



Welcome to the Winter 2023 edition of our e-newsletter. www.oriy.org.uk

Dear Members,

In this edition I have taken a look at the invocations we chant as part of our yoga practice.

In Yoga Wisdom and Practice - for health happiness and a better world' Page 88. Guruji says, *"I request all of you to recite the invocation on Patanjali when you start your classes. If you cannot recite it in Sanskrit, you may recite the translation. In this way, we may invoke his presence at the time of our practices. We recite this invocation for the simple reason that we consider him as our Guru in yoga. This great sage gave us grammar for right speech, medicine for health, and yoga for mind culture. When we are in our yoga sadhana, we should think of him and pay our reverential respects to him so that our minds may be tuned to the good thoughts of his works."*

We are all very familiar with the Invocation to Patanjali so this is not included but I thought the Prayer to the Guru sometimes recited after the Invocation could be reproduced later in this newsletter. I have also included the very beautiful 'Song of the Soul' a magnificent account of the spiritual part of a human being. Both taken from the booklet 'Prayers and Invocations for Chanting – including an explanation of the invocations by Dr Geeta S.Iyengar' published in 2010. This booklet contains a wonderful collection of the chanting led by Geetaji from the two Conventions in Cologne and London in 2009.

Finding the language to express complex ideas and concepts is very difficult but something Guruji did with great mastery. I found his descriptions of Savasana in 'Light on Pranayama – Part Two: Freedom and Beatitude' compelling, some of which is shared later on.

Finally, info about the next ORIY workshop in March with Matthew Greenfield, some photos from the workshop with Margaret Rawlinson held in October as well as the usual recipe- a rather filling but tasty butternut squash and tomato crumble and a last minute piece on the Winter Solstice to wind up 2023.

Have a very Happy Christmas and New Year.
Love and best wishes

Mary
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Prayers of Guru (page 25)

**gurur brahma gurur Visnu
gurur devo mahesvarah
gurus saksat param brahma
tasmai sri gurave namah**

The Guru is Brahma, the creator Himself. The Guru is Visnu, the preserver. The Guru is great God Siva, the destroyer. The Guru is Supreme Bahman, Lord of Lords. To the divine Guru I bow.

**brahmanandam param sukhadam kevalam jnanamurtim
dvandvatitam gaganasadsam tattvamasyadi laksyam
ekam nityam vimalmachalam sarvadhi saksibutam
bhavatitam triguna rahitam sadgurum tam namami**

I bow to Guru, who is the embodiment of the bliss of Brahman, the giver of the greatest beatitude. He is the absolute. He is the personification of the highest knowledge. He is beyond the dualities. He is as vast as sky. He aims to become one with Lord. He is only one and eternal. He is pure and stable. He witnesses everything that is happening. He is unattached and above that. He is free from three qualities, sattva, rajas and tamas. I bow down to that true and real Guru.

atmasatakam (Song of the Soul)

(This beautiful song attempts to unravel the complexities of the human soul.)

**mano buddhyahamkara cittani naham
na ca srotrajivhe na ca ghrananetre
na ca vyomabhumima tejo na vayuh
cidanandarupah sivoham sivoham**

I am neither ego nor reason, I am neither mind nor thought,
I cannot be heard nor cast into words, nor by smell nor sight ever caught;
In light and wind I am not found, nor yet in earth and sky –
Consciousness and joy incarnate, Bliss of the Blissful am I.

**na ca prana samjno na vaipanchvayur
na va sapta dhaturna va panckosah
na vakpanipadau na copsthapayu
cidanandarupah sivoham sivoham**

I have no name, I have no life, I breathe no vital air,
No elements have moulded me, No bodily sheath is my lair;
I have no speech, no hands and feet, nor means of evolution-
Consciousness and joy am I, and bliss in dissolution.

**na me dvesa ragau na me lobhamohau
mado naiva me naiva matsatrya bhavah
na dharmo na cartho na kamo na mokshah
cidanandarupah sivoham sivoham**

I cast aside hatred and passion, I conquered delusion and greed;
No touch of pride caressed me, so envy never did breed;
Beyond all faiths, past reach of wealth, past freedom, past desire,
Consciousness and joy am I, and bliss is my attire.

**na punyam na papam na saukhyam na dukhahm
na mantrō na tirham na veda na yajnah
aham bhojanam naiva bhojyam na bhokta
cidanandarupah sivoham sivoham**

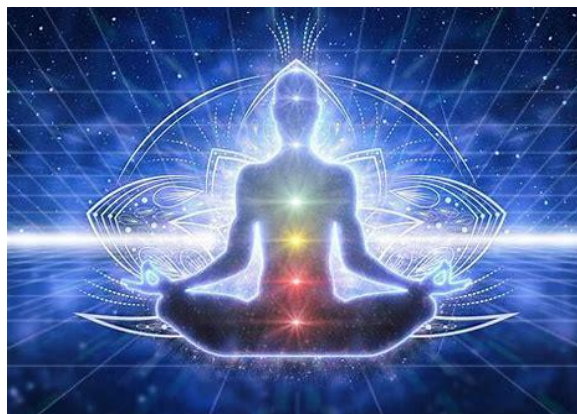
Virtue and vice, or pleasure and pain are not my heritage,
Nor sacred texts, nor offerings, nor prayer nor pilgrimage;
I am neither food, nor eating, yet eater am I –
Consciousness and joy incarnate, Bliss of the Blissful am I.

**na me mrtyu sank ana me jati bhedah
pita naiva me naiva mata na janmah
na bandhur na mitram gurur naiva sisyah
cidanandarupah sivoham sivoham**

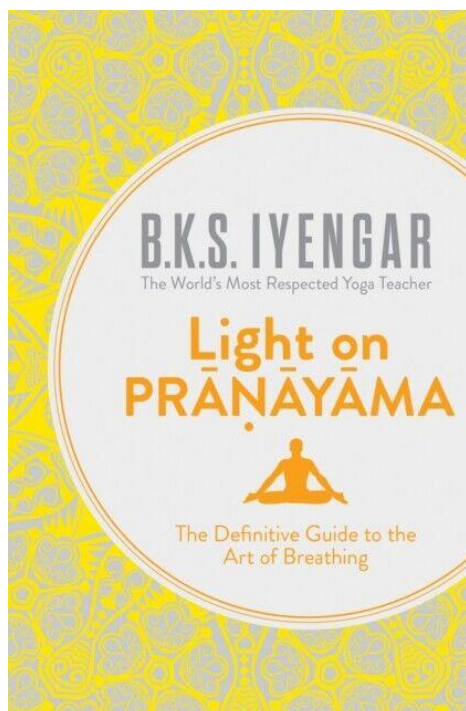
I have no misgivings of death, no chasms of race divide me,
No parent ever called me child, no bond of birth ever tied me;
I am neither disciple nor master, I have no kin, no friend –
Consciousness and joy am I, and merging in bliss is my end.

**aham nirvikalpo nirakararupo
vibhur vyapta sarvatra sarvendriyanam
sada me samtvaṁ na muktima bandhah
cidanandarupah sivoham sivoham**

Neither knowable, knowledge, nor knower am I, formless is my form,
I dwell within the senses but they are not my home;
Ever serenely balanced, I am neither free nor bound –
Consciousness and joy am I, and bliss is where I am found.



Savasana (Relaxation) From Light on Pranayama page 266



(This text is included to show the way Gururji explained the complexities of Savasana and how he used the linguistic tool of analogy to help us understand.)

1. Sava in Sanskrit means a corpse, and asana a posture. Thus, savasana is a posture that simulates a dead body, and evokes the experience of remaining in a state as in death and of ending the heart-aches and the shocks that the flesh is heir to. It means relaxation and therefore recuperation. It is not simply lying on one's back with a vacant mind and gazing, nor does it end in snoring. It is the most difficult of the yogic asanas to perfect, but it is also the most refreshing and rewarding.

2. A perfect savasana needs perfect discipline. It is easy to relax for a few minutes, but to do so without physical movement or without wavering of the intellect requires long training. At the start a prolonged stay in savasana is not only

very uncomfortable to the brain, but makes the body feel like a piece of dry, dead wood. Pricking sensations are felt on the skin along the limbs and they grow more acute if the pose is continued.

Rhythm

3. When savasana is well performed the breath moves like a string holding the pearls of a necklace together. The pearls are the ribs which move slowly, very steadily and reverently, reverent because when one is in that precise state, the body, the mind and the brain move towards the real self (Atma), like a spider returning the centre of its web. At this juncture a state of samahita chitta (equanimity of the mind, the intellect and the self) is felt.

4. In the beginning, the ribs do not relax, the breath is rough and uneven, while the mind and intellect waver. The body, the breath, the mind and the intellect are not united with the Atma or the Self. For correct savasana there must be unity of the body, the breath, the mind and the intellect where the Self holds the reins. All four bow down respectfully to the Atma. Then the chitta (that is, manas, buddhi and ahankara or ego, which is the state that ascertains that 'I know') becomes samahita chitta, in which the mind, the intellect and the ego are balanced. This is a state of stillness.

5. This state is achieved by controlled discipline of the body, the senses and the mind. It should not, however, be mistaken for silence. In stillness there is a rigidity due to force of will. Here the attention is focused to keep the consciousness (chitta) still (dharana), whereas in silence that attention is expanded and released (dhyana) and the will is submerged in the Atma. This subtle distinction between stillness and silence can only be known by experience. In savasana the attempt is to achieve silence in all the five sheaths or kosas: the annamaya (anatomical), the pranamaya (physiological), the manomaya (mental or emotional), the vijnanamaya (intellectual), and the anandamaya (the body of bliss), which envelop the person from the skin to the self.

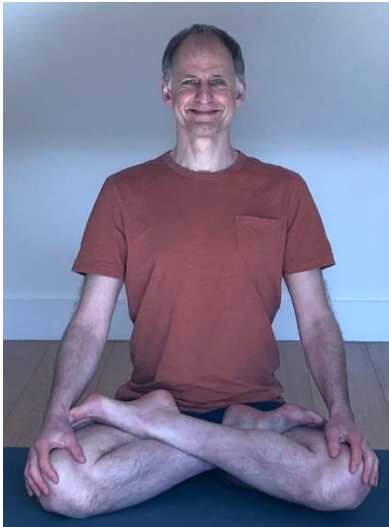
6. A star pulsates with energy and the energy is translated into light rays, which may take many light-years to reach human eyes on earth. The Atma is like such a star and it transmits and imprints its likes and desires on the mind. These latent desires, like stellar energy translated into light, may resurface to the mind level, breaching the silence.

7. First, learn to achieve the silence of the body. Then control the subtle movements of the breath. Next learn about the silence of the mind and the emotions and then of the intellect. From there proceed to learn and study about the silence of the Self. It is not until then that the ego or small self (ahamkara) of the practitioner can merge with his Self (Atma). The fluctuations of the mind and the intellect cease, the 'I' or ego disappears and savasana provides an experience of unalloyed bliss.



EVENTS

The next ORIY workshop with Matthew Greenfield



We are very pleased to welcome Mathew to Newbury on Sunday 3rd March 2024 from 10 am until 1.00pm at Speen Hall RG14 1RJ.

Matthew is a qualified Level 3 Iyengar Yoga Teacher (Senior Intermediate Level 2) with over 30 years' experience. He started yoga at university and has trained with many senior teachers in the UK and abroad. This includes several trips to study with the Iyengar family in Pune.

Cost: ORIY Members – £25
(Non ORIY Members £35)

Payment by Bank Transfer - Account Name: ORIY (Oxford & Region Iyengar Yoga). Account Number: 13688928. Sort Code: 60-15-07. Ref: Your Surname Matthew 2024

To book your place please email jhardy2406@gmail.com

Many ORIY members (including myself) enjoyed a wonderful day of yoga in October with Margaret Rawlinson. Here are few photos from the day. It's not the best photography as I was enjoying the teaching so much that I kept missing the best moments. These photos just capture a little of the flavour of the day. Editor.





Butternut Squash and Tomato Crumble



Ingredients

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 1 garlic clove, finely chopped or grated
- 1 small butternut squash, peeled, deseeded and cut into bite-sized pieces
- 400g can cherry tomatoes
- 150g mascarpone
- 100g spinach

For the crumble

- 200g plain flour (I used wholemeal)
- 125g cold butter, cut into cubes
- 50g parmesan or vegetarian alternative, grated
- 50g cheddar, grated
- 50g walnuts, chopped
- few thyme sprigs, leaves picked

Method

- **STEP 1**
Heat the oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6. Heat the oil in a large frying pan over a medium-low heat and fry the onion until softened but not coloured, about 10-12 mins. Stir in the garlic and cook for 1 min more before tipping in the squash. Cook for 8-10 mins until the squash has started to soften, then stir in the tomatoes, mascarpone and spinach. Season well and cook for a few minutes more to warm everything through, then tip into a medium baking dish (ours was 22 x 22cm).
- **STEP 2**
For the crumble, rub the flour and butter together or blitz in a food processor to a breadcrumb-like consistency. Stir in the cheese, walnuts and thyme, and season. Scatter the crumble over the squash filling, being careful not to pack it down. Bake for 30-40 mins until the squash is tender and the crumble is golden.

The Winter Solstice

I just had to end with this delightful piece, loved it, so true – thanks to Jenny Furby for sharing.

The winter solstice time is no longer celebrated as it once was, with the understanding that this is a period of descent and rest, of going within our homes, within ourselves and taking in all that we have been through, all that has passed in this full year which is coming to a close... like nature and the animal kingdom around us, this time of hibernation is so necessary for our tired limbs, our burdened minds.

Our modern culture teaches avoidance at a max at this time; alcohol, lights, shopping, overworking, over spending, comfort food and consumerism.

And yet the natural tug to go inwards as nearly all creatures are doing is strong and the weather so bitter that people are left feeling that winter is hard, because for those of us without burning fires and big festive families, it can be lonely and isolating.

Whereas in actual fact winter is kind, she points us in her quiet soft way towards our inner self, towards this annual time of peace and reflection, embracing the darkness and forgiving, accepting and loving embracing goodbye the past year.

"Winter takes away the distractions, the buzz, and presents us with the perfect time to rest and withdraw into a womb like love, bringing fire & light to our hearth".

.. and then, just around the corner the new year will begin again, and like a seed planted deep in the earth, we will all rise with renewed energy once again to dance in the sunlight.

Life is a gift ❤️ a Happy winter to you all...

~ Bridget Anna McNeil

art | Sylwia Telari

