



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

The use of "props", importance given to sequencing of asanas and staying in different asanas for long periods of times are some of the characteristics of an "Iyengar Yoga" practitioner. Another attribute of "Iyengar Yoga" is the hierarchy in the practice of asanas. A beginner may be performing Trikonasana at a very physical level, but as one progresses one can be performing the same asana at a mental and intellectual levels. For example, Guruji is in a state of dhyana (meditation) in Trikonasana or any asana, even Kapotasana. To a lay observer, who is ignorant of the intricacies of yoga, all the hierarchies of practitioners seem to be doing the same "pose" but in reality, the quality of the asana would definitely vary. Ignorance and doubt are the hurdles in one's quest for knowledge. Through **Yogadoot**, which has a wide hierarchy of readers: from experienced teachers to new students to somebody who has never done yoga before, we are trying to remove the veils of ignorance and doubts from the minds of the readers. The readers are welcome to write to us with any questions that they may be facing in their practice rather than continue their practice in a state of doubt.

#### Celebration Time: Patanjali Jayanti

Patanjali Jayanti, the birth anniversary of Sage Patanjali will be celebrated at RIMYI on October 23, 2003. The subject of *astanga* yoga was transmitted by the word of mouth for generations to come until Sage Patanjali codified it into 196 aphorisms (*sutras*) divided into 4 chapter viz., *samadhi pada*, *sadhana pada*, *vibhuti pada* and *kaivalya pada* (*pada* = chapter). If not for these *sutras*, this subject may have been lost to our generation. Therefore, we practitioners of yoga, consider him as the father of yoga. We not only seek his blessings before commencing our practices but we also pay special respects to him on the occasion of Patanjali Jayanti. Several scholars have written commentaries on these *sutras*, which otherwise may appear terse and

difficult to comprehend. For the current generation, the **Light on Yoga Sutras of Patanjali**, provides the practitioner an insight into his own psyche and a practical philosophy on how the practice of yoga can help transform oneself - all these based on the practical, experiential knowledge of Guruji.

#### Guruji's 85th birthday celebration

Guruji's 85th birthday is to be celebrated at RIMYI, Pune from the 8th to the 14th of December. The highlight of this celebration would be Guruji explaining to us some of the subtlest aspects of yoga. Participation in this programme is open to ALL students of Iyengar Yoga. Those interested can visit [www.bksiyengar.com](http://www.bksiyengar.com) for more details on the programme.

#### Know your texts

Hiranyagarbha is considered to be the first speaker on yoga and his text, the first and foremost. This text is now extinct but there are remnants of this in the **Ahirbudhynya Samhita**.

#### Light on Yoga

The **Light on Yoga** was written by Guruji in the early 1960s and was first published in 1966. Till today, it remains one of the most popular books on yoga in the modern era. The Indian edition of the book has undergone its 29th impression. It has been translated into 17 languages. This book has opened out the subject of yoga to one and all breaking geo-political, religious, lingual, economic and cultural barriers - making yoga a truly universal subject.

## Inauguration of THE Iyengar Yoga Institute

The B in B K S Iyengar stands for the village Bellur, where Guruji was born and spent the first 6 to 8 years of his life. Yoga has spread to all corners of the globe but Guruji felt that this subject has to reach the core - the village of his origin. This aspiration saw the light of the day when the Yogini Smt. Ramamani Sundararaja Iyengar Memorial Hall was inaugurated on September 8, 2003. This hall, which is approx. 2000 square feet is constructed over the school

that Guruji built in 1967 in the memory of his parents. There was a lot of hesitation amongst the villagers when the concept of a yoga hall was floated last year. However, within a week after the construction of the Hall, there were 195 students in the yoga class! The budding yogis from Bellur may soon capture the world.

For details and photographs: read the forthcoming issue of Yoga Rahasya

### On the precipice

The *Katho Upanishad* clearly states that the good (shreya) and the pleasant (preya) approaches man. The wise man discriminates between the two and chooses the good over the pleasant while the average man opts for the pleasant for the sake of worldly well being. It further goes on to say that both good and pleasant, with different purposes bind man and the one who chooses the

pleasant "fails of his aim".

The practice of yoga also develops in the practitioner certain higher attributes. These attributes can lead one to enjoy the worldly pleasures (*bhoga*) or one can divest oneself of them and experience *apavarga* (emancipation or liberation of the self). It is here that many "yogis" slip and get trapped within *bhoga*.

### A Hint for the beginner

For those struggling to attain balance in *Ardha Chandrasana* - press the big toe of the bottom leg firmly on the floor. As long as this toe is pressing on the floor, you will be able to balance the lifted leg off the floor. Lift the big toe off the floor and you will struggle to retain your balance!

### Attaining agility

Speed and agility while walking or running is determined by the "space" or length between the base of the foot (near the heel) and the ankle. If the ankle is dropped then the speed while running or walking decreases in such individuals. One can learn how to "lengthen" this region in *asanas* such as *Upavisthakonasana*. Extend the heel away from the body in this *asana*. This helps attain sensitivity in the "ankle-heel" region.

### Questions that Guruji is often asked

What is the diet that you recommend?

Should we eat only sattvic food?

Should we stop eating non-vegetarian food?

Guruji has never enforced any form of diet on his students. He never insists on what his students should eat or what his students should not eat. As he has often said, "I have lived on tap water." He has had to live on only bread and water when the times were tough in his early days. The advice that Guruji gives is "respect the food when you eat it." If your mind is disturbed, if you are annoyed and irritable while you are eating then you are not doing justice to your food as its assimilation would be affected.

However, there are "n" number of instances where Guruji's students' dietary habits have changed. After years of practice, many students who have been eating non-vegetarian food since their childhood have switched towards vegetarian food. There are several instances where students no longer prefer oily and spicy food i.e., they naturally move towards a sattvic diet.

It is their practice that has brought about a natural change!!

### Quotable Quote

Yoga is not a pain-killer.

It is a pain remover

-- BKS Iyengar