



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

Guruji has often been referred to as a practical philosopher. Philosophers and scholars interpret the implied purport in the yoga sutras intellectually. Guruji, on the other hand, has his first hand experience and he uses the yoga sutras and other texts as a reference to find out whether his experiences are similar to those stated in the texts. He is therefore a practical philosopher. Those who have been fortunate to be under his direct tutelage realize how he has a detailed methodology to treat ailments of the body as well as to reach the innermost core of our own selves - all through the medium of the asanas. The body is the only instrument we are born with. It is upto us on whether we create a symphony or generate a cacophony with it. A symphony touches our heart and soul while a cacophony gets on our nerves! It is upto us on how deep we wish to penetrate with this instrument. Henceforth, through Yogadoot, we will also try to give you hints on how to create this symphony with the practice of yoga.

Why do we have so many asanas?

There are 84,00,000 *asanas* according to our yoga texts. Guruji has given the detailed methodology for 200 of these. The common question that a non-practitioner or a beginner asks is why should we be doing so many *asanas*? "Why should we mould our body into so many poses" (earlier ruefully referred to as contortions!)? "What do I get out of it?" "I do not want to be a Master of yoga!"

Remember, the *asana* is not done only by the physical body but also the organic body, the breath, the mind, the senses and the intellect.

As a beginner we start with the physical body and get flexibility in our muscles and joints which increases our mobility; as we progress a little, the *asanas* also affect all our physiological systems - our respiratory,

digestive, circulatory systems improve in their functioning and bring a sense of well being.

The real practice begins when we can attain stability in the different *asanas*. Stability not for a moment but for pronged durations. This stability is not to be only in our physical body but also the breath. The mind and emotions are stable when the breath is stable!

Quotable Quote

In perfection, experience and expression find balance and concord.

--Guruji BKS Iyengar

How does doing so many asanas help me cope with life ?

Any individual can attain the feeling of quietness and tranquility on the Himalayas but the beauty would be when one can attain that tranquility and stability in the most adverse situations and circumstances one may face in life.

Each *asana* gives us access to

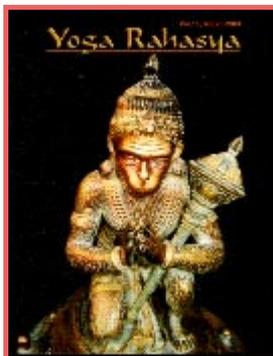
different parts of our being. Thus, if we can practice all the *asanas* with the kind of stability desirous then we naturally develop in us the stability to withstand any situation that we may come across in life. They teach us not to "cope" with life but to lead our own lives!

A Wedding in the Family

Guruji's grandson, Srineet will be marrying Kum. Mugdha on Sunday, April 18, 2004 in Pune. Srineet is the son of Guruji's daughter Vanita

and Mr. Sridharan. On behalf of all of Guruji's extended family, we wish the newly weds a long and happy married life.

New Releases



Yoga Rahasya 11.2, 2004

This issue contains 16 articles covering a variety of topics ranging from understanding the principles of Iyengar Yoga to anatomy of asanas to technical details on Urdhva Dhanurasana to yoga as a punishment. It also gives a gist of the Goraksha Samhita.

Celebration Time: Hanuman Jayanti - April 5, 2004

The Hanuman Jayanti celebrations at RIMYI were initiated by 12 year old Sharan reciting the Hanuman chalisa.



The highlight of this evening

function was Geetaji's talk on why we worship Lord Hanuman. She explained what are the attributes of the Lord and how these important characteristics are to be adapted by the yoga *sadhaka*.

Then, Guruji gave a unique interpretation of the meaning of the Monkey-God. Hanumanji was a "WAH" "nara" i.e. super human but wah-nara became vanara which means a monkey! Thus, we worship not a monkey God but a super-human God and then Guruji elaborated on the qualities of this invincible God!

Learning from Guruji: Devotion

Guruji teaches us yoga by giving us clear precise methodology to practice the different aspects of Astanga Yoga. He also teaches a lot by example. By just observing Guruji, one learns a lot. He does not practice what he preaches as the adage goes! He advocates only what he practices. He is a yogi and there is no duality about him! Today, we mention one such aspect about him that we can learn from: DEVOTION!

Guruji is devoted to yoga and time, place, age have made no difference.

He used to get up at 3 and 4 in the morning so as not to miss practice when he used to travel. Injuries caused by road accidents did not inhibit practice. Age does not stop him. Even today, he never misses his practice. The only difference is that today he is more intense and in a meditative state in all his *asanas*.

Practical Hint Sirsasana



Here are two important hints to attain good balance and stability in *Sirsasana*.

* When one interlocks the fingers for *Sirsasana*, ensure that the interlock is not loose. The web between the fingers of one palm should touch the web between the fingers of the other palm.

* Try to touch the bottom the wrist which is closer to the floor to touch the blankets on which you are performing *Sirsasana*. Observe the balance and stability that naturally comes in!

Know Your Texts

Yoga is said to have originated with the origin of the Universe. But, even in the written form, there are yogic texts which date back a more than a couple of millennia.

One such text is the *Goraksha Samhita* written by Sage Gorakshanath about 1000 to 1200 years ago. This text is composed of 200 verses distributed in 2 chapters. It talks about *asana*, *pranayama*, *pratyahara*, *dharana*, *dhyana* and *samadhi* and the effects of the practice of yoga.

Feedback

Please send your feedback on *Yogadoot* and your suggestions to info@bksiyengar.com