



Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute (RIMYI) and Light on Yoga Research Trust, India

We are pleased to receive an overwhelming response to the first issue of **Yogadoot**. The intent of **Yogadoot** is to bring a direct contact of the readers with our Institute and the events happening there; to give the readers a feel of these events even though they are not able to be physically present. **Yogadoot** will also share the words of wisdom from Gururji, Geetaji and Prashantji. Words which give us enough food for thought, and actions reflected by these thoughts will gradually transform our lives. Gururji never follows the adage **practice what you preach** because he only teaches what he practices!! There are no dualities about him. A glimpse into his practice and the way he lives his life is also a great inspiration for us, his students. We are constantly learning even by being in the presence of Gururji! **Yogadoot** will also be sharing these **silent** teachings of Gururji. We hope that this messenger of yoga helps you proceed towards leading a yogic life.

Celebration Time: Guru Purnima

Hanuman Jayanti, the birth anniversary of Lord Hanuman was celebrated on April 16, 2003 at RIMYI. The event commenced with an invocation to Lord Hanuman followed by the recitation of the *Hanuman Chalisa* memorized by young Sharan Raghu. Prashantji then shed light on the mythological tales behind Lord Hanuman's birth as narrated in the different *Puranas*. He then clearly articulated on some unique attributes of Lord Hanuman, which we need to learn to imbibe, being students of yoga.

Lord Hanuman exhibits the quality of leadership along with the ability to serve. He is an embodiment of strength but along with that he expresses humility. Strength and humility is a

rare combination because strength leads to pride. A leader rarely has the humility to serve but Lord Hanuman has all these qualities.

Lord Hanuman is the son of Lord Pavan, Lord of the Wind. Both Gururji and Prashantji explained how our breath, our inhalations and exhalations should be graced by the Lord. Our inhalations should be such that we are inviting the grace of the Lord while our exhalations should be a gratitude to the Lord. Gururji ended the evening by releasing the 2nd issue of the 10th volume of **Yoga Rahasya**.

This was followed by *prasad* and a delicious sweet-sour raw mango drink - reminder of the start of the season of India's national fruit.

We all missed Geetaji during the function in Pune. She had left the day before for Mumbai on her way to South Africa, Australia and New Zealand where hundreds of members of our Iyengar Yoga family are getting an opportunity to learn directly under her. The Mumbai students were honoured as she made her first visit to *Iyengar Yogashraya*, one of the youngest Iyengar Yoga Institutes in the world which possibly has some of the oldest students of Iyengar Yoga. And, she also gave an informative talk on Lord Hanuman on the eve of the Lord's birth anniversary.

RIMYI

Our Institute in Pune is now closed for summer till the end of May - a little earlier than usual. Those visiting the Institute in June will be in for a pleasant surprise as the hall is being renovated and expanded. We look forward to see the new look.

Clearing Misconceptions

Pranayama is another Sanskrit term, which like *asana* (refer to **Yogadoot** 1.1; 2003), is widely misunderstood while being translated into the English language. It has often been loosely translated as the regulation of the breath. *Prana* is not merely the breath but the life-force. Life cannot exist without the breath and therefore man has often (mis) understood the "life-force", the *prana*, as breath. However, *prana* is much more than the breath. A comatose man is breathing, he is living but he has no life, he has no *prana*. So, one needs to be very clear that *pranayama* is NOT merely regulating the breath, it is not merely modulating the breath, it is not merely disciplining the breath but channelling the *prana* - that which gives us life. Breath is a part of *prana* but *prana* is not merely the breath.

Bringing clarity in thought and actions

Philosophers tell us that we should be satisfied with what we have. Satisfaction is the key to happiness. Does that mean that we should never be ambitious? Ambition is aspiring for what we do not have, which in other words means not being satisfied with what we have.

On the other hand, does not a man of the world need some motivation in life. Is not ambition a sort of motivation to pursue a particular goal in life? Will not a man of this world become dull, lethargic in the absence of motivation of any sort. Will he find meaning in life in the absence of motivation?

Should we or should we not be ambitious?

Gurujī clarifies

Ambition is the key for motivation in life. This is called as *abhilasha*. You need this motivation to get into any art, science or philosophy. You will be dull, stupid, inertic without this *abhilasha*. This "first" ambition is required to get into any subject. Any further ambitions are not ambitions but greed. Once you have been motivated by this first ambition, you should observe and study what all you get without the limited frame of the subsequent ambition. New light will strike you in that vastness and freshness of mind. You will grow in wisdom as knowledge enters you and at the same time you will not be trapped in the frames of ambition.

A practical hint

The body which is near the floor is the foundation/intelligence. This foundation has to be firm in any *asana* that you practice. To get a firm foundation, maximize the area of contact of the body part (which is touching the floor) with the floor.

Did you know?

Each and every cell in the body needs oxygen and without it, each will die in only four minutes!

Can you imagine how many cells of our body die because of lack of sufficient oxygen? We are not even aware of their demise till the entire tissue or organ gets affected.

Gurujī's practice

Here is list of *asanas* that Gurujī was seen performing recently. He stayed in each *asana* for 15 to 20 minutes for a total of nearly 2 1/2 hours.

- * *Sirshasana*
- * *Supta Virasana*
- * *Viparita Dandasana*
- * *Urdhva Dhanurasana*
- * *Kapotasana*
- * *Setu Bandha Sarvangasana*
- * *Sarvangasana*
- * *Shavasana*

Quotable Quotes

A yoga practitioner has to be intellectually alert and emotionally stable.

--B. K. S Iyengar