinary people to grasp.

In *Light on Life*, I am connecting all my practice and way of living, I have brought it in depth. For example [consider what some people said at first], “Mr. Iyengar is just a physical yogi.” Naturally I started with the element of earth, the foundation, *annamaya*: the body should be firm. So by now I’ve gone ahead... I don’t think others have reached this level. So it’s easy to criticize, it’s easy to attack. But I have presented depth of each *asana* ... I don’t think those who attack me know about it.

I started yoga for physical well-being, and the first work which came was *Light on Yoga*. Naturally I had to deal with the somatic system of the body, one of the elements of nature. Then I wrote *Light on Pranayama*, on the vital body. Then *The Tree of Yoga*, where I write about the emotional upheavals of human beings, and how difficult it is to maintain the practice with these upheavals... So I went from the physical body to the vital body, from the vital body to the breath. Then from breath I came to mind—in *The Tree of Yoga* and from mind to intellectual wisdom, in *The*

Yoga Sutras of Patanjali. Now the latest volumes of *Astadala Yogamala* carry a great deal more information, because there I come with my total views... And in *Light On Life*, within the restrictions [of writing for the general public]—to write a book within such and such guidelines, not more than so many words – we have to present the gamut of the practices and the experiences.

Things are presented in depth in *Astadala Yogamala*, as it is for all my students. Challenges come in your practice; students have so many questions. So I thought, if I bring them a book with all the views of the people, then if they go on reading, probably they will gain confidence in expression—their faith, through their own experiences, what they desire. There is a fear complex in people about answering such questions. I've tried my best to see that everyone who practices, has that capacity to understand, to stand up to challenges. Today nobody wants to work hard. Everyone wants to be a genius!

Without perspiration, nothing can come. We have to sweat and sweat. No art comes without sweating. Some people misunderstand or misrepresent [and say] that it does not require that strain. But no art will come to a person graced by the Divinity, without sweating. So in *Light on Life*, I covered the sweat I underwent. Not only physical sweat. When I speak of sweating, even I have to sweat intellectually!

People do not know whether the intellect will sweat or not, but it sweats because doubts are there. Doubts are the pains of the intellectual sheath, which is also paining, crying



with confusion.... So I had to work hard, and I tried, and I am happy. From nowhere in the field of yoga, I reached a certain level, and I have brought something for people to go ahead from where I reached. Maybe my age has put on the brakes, and I cannot work as I used to in the early days. So some will take it and proceed. Well, I say, who knows? Art is immortal, but the artist is not immortal.

I have given so that people who work with that intensity – that intellectual, mental and physical sweat – may go forward. ॐ



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