



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

Yoga for long was considered as a mysterious subject. The reason is that there is a lot of implied and experienced purport to what yoga is and what yoga does than what is visible to an untrained and unexperienced individual. In the olden days, a Guru initiated a student into the subject and guided them to delve deep into the subject to be able to experience its true meaning. Intense, reflective practice over years brought about revelations. In today's fast-paced world, it is saddening to see yoga being marketed like a commodity, advertising instant training and instant wisdom and trivialising the subject to the point of absurdity - such as the recent report on "teaching yoga to dogs for stress relief !" Through this doot (messenger), we are trying to keep you in touch with the source, Gururji Iyengar and RIMYI who have played a very crucial role in revealing the mysteries of this ancient subject to the common man of this era.

To Sir With Love

July 2nd 2003 was a memorable day for the students at RIMYI as they gathered in the lobby to greet Prashantji on his birthday. It was an



informal function which started with the reading of a witty "card" describing the different aspects of Prashantji and

his teachings. Then, an offering was made in the form of a book entitled 'Prashant Uvacha' which is a compilation of his Tuesday evening classes for the academic year 2002-2003. A book which will soon be released for students all over the world. Later, in all humility, Prashantji expressed that he was not used to being in the limelight and was embarrassed by all the affection that was being showered on him. Prashantji, then personally went around offering 'prasad' to his students.

Celebration Time: Guru Purnima

Guru purnima, the day on which sishyas (disciples) pay their respects and seek the blessings of their Guru, was celebrated on July 13, 2003. Over 800 students gathered at RIMYI on this auspicious day. Prashantji on behalf of all us (the students who were present as well as those who were not present!) sought the blessings of Gururji.

He then talked on how a Guru is not a person but a principle; all of us have the Guru, the divinity within us and how the "external" Guru inducts us

towards the Guru within us.

Another highlight of his talk was his explanation on how a Guru gives the same messages to all his disciples; gives the same instructions to all his students but each student interprets these as per his understanding, capability and mind-set.

He reiterated this aspect by narrating a beautiful story from the Upanishad. The deities, humans and demons asked Prajapati for instructions. Prajapati just uttered the letter

"Da". The celestial beings, who lived a leisure-filled life, interpreted this as "damanam" - observing restraint; the demons living a ruthless life, interpreted it as "dayanam" meaning compassion while humans who lead a self-centred life interpreted it as "danam" - to gift and give.

The Guru gives the same message to all but the implied purport received by us on the same instructions varies as per our mind-set and ability.

Gururji's 85th Birthday Celebrations

December 14, 2003 is our Revered Gururji's 85th birthday. Celebrations are being planned between the 8th and 14th. The programme would include talks, discussions, discourses, seminars, symposia, presentations, question and answer sessions but NO

classes. An outing may also be organised. You are welcome to send in your suggestions on how you wish to celebrate Gururji's birthday!!

Guru Prasad on Guru Purnima



Guruji blessed us with a divine discourse on the last word in the last sutra in the last chapter of Patanjali's yoga sutra. The crucial word being citi-shakti. The students were spell bound

for an hour when he expounded on only these two words citi and citi-shakti through which he revealed the entire philosophy of the yoga sutras. The lucidity and simplicity with which he spoke made it possible for all levels of students to understand this deep philosophy. We will give the transcript of this talk in one of the issues of Yoga Rahasya for all to partake the prasad that Guruji gave us on this day.

Is it necessary to learn asanas before pranayama?

It is not uncommon for new students to express a desire to learn pranayama before even embarking on asana practice. They are looking for peace of mind and have "heard" that pranayama can give them that and much more. Is it possible to learn pranayama before learning asana?

The answer can be found in Patanjali's 49th sutra of the second chapter which when translated reads that pranayama is the stoppage (cessation) of the inhalation and exhalation which follows when THAT has been secured. THAT referring to the posture.

As mentioned earlier (Yogadoot 1.1;2003), the words in our ancient scriptures are often difficult for people to understand and interpret and therefore we have scholars interpreting these through their commentaries. Vyasa, one of the foremost commentators on the yoga sutras clearly states pranayama can be done only when the posture (asana) has been achieved. Another learned commentator Vachaspati Misra also states, "after performing the asana and being full in their qualities is pranayama described". Which clearly implies that asana must precede pranayama.

To the current generation of teachers, Guruji always insists that beginners should never be taught pranayama until they have gained some mastery over asanas. This is nothing but a corroboration of the sutras.

Definitions

Pranayama is the science of the breath which leads to the creation, distribution and maintenance of vital energy.

Quotable Quote

To live spiritually, is to live in the present moment.

- BKS Iyengar

Clearing Misconceptions

Many people think that sitting quiet with eyes closed is meditation. A sense of quietness or serenity is also (mis) conceived as meditation. A dull person is also quiet but that is not meditation!!

Meditation is a sadhana concerning the innermost core of one's being. It is a Supreme state, an ultimate state of self realization where the subject and object become one. It is a state of enlightenment where one is beyond the mind, intelligence, feelings or experience. It is a state that can never be learnt or taught. People tend to confuse quietness as meditation which is not true!!

How many arches do we have on our feet?

We only notice the arch of the foot. Have we ever noticed that there is another arch between the mount of the big toe and the big toe? We try to lift the arches of the feet in Tadasana but have we ever tried to lift the "other" arch? Observe the firmness and stability that comes in the feet and legs when you lift the other arch too.

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