



Welcome to the Summer 2020 edition of our e-newsletter.

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Dear Members,

I hope you are all keeping well. I didn't realise that we would still be leading a restricted life when I wrote to you all in the Easter newsletter – strange times indeed.

I've had more time than usual to ponder the contents of this newsletter but despite the extra time I have struggled to get on with it – curious isn't it that rather than being a bonus the extra time has actually made me feel unsettled and a bit stressed. Probably to do with the uncertainty of the times!

The virtual Convention in June though, was a wonderful treat with several hours of glorious Pranayama teaching by Navaz Kamdin, a lecture and workshop by Edwin Bryant on his seminal text, the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali and some great classes taught by some of the most senior UK teachers and much more. IY(UK) are planning to include a review of this event in the next magazine so I won't go into detail here just to say, for me, the sessions with Navaz felt very personal – as if she was actually visiting my home, talking directly to me. Her wisdom and kindness shone though and her rapport with Uday (who was demonstrating the poses) was like a mother talking to a much loved son. I was especially delighted when he referred to her as Aunty at the end which is a typical Indian address for a much loved and honoured older woman.

In this newsletter I have included some fitting words from BKS Iyengar on stress taken from Chapter 3 VITALITY: The Energy Body (Prana) from Light on Life. If you don't own a copy of this amazing book I really urge you to get it. It was first published in 2005 but is as valid and relevant today as it was then.

Also included are some thoughts on food waste in the environment section, some photos of some garden practice and the recipe. As always I'd welcome any contributions for future newsletters – perhaps some reflections on how we are finding the new zoom classes from both the student and teachers perspective!

Love and best wishes - keep safe

Mary

ORIY Chair and Newsletter Editor

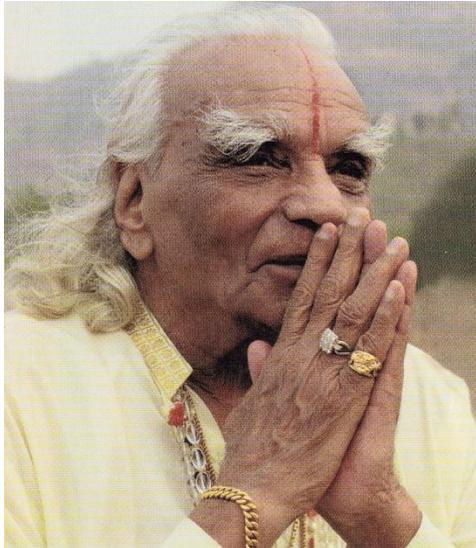
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Stress

From - Light on Life by B.K.S. Iyengar

Chapter 3 – VITALITY – The Energy Body (Prana)



While there has always been stress in the getting and spending of life, today we suffer from so much culturally and personally created stress. The “rat-race” has created much unnecessary tension both within and around us. Because of this fast life, we are neglecting the body and the mind. The body and the mind are beginning to pull each other in opposite directions, dissipating our energy. We do not know how to recharge our batteries of energy. As a result we become careless and callous.

Industrial development and urbanization have no doubt triggered a faster life. Science and technology have given us the boons of physical comforts and leisure. But we do not allow our mind to pause and think. We throw ourselves from one endeavour to another, believing that speed and movement is all there is in life. Therefore, stress accumulates in the body, producing psychosomatic ailments from stomach ulcers to cardiac arrest. Emotional stresses imprint themselves on the physical, organic, and neurological bodies, just as music is imprinted on the compact disc. Even animals fall sick and die from emotional stress.

We cannot eliminate stress and tension from our lives. That is not the point. Life is of itself stressful. People go to the cinema to relax. But even watching the picture is stressful. In sleep there is also stress: you move from one position to the other because of stress. You sit in meditation, and there is stress. If you collapse your spine while meditating, you go to sleep, so you have to keep your spine erect, and that is stressful. Walking, eating, reading – everything is stress. There is nothing in the world free from stress until death. Rather than asking, “Can I be completely free from stress?” we must ask, “What is the degree of stress?” What matters ultimately is how stress affects your nervous system. Positive stress is a measured response to Nature’s challenges. It is constructive and does not harm the nerves. But when it is destructive, it is negative stress, which is indeed harmful. In short, our aim is to be able to deal with stress as and when it arises, and not to imprint and accumulate it in the body’s various systems, including both conscious and unconscious memory.

Obviously, the key to overcoming stress is to calm and strengthen the nervous system. The eyes are so close to the brain that their tension and jitteriness reflects how ragged the nerves have become through overload. Whether your purpose is simply health, or health as a prelude to meditation, these disruptive patterns of energy that we call stress need to be

pacified and eliminated from the body. Otherwise progress towards the higher levels of yoga and the more harmonious ways of life will not come.

The main causes of negative stress are anger, fear, speed, greed, unhealthy ambition, and competition, which produce a deleterious effect on the body and the mind. When one does good work without selfish motives, though there is the stress of the work, it is positive and it does not cause the far greater stress that comes from grasping and greed. The practice of asana and pranayama not only de-stress you, but energise and invigorate the nerves and the mind in order to handle the stress that comes from the caprices of life.

Consider this analogy. When it rains heavily, the water does not necessarily penetrate the earth. If the surface is dry and hard, the rain water floods the surface and runs off. But if it rains gradually for many days continuously, the ground is moist, then the water seeps deep into the earth, which is good for cultivation and for life. Similarly, in ourselves, we must moisten our muscles and nerves through the expansion and extension of the various asana. In this way, the stress that saturates the brain is diffused throughout the rest of the body, so the brain is rested and released from strain and the body releases its stress and strain through movement. Similarly, while doing the various types of pranayama the whole body is irrigated with energy. The nerves are soothed, the brain is calmed, and the hardness and rigidity of the lungs are loosened. The nerves are made to remain healthy. There is a certain vibration, which you can make rhythmic and subtler in your asana and pranayama practice without force or stress. You are one with yourself and that is in and of itself a meditative state.

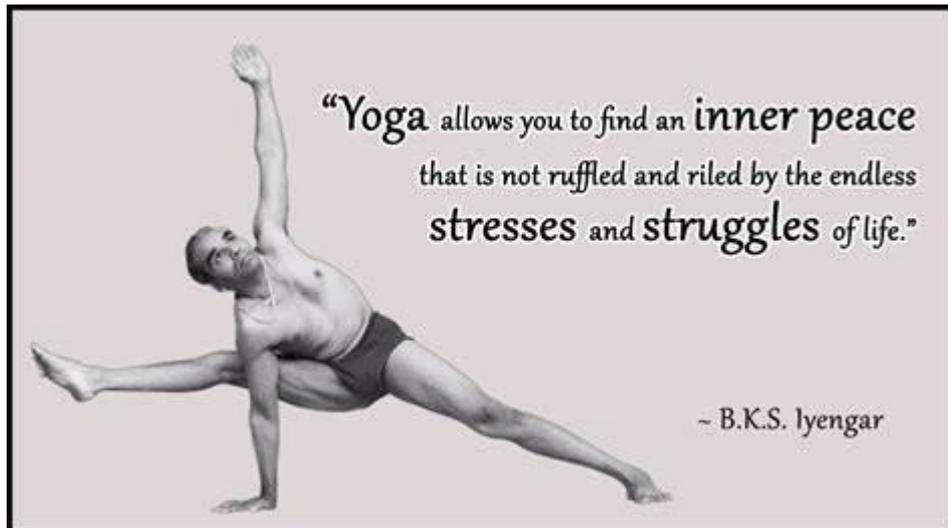
This quest for inner peace and contentment through yoga is the solution to the accumulation of stress that we experience in our lives. Two principal practices, yogasana and pranayama, help enormously with stress, but yoga offers a wider solution to stress. The cure to combat the three Ss – stress, strain, and speed – can be found in the three Ws – the work of devoted practice, the wisdom that comes of understanding the self and the world, and worship because ultimately surrendering what we cannot control allows the ego to relax and lose the anxiety of its own infinitesimally small self in the infinitude of the divine.

The speed, stress and strain of modern life sends the human system out of gear. The human body is the finest machine created by God. Millions of cells are produced every second and die out just as swiftly. The cells have their own intelligence. They give strength, fitness, and mental calm. The orchestra of the bones, muscles, tissues, nerves, blood vessels, limbs, and organs in the circulatory, respiratory, digestive, and glandular systems is tuned to a veritable dance that is sustained by the energy of prana and choreographed by our consciousness. While yoga may begin with the cult of the body, it leads towards the cultivation of our consciousness. As we cultivate our mind, we are able to avoid the stress that would otherwise lodge itself in our body, causing disease and suffering.

As I have said, you must not think that the practice of meditation alone is going to remove stress. Only by learning how to relax the brain can one remove stress. Stress is related to our very nerves and cells. One must learn to calm these cells and cool them down when

they overheat with anxious and distracting thoughts. Keeping the brain in a receptive state is the art that yoga teaches. Many people have been taught that meditation is a method of stress relief. In yoga, stress must be dealt with before one can truly begin to meditate. True meditation (dhyana) is when the knower, the knowledge, and the known become one. This is only possible when one is in a stress-less state.

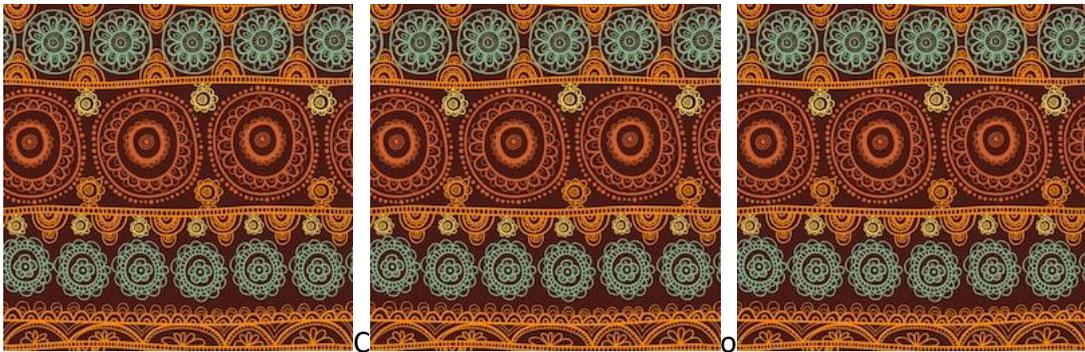
Meditation (dhyana) is an essential part of yoga, and potentially there is dhyana in every aspect or petal of yoga. Each one requires a reflective or meditative mood. Meditation is related to the higher mental faculty for which one needs preparation. Learning asanas certainly helps. If I say, "Relax your brain," you cannot do it . If I put you in a certain asana, your brain relaxes, and you become quiet. This is the beauty of yoga. If you do Halasana (Plough Pose) your brain becomes completely quiet. If you are dejected mentally you can do Setu Bandha Sarvangasana (a pose in which the body is arched like a bridge) for ten minutes, and your depression disappears, though you do not know how this transformation has occurred. This is how the body is used to cultivate the mind. When the suffering, depressed mind is cured, the light of the soul can itself radiate to the surface of our being.



Yoga practice in Julia's garden

Here a few photos from a recent class – the poses aren't perfect but hopefully you'll feel the summer vibe!





Congratulations to Sue Wakelin

Sue has been making and selling face masks to support the NHS – so far she has donated

£600 to this worthy cause. She has now decided to support the Air Ambulance with her latest batch of masks. For more information contact her at



susiewakelin@aol.com

Please let me know of any other charitable endeavours you have been involved in during this difficult time.

Caring for the environment.



Food waste

The facts

The causes of food waste or loss are numerous and occur at the stages of production, processing, retail and consumption. Global food loss and waste amount to between one-third and one-half of all food produced. Loss and wastage occur at all stages of the food supply chain.

In low-income countries, most loss occurs during production, while in developed countries much food – about 100 kilograms per person per year is wasted at the consumption stage.



In the UK it seems people are thinking more about where their waste goes and how to cut it.

Freezing unused fruit, vegetables and other food items, buying ingredients which keep for longer and only buying the food they need are among some of the actions contributing to less food waste.

According to some recent research commissioned by Cathedral City many claimed they are 'desperate' to eliminate food waste as much as possible following recent shortages of some items.

It also revealed that four in 10 adults have been donating leftover items to food banks or giving it away to friends and family to avoid throwing it in the bin.

While eight in 10 now try to only buy food they actually need – opting to shun multi-buy offers and other tempting deals.

And 63 per cent have taken to batch cooking in a bid to reduce the levels of waste in their homes.

But more adults have also been experimenting when cooking at home – with the aim of cutting down on food waste.

In fact, two thirds have tried out new recipes for this very reason.

The most common motivating factor for the reduction in food waste is to save money (41 per cent).

Other reasons include wanting to avoid the supermarket as much as possible (36 per cent) and dining out less (32 per cent).

However, environmental concerns (15 per cent) are also a key factor in the fall in food waste.

The researcher from Cathedral City is quoted as saying: “As we ease out of lockdown, it is reassuring that many Brits intend to continue with positive lifestyle habits established during this challenging time.”

“Efforts to improve recycling habits and drive collective sustainable change are fantastic to see and we want to encourage and champion this mindset in the long-term.

The study also found 44 per cent of those polled are especially eager to be sustainable in general - although they still have some way to go.

NOW OVER TO YOU

In our Winter 2019 newsletter many of you provided examples of all the little ways we are trying to lead a more environmentally friendly life – perhaps this time you could share the ways you avoid food waste. Let me know what you are doing for a future newsletter. (A comment made by food waste activist Selena Juul (founder of the consumer organisation ‘Stop Wasting Food’ cited as being responsible for Denmark reducing its food waste nationally by 25% in five years between 2010 - 2015) had particular resonance for me. She talks about UFOs (unidentified frozen objects) leftovers frozen with good intentions but not labelled and so forgotten and then eventually thrown away!)



Piedmont Roasted Peppers

I have been making this Delia recipe in the summer for nearly 20 years – so simple but absolutely delicious. Can be served as a starter or a light supper with some extra salad or tabbouleh.



Ingredients

- 4 large red peppers (green are not suitable)
- 4 medium tomatoes
- 8 tinned anchovy fillets, drained (you can substitute some kalamata or regular black olives for vegetarians)
- 2 cloves of garlic

8 dessertspoons extra virgin olive oil

Freshly milled black pepper

Small bunch of fresh basil leaves

Method

(Preheat the oven to gas mark 4 or 180 c)

Begin by cutting the peppers in half and removing the seeds but leaving the stalks intact (they're not edible but help the peppers keep their shape). Lay the pepper halves in a lightly oiled baking tray. Its essential to use a shallow tray approximately 16 cm x 40 cm: if the sides are too deep, the roasted vegetables won't get those lovely, nutty, toasted edges. Now put the tomatoes in a bowl and pour boiling water over them. Leave for a minute then drain and remove the skins. Cut the tomatoes in quarters and place two quarters in each pepper half.

Snip one anchovy fillet per pepper half into rough pieces and add to the tomatoes. (add chopped olives for vegetarians). Peel the garlic cloves, slice them thinly and divide equally among the tomatoes and anchovies. Spoon a dessert spoon of olive oil into each pepper and season with freshly milled pepper (you shouldn't need salt because of the anchovies). Roast for 50 minutes -1 hour

Transfer the cooked peppers to a serving dish with all the juices poured over and garnish with scattered basil leaves – serve with some tasty bread.