



Welcome to the Summer 2024 edition of our e-newsletter.

[www.oriy.org.uk](http://www.oriy.org.uk)

Dear Members,

Like many of us I was extremely saddened to hear of the recent death of Dr Michael Mosley. I have so enjoyed his brilliant series 'Just one thing' on BBC Radio 4 which looked at a variety of activities/practices that can improve health and well-being. Thankfully, due to BBC Radio Sounds we can still hear these programmes. In May he looked at the many benefits of yoga – how it can boost your brain, lower stress levels and even reverse the signs of aging! In the blurb published it says, *“Although Yoga is thought to have been practised for over 5,000 years, its myriad benefits for our health and wellbeing are still being uncovered. Professor Rima Dada from the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in New Delhi reveals the extraordinary findings into the benefits of yoga – how half an hour a day can slow down aging at a cellular level by protecting your mitochondria and your DNA. It can also improve your brain health and even reduce symptoms of depression.”* It's not telling us anything we didn't know already but worth a listen. Later on in this newsletter you can read more about Dr Data's work in an interview published in The Week magazine last year.

Of course, B K S Iyengar was well aware of the many benefits of yoga and made it his life's mission to share it with the world. In his numerous books and publications, he expounds the importance and value of yoga to humankind. Some of you have been fortunate to have heard him share his wisdom directly while many others have to rely on books, and the recollections from those who met him in person. In 'The True Nature of Health (Chapter 2 STABILITY The Physical Body (Asana) from Light on Life) Guruji explains how yoga plays an important part in being healthy – shared later in this newsletter. I would urge you to dip into this amazing book whenever you can, it really is worth revisiting over and over again.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank Tanya de Leernsyder for her sterling work representing ORIY at IY(UK) Executive meetings since the beginning of 2021 and then providing us with interesting summaries of proceedings. She has been a great Rep and will be missed. She is standing down as she takes on greater responsibilities as Membership Secretary of IY(UK). **So, if any of you are interested in taking on the now vacant position of ORIY Rep PLEASE let me know.**

Also, just a reminder about the ORIY Bursary available to teachers to help with costs associated with going to RIMYI in Pune. This bursary is designed to help people who wouldn't be able to finance the trip alone – get in touch if you feel an extra bit of financial support could make the trip possible.

Finally, as usual the newsletter contains info about upcoming events, a recipe and just for a change a beautiful poem I came across in a collection of Poetry and Pose on the Climate Crisis.

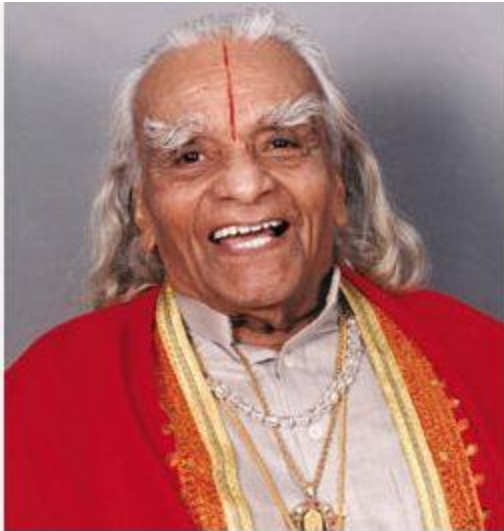
Enjoy the rest of the summer.  
Love and best wishes

Mary x

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## The True Nature of Health. From Light on Life Chapter 2 – Stability — (The Physical Body Asana) P.23



Most people ask only from their body that it does not trouble them. Most people feel that they are healthy if they are not suffering from illness or pain, not aware of the imbalances that exist in their bodies and minds that ultimately will lead to disease. Yoga has a threefold impact on health. It keeps healthy people healthy, it inhibits the development of diseases, and it aids recovery from ill health.

But diseases are not just a physical phenomenon. Anything that disturbs your spiritual life and practice is a disease and will manifest eventually in illness. Because most modern people have

separated their minds from their bodies and their souls have been banished from their ordinary lives, they forget that the well-being of all three (body, mind and spirit) are intimately entwined like the fibers of our muscles.

Health begins with firmness in body, deepens to emotional stability, then leads to intellectual clarity, wisdom, and finally the unveiling of the soul. Indeed health can be categorized in many ways. There is the physical health, which we are all familiar with, but there is also moral health, mental health, intellectual health, and even the health of our consciousness, health of the conscience, and ultimately divine health.

But a yogi never forgets that health must begin with the body. Your body is the child of your soul. You must nourish and train your child. Physical health is not a commodity to be bargained for. Nor can it be swallowed in the form of drugs and pills. It has to be earned through sweat. It is something we must build up. You have to create within yourself the experience of beauty, liberation and infinity. This is health. Healthy plants and trees yield abundant flowers and fruits. Similarly, from a healthy person, smiles and happiness shine forth like the rays from the sun.

The practice of yogasana for the sake of health, to keep fit, or to maintain flexibility is the external practice of yoga. While this is a legitimate place to begin, it is not the end. As one penetrates the inner body more deeply, one's mind becomes immersed in the asana. The first external practice remains dry and peripheral, while the second more intense practice literally soaks the practitioner with sweat, making him wet enough to pursue the deeper effects of the asana.

Do not under estimate the value of asana. Even in simple asanas, one is experiencing the three levels of the quest: the external quest, which brings firmness of the body; the internal quest, which brings steadiness of intelligence; the innermost quest, which brings

benevolence of spirit. While a beginner is not generally aware of these aspects when performing the asana, they are there. Often, we hear people saying that they remain active and light when they do just a little bit of asana practice. When a raw beginner experiences this state of well-being, it is not merely the external or anatomical effects of yoga. It is also about the internal physiological and psychological effects of the practice.

As long as the body is not in perfect health, you are caught in body consciousness alone. This distracts you from healing and culturing the mind. We need sound bodies so we can develop sound minds.

Body will prove to be an obstacle unless we transcend its limitations and remove its compulsions. Hence, we have to learn how to explore beyond our known frontiers, that is to expand and interpenetrate our awareness and how to master ourselves. Asana is ideal for this.

The keys to unlocking our potential are the qualities of purity and sensitivity. The point about purity, or simply cleanliness as it is often called in yoga texts, is not primarily a moral one. It is that purity permits sensitivity. Sensitivity is not weakness or vulnerability. It is clarity of perception and allows judicious, precise action.

On the other hand, rigidity comes from impurity, from accumulated toxins, whether in the physical sense or the mental, when we call it prejudice or narrow-mindedness. Rigidity is insensitivity. The sweat of exertion and the insight of penetration bring us, through a process of elimination and self-cultivation, both purity and sensitivity.

Purity and sensitivity benefit us not only in relation to the inward journey but in relation to our outer environment, the external world. The effects of impurity are highly undesirable. They cause us to develop a hard shell around us. If we construct a stiff shell between ourselves and the world outside our skin, we rob ourselves of most of life's possibilities. We are cut off from the free flow of cosmic energy. It becomes difficult in every sense to let nourishment in or to let toxic waste out. We live in a capsule, what a poet called a "vain citadel."

As mammals we are homeostatic. That means we maintain certain constant balances within our bodies, temperature for example, by adapting to change and challenge in the environment. Strength and flexibility allow us to keep an inner balance, but man is trying more and more to dominate the environment rather than control himself. Central heating, air conditioning, cars that we take out to drive three hundred yards, towns that stay lit up all night, and food imported from around the world out of season are all examples of how we try to circumvent our duty to adapt to nature and instead force nature to adapt to us. In the process, we become both weak and brittle. Even many of my Indian students who all now sit on chairs in their homes are becoming too stiff to sit in lotus position easily.

Suppose you lose your job. That is an external challenge with attendant worries such as how to pay the mortgage and feed and clothe the family. It is an emotional upheaval too. But if you are in balance, if there is an energetic osmosis between you and the outer world, you will adapt and survive by finding another job. Purity and sensitivity mean that we receive a

cosmic paycheck each day of our lives. When harmony and integration begin through practice in our inner layers of being, there is immediately a beginning to harmony and integration with the world we live in.

A great boon of yoga, even for relative beginners, is the happiness it brings, a state of self-reliant contentment. Happiness is good in itself and a basis for progress. An unquiet mind cannot meditate. A happy and serene mind allows us to pursue our quest as well as live with artistry and skill. Does not the American Declaration of Independence talk of Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness? If a yogi had written that, he would have said Life, Happiness and the Pursuit of Liberty. Sometimes happiness may bring stagnation, but if freedom comes from disciplined happiness, there is the possibility of true liberation.

Yoga sees the body quite differently than Western sports, which treats the body like a racehorse, trying to push it faster and faster and competing with all other bodies in speed and strength. There are today in India yoga “Olympics” where yoga practitioners can compete with one another. I do not decry this. In my life, I have given many demonstrations around the world in an attempt to popularize yoga. While this was yoga as an exhibition of art, the essence of yoga is not about external display but internal cultivation. Yoga is beautiful as well as Divine. Ultimately, the yogi searches for the inner light as well as the inner beauty, infinity, and liberation. Once I was called “Iron Iyengar” by a journalist, and I had to correct him that I am not hard like iron, but hard like a diamond. The hardness of a diamond is part of its usefulness, but its true value is in the light that shines through it.

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## 'Yoga can prevent onset of disease': Dr Rima Dada of AIIMS



– from THE WEEK Magazine

*By Anirudha Karindalam*

**Q/ What is the aim of your studies at AIIMS?**

**A/** I have been working on the impact of yoga in complex lifestyle diseases since 2008, that is yoga as a mind-body energy medicine that targets the body as a whole. For example, depression, which is a disease of the mind, affects every cell of the body. People with depression have high stress levels and they tend to age faster. Similarly, complex lifestyle diseases are associated with co-morbid depression.

We are working on the impact of yoga on sperm genome and sperm epigenome, and how it affects the health of future generations. It is proven from our study that yoga improves both nuclear and mitochondrial integrity and has positive impact on nuclear DNA (from both parents) and mitochondrial DNA (from the mother). Our studies on the impact of yoga on sperm genome are the first in the world.

**Q/ How many participants have been included in the study?**

**A/** We are working on yoga and its impact on various diseases for the last 15 years. Since 2008, we have had more than 200 patients of glaucoma, more than 400 patients of unexplained male infertility, 150 patients of arthritis, 200 patients of depression, 120 patients of idiopathic recurrent spontaneous miscarriages and 45 patients of polycystic ovarian syndrome.

**Q/ Can yoga be absorbed into integrative medicine to prevent diseases?**

**A/** Definitely, yoga should be integrated with modern medicine for management of complex lifestyle diseases. Yoga switches on the expression of genes that enhance DNA repair. It reduces oxidative stress (too many free radicals and not enough antioxidants to eliminate them, which leads to tissue damage) and inflammation. It increases telomerase (an enzyme that keeps cells from dying) activity and promotes neuroplasticity.

**Q/ Your study says that yoga can be used as an adjunct therapy in the management of rheumatoid arthritis and co-morbid depression. How can *asanas* help physical and mental ailments?**

**A/** Yoga is not synonymous with asanas. It comprises of asana, *pranayama* and meditation. It is a mind-body energy medicine. Most people identify yoga with physical posture (asana). Having said that, maximum benefits come from regulated breathing practices (*pranayama*) and meditation (*dhyana*). They cause parasympathetic dominance—the system for rest, digestion and repair reduces stress and harmonises the mind and the body.

In rheumatoid arthritis, which is a severe, chronic, progressive inflammatory arthritis, yoga reduces inflaming. It reduces ESR (erythrocyte sedimentation rate) and CRP (C-reactive protein) levels (both inflammation indicators), maintains immune homeostasis, increases HLA-G (human leukocyte antigen-G) levels and thus induces molecular remission and re-establishes immunological tolerance in rheumatoid arthritis.

For mental ailments, our studies have shown yoga practices increase expression of genes that enhance neuroplasticity and genes that encode for neurotrophics factors (small proteins that support growth and survival of mature and developing neurons). Thus, yoga builds emotional resilience. It not only causes biochemical and physiological changes in brain but also anatomical changes. It increases grey matter in areas like prefrontal cortex, hippocampus and reduces size of amygdala, which is the centre for stress. Thus, yoga practices increase concentration, focus, attention, learning and memory.

**Q/ Do you think yoga can help bring down the problem of infertility?**

**A/** There are many causes of infertility—they can be genetic causes like structural or numerical chromosomal defects, Y-chromosome deletions, anatomical causes, endocrine and immunological causes, which can lead to infertility in men. WHO reports have shown that in nearly half the infertility cases the problem is in the male. We have worked on cases with unexplained male factor infertility. In these cases, sperm count, motility, morphology and hormonal parameters are normal, yet they are infertile. Earlier studies from my lab have documented that the sperm is a cell most vulnerable to oxidative stress. Unhealthy lifestyle, smoking, excessive alcohol intake, excessive cellphone use, psychological stress and advanced age are associated with oxidative stress and oxidative damage to DNA and increase in concentration of oxidative DNA adducts (a form of DNA damage), which cause de-novo germline mutations. Oxidative stress damages both mitochondrial and nuclear genome. This results in not only infertility, but also in recurrent spontaneous miscarriage, congenital malformation, complex neuropsychiatric disorders and even childhood cancers. Practising yoga decreases oxidative stress and oxidative DNA damage and normalises levels of sperm transcripts. Yoga improves integrity of mitochondrial and nuclear genome and positively modulates the sperm epigenome, and this also impacts the lifelong health of the offspring.

**Q/ What is the impact of yoga and meditation on other lifestyle diseases?**

**A/** Meditation focused on breathing decreases intraocular pressure (fluid pressure of the eye; IOP helps in evaluating patients at risk of glaucoma) and diurnal fluctuations in IOP. Meditation has a direct impact on trabecular meshwork gene expression (also related to the eye). An upward regulation of neuro-protective and downward regulation of pro-inflammatory genes was observed after *pranayama* and meditation. It leads to reduction in stress as seen by reduction in cortisol levels, and improves overall quality of life. Most benefits are observed with pranayam and *dhyana* that reduce stress hormone release by relaxation and harmonise mind-body relationship. From our studies, we have clearly seen that yoga can be used as an adjunct therapy in the management of complex lifestyle diseases. Yoga is a polypill. It modulates the epigenome and switches on gene programmes beneficial for health and wellness. If practised regularly, it can prevent onset of diseases and promote health.





## EVENTS

### The Next ORIY workshop with Elaine (Lally) Martin

We are delighted to welcome Lally to Newbury on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> October at Speen Hall, Speen Lane. RG14 1RJ.  
10am till 1.00pm



Lally is a Senior Iyengar Yoga teacher based in the North Cotswolds. Her background is medical but yoga is her passion. The subject of yoga is vast and has taken her on an annual journey to India for many years to improve her understanding and knowledge. She qualified as an introductory teacher in 2002

Cost: ORIY Members £25  
Non ORIY Members £35

**(ORIY membership: £20 per annum which gives you affiliated membership to Iyengar Yoga UK with 2 magazines per year, the ORIY e-newsletter each term and access to yoga workshops at a reduced rate)**

#### Payment by Bank Transfer:

Account Name: ORIY (Oxford & Region Iyengar Yoga).

Account Number: 13688928.

Sort Code: 60-15-07.

Ref: Your Surname Lally 2024

To book your place please email [jhardy2406@gmail.com](mailto:jhardy2406@gmail.com)

Also,



**SAVE THE DATE** – for a Day workshop with Uday Bhosale Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> March 2025 more info to follow.

**Sometimes - by Jean O'Brien ( from the Empty House collection)**

Sometimes the air dissolves  
around a thing and it stands clear,  
of air, of shadows we see it bare.  
Sometimes time comes unstrung,  
like a rope of milky opals spilling  
unexpected flashes of kingfisher colours,  
the jade green, the crimson throat,  
before it slots back in.



Sometimes the sea stands still  
for a brief moment, when the forward  
push and pull of the undertow hushes  
and the sand sparkles with airy foam  
and pebbles idle. And in those times  
we stand alone clear of the pressing chatter,  
the urgency of now, and sometimes wonder  
why the stars are where they are.

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**Veggie lasagne (really easy and tasty)**

**Ingredients**

- 2 yellow or red peppers, seeds removed, cut into roughly 2cm chunks
- 1 courgette, about 300g quartered lengthways and cut into roughly 2cm chunks
- 1 large sweet potato, peeled and cut into roughly 2cm chunks
- 3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 1 large onion, finely chopped
- ½ tsp dried chilli flakes
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 2 x 400g tins chopped tomatoes
- 2 tsp Italian seasoning or dried oregano
- 1 vegetable stock cube
- 200ml/7fl oz cold water
- 100g young spinach leaves (optional)
- 9–10 dried lasagne sheets
- salt and freshly ground black pepper





## For the cheese sauce

- 75g plain flour
- 75g butter, cubed
- 750ml milk, semi-skimmed or full-fat
- 125g mature cheddar, coarsely grated
- 75g grated mozzarella, or extra cheddar

## Method

1. Preheat the oven to 200C/180C Fan/Gas 6. Put the peppers, courgette and sweet potato into a large baking tray. Drizzle with 2 tablespoons of the oil, season with salt and pepper and toss together.
2. Roast for 30 minutes, or until softened and lightly browned.
3. While the vegetables are roasting, heat the remaining oil in a large saucepan and gently fry the onion for 5 minutes, stirring regularly.
4. Add the chilli and garlic and cook for a few seconds more. Stir in the tomatoes, Italian seasoning (or dried oregano) and crumbled stock cube. Pour over the water and bring to a gentle simmer. Cook for 10 minutes, stirring regularly. Set aside.
5. For the cheese sauce, put the flour, butter and milk in a large saucepan and place over a medium heat. Whisk constantly with a large metal whisk until the sauce is thickened and smooth. (Use a silicone covered whisk if cooking in a non-stick pan.) Stir in roughly two-thirds of the cheeses and season to taste.
6. Take the vegetables out of the oven and add to the pan with the tomato sauce. Stir in the spinach and cook together for 3 minutes. Season with salt and lots of ground black pepper.
7. Spoon a third of the vegetable mixture over the base of a 2½–3 litre/4½–5¼ pint ovenproof lasagne dish and cover with a single layer of lasagne. Top with another third of the vegetable mixture (don't worry if it doesn't cover evenly) and a second layer of lasagne.
8. Pour over just under half of the cheese sauce and very gently top with the remaining vegetable mixture. Finish with a final layer of lasagne and the rest of the cheese sauce. Sprinkle the reserved cheese over the top.
9. Bake for 35–40 minutes, or until the pasta has softened and the topping is golden brown and bubbling. Stand for 5 minutes before cutting to allow the filling to settle.

## Recipe Tips

Letting the lasagne stand for a few minutes before serving makes it easier to serve as the layers will hold together better.

If you want to make this recipe ahead, you can assemble it in a freezer and oven safe dish then wrap very thoroughly in cling film or kitchen foil. Freeze for up to 3 months. To cook, first thaw in the fridge, then cook as directed in the recipe.

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