

Yoga Samachar

IYENGAR YOGA NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES

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MALA FOR THE GURU

An offering of love and affection,
respect and memory in honor
of the 90th birthday of
Sri B. K. S. Iyengar,
our beloved Guruji

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MISSION STATEMENT

Yoga Samachar is the biannual newsletter published by the Iyengar Yoga National Association of the United States (IYNAUS). The word *samachar* means “news” in Sanskrit. The mission of *Yoga Samachar* is to provide useful and interesting information to the IYNAUS membership and to aid in the mission of the organization. To that end it will:

1. Promote the dissemination of the art and science of yoga as taught by B. K. S. Iyengar, Geeta Iyengar, and Prashant Iyengar.
2. Communicate information regarding the standards and training of certified teachers.
3. Report on studies regarding the practice of Iyengar Yoga.
4. Provide information on products that IYNAUS imports from India.
5. Review and present recent articles and books written by the Iyengars.
6. Report on recent events regarding Iyengar Yoga in Pune and worldwide.
7. Be a platform for the expression of experiences and thoughts from members, both students and teachers, about how the practice of yoga affects their lives.
8. Present ideas to stimulate every aspect of the reader's practice.

Yoga Samachar is produced by the current IYNAUS Newsletter Committee Chair. The newsletter committee, which consists of interested volunteers from the community, helps to develop themes and solicit articles. This newsletter was edited by Constance Braden, copyedited by Alexandra Anderson, and designed by Don Gura. Cover photo by Jake Clennell.

Members may submit an article or a practice sequence for consideration for inclusion in future issues. Articles should be well written and submitted electronically to the current Newsletter Chair (see Board contact information).

Articles must include author's full name, certification level, and the year the author began studying Iyengar Yoga, along with contact information: email, mailing address, and phone number.

Ads and articles for the Spring/Summer issue must be submitted by April 15.
Ads and articles for the Fall/Winter issue must be submitted by September 1.
Please send to constancebraden@mac.com. ☺

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Fellow IYNAUS Members,

B. K. S. Iyengar will celebrate his 90th birthday on December 14, 2008. It is a blessing for each of us to be influenced by the teachings of our beloved Guruji. We wish him continued good health and happiness at this most auspicious time.

It was my profound privilege to speak with Guruji for an article in this publication. Constance Braden, *Yoga Samachar* Chair, extended the invitation to me to conduct the interview. It was an inspiring yet humbling experience. I will savor the memory of the time spent sitting across the table from him and engaging in conversation on the topic of devotion.

In early July, the new IYNAUS web site was launched and our new look was in plain sight for all to see. The new design was favorably received. Since the launch of the site, we have been very involved with fine-tuning, preparing to add more content, and cleaning up data base glitches. The amount of attention to detail required for this process is stunning. The entire board and two very adept technical consultants have been steeped in this stage of development. Most transitions of this nature are riddled with snafus, and we seemed to have had more than our fair share. Nevertheless, we are very close to the end of this phase and are excited about the ability to have a dynamic web site. We will be able to update news and announcements and change and add content with relative ease. Our intention is to use technology to improve our communications with members and regional associations and to promote Iyengar Yoga to the community at large.

Thank you for understanding the nature of this process. Many of you have kindly communicated problems you've experienced and, with equal kindness, let us know you were not receiving the *Yoga Rahasya*. We applaud you for your patience and support. We understand that our members are an essential and highly valued component of our association, and we welcome the opportunity to serve you more effectively as we move beyond this transition.

As we go to print with this edition, one of our esteemed and much-loved senior teachers, Mary Dunn, has lost the battle she so gallantly fought for the last year. We mourn her passing, and while we each may be heavy with sadness, our hearts and prayers are with her family and the New York yoga community.

We are embarking on another transition this fall. Five of my fellow board members and I will be stepping down. Gail Ackerman, Constance Braden, Bobbie Fultz, Gloria Goldberg, Linda Lutz, and I will turn responsibility over to the newly elected board members. Chris Beach, Patrina Dobish, Leslie Freyberg, Christine Nounou, Karin O'Bannon, and Marty Teasdale will be stepping up to join Richard Jonas, and Pat Musburger to explore new ways to serve our members and our teachers and to raise the profile of Iyengar Yoga nationwide. It truly has been an honor to serve as a member of the Board of Directors.

With kindness,
Linda Di Carlo, President
Iyengar Yoga National Association of the United States



Fall 2008/Winter 2009

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DEVOTION: AN INTERVIEW WITH GURUJI

Linda Di Carlo

LD: I know you have been devoted to yoga since you began your practice; I'm wondering how your devotion has changed over the years.

Guruji: I feel actually healthy in all aspects of life. I do not think it important for me to talk of my devotion to yoga now. I've recovered from ill health. After ill health, I gained health. As I gained health, circumstances made me to become a teacher of yoga. This God's gift made me to help those who were suffering from ill health, sprouted an ambition in me to try yoga on those who needed such help. I was at rock bottom in yoga to start with. My contact with them in helping gave me confidence that I should stick to the subject. Afterwards, wherever and whenever I presented yoga, I considered *asana* as my deity and through that I developed devotion to God in the form of yogic discipline. People have different ideas to pray to their choice of God. Some go to church, some to temple, some to masjid, and so forth. I only thought of my body as my temple, and I pray through my practice of *Asana* and *Pranayama sadhana* as a *satsangha* or worshipful adoration within myself in my practice. My practices are my prayers as my devotion to practice went on reaching my core.

LD: Has that changed as time has gone by?

Guruji: It has changed from good to auspicious goodness of my way of life so much that it astonishes me to think how, from nowhere, I reached somewhere to experience the real joy of life. I am a man who knew nothing about the physical body, mental body, or intellectual body, but by the grace of God, they revealed to me stage by stage as my *sadhana* became specific in uniting the body, words, and intelligence, which gave me mature wisdom to feel the immeasurable depth in the measurable body.

LD: So as your practice deepened, your sense of devotion became more cultivated.

Guruji: Yes.

LD: Have you ever had periods in your life when devotion was hard to sustain, and what should we do when this happens?

Guruji: There were frustrations, humiliations, and disappointments in the early period of *sadhana*. At that time, I remember cursing God for his indifference to my *sadhana*. Though it took time to sustain, the hard nut in me did not bore me. I don't think that I've tried to monitor how boredom comes in the subject. I cannot explain how the word *boredom* did not strike me even once in my *sadhana*, though many people say this happens to them. It has not happened to me, except disappointments in reaching the ultimate. Then I used to scratch my intelligence, but I did not find the answer at all. Fortunately, the moment I dressed myself for the practice, I was wholly in it and I am yet totally and completely in my *sadhana*. Not once in my life, a negative idea of dropping my practice and to search some other means came to me. Or the feel of "let me escape practice" or anything like that never occurred to me.



Martin Brading

LD: You say that *samadhi* arrives by the grace of God. Is devotion a gift?

Guruji: Yes, for me it is a gift. Disappointments never taunted me. Because of this grace of the infinite that dawned on me, I say I am a very fortunate person. I did perspire not only in my body but also made my intelligence to perspire to know the depths of what is obtainable. No doubt, it took me very many years to get devoted to this subject. When once that devotion set in me, it is holding me firmer and firmer. For me this is nothing but the grace of the unknown hands of God which made me to practice irrespective of failures and made me to follow from my heart to pursue my practices again and again. This is how my devotion developed in a natural way. It was gradual but very, very slow. I nursed my practice from the very day that I presented yoga to the world which was provided for me by that invisible hands to carry on. At the same time, my *sadhana* acted as my enemy, too, because my body was not able to bend and I had to undergo many injuries. Though the injuries put back my practice, it acted as a pole star to persevere my *sadhana*, and how it became friendly is a mystery hard to explain. But the battle was a way to savor the flavor of yoga after years of uninterrupted practice. It was painful, but love of the subject acted in me as a magnet and I got attracted to it.

The more I practiced, the more I got intoxicated to try again and again with intense attention.

LD: Can we cultivate devotion?

Guruji: Why not? Persist and sustain the practice. As sustenance brought me close to God, persist and persevere, and you, too, can experience the essence of the fruit of yoga as I am experiencing.

LD: In *Light on Life*, you tell us that surrender to God is not doing what we think God wants us to do or God giving us instructions. Can you explain the concept of surrender to God?

Guruji: God exists everywhere and we call it *inner voice*. That inner voice is God. And hence that inner voice is just tapping me every now and then. Go. Try. And then retry. So I came to know naturally that this is God. God may appear in form. God may appear in ideas. For me He presents new ideas in the field of yoga and makes me to work on it further. This gives me room to think and find out whether it transforms me further towards progress and to work on it and, if possible, to maintain and consolidate it. I go like that which automatically makes me to surrender to God. This is how I am made to conceive God and as such naturally, I may advise all to try the same way to experience how the invisible hand of God works on us to feel His presence for surrender.

LD: Listening to our inner voice is surrender to God.

Guruji: It is purely individual, and it depends upon the individual's interest.

LD: How can we practice *isvara pranidhana* in *Asana* and *Pranayama*?

Guruji: Just now I told you that God is in many forms; God is everywhere. Do you mean to say he is not in the space that you occupy while extending your body? When you do the *asana* or *pranayama*, you have to do it in the best way by attending to each and every part, every cell, as God exists everywhere. Suppose you are doing a certain *asana*

and you are satisfied you are paying total attention to the body from the head to the foot, from the right to the left. Fortunately, one loses his individual identity, and at that time, one moves beyond him, which is nothing but removing the veil between the self and the Self. Somewhere you are attentive, somewhere inattentive. This cannot be called *isvara pranidhana*. You have to integrate the body, mind, intelligence, and Self so that the Self that is within you reaches each and every part. That is *isvara pranidhana*.

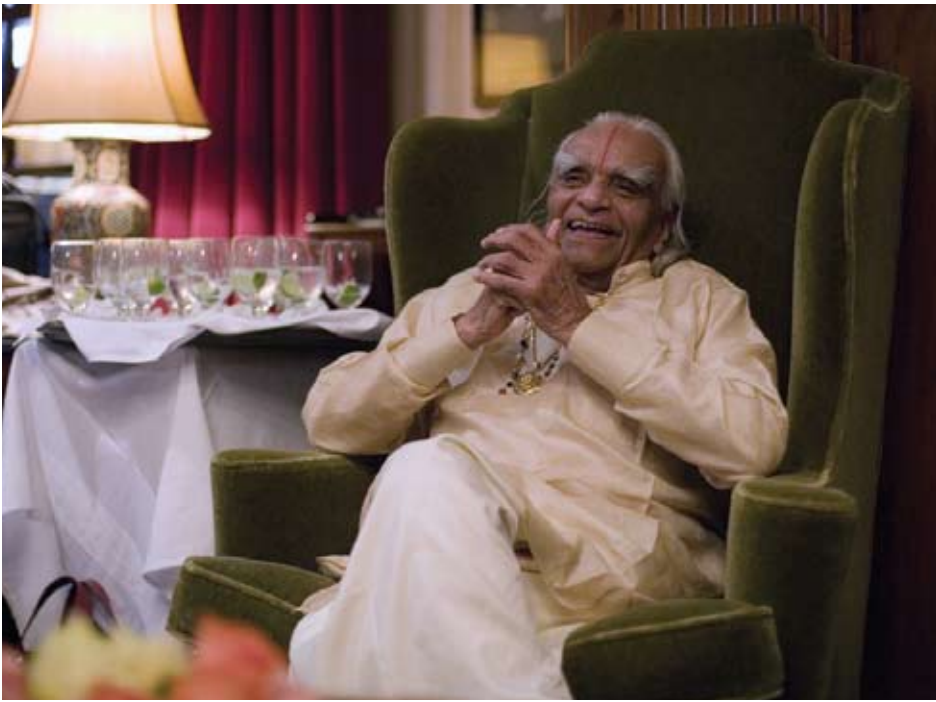
For example, when you do *pranayama*, give a thought in observing how the in breath occupies the torso. Which gives room for the breath to occupy when you hold, which creates and changes to hold the breath and when you exhale as the breath comes out, which enters and occupies? Then you understand the power of the invisible. That is God. Then *pranidhana* takes place as your eyes, your mind, and intelligence moves with it.

LD: So in a sense you can say alignment and *bhakti* are related?

Guruji: From alignment only will you be able to develop gradually. First you bring alignment with the bank of the muscles. Then you align your joints correctly, though these refer to the gross body. Then from the gross body, bring the mind to align and engulf the inner pores of the body. This brings a new awareness as it transforms the mind to correlate with the extension and expansion of the body. Then join the intelligence to the movement for it to judge and track the sensitivity in those areas. The moment you work like this, you develop sensitivity to feel the actions and reaction from each pore of the skin up to the core of the being, and this is, for me, *isvara pranidhana*. Alignment is a movement towards enlightenment. As I said, when you stretch your hand in an *asana*, you may just stretch your hand, but you have to give a thought to find out whether you stretch with your physical force, or mental force, or intellectual force, or from the individual core of the being. If that core of the being follows in stretching, naturally the intelligence follows and likes to go beyond your limit of the mind. *Asanas* are like the sun. As the rays of the sun touch the earth evenly if there are no clouds. But in us as *sadhakas*, there are a lot of thick clouds in our intelligence as well as in our mind. If we can brush out those things by practice, one day it may be possible for the individual force from inside to be like the rays of sun touching the earth and shall make the rays of the self to touch each and every part of the body without giving room for inattention. If it doesn't touch, then there is an intellectual veil; something is clouded, so one has to remove those clouds that veil of the intelligence, consciousness, and the Self. That is why so many *asanas* are given, to remove the clouds that cover the intelligence and consciousness. But *asanas* are not for physical fitness, or just for that. Can we find out these veils and uncover them so that the self travels in its frontier with ease? *Asanas* are meant to remove the clouds that cover the soul. Let not the mind or intelligence hold on. Detach them and the veils of the soul are removed. That means the dualities of dividing ourselves as body, mind, intelligence, consciousness, and self have to be removed so that all these stretches happen from the very core. Each individual part and every part of the body has to say, "Yes, I felt, I felt."

LD: And then it manifests *isvara pranidhana*?

Guruji: Yes, that is *isvara pranidhana* itself. You don't think of yourself. You completely exist without "I" or "me" in that *asana*. While doing *Pranayama*, there are *vrtti*. Inhalation is a *vrtti*. It is nothing but the life giver, while the intention of retention is to distribute the energy or organize the energy to the entire body. This is another *vrtti*. Then one exhales as that force is not needed for the life force within; but on the contrary, it may become harmful in case of maintaining health. This, too, is a *vrtti*. *Pranayama* is nothing but the movement of God. Inhalation in *Pranayama* is the generator "G" of energy. Holding the breath is organization of energy for distribution, "O," and the exhalation acts in throwing out the vicious air which may turn out into poison, and therefore one throws it out. Hence it represents "D." If you do *Pranayama* in this sense, *Pranayama* is God. God enters the breath, God holds the body with the breath, and God releases air for the Self to reach the cosmic force. The individual mind



touches the cosmic force during exhalation. This is how *Pranayama* leads you really to *bhakti marga*. When you start inhalation, something has to come out from the torso for the breath to enter in. This means the Self moves out for the breath to move in during the in breath. While holding, the Self and breath or energy unites as one, while in exhalation, the breath moves out and Self moves in. Have you ever given a thought to this way to understand what *Pranayama* means?

LD: For me, *Pranayama* is the soul of my practice.

Guruji: It may be the soul of your practice, but have you done in the way I have explained is the question mark. When you inhale watch how the soul gives room to occupy the in breath into the lungs. At the end of inhalation, you feel that it is not breath, but the Self that touches the periphery of the torso and beyond that you can't know. From the Self the breath begins, the breath enters and Self gives room to the ethereal body. And when you hold the breath and the physical body, the peripheral body and the core are leveled.

Then in exhalation you breathe out, but actually it is not the act of breathing out. The breath is coming out, but the Self goes in to reach the core of which we are unaware. That is the means and that is the effect of *Pranayama*. In inhalation, God gives room for the cosmic air to enter in. And in *kumbhaka*, the cosmic force and the individual force work together and they become one. Union takes place. In exhalation the individual force comes out and the universal force goes in (chuckles).

LD: So we are touching the individual soul with the cosmic soul.

Guruji: Yes. In true *Pranayama*, one can understand this easily and that is the beauty of *Pranayama*.

LD: And we touch divine will when we hold our breath?

Guruji: If you say, "I am holding the breath," then you are lost. Who is holding the breath? This is what we have to understand. In *kumbhaka*, one can understand the difference. If one holds the breath, he forgets his self. It is Self that is held, and not breath. For example, after full inhalation when you draw the breath, your whole "I" does not excite you at all. Not for some time. Then you try to say, "I'm holding the

breath." The moment there is a space between the body and the breath within, then that means the Self is receding, from the periphery. The time is up for *sattvic kumbhaka*. But you force to hold which becomes a *rajasic kumbhaka*. Here the pride plays, while in *sattvic kumbhaka*, humbleness builds up. This means the self is not touching me. So it guides why should I do that *kumbhaka*. Start exhalation. Then this becomes *bhakti marga kumbhaka*. The moment that something recedes and you hold the breath, the depravity has started. The very Self that kissed the skin and after sometime the skin fibers get separated this means the Self is receding and not the flesh. That is how you have to watch to understand *Pranayama*.

LD: Can an atheist feel *isvara pranidhana*?

Guruji: Whether one is a theist or an atheist, he has to believe in his own self. So if he believes in his own self, then yoga is fit even for an atheist. If we get the disease, do we not take medicine?

LD: Yes.

Guruji: Similarly, is he not doing the method for the end? Yoga does not say, "Believe in God." Yoga only says to find out if you can do it or not. It is a very individual thing. You have got your back. Do you see your back or do you feel your back?

LD: Feel it.

Guruji: You can feel it. God can be felt but He cannot be seen. So an atheist or a theist, he believes in himself. This sense of being is enough to practice yoga. He has to keep himself healthy physically, mentally; he has to balance his physical body and his intellectual body. So whether he is an atheist or a theist, it doesn't make any difference. I cannot stop class or ask whether one believes in God or not. He believes in his existence and that is enough to start yoga.

LD: What can we do when our sense of devotion becomes dull or begins to falter?

Guruji: Nothing. Devotion cannot become dull. The instruments of the self lose their power. That is why in the *Yoga Sutras*, it is said the pure illumination of the intelligence should be in par with the illumination of the Self. As the intelligence is not completely cleansed and matured, practice of yoga is there in order to cleanse it. After cleansing, we are not to allow any clouds or veils to reappear.

LD: So if we feel ourselves faltering...?

Guruji: That shows you have brought a veil. By way of logic, by way of thinking, by way of listening, something has gotten into you only just to escape. This is an intellectual trick. It means you have to learn. It wants to be supreme. In order to sublimate this egoistic intelligence, yoga is practiced to nullify the egoistic character.

LD: The intellect wants to be supreme.

Guruji: Only the inner core should be supreme. That is the supreme, not the intellect.

LD: Sometimes the intellect presents itself as the soul.

Guruji: That is the “I,” what sometimes impersonates the self. The real “I” is hidden. The real is constant from birth to death. It does not oscillate. This “I” is the same from birth to death. It has an impostor in the form of the small “i,” as the running “i.” The running “i” is the *ahamkara* which does not allow to be close to the real capital “I.” We live in that running “i” and not the capital “I.” Yoga helps us to discard this impostor, the small “i,” and leads to touch the real “I” which is constant and nonchanging.

LD: What is the best path to erode the attraction of ego and self-identity?

Guruji: That is why meditation is given. Meditation is not for peace of mind. Peace of mind is needed for meditation. I’ve written in lots of books about what *citta vrtti nirodha* is. People know what it is all about. That’s why it makes us to do yoga. We have got so many *vrttis*: *vrttis* for outer perception, *vrttis* for sensual perception, *vrttis* for cellular perception,

vrttis from the bone, *vrttis* in the flow of movement, *vrttis* in the mind, *vrttis* in the intelligence, *vrttis* in the consciousness. When they are all restrained through integrated yogic *sadhana*, then all these get integrated into one absolute consciousness. Then consciousness and the function of the organs of action, senses of perception and mind have no deviations or refractions in thinking or acting. And this means the union of all the things put together is the feel of the sense of the soul.

LD: In order to hear the voice of God speak, we have to be egoless?

Guruji: With ego, nobody can see God. The ego has to submerge. That is why I call it the running “i,” not the capital “I.” The capital “I” is a passive “I.” The real “I” in you is passive. It does not act at all. It only triggers the small “i,” which represents in you as the real “I.” Until the moment you recognize this as an impostor, you cannot reach the Self or God.

LD: Can devotion lead to freedom?

Guruji: Yes. That’s the end of search in life. In order to have it, we should have *trivida shakti*, or three types of prowess. The physical body should be able to withstand all impediments that come at any time from anywhere. Physical prowess is needed to counteract *karma*; intellectual skill is needed, so that there is skill in intelligence to have purity of the intelligence (*jnana*); then sublimate the ego so that *bhakti* or love without lust is developed. The first sutra of the second chapter is the guide: “*Tapas, svadyaya, isvara pranidhanani kriya yogaha.*” *Tapas* is for the maintenance for the power in the body; *svadyaya* to discover the skill in our intelligence; *jnana*, a supple mind. Then they coordinate together, so that one is in *isvara pranidhana* at that time. This is the goal of yoga, hence yoga is meant to earn these three paths. That is the meaning of that sutra.

It is in your *sadhana* that you should get devoted. This devotion to *sadhana* ends up in devotion to God, which is the aim of life in all.

LD: Thank you very much, Guruji.

Guruji: Give my love to all. ☺



Martin Brading

HOW ARE WE TO EMULATE GURUJI?

John Schumacher

How many times have you seen a teacher go off to India to study at RIMYI and return a very different person, his or her manner of teaching markedly changed? Not only have I seen it a lot, but I have had the same experience myself. After my first couple of trips to study with Guruji back in the early 1980s, I returned to my classes transformed. Before my journey to Pune, I had been, in appearance and manner, very much a “peace and love” hippie yoga teacher. After a couple of intensives with B. K. S. Iyengar, I was much more demanding, confrontational, and strident. Some of my pupils described me as “fierce”; I even swatted my students on occasion!

Of course, it is very natural to attempt to imitate those whom we admire and who are important to us. It begins with our parents, older siblings, and then friends, teachers, heroes—anyone we look up to. Mr. Iyengar’s teaching, his performance of the *asanas*, his very presence had such a profound effect on me that I wanted to try to be like him as much as I could. So, I copied him in every way I could.

I look back on that time now with some amusement at and compassion for that young man’s attempts to try to recreate those experiences that meant so much to him. As is so often the case in the beginning, he had taken on the style and manner of his teacher as he perceived it without any real understanding of the substance that lay behind it, of the essence of what his teacher was trying to convey to him and to all the other students in that room. And as is so often the case, it would take a while for that understanding to begin to dawn on him, gradually, a little at a time, year by year.

The topic put to me for this essay, How to Emulate Guruji, is what prompted the recollection of my immature attempts to copy Mr. Iyengar’s mannerisms and style. Striding around with your hands behind your back, shouting, whacking folks every now and then, wearing white robes—these, of course, are NOT the ways to emulate Guruji.

So how ARE we to emulate Guruji? In what ways is he a beacon for us in our practice, in our teaching, in our lives? Certainly there are many ways, more than we have room for here. Several leap to mind immediately, though.

Unswerving dedication to practice. The power of Guruji’s practice grows out of his deep devotion to the art and science of yoga. He has given everything to it and it has given everything back to him in kind. But as with every long-term endeavor, there no doubt have been moments when he has persisted through sheer will power alone. All manner of obstacles have appeared through his many years of practice, and although at times he may have been daunted, he has never given up. We can keep his example in mind when we encounter the *citta viksepas*, when we feel lazy or dull, when we wonder whether it’s worth the struggle, when we just don’t feel like getting on the mat.

Intensity. Guruji is fond of breaking down Sutra I:22, which describes practitioners as being mild, medium, or intense, even further into mild-mild, medium-mild, intense-mild, mild-medium, and so on. A hallmark of Mr. Iyengar’s practice, teaching, and being is intensity. He is intense-intense. Any who have watched him practice, been in



Chandru Melwani

his class, or spent time in his presence have experienced this intensity. Most striking and important, in my mind, is the intensity with which he lives life. Every moment is full, rich, and alive. Let’s see if we can bring some measure of that intensity to our practice, for it is there that the current is established that ignites our teaching and illuminates our lives.

Presence. When Guruji is doing something, he does it with full awareness, utter presence of mind. It is that complete presence that feeds his intensity and that makes being in class with him such an incomparable experience. Can we let go of our extraneous issues, even briefly, and give our total attention to the task at hand?

Surrender. To be truly present, one must surrender petty, egotistical concerns. Guruji lets go of desire for comfort or ease, lets go of fear and doubt as he penetrates his inner being through his practice and shares his insights through his teaching. Watch him. You can see it. How much can we step outside our small selves and explore the nature of our own inner being on our mat and in our classes?

Compassion. This grows out of presence and surrender. One has only to watch Guruji work with someone who is suffering with illness or injury to see his ability to set himself aside and give himself fully to that person in that moment. And in that moment, true compassion comes into being. Whether we are working with a student, relating to a friend or family member, or struggling with our own difficulties, are we able to surrender our own ideas and agendas and give ourselves fully to that person or that circumstance? Are we able to see that it's really not about us?

Being true to himself. For me, this, more than anything else, is the way to emulate Guruji. Above all, he is his own person: authentic, honest, real. Prashant, in an interview with Alex Medin in *Yoga Rahasya* (Vol. 13, No. 3, 2006), says that in the study of yoga, “[y]ou are supposed to explore your self, your mind, awareness, consciousness and conscience, your whole being. In yoga, we should not just copy what is taught to us.” No less than the *Bhagavad Gita* tells us, “Better is one’s own dharma even if imperfect than another’s dharma followed perfectly” (III:35).

As we celebrate this year the 90th birthday of a truly remarkable man, let’s appreciate all the many gifts he has given us. Let’s honor him for the light he has shone and continues to shine for everyone. Let’s enjoy our tremendous good fortune at having been in the company of a living legend, a genius, a giant among men. And if imitation is the sincerest flattery, then let’s flatter as well as emulate Guruji by practicing with intense intensity, by living with presence of mind and compassion, and, as he has done, by surrendering ourselves to our own unique manifestation of the true self. ☯

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JAI JAGANNATH: A JOURNEY WITH GURUJI

Lisa Walford



Paul Cabanis

July 5th, 5 AM. The culmination of an extraordinary journey finds us in three-wheeler rickshaws weaving through the narrow cow-lined back streets of Puri, in the state of Orissa, en route to hug Lord Jagannatha. The wide Grand Road, now littered with sacrificed chapels and sanctified memories, stands testimony to the frenzied stampede that only a few hours ago heralded the arrival of the three chariots of Subhadra, Balabhadra, and Lord Jagannath. We prepare to scamper up the hand-crafted, six-foot-high wheels of the main platform to embrace Jagannath, an incarnation of Krishna represented in wood with huge, wide-open eyes granted him by Lord Brahma. Pulled and pushed, blessed and protected, we make our way for the few seconds we each have to be filled with the *rasa*, the *shakti*, the potent essence concentrated in this ritual.

Twenty-four hours earlier, Guruji completed the final of four auspicious journeys to one of the most sacred pilgrimage *dhams* (sites) in all of India. It was a high honor for Guruji to receive the first *darshan* of Lord Jagannath, within the main temple grounds before the *neem* (carved deities) made their public journey through the one million plus pilgrims who fill Puri for this occasion. Joining him were Guruji’s daughters Sunitaji, Sucheetaji, Vanitaji, and Savitaji; his sons-in-law Shridhar and Parthasarathy; and his grandsons Hareeth, Kaushik, and Sharan. Accompanied by the high priest and his son, Raja Kumar, who supervised the entire festival, Guruji and his family climbed the slippery stairs into the packed inner sanctum.

The annual Ratha Yatra festival commemorates Lord Jagannath (literally, Lord of the World), his sister, Subhadra, and brother, Balaram. Devotees nurture a highly personal relationship with the deities, speaking, cajoling, dressing, bathing, and feeding them with the utmost love and care. In this chapter of the deity’s life, Lord Jagannath had been feverish and in isolation for 10 days. As he recovers, he receives the *darshan* of pilgrims who flock to Puri on the full moon in June and July. The public display reaches a fevered pitch as thousands attempt physically to pull the three-story-high chariots along the swollen route. Government officials do their best to steer the dancing, manic mob. To prevent dehydration, they repeatedly mist the crowd and throw water packs

into outreached arms. Stretchers carry older devotees and those too overwhelmed to waiting ambulances. We witness a sea of heads, like currents in a river, ripple and sway with the rhythm of the crowd.

July 5, 7 AM. Guruji's car led our 10-rickshaw brigade to the stairwell leading up to our rooftop home for the day. Here, Chris Stein and Raja had created a safe haven for our party to survive the mind-blowing celebrations. Guruji set an example of how to maintain equilibrium in an intensely vibrant and emotionally charged atmosphere by spending the early morning hours practicing in a special canopied yoga room surrounded by the bedlam below. "When I do yoga, my mind is at peace," he said. Following his example, we each took turns replenishing our waning resources.

Safe in our honorary seats generously provided by the presiding priest and our host, Raja, we alternate between wonder, joy, and gratitude. Our Los Angeles team of Chris Stein, Gloria Goldberg, Marla Apt, Paul Cabanis, Shakuntala Zakeim, and myself, along with friends Dr. Kamal and Shama Ghandi, had arrived in Kolkota on June 29th to serve Guruji. Funded by IYNAUS, this spiritual and social family vacation was a gift for his 90th birthday. Chris and Raja had coordinated, worried, and thrice checked to ensure a magical event. And yet it is to Lord Jagannath himself who we now tearfully salute. When all the stars line up, you can see the *yantra*, the mystical alignment that enables energy to flow effortlessly. Too many stars lined up to mention the magic inherent in this event. Suffice it to say that we were all blessed, and that Guruji was delighted!

Raja, his crimson and gold robes signaling him out from among the other priests, waved to us from his position at Jagannath's feet, while the chariot slowly lurched through the crowd. Earlier this year, Raja officially invited Guruji to attend as an honorary guest. The request had been written on a palm leaf, and every gesture was imbued with the care, dignity, and love that so embodies the Upanishadic custom to treat a guest as a god. Raja provided Guruji and the family with delectable Jagannath *prasadam* (food that had been offered to the deity) cooked in the temple, delivered in clay vessels, and served on banana leaves. He commanded every detail ranging from providing Guruji with an *Asana* room and bodyguard to *rangoli* on the doorstep of the cottage by the sea.

To close our festivities, Raja celebrated Guruji by mounting a cultural display of the graceful and exhilarating Orissan dance. Dignitaries and international guests were treated to a brief history of Guruji's accomplishments. Guruji was so pleased with this display that he invited the dance troupe to perform for his 90th birthday. Animated, he treated the dancers to his experience from past demonstrations, explaining that performance becomes a devotional act that embraces the audience.

Guruji and his family enjoyed an intimate vacation while honoring an important ritual that sanctifies a Brahmin's life. For us, the event was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to jockey shoulder to shoulder with love-struck devotees for the grace of Lord Jagannath and for the blessing of serving Guruji. The joy and love unleashed by devotional prayer and song will remain with us for a long, long time. ☺



Paul Cabanis

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AT THE HEART OF THE IYENGAR TRADITION: THE LION OF PUNE

Sharon Conroy

I attended my first Iyengar Yoga class in January 1986. Four years later, shortly after beginning to teach, I learned of an Iyengar convention that would take place in San Diego. Without hesitation, I signed up! I wanted very much to meet the man whose yoga tradition was transforming my life.

Over the years, senior teachers had told me again and again about the high standards to which B. K. S. Iyengar held his students. Many practitioners described him as very demanding. Others considered him fierce. Some called him the Lion of Pune.

What I remember most vividly about Guruji at the 1990 convention is not his fierceness, but rather, his devotion to his students. One night during an evening talk, he told us that we were all his spiritual children. From what I observed, he meant what he said. B.K.S. Iyengar was not only devoted to his own practice of Patanjali's yoga, but he was also absolutely devoted to his students. We were, indeed, his spiritual children. And like any good parent, he wanted his children to understand and benefit from what he had learned over his many years of practice.

When he taught a megaclass to the entire convention on the last day, Mr. Iyengar was indeed fierce. From time to time, he shouted as he implored us to go beyond the place we usually attained in a pose. And he chastised all 600 of us to move more quickly up to the platform to see something he wanted to show us.

"We don't have much time!" he said. That statement stuck with me longer than any teaching point I heard that day. I've thought about it many times over the past 18 years. One lifetime is not very long. In fact, we really don't have much time. This is what Guruji was teaching us. He had used his time well, and he wanted us to learn to do the same.

As he tried to get each of us to do our best, it was clear that Guruji could be both fierce and demanding. It was also obvious that he was very generous. He wanted to give us as much as he could within the constraints of our short time together.

However, there was something else that distinguished Mr. Iyengar's teaching. And that, above all else, was its directness. At one point, he told us to forget other teachers' voices, to let him speak directly to our body. It was this passionate and direct teaching to which I was immediately drawn. In a class of 600, at the back of the room, I felt like Guruji was, in fact, teaching my particular body.

After the mega-class, I saw John Schumacher, one of the teachers with whom I studied regularly, and with excitement, told him my experience. He knew immediately what I meant and, smiling, said, "B. K. S. Iyengar is the only one I know who can do that!"

I traveled to San Diego in order to better understand who Mr. Iyengar was. I left knowing that he was extraordinarily generous and passionately direct in his teaching. He spoke the truth in a way that few do. While I was immediately drawn to that quality, my understanding of it has ripened and deepened since 1990. I now consider it to be at the heart of the Iyengar tradition. And, it's what makes Guruji the extraordinary teacher that he is.

The brilliance of the Iyengar tradition derives from Mr. Iyengar's uncompromising directness and honesty. It's Guruji telling the truth, over and over again to our bodies, that compels us as students to move forward along the path of Patanjali's *Astanga yoga*. More than fierceness, it's Guruji's directness that earns him the title of the Lion of Pune.

In the American Heritage dictionary, the word *lion*, referring to a person has three meanings: (1) a very brave person, (2) a person regarded as fierce or ferocious, and (3) an eminent person. There is no question that all three meanings can be applied to Mr. Iyengar. However, Guruji is, first and foremost, a very brave person. One could even say that he is *lionhearted*, which the same dictionary defines as "extraordinarily courageous."

It must have taken tremendous perseverance and courage to practice yoga for as long and as intensely as Guruji has done. With the exception of a very short period during which he studied with Krishnamacharya, what Mr. Iyengar has generously gifted us, he worked out on his own. Patricia Walden points out, "For him, there was no one but himself. All the inspiration came from within."

With the guidance of Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras* and his own internal guru, Mr. Iyengar has inspired himself over an amazingly fruitful 75 years of practice. That is an astounding accomplishment!

One could even say that he is *lionhearted*, which the same dictionary defines as "extraordinarily courageous."

Over these many years of intense practice, Guruji has created, and continues to refine, an approach to practicing and teaching *Asana* and *Pranayama* that allows each of us to move with integrity along the path described in Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras*. It is Guruji's directness, his absolute honesty, that is at the heart of his tradition.

Karin O'Bannon puts it this way, "Guruji tells students what they need to hear, not what they necessarily want to hear. And, he refers to this as compassion." While I understand this statement now, I would not have understood it 22 years ago when I took my first Iyengar class. At that time, I knew very little about classical yoga. I simply wanted to take better care of my physical body. Much more awaited me!

In an Iyengar class for beginners, the teacher starts with the standing poses. We learn how to straighten our arms and legs, how to use these limbs to lengthen the spine, how to approximate the shape of each pose. The focus is on paying attention to the physical body and bringing it into the shape of the pose we're being taught. Once this begins to happen, our teacher helps us refine the alignment of each pose. This is when class can become interesting for both the teacher and the student.

As the teacher instructs us in *Utthita Trikonasana* on how to straighten the back leg more completely or how to align the knee in the forward leg, we begin to see the truth of the physical body. We begin to bring the body into a position that more closely approximates the ideal alignment of the pose.

Initially, we may bristle and even resist the corrections that our teacher provides. We are so identified with the body that when the teacher corrects it, we feel threatened. At this point, we need courage to continue to come to class.

I often tell students that the Iyengar tradition is fierce because it asks us to see the truth of each pose. The mind would prefer to do otherwise. It would much prefer to move on to something new rather than stay present. The ego frequently operates under the delusion that everything it does is just right. As a result, it may even resist acknowledging that the knee is not aligned in *Utthita Trikonasana*. It does this by simply not seeing. Given the mind's tendency to resist reality and to wander off, it often requires fierce determination and courage for us to stay present and try to do what our teacher is instructing us to do.

Once we're able to do this and come to class regularly, we begin to learn how to find alignment, balance, and stability in each pose. Simultaneously, through the practice of *Savasana*, and later *Pranayama*, we begin to understand that we are not the physical body that is being corrected. We begin to sense that there is something beyond the body and the mind. As this feeling deepens, we become more able to receive our teacher's corrections with humility. And in our own practice, we become more able to stay present and observe our poses carefully and accurately.

In the beginning, we may question why we need to work so intently towards each pose's ideal alignment. Later, we come to understand experientially, through our own practice, that as we approach the ideal alignment of any pose, we experience a spaciousness inside the body and a quieting of the mind as it moves towards silence. Patricia Walden says, "B. K. S. Iyengar would say that is the nectar of the infinite."

When we begin to experience *Asana* in this way, the ego's hold on us has already lessened. We know that we are not simply the physical body. We know that we are not primarily our mind. Through our practice, we have touched, if only briefly, the divine within.

We cannot reach this place by reading about it, nor by talking about it, nor by wishing for it. We can only reach this place through a devoted and dedicated practice. It is through practice that we come to understand that we are not our body, not our mind. We are not *prakrti*, nature. Through practice, we begin to see ourselves and the world around us with increasing clarity. We come to know experientially that we are *purusa*. We are the seer.

And just as Mr. Iyengar has taught us how to be present to our poses, how to find the alignment that allows us after many years to penetrate inward toward the seat of our soul, so has he shown us what a devoted and dedicated practice is.

When I went to RIMYI for the first time, my understanding of Mr. Iyengar's devotion to his students grew exponentially. What impressed me the most that first trip was the extraordinary generosity of the entire Iyengar family in welcoming hundreds of students to the Institute every week. Over the course of a day, we came and went across the courtyard in front of their home. We were an integral part of their daily life, and they made themselves available to us in a variety of different ways. Either Geeta Iyengar or Prashant Iyengar instructed us in a daily class. Guruji made himself available in the library every afternoon. And, most importantly, Guruji, Geetaji, and at times, Pranshantji were practicing at the same time that we were. What a generous gift! By his own example, week after week, year after year, Mr. Iyengar has taught us how to practice.

Guruji has also advised us with words. He has told us that we should be open and aware when we practice. By aware, I understand him to mean that we are in the present moment. By open, I understand him to mean that we are seeing ourselves with fresh eyes each time we practice a pose. Even when we are working with a very familiar pose, we are not, simply out of habit, instructing ourselves today as we did yesterday. To do so is to practice mechanically. When we practice in an open way, we are trying to see ourselves clearly, trying to see the truth of our pose. We adjust the pose based on what we see, and we are open to exploring new actions with the focused, playful mind that a young child brings to his exploration of the world. We are interested in the effects of our actions and base future actions on what we see. To practice in this manner is to be creative in the highest sense of the word.

Over the years, by practicing this way, we become able to see the physical body with increasing clarity. As the ego's hold on us diminishes, we may also find that we are less prone to emotions such as envy, anger, greed, and infatuation. At this point, the qualities that Guruji sees as intuitive, as part of our true nature, may begin to manifest with more and more frequency in our lives.

In his commentary on Sutra I.41, Guruji talks about these qualities: "Truthfulness, purity, and a loving nature are intuitive.... By yogic discipline and contemplation, the *sadhaka* develops these intuitive qualities of purity and truthfulness and realizes the flawless quality of consciousness. Through it, he becomes the seer and transmits rays of wisdom through his words, thoughts, and actions."

As I watch Guruji practice and see him work with senior teachers, I have come to believe that I am witnessing someone who has, indeed, become the seer. He transmits rays of wisdom through his words, thoughts, and actions. And, it occurs to me that in his luminous poses I am seeing *sattva* in *sattva*.

In our own practice, to stay present and tell the truth to ourselves takes tremendous perseverance and courage. Over 75 years of practice, this is the perseverance and courage that Mr. Iyengar, the Lion of Pune, has modeled for us. This is the courage that is at the heart of the Iyengar tradition.

Through practice and classes, we come to know the truth of our physical body, our emotions, and our mind. In the process of doing this, we penetrate inward and come to understand more clearly our own *dharma*, the individual truth of this particular lifetime. Eventually, we move beyond our individual truth and access a universal truth. We access *sat*, beingness.

By remaining absolutely attentive to the physical body, we transcend the physical. By telling the truth to ourselves over and over again about the physical body, about *prakrti*, in the end, we transcend *prakrti*.

It is the role of a *guru* to lead us from a state of darkness and not knowing, *avidya*, towards the light, towards a state where we clearly see the nature of reality. That reality, that state of beingness is *sat*, a universal truth that embraces and contains all individual truths. It is only when a person has reached that place himself that he can show others the way. Such a teacher is the *sat guru*. We are each blessed to have Mr. Iyengar as our *sat guru*.

As Iyengar practitioners, we might periodically ask ourselves the following questions:

- Have I established a dedicated and devoted practice?
- Do I use my practice time well?
- Do I set high standards for myself?
- Do I practice in an open and aware way, inquisitive and playful rather than mechanical?
- Do I see the effects of the actions I give myself in poses?
- Am I committed to telling myself the truth about what I see?
- Do I generously share whatever I understand with others?

When we practice in these ways, not only do we move ourselves further along the path of Patanjali's yoga, but we also pay tribute to the truth and beauty of Mr. Iyengar's life and give thanks to him for the many ways he has enriched our own. ☺

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HOW DEAN LERNER GOT STARTED

Pauline Schloesser
with Dean Lerner



Dean Lerner

Even before graduating from high school in the late 1960s, Dean Lerner was interested in Eastern thought and mysticism. He was introduced to yoga in the early 1970s, read books on yoga, took a correspondence course, and tried some poses without much success, deciding that nobody could really do them. He went to college, graduated with a master's degree, and even

held a "regular" job in the state of Arkansas, working as an agricultural advisor.

Dean didn't really begin serious practice until he went to India. In 1980, he quit his job to travel for a year. He went to Tahiti, New Zealand, Australia, Indonesia, and spent three months in India. While sipping tea in a restaurant in India, he met a man from England who spoke about the benefits of doing headstand. Dean later went to his room and tried it—on his bed. Soon thereafter, he bought a copy of *Yoga, Self Taught*, by Andre Van Lysebeth. Van Lysebeth's book, which contains a sequence of twelve poses,¹ became his study guide and practice manual. While his traveling companions were sipping wine on the verandah one evening, Dean experienced a state of elation through the practice. From then on, he was passionate about doing yoga *asanas*.

In India, Dean and his traveling companions adopted a rigorous schedule, visiting up to three towns per week. On a tight budget and integrating Mahatma Gandhi's ideal of being close to the "people," he and his friends commonly experienced long bus and train rides—all third class. No matter how tired or hungry he was, he never missed his practice. Thus, it happened that his friends sometimes went off to dinner without him, and he missed his only opportunity to eat. Lerner soon became travel weary and came down with dysentery. He recalls sunbathing on a rock one day at a mountain station. One of his friends remarked, "Hey, look at Dean! Look how *thin* he is, you can see *all* his ribs." Dean was still practicing his 12 poses, despite the dysentery. It was the summer of 1981. Taking up residence on a houseboat on Lake Shrinigar in Kashmir, Dean remembers taking his first hot shower in weeks, thinking, "Ah, finally, a first class ride." Then he learned that all potable water came directly from the lake, into which sewage was directly dumped. He was getting sicker. He left the boat and Lake Shrinigar and took a three-day bus trip to the village of Ladakh on the Chinese-Tibetan border, where he stayed in the home of a Tibetan family on the outskirts of town. His hosts spoke no English. He had been feeling strange even before he got there, but by this time he was aware something was very wrong, that he was seriously ill. As he tells the story today, he remembers lying in bed, hearing the farmers sing as they harvested mustard in the surrounding fields.

¹ Interestingly, *B. K. S. Iyengar* is referenced in this book.

Eventually, Dean got up and walked a mile or so to an infirmary near Ladakh, to be treated by an Indian medic. He recalls being given a test tube and a match box, into which he was instructed to submit urine and fecal specimens, in less-than-private accommodations. Proud of his diagnostic skills, the medical worker came to him excitedly: "I know what you've got! You've got hepatitis!" At the time, there was no treatment for this strain of hepatitis except bed rest. His friends weren't going to hang around for his convalescence. As they waved goodbye, he did not wonder how they could desert him when he was so ill. Instead, he asked himself, "How can they waste that much energy, waving their hands like that?"

To obtain some orange juice, he offered flutes he'd collected on his travels to a teenaged Tibetan boy, who went into town for him. Alone in bed, he reflected on what Gandhi had written, that severe illness was a form of spiritual cleansing. Although very ill, he was confident that he would not die.

After a week or so, he put in a reservation to travel to Delhi. In Old Delhi, he found inexpensive, good food and clean, affordable hotels. As he began to feel better, his interest in yoga still growing, he perused the bookstores. Of hundreds of books on yoga, he found two that particularly interested him: *Encyclopedia of Yoga* (author unknown) and *Light on Yoga*, by B.K. S. Iyengar. He liked the pictures in *Light on Yoga*, the integrity they conveyed, and the therapeutic information in the back of the book. The choice of *Light on Yoga* would change the course of his life.

He told Dean that it was intense; students had to hold *Paschimottanasana* for seven minutes. Dean now had a clue about the direction his yogic journey would take.

By this time, Dean was jaundiced and recovering from his illness. He studied the poses recommended for the liver in *Light on Yoga* and incorporated them into his *Asana* practice. The yoga philosophy described in the introduction to the book was also very healing.

On the return of one of his traveling partners, he made a trip to Katmandu, and then later, a trek in the Himalayas. Dean took with him light cotton clothing, a sarong, and sandals. Naturally, he was underdressed at the higher elevations. He had read about how slow, deep, long inhalations and exhalations created heat in the body, and one cold morning while out to look at the Himalayan peaks, where others were covered nicely in down jackets, Dean used *Pranayama* to keep himself warm, and found he didn't shiver.

In late summer, Dean traveled to Burma and the Philippines. His next significant encounter with yoga took place on a small island. He was on a beach, talking to a young woman, when he noticed in the distance someone performing a seamless sequence of *asanas*: from *Adho Mukha Vrksasana* to *Vrischikasana II*, *Urdhva Dhanurasana*, *Viparita Chakrasana*, *Uttanasana*, and finally, *Samasthiti*. Then the practitioner ran to the ocean, submerged himself in its salty waters, and bounded back to the sand to repeat the entire sequence. Dean left his conversation and got up to approach the man. Barry had just come back from a course at the Iyengar institute in Pune. He told Dean that it was intense; students had to hold *Paschimottanasana* for seven minutes. Dean now had a clue about the direction his yogic journey would take.

By the early fall of 1981, Dean was out of funds. He went back to the United States, hoping to be reinstated to his job, but it was no longer available. Years before, he had helped a friend build a stone house in the Ozark Mountains. No one was living there, so

IYENGAR YOGA EVENTS 2008/2009

Each "per workshop date" listing, for Certified Teachers and IYNAUS member sponsors only, costs \$25.00 and includes listing on the IYNAUS website. (For example; Teacher Trainings that meet more than one time must pay \$25.00 per date listed.) Please submit your listings with payment (check made to IYNAUS) to Newsletter c/o Constance Braden, 1210 W. Clay #19, Houston, TX 77019.

Deadline for Spring/Summer 2009 issue is April 1, 2009

John Schumacher October 24-26, 2008

Weekend classes for experienced students
Iyengar Yoga Institute of New York
New York, NY

Contact: James Murphy at (212) 691-9642

Email: info@iyengarnyc.org

Website: www.iyengarnyc.org

Gabriella Giubilaro November 14-16, 2008

Weekend Yoga Intensive
Studio Yoga
Madison NJ

Contact: Theresa or Loretta at (973) 966-5311

Email: staff@studioyoga.info

Elise Browning Miller December 13 -20, 2008

Yoga for Scoliosis –
Week Training in Troncones, Mexico
All levels welcomed!

Contact: Elise at (650) 493-1254

Email: info@yogaforscoliosis.com

John Schumacher January 9-11, 2009

Weekend workshop
Yoga Institute of Miami
Miami, FL

Contact: Bobbi Goldin at (305) 670-0558

Email: bobbiji@yogamiami.com

Website: www.yogamiami.com

Christian & June Pisano February 6-8, 2009

Weekend Yoga Intensive
Studio Yoga
Madison NJ

Contact: Theresa or Loretta at (973) 966-5311

Email: staff@studioyoga.info

IYENGAR YOGA EVENTS 2008/2009 CONTINUED

Dean & Rebecca Lerner

February 26-29, 2009

Annual four-day Teacher Training Intensive
Lemont, PA.

Contact: (561) 338-2612

Email: fdlerner@comcast.net

Website: www.centerforwellbeing.net

Dean & Rebecca Lerner

March 7-14, 2009

Yoga in Isla Mujeres, Mexico

Contact: Feathered Pipe Ranch (406) 442-8196

Email: fpranch@mt.net

Website: www.featheredpipe.com

Dean & Rebecca Lerner

March 7-14, 2009

Yoga in Isla Mujeres, Mexico

Contact: Feathered Pipe Ranch (406) 442-8196

Email: fpranch@mt.net

Website: www.featheredpipe.com

Stephanie Quirk

May 15-17, 2009

Special yoga class series
Lemont, PA

Contact: Dean Lerner at (814) 237-3042

Email: fdlerner@comcast.net

Website: www.centerforwellbeing.net

John Schumacher

March 27-29, 2009

Weekend workshop
Yoga Rosa

Hallandale Beach, FL

Contact: Rosa Santana at (945) 456-6077

Email: yogarosa@msn.com

Website: www.yogarosa.com

John Schumacher

April 24-26, 2009

Weekend yoga retreat for intermediate students
(level II and above)

SERENDIPITY

Berkeley Springs, WV

Contact: Linda San Gabriel at

(301) 656-8992, ext. 118

Email: linda@unitywoods.com

Website: www.unitywoods.com

Lois Steinberg

September 25-27, 2009

Weekend Yoga Intensive

Studio Yoga

Madison NJ

Contact: Theresa or Loretta at (973) 966-5311

Email: staff@studioyoga.info

the friend offered Dean its accommodations. With no job waiting and no family obligations, Dean happily took the opportunity. There he lived alone for a year, literally chopping wood and carrying water. It was in this primitive mountain dwelling with no running water or electricity, twelve miles from the nearest town, that his *sadhana* really deepened. He read *Light on Yoga* carefully as well as Jean Couch's *Runner's Yoga Book* and practiced six hours daily. His mind overflowed with questions. He decided to write to B. K. S. Iyengar:

Dear Mr. Iyengar,

I've been practicing asanas from Light on Yoga. I can't do all the poses like you, and some of them are uncomfortable. Can I use blankets or pillows to sit on?

This and about 15 other questions were swiftly met by a response:

Dear Dean Lerner,

I am not concerned with your comfort, but the precision with which you do the poses.

Who was this man, he wondered, not concerned with comfort, but precision! He felt his life course further set. He answered about three of Dean's questions, and then referred him to two teachers in the United States: Mary Palmer (Mary Dunn's mother) and Ramanand Patel.

Some time after that, his mother fell ill in Fort Worth, so he postponed his quest for those teachers and headed to his home state of Texas. In the summer of 1982, he found George Purvis teaching in Dallas. In class, Dean noticed other students looking at him in a funny way. Here was this student out of the Arkansas woods and new to yoga classes, but obviously somewhat experienced in the *asanas*. Dean recalls that he had by this time been practicing yoga by himself with *Light on Yoga* for eighteen months. Eventually, Mary Dunn and Ramanand Patel became his primary teachers in the United States.

Dean's teaching career began with what he calls "yoga on wheels" in Fort Worth. He loaded props in and out of his vehicle to teach at several different locations each week. In 1985, he was invited to move to central Pennsylvania to teach there, and it is there that he has taught and lived ever since.

With his wife, Rebecca Lerner, Dean currently codirects The Center for Well-Being (<http://www.centerforwellbeing.net>), a yoga studio and holistic health center in Lemont, Pennsylvania. He conducts workshops all over the United States and abroad. He has studied with the Iyengars in Pune numerous times, and holds an advanced-level Iyengar teaching certificate. ☺

Pauline Schloesser, who teaches in Houston, Texas, passed her Teacher-in-Training assessment last year.



Dean Lerner

LIGHT ON MOTHERHOOD

Ann Teresa Thomas



Ann Thomas

In B. K. S. Iyengar's most recent book, *Light on Life*, he tells of his decision as a young man to walk the path of yoga "as an ordinary householder with all the trials and tribulations of life," rather than to renounce the world as a *sannyasin*. Like him, most of us have done the same. We are living and practicing our yoga in the modern world as students, teachers, workers, spouses, mothers, and fathers.

As a yoga practitioner, teacher, and mother of four-and-a-half-year-old twins, I am among you. It's my personal challenge each day to live a yogic way of life with integrity and equanimity while being a wife and a mother, running a household, and operating a small yoga business out of our home. I often fall far from the mark. The *klesas*, or afflictions, rear their ugly head at every turn. Or I transgress in practicing *Yama* and *Niyama*.

Even as I sat down at my computer to type my "important thoughts on yoga," the twins clamored for my attention. "Mommy, type Spiderman!" my son Christopher insisted. "Mommy, I'll be the mommy, and you be the baby sitter," directed my daughter Clare, as she handed me her baby doll.

I wanted to scold them, or worse, for yet again interrupting my plans, and my "important" yogic work. I was humbled as I witnessed my own mental response violate *ahimsa*. My pride and attachment to the project at hand easily might have escalated into human chaos, foible, and shame.

I wanted to scold them, or worse, for yet again interrupting my plans, and my "important" yogic work. I was humbled as I witnessed my own mental response violate *ahimsa*.

Instead, I took a breath and surrendered to this precious moment with my children. I googled "Spiderman" and viewed all sorts of neat images of the superhero with my son on my lap. Simultaneously, I baby sat my daughter's baby doll while she went imaginary shopping. A sense of clarity and focus filled my mind, while warmth and love filled my heart. Yes, this is what more than 20 years of practice had prepared me for. This was a glimmer of "light on motherhood."

I began practicing yoga in the mid 1980s and gave birth to my twins in 2004. When I reflected on life before their arrival, it seemed easy to devote hours of uninterrupted

practice on the mat, in classes or in workshops, or to the study of philosophy and theology in graduate school. Even those things that were the most difficult to accomplish now seemed much easier in comparison: to pass assessment, to hoist 6-foot-tall, 200-pound men up into *Adho Muhka Vrksasana*, or even to travel to India to study under the fiery gaze of the Iyengars. It seemed a cinch to adjust my practice during pregnancy, labor, and delivery.

After I gave birth, I was naturally overwhelmed with love and joy. I was also overwhelmed with exhaustion and the incessant demands of caring for newborn twins. With them came a commitment of time, energy, and responsibility beyond anything I had ever experienced before having children. Any illusion I had of feeling competent or in control was shattered. My addiction to myself and my way of doing things, including my practice, was no longer an option. Two tiny beings were now in my charge and they were the priority.

As a new mother, I found literally not being able to practice at times, let alone to participate in workshops or retreats, to be extremely difficult. However, like practicing a challenging forward bend where progress is made in the letting go, I surrendered. I stayed home and tended to the mothering tasks at hand.

I breastfed my children for years, even while doing *asanas*. I changed thousands of diapers, then potty trained. I read stories and made them up, too. I prayed and meditated with my children as they drifted off to sleep each night. I sang songs, played silly games, danced with delight, and tolerated far more noise, movement, disorder, and commotion than I ever thought possible, even more than in Pune.

In practicing *satya*, or truthfulness, I found much of mothering instinctive, but also faced the fact that there was much about parenting that I knew nothing about. I attended parenting classes instead of yoga workshops and went to therapy to address the unresolved issues that were surfacing in my daily

interactions with my children. I also found time again to practice *Asana*, *Pranayama*, and meditation, and they sustained me. Although I relish quiet, solitary practice, some of the most enlightening moments have been when the children interrupted me. Their improvisational dances continue to be priceless, as are their little directives when they each take turns being the yoga teacher. My life and practice are one.

It's now 2:00 AM and my children are sleeping peacefully, curled into each other like they were in my womb. I savor the sweet sound of their breathing as much as I do the pause between my own inhalation and exhalation. I use this quiet time to practice *Asana* (using my son's stuffed gecko as a prop under my ankle in *Padmasana*). I meditate and try to collect my thoughts to complete this article.

I reflect on my personal inventory for the day (*svadhyaya*, or self-knowledge) using *Yama*, *Niyama*, and the *klesas* as my frame of reference. I assuredly had human moments when I lapsed into pride or attachment, had my own little temper tantrum, or just needed a hug. Yet *tapas* (sustained practice) prevailed. I persevered and did the next right thing.

Ultimately, the precept I have found most sustaining as a mother has been *ishvara pranidhana*, devotion to the Lord. In the Christian faith tradition that I practice, I call on the grace of God and the Blessed Mother each day to give me strength when I am weak, to give me patience when I have none, and to love my children when my inner resources seem depleted. I surrender and I pray, "Thy will, not mine, be done." As Mr. Iyengar states in *Light on Life*, "And what will God tell you to do... He will tell you to carry on in the world, but never to forget Him."

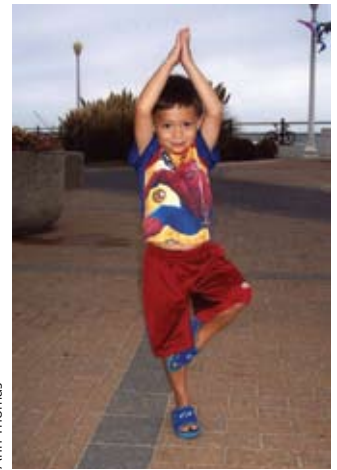
Quoting Socrates, Mr. Iyengar tells each of us, "Know thyself," using the traditions of yoga as the source of our inquiry. Just as he used his body as the laboratory for *Asana* practice, on the eve of his 90th birthday, he is an inspiring model of how to traverse one's course in life with the philosophy, traditions, and practices of yoga as the navigational framework. His

promise is authentic. The path is far from easy, but if we follow it with dedication and *shrada* (faith), we will come to know the Self and a freedom beyond human comprehension.

I am in awe and overcome with gratitude as I watch my children thrive and grow. As my *sadhana* continues, I am honored to be their mother with its joys, trials, and tribulations. I am also acutely aware of the suffering in the world they are growing up in. Mother Earth is in crisis. War and violence rage on. Millions of children are sick, hungry, orphaned, or abused. Within almost every heart is a small or large ache, longing for peace and healing.

As we walk the path of yoga together, we also have a calling to serve our universal family. I am grateful for your companionship, help, and inspiration along the way. In turn, I offer you mine. Peace to us, one and all, and may the fruits of our efforts help to relieve suffering for all beings and help to spread peace and healing in the world. ☺

Ann Teresa Thomas is a certified Introductory Iyengar Yoga instructor who lives in Leesburg, Virginia, with her husband and twins. She runs Yoga & Healing Services LLC, and also teaches at Unity Woods Yoga Center in the Washington, DC, area.



Ann Thomas

A MALA FOR THE GURU: CONTINUING OUR EFFORTS FOR THE BELLUR CAMPAIGN

Michelle Mock

Sankalpa is a Sanskrit word meaning a resolution, free will, or determination: a will power that is flexible enough to account for changing circumstances yet precise enough not to be diverted by *chitta viksepa* (distractions and obstacles) from its good intentions. With our collective *sankalpa*, the United States Iyengar Yoga association members raised approximately \$19,000 during the 2007 Three for Bellur Campaign, funds that directly benefit the Bellur Krishnamachar and Seshamma Smaraka Nidhi Trust established by Guruji. We successfully demonstrated that a united group of citizens can make a significant contribution toward a positive change of circumstances in the world today. Our community efforts remind me of Margaret Mead's words: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

This year, IYNAUS invites everyone to join in A Mala for the Guru, an offering of love, affection, and respect in honor of the 90th birthday of Sri B. K. S. Iyengar, our beloved Guruji. In 2008, we can aid in accomplishing even more for Bellur by incorporating fundraising campaigns into our A Mala for the Guru celebrations. B. K. S. Iyengar said, "Change leads to disappointment if it is not sustained. Transformation is sustained change, and it is achieved through practice." It is a matter of pose and repose: there is more work to be done, as any good Iyengar Yoga practitioner knows! Now is the time to heighten our efforts to sustain the transformations and to achieve the completion of current and future proposals relating to the health, education, social, and cultural aspects of the Bellur Krishnamachar and Seshamma Smaraka Nidhi Trust. This year, we can launch even greater fundraiser initiatives during the grandest, most glorious

commemoration ever: A Mala for the Guru! To comprehend fully why funding is needed, I encourage you to consider the following information.

The Trust's health and education proposals outline the key underlying routes required for future development. Funding is essential to ensure that cost does not prevent ongoing maintenance or the objectives for primary health care and to guarantee the children's rights to health and education. Consider the cost of health care and education in the United States, then imagine running a free hospital, primary school, and high school. It just necessitates funding! Last year when a medical camp was held in Bellur, approximately 800 people attended from 44 villages, including Bellur. Forty-four villages! A Mala for the Guru gives us a perfect opportunity to support the Trust's request for our assistance in providing more such medical camps. Please understand that health is a fundamental right, not a privilege.

The education initiatives alone are a launching pad for uplifting future generations, a vision close to Guruji's heart. To make education a reality, the Trust waives all school fees; supplies uniforms, books, and stationary; and provides a hot lunch, often the children's only meal of the day. The Trust built, equipped, and staffed a high school, which received an overwhelming show of confidence from the villagers, who have enrolled 170 of their sons and daughters. In this way, the Trust has engaged the community successfully in the struggle for their basic human rights and has provided the groundwork for a brighter future.

The plans outlined by the Trust for cultural and basic social needs focus on alleviating the economic and social impacts of poverty. To ensure economic development, the Trust has purchased seven acres of land to support small cottage industries, including a horticultural business, possibly growing roses! By developing the technical and artistic skills of these rural people, the Trust enables each individual to take control of their future, to help everyone realize their full potential.

What the Trust has accomplished in such a short time is profound and is no easy task. Fighting poverty in impoverished areas means tilling the soil to establish the healthy roots necessary for cultivating a solid foundation. Establishing a firm base is key, something that is hardly an enigma to our beloved Guruji! Our donations nourish the foundation by helping to provide clean drinking water facilities and to improve the sanitation conditions in the villages. These improvements are vital; they are the most helpful and cost-effective investments in rural communities, a prerequisite for uplifting overall conditions. The Trust has installed one water tank to minimize the impact of the lack of clean water and the challenges this shortage presents, yet there is more work to be done to accomplish the inclusive sanitary improvement plans that address a multitude of fundamental issues.

Our commitment and resolve are of immense importance for sustaining, maintaining, and continuing the health, education, cultural, and social transformations. All we have to do is lend a hand to help the project's comprehensive and community-based approach evolve and to define a better future for Bellur and the surrounding villages of the Kolar District. This year's A Mala for the Guru gives us an opportunity to make a significant contribution toward a positive change in circumstances in the world today. With our collective *sankalpa*, our Iyengar Yoga community can make our beloved Guruji's vision a reality. Come on, let's do it! ☺

Michelle Mock is a Teacher-in-Training and a practitioner at The B. K. S. Iyengar Yoga Studio of Dallas. She is dedicated to the tradition of Iyengar Yoga as a life-sustaining path to self-realization. She studies and draws inspiration from certified Iyengar teachers in the United States and globally, traveling to India every couple of years.

BOOK REVIEWS

Vickie Aldridge

Two members of our community, Bobby Clennell and Lois Steinberg, have written books that focus on Iyengar Yoga practice for women and the menstrual cycle.



The Woman's Yoga Book: Asana and Pranayama for All Phases of the Menstrual Cycle. Written and illustrated by Bobby Clennell. Berkeley, CA: Rodmell Press, 2007.

ISBN 1-930485-18-2. 256 pages. \$24.95.

Bobby Clennell's *The Woman's Yoga Book* will capture your interest immediately with the simple clarity of her beautiful illustrations. She used herself as the model for these poses, which address women's health issues relating to the menstrual cycle. The book lays a foundation for the reader, explaining the history of yoga and its benefits and how to begin with a home practice, as well as providing an overview of the theory of why and how women practice depending on the stage of their menstrual cycles. It will become a treasured practice companion for students and teachers alike for years to come and a good reference book for teachers to assist their students in understanding their own hormonal cycles. If you have a young girl in your life entering adulthood, I encourage you to buy this book for her as a way of empowering her with this knowledge about her own body.

Geeta S. Iyengar writes in the Foreword of this book that "a woman should respect her femininity and practice yoga accordingly." She further states that Bobby takes the reader through the entire journey of a woman's cycle and that her clear illustrations "enhance the value of the book."

The contents are clearly divided into chapters on standing poses that build a support system, seated poses and twists to keep women centered, reclining poses that restore lost energy, inversions to balance the system, and backbends to

open the heart, as well as *Pranayama* to balance energy and to strengthen the nerves.

The ensuing chapters on stress and tension, headaches, insomnia, and irregularities of menstruation take the poses covered in previous chapters and put them into practice sessions, with smaller drawings and references of where to find full explanations of the poses in the book for clarification. As soon as a reader becomes familiar with how to set up the poses, she can practice from these sequences more easily with Bobby's smaller drawings.

Bobby believes that yoga is a "spiritual practice, which involves acknowledging, reaching out to, and aligning with forces greater than ourselves. As your body takes on the form of animals, plants, gods and planets, yoga becomes your meditation and your prayer."

Bobby Clennell's skill as a former professional animator draws you to this book with the detail and clarity of her drawings. Her commitment to yoga practice and teaching for more than 30 years in the Iyengar method have come together in the wisdom that lies within these pages. She has created a book of hope and direction for women as they live with their fluctuating hormones and face the challenges in their every day lives.



Geeta S. Iyengar's Guide to A Woman's Yoga Practice, Volume 1. Written by Lois Steinberg, PhD. Parvati Productions, 2006. \$50.00.

Health, harmony, and happiness. Aren't these words we can aspire to? How can we, as women, live a life that embodies these traits in the midst of hormonal changes that we seem to have no control over?

Opening the pages of *Geeta S. Iyengar's Guide to a Woman's Yoga Practice, Volume 1*, written by Lois Steinberg, is like stepping into an Iyengar Yoga medical class at RIMYI in Pune, India. The following is taken from Geeta Iyengar's Foreword: "A woman undergoes internal changes at

different phases of life that affect her body and mind, sometimes causing her to suffer. She may be in agony and fail to share her problems with others, thinking that there might be no solution. Often women with on-going aches and pains lose tolerance to make any efforts. Both the sufferings and doubts agitate us, yet they ignite us to seek the solution."

Most women can relate to the above statement because our hormones and menstrual cycles affect each of us in various ways for most of our lives. Many of us end up planning our activities around that monthly cycle created by our ever-changing hormones. If you are fortunate enough to have very light, three-day menstruation with no cramps, then you may wonder what all the fuss is about. If, however, you are plagued with painful cramps, dizziness, and the fatigue that comes from long and heavy menstruation, then this book reaches out to you with help. May you be ignited to seek the solutions that lie within this well-researched book.

Under Geetaji's guidance and review, Lois Steinberg has produced a book for all of us, both teachers and students, containing sequences for the monthly cycles of women in their reproductive years of premenstrual, menstrual, and postmenstrual cycles. One look at the index reveals that there is so much more detailed information within the pages. Issues such as depression and anxiety, ovarian cysts, headaches, and glandular issues are covered in a thoughtful and in-depth way that I believe can be found only in this method of yoga established by Yogacharya B. K. S. Iyengar. Geetaji reminds us in *Yoga: A Gem for Women* that this way of thoughtful practice brings health to the vital organs in a way that is different from simply exercising.

Geetaji tells us in the Foreword that this book will help both male and female teachers when they deal with women's problems. Lois Steinberg shares some of her personal story that led her on this path of well-being through the practice of yoga and many years of study with the Iyengar family. She wisely states that the contents of this book are not meant for novices, and she recommends at least a 12-week course of study with a certified Iyengar Yoga teacher before using it. For some, the descriptions and detail will seem prohibitive, but to others, those same clear photos and attention to detail will pique their interest, and this book will become a lifelong companion and resource.

I commend Lois Steinberg on her dedication to this subject matter and her thoughtful attention to detail, which has created a valuable resource book for all of us. I am sure that we in this Iyengar Yoga community will look forward to her publication of volume II. ♻️

Vickie Aldridge is a certified Junior Intermediate I Iyengar Yoga instructor. She lives with her husband, Jerry, also a certified Iyengar instructor, and their 18-year-old nephew, Ely, in Boise, Idaho.

NEWS FROM THE REGIONS

Compiled by Pat Musburger

Celebrations for Guruji's 90th birthday, the opening of new yoga centers, community outreach events, restructuring, and scientific research highlight the activities of some of our regional associations.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA: IYASC

The San Diego chapter reports hosting very successful members workshops. These workshops allow members to experience many of the excellent teachers in the area.

To honor Guruji's birthday, a small book is being created by IYASC. It will include some of the history of Iyengar Yoga in the area, photos, and a sense of the broad array of ways in which Iyengar Yoga has influenced people in the area. All members and local Iyengar students have an opportunity to contribute to the book before it is sent to India with someone who will attend the birthday celebrations there.

LOS ANGELES: IYILA

After nearly two years of fundraising, locating a suitable space, and transforming the space into a beautiful new yoga studio, the new IYILA opened for classes on September 2. The new location has abundant parking and much easier freeway access than the old 3rd Street location. The 3000-square-foot space has a roomy interior with raised ceilings, skylights, and bamboo floors. It is divided into two fully functional *asana* rooms with a moveable partition that can be opened up for a single, larger space.

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA: IYANC

In early October, the Iyengar Yoga Institute of San Francisco hosted A Festival of Inner Light to benefit the Iyengar Yoga Association of Northern California and to honor the teachings of B. K. S. Iyengar. The outreach goal was to introduce the community to Iyengar Yoga and to bring together the existing community of students, alumni, and teachers. The fundraising goal was \$25,000. Featured teachers included Ramanand Patel, Elise Miller, and the stellar IYISF faculty. The keynote speaker, Dr. Timothy McCall, also signed copies of his book *Yoga as Medicine*. The event culminated with a gala dinner and silent auction.

NORTHWEST: IYANW

The Julie Lawrence Yoga Center in Portland, Oregon, and Tree House Iyengar Yoga in Seattle, Washington, are among the many studios planning celebrations on December 14 to honor Gururji's 90th birthday. Potluck dinner, videos, stories, and asana classes will pay tribute to our beloved teacher. Donations for the events will benefit both the Bellur Project and the IYANW Scholarship fund.

IYANW is pleased to announce the formation of a lending library. Members have access to books and videos that have been donated to IYANW. The only cost to the member is for the postage. The library began with generous donations of videos, books, and periodicals from Felicity Green and Jo Leffingwell. The video collection includes the Yoga 90 Teachers Series, the 1991 Backbend Intensive, and the DVD of The Journey Convention. For more information about donating to or borrowing from the library, contact any IYANW board member.

Yoga Northwest in Bellingham, Washington, recently moved into a new, environmentally green studio. Much of the funding came from community events that showed strong support for the studio.

MIDWEST: IYAMW

An ad hoc committee has been working hard to complete the process of revitalizing this region. The IYAMW is now reincorporated in the state of Illinois and is preparing to send out nomination ballots. IYNAUS members living in Illinois, Michigan, Indiana, Ohio, and Wisconsin may want to consider membership in IYAMW and are eligible to serve on the board. Ballots will be sent out in December, with the new board in place by early 2009. For more information, contact Jennie Williford at iyamw@iynaus.org.

SOUTHEAST: IYASE

Kimberly Williams, a certified Iyengar Yoga teacher from West Virginia, recently attended the 12th World Congress on Pain in Dublin, Ireland, and Glasgow, Scotland. She presented findings that an Iyengar Yoga group had statistically significant and clinically important decreases in function disability, pain, and depression after 24 weeks of yoga training. A trend toward decreased use of pain medication also was shown. Kimberly reports that the most exciting research presented was on brain activation in chronic pain populations. Research showed that brain function was abnormal and that patients could be trained to normalize the activation of their brain to decrease their pain. Although yoga was only one of many techniques used in their retraining programs, this leads Kimberly to believe that yoga training would be helpful in normalizing brain activation.

Kimberly has been invited to attend Scientific Studies on Iyengar Yoga, a scientific conference in Mumbai in October in honor of Mr. Iyengar's 90th birthday. She plans to present a talk titled "Evaluation of the Efficacy and Effectiveness of Iyengar Yoga on Chronic Low Back Pain." 📍

Pat Musburger is certified at the Intermediate Junior I level and is director of Tree House Iyengar Yoga in the Seattle area. She serves as Secretary and Regional Support Chair for IYNAUS and as President of IYANW.

Gururji has asked IYNAUS, through our regional associations, to be responsible for granting permission for use of the Iyengar name in businesses. In areas where no active regional association exists, the most senior teacher in the area will fill the void. In addition, a senior teacher must cosign with the board representative for all requests made.

The requirements for the use of the Iyengar name in a business name are as follows:

- Iyengar Yoga is the only method that may be taught in the facility.
- All teachers at these businesses must be certified or under the supervision of a mentor or teacher trainer and in the process of becoming certified.
- If these conditions change, the Iyengar name may no longer be used.

To create a consistent process, IYNAUS devised a form for businesses to use and submit to both the regional association and the senior teacher. Copies of these forms will be kept on file with the regions.

If the business meets the criteria, the business will be notified. If permission is denied, the business will receive an explanation. To best suit the region's operating structure, further logistics of the system should be agreed on by each region and the senior teachers involved.

If your business currently uses Iyengar in its name and you have a letter from Gururji granting permission, please be sure that it is on file with Gloria Goldberg.

IYNAUS STORE NEWS

We are happy to announce that Bobbie Fultz is settled into the Boulder office, and the expanded IYNAUS Store is open for retail and wholesale orders.

The new phone number is (720) 565-6885. You may call Monday through Friday, 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM Mountain time with questions and credit card orders. Visa, Master Card, and American Express are accepted.

Order by email to bobbie.fultz@gmail.com for invoiced sales. A 30-day net invoice will come as an attachment by reply email after shipping.

A limited number of items are currently available for online ordering. A complete inventory list with retail prices will be published on the website.

CERTIFICATION MANUALS

For the first time, Certification Manuals may be ordered directly as a Store item as well as online through the website. The new version will be available in November of each year and is priced yearly by the Certification Committee.

BASIC GUIDELEINES

At the request of the Iyengars, sales of the book *Basic Guidelines for Teachers of Yoga* are restricted to Certified Iyengar Yoga Teachers and those who have been accepted for assessment by the IYNAUS Certification Committee. The new online IYNAUS Store can screen for certified teachers in the purchasing process. Those who are on the assessment list need to call the IYNAUS Store at (720) 565-6885 10-3 pm mountain time Monday-Friday to be screened against this list and make the purchase with a credit card.



BOOK REVIEW

Bobbie Fultz

B. K. S. Iyengar, *Astadala Yogamala*, volumes 1 through 7. Published by Allied Publishers, Delhi, India.

The *Astadala Yogamala* are the collected works of B. K. S. Iyengar and are arranged according to a master scheme: articles; interviews; question-and-answer sessions; techniques of *asanas*, *pranayama*, *dhyana*, and *savasana*; therapeutic applications of yoga; a garland of aphorisms and thoughts; a general index and analytical dictionary; and an addendum.

Now that says a mouthful. What a tremendous task! Anybody who has been in the library at RIMYI in the last decade has seen the activity generated to edit and proof this material gathered from sources spread throughout the Iyengar Yoga international community. Many people sit in the library pouring over these articles and taking any questions, conflicts of information, or confusions to Mr. Iyengar. Each year, a new volume appears. Don't be misled by the modest covers of these books: within is the distillation of a lifetime of study and exploration.

Volumes 1 through 3, within blue covers, present the articles in a highly logical sequence. Volume 1 begins at the beginning, with biographical works on how Guruji began his studies. Then the teachings begin with an explanation of the topic and a presentation of Patanjali yoga. Included are true gems of wisdom: a summation of each *sutra* chronologically and a codification of the themes grouping the *sutras* under 39 topics. If you haven't applied yourself to the study of Patanjali's yoga *sutras*, here are the tools to get you started and to provide the answers. Volume 2 addresses the limbs of Astanga, real *sadhana*, the science of Hatha and the *pancamahabhutas* (five elements) to bring light to one's practice. And Volume 3 of this collation of articles rounds up the dimensions of yoga for teaching all the different populations we see in practice and classes.

Volumes 4 through 6, within yellow covers, present the interviews from radio and television broadcasts and published articles. We're not talking about talk show fluff on late night television. These are decades of responses given by Mr. Iyengar to directly and indirectly answer to the doubts and fears hidden within the interviewers' questions. Replies are given within the context of the country where the interview took place and the cultural time period. The interviews have been reedited by Mr. Iyengar since the original publication and broadcast to bring them into the present context for this current publication. Interviews also are from among practitioners on esoteric and subtle points. We all know that answers in the Iyengar system cannot be given without someone "doing the pose," so plenty of pictures are included to show exactly where to place that rolled blanket or how the intelligence comes to stretch inside the arms.

Volume 7 is the first of the purple covers and has some 50 more pages than the previous volumes. Here begins the dialogue between *sisya* and guru in the form of questions and answers. The queries and doubts are linked to the major themes of the philosophical vision of yoga to keep the readers on the subject of yoga as a prerequisite to practice, experimentation, deliberation, and analysis. The short answer to all the detailed questions is, "Do practice with calmness." I still hear the response I received to my question to Guruji during my first trip to RIMYI on how I should practice: "Do, do, do!"

Two thousand one hundred ninety-nine pages of text, pictures, charts, and drawings are given to us for study in these 7 volumes, which have only reached the third topic of the eight in the *Astadala* delineated by the master scheme of this collection of works of the *Yogamala*. Best begin reading now to keep up with the availability of the information flowing from the library at RIMYI! 🙏

Bobbie Fultz is a certified Intermediate Junior II Iyengar Yoga instructor.



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Membership is open to all persons who are willing to study, teach, disseminate, and promote the art, science, and philosophy of yoga according to the teachings of B. K. S. Iyengar. Membership, **renewable each calendar year**, is a condition for holding a United States Iyengar Yoga Teaching Credential.

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