



IYASE

Iyengar Yoga Association
of the South East

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President's Letter



Dear Members,

This year, we celebrate Guruji's 100th birthday. Next year, we will celebrate the 25th anniversary of the creation of IYASE, formed in 1994, with Guruji's good wishes.

Transformation is in the air. Can you feel it?

In the national association, there are discussions about how IYNAUS can best serve its community and what the respective strengths are of the regional and national Iyengar associations. You may have noticed that the IYNAUS website has been re-launched. You may also have found some of the many new resources available on our regional IYASE website. We are proud to announce that there are several new studios in our IYASE region, and in previously unrepresented areas. Also, be aware that some of our long-established teachers are modifying their teaching schedules.

How can we make the most of this time of transition? The key to moving in the direction we want to go in starts by applying the principle of *svadaya*, self-study.

Within your IYASE Board, we are continually engaged in the process of self-study. We ask ourselves: Is what we are doing furthering Guruji's gift in a way he would approve of? What else might we do that could be better? Is what we did as an organization in the past still meaningful today?

For 2018, my priorities in service of the IYASE region are threefold:

1. Create a process for smooth succession for the Board in 2019 and beyond.
 2. Implement additional methods for disseminating Iyengar Yoga within the region.
 3. Begin updating the IYASE By-laws, with the intention of completing that process in 2019, my last year with the Board.
- Create a process for smooth succession for the Board for 2019 and beyond.

This is my third year on the IYASE Board, and each year our succession has been a more difficult than necessary process. This means that nowadays we spend too much time discussing and re-learning standard practices of the Board. One of the ways I'd like to address this is to have

a lead and a second for each of our subject areas. The second for each area would step into that role as lead in their next year on the Board, with a comfortable understanding of Board practices.

- Implement additional methods for disseminating Iyengar Yoga within the region.

Historically, IYASE has sponsored two in-person continuing education workshops each year. For 2019, we have one in-person workshop planned (since I originally did a 3-year plan when I came onboard), and that is a teacher training in North Carolina.

After being the lead for Continuing Education for IYASE for two years, and now as your President, I've questioned whether this practice is getting us the results that we want.

Essentially, when we ask a senior teacher in the region to run an IYASE-sponsored workshop, we are asking them to make a donation to the region, since most people who attend these trainings are folks who already know these teachers, and would go to their workshops anyway. In my view, this: 1) doesn't do the teacher any favors since they make less money than they would running the workshop on their own; 2) doesn't help folks in the region get to know teachers they wouldn't otherwise know; and 3) doesn't advance regional IYASE teachers who aren't well known.

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Asana Column



Asana Sequence for Compassion

By *Kandy Love*
and *Bobbi Goldin*

As seasoned practitioners and teachers, we have both experienced and witnessed the powerful effects of yoga. Bobbi and I had our first yoga classes in 1978, and we “found” each other in 1984. So, with 40 years of practice and 34 years of friendship, our immersion into yoga is shared; it is deep, broad, and committed. However, the approach to our practices with compassion evolved separately as we live on opposite coasts in Florida. Putting together our knowledge and expertise for this article seemed natural.

An integral part of developing an asana sequence which enhances compassion is defining this value. We turn to Patanjali’s Yoga Sutra I:33 as a starting point:

“maitre karuna mudita upeksanam sukha dukkha punyapunya visayanam bhavanatah cittaprasadanam.” The translation of this sutra from BKS Iyengar is as follows: “This sutra asks us to rejoice with the happy, to be compassionate to the sorrowful, friendly to the virtuous, and indifferent to those who continue to live in vice despite our attempts to change them.”

To move in the world with this attitude is not easy. In the aging process we have both experienced throughout these 40 years, our bod-

ies and hearts have been challenged and compromised, to say the least, from surgeries, broken bones, loss of loved ones and friends, and life threatening developments. Our internal and external opinions, judgments, and expectations have also taken their tolls. We have had to change our practices, stop and restart our practices, and laugh at ourselves more often than not. Being on the mat with an intention of self friendliness, happiness, and compassion is a choice we have had to make time and time again. And it continues to work, even when off the mat, one choice at a time.

We need to remember that compassion is not a mental construct that we wish for, nor does it live in a

vacuum. It is an innate quality of being human, not doing human. Thus, to approach an asana practice with an intention of compassion means a practice of non-doing...it means a practice of effortless effort...it means a practice of experiencing the light that shines through us. In Mr. Iyengar’s words, “The hardness of a diamond is part of its usefulness, but its true value is in the Light that shines through it.”

We often forget this value of the Light with our daily lives full of challenges and joys. Even on our mat, we oftentimes focus on the details and structure of the asanas, striving for the right pose. As Guruji said, “The study of asana is not about mastering posture. It’s about using posture to understand and transform yourself.”

Keeping the words of Mr. Iyengar in mind, our starting point for this Asana Sequence for Compassion begins from this self love and transformative place.

*The study of asana is
... about using posture
to understand and
transform yourself.*

Details about how to do the poses are not our focus, as we are assuming those of you reading this article have that basic information on hand. This article is more about what the details create, not what they are. You will find suggestions,

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Philosophy Corner



Yoga for Consciousness: The Importance of Grammar and Speech

By Gary Jaeger

On a number of occasions, I've heard yoga practitioners ask why they should study the Yoga Sūtras. To many, I suppose, this ancient text and its philosophical lessons seem too far removed from our contemporary, physical practice to be relevant. This is not surprising. Most practitioners are first drawn to yoga by its physicality and are understandably less interested in its philosophical component. Those who attempt to cultivate an interest by turning to the Sūtras can become easily discouraged when they find no mention of the poses that comprise their practice.

For teachers, the expectation to incorporate philosophy into their teaching can seem onerous or even pointless. Weaving some quick point about the Sūtras into a class that is otherwise about the performance of poses can seem tangential. Meaningfully incorporating philosophical lessons in a more engaging way can be time-consuming, and could alienate some students who come to class with the sole intention of exercising.

Learning the Sūtras is a daunting task for anyone. Even a cursory understanding requires some knowledge about the historical context in

which they were written and about the larger philosophical discussion of which they are a part. A more complete understanding requires at least a little familiarity with Sanskrit and its complex grammar. To most practitioners and teachers, all this work hardly seems worth the effort. To some, philosophy and Asana seem completely distinct, even mutually exclusive. To others, it seems that even if Asana is a means to some esoteric goal discussed in the Sūtras, it is nevertheless intrinsically worthwhile as a practice on to itself.

Of these two views, the latter comes closer to the truth. Studying the

Sūtras can indeed elevate a merely physical practice of the body to a yogic one of the consciousness, but in doing so it also improves the physical practice and facilitates the performance of Asana. Case in point: It was only by studying the Sūtras, and sutra I.41 in particular, that I learned to comfortably and stably complete *Utthita Hasta Padangusthasana* and bring my leg to my head, a pose I continually injured myself practicing while preparing for the Intermediate Junior II assessment.

Whenever I used to do deep, standing forward bends, my feet would cramp, my knees would hurt, and afterwards my hips would feel inflamed. The more I came to my practice with mere physical determination, the worse it got. My practice was very *rajasic*. I understood on a very superficial level that it ought to be more *sattvic*, but did not really know what *sattva* was or how it could be cultivated. From reading historical commentaries and contemporary philosophical analysis on the Sūtras, I came to understand that *sattva* was the quality of being like *purusa*, or pure consciousness, and that this meant being a witness not an agent. However, I still didn't understand how to be a witness of my own practice.

As I struggled to understand this and more rigorously studied Sanskrit, what struck me most was the grammatical construction of the Sūtras, a passive construction that resists any linguistic rendering into the English language. There are no verbs or actions, only a collection of nouns and adjectives related to each

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Community Spotlight



Teaching People (Not Only Poses)

By Suzy Friedman, with
guidance from Jan Campbell

A few months ago, Jan Campbell suggested that I read the letter from Geeta and Prashant that prefaces the 2018 IYNAUS Certification Manual. It really is an informative document, and if I could sum it up in two words, they would be friendliness (*maitri*) and patience.

As yoga teachers, we almost always find ourselves in a studio or a gym with students whose backgrounds, ages, and abilities are quite different from our own. Yet, we usually all share some desire to transform ourselves and the community at large. And while we are trained to exert our influence over our students for their safety, among other things, I oftentimes wonder if we are allowing our students enough personal space for self-discovery and empowerment. Are we being friendly and patient enough? At times it appears as if the yoga teacher is more focused on the pose itself, and/or in demonstrating her mastery of *asana*, than by the students who have placed themselves before him or her. Could we be prioritizing the poses over our students' wellbeing? If so, how does this lead to our students' growth? I fear that many of us have forgotten that the root

of *yoga*, *yuj*, has various meanings in Sanskrit including "to join and unite" as well as "to subjugate and discipline." Are we forgetting to yoke ourselves to our students and being task-masters instead?

I am well aware that the certification process that Iyengar teachers undergo is exacting and demanding. It makes us competent teachers, but at what cost? During assessment, we are timed and judged on our teaching skills and efficiency. I fear that if we always use this model when we teach yoga then we risk losing our individuality and warmth as people and our compassion towards our students—perhaps alienating the same students who are trying to connect to us and to each other. No matter the size of our classes or the venue in which we teach, we need to find ways to reach out to others and create an inclusive environment that helps students to better understand and practice their *asanas* (and

through them, perhaps, yoga philosophy). In fact, Chapter 1 of Basic Guidelines for Teachers of Yoga is dedicated to instructing teachers on how to "teach from the heart" and "not from the brain alone." Are we really doing this?

I suggest that we read Chapter 1 of this book closely to see how we can better serve our students. When we are told: "Do not be callous," this suggests that too many of us are not acting with compassion or being responsive to our students. As yoga teachers, we offer instruction on how to do the pose; we educate our students on the benefits of the *asana*, or show how it fits into a general category of poses; and we make each pose effective, yet accessible, to our students. We allow the benefits of the *asana* to speak for them-

*Teach from the
heart and not from
the brain alone.*

selves and vow to "do no harm." Eventually, hopefully, our students become self-learners. This is why I am so concerned that we are focusing too much on "performing" the *asana*, and are not giving enough attention to our students as individuals. If we were to truly mentor our students, then each yoga class might become an exercise in community building. Any sense of competition or performance could be lessened

or eliminated because the group would then take pride in its collaborative success. Even in the most challenging classes (where we may be teaching poses that will be on an upcoming assessment), we must allow our students to succeed. We should demystify those “back of the book” poses and teach our students that each page of *Light on Yoga* is valuable, that each stage of the pose is a necessary component. In their letter in the Certification Manual, Geeta and Prashant caution against forcing ourselves and students “to achieve the final classical *Asana* for the sake of certification. This can prove to be physically harmful and can be mentally stressful as well. It is important to remember that even intermediate stages of the *Asana* have therapeutic value.” In our yoga classes, as in our home practices, the means to achieving the end (final posture) are much more useful to us than “landing” the final pose. In other words, it is often while taking the journey rather than reaching the destination that we find the most value.

Rather than simply approach teaching as a one-way relationship where the teacher gives and the student receives, what would happen if we were to approach this relationship differently? By creating an atmosphere in our classes where we teach our students the *asana*, rather than the *asana* to the student, we can begin to consider which factors might be affecting our students, and understand why they are taking our class in the first place. Our students will not necessarily learn from us nor remember what they have been taught if they are not convinced it is something that will benefit them in the long run. *Basic Guidelines* tells us to not ignore nor neglect those who have come to us. We must show our students that we see them, that we hear them, and that we are considering their interests before our own. In Geeta and Prashant’s words, we should remember that “Yoga is not a race.” We must give ourselves and our students time to learn. We must teach people, not only poses.

Suzy Friedman is certified at the Intermediate Junior I level. She has been the IYASE Newsletter co-editor for the past two years. She also teaches writing and literature at the University of Alabama-Huntsville, and is the only certified Iyengar teacher in Alabama.

Jan Campbell is a certified Intermediate Junior III Iyengar instructor. She is the founder and director of The Yoga Center of Nashville, which she opened in 1986. Jan, now 85, continues to teach a full schedule of classes each week. New joy and skill as a teacher come from her evolving personal work and practice, which reflect in her teaching and her life.

Iyengar Yoga Association of Southeast Mission

IYASE has four aims:

Communication: Share information about Iyengar Yoga and news in the Iyengar Yoga community; Distribute newsletters two or more times a year to members; maintain the website; send E-bulletins 10-12 times a year.

Continuing Education: Provide one or more Continuing Education Workshops per year with senior Iyengar instructors and announce local Iyengar workshops by member teachers.

Scholarship: Distribute awards to teachers and students to help with expenses for (1) IYASE sponsored workshops; (2) teacher certification; and (3) study at RIMYI in India.

Service: Maintain the Lotus Fellowship Fund to provide immediate financial assistance to members in times of serious need.

other in terms of space and time. Rather than produce a sentence in active voice, inviting us to identify with an agent, they paint an image in passive voice, inviting us to be a witness.

These images stayed with me as I hit the mat. They helped me to fix my consciousness on something other than the *rajasic* will to do and the *tamasic* experience of pain. They became a lens through which I witnessed my own body and eventually my own state of mind. To explain how, let me return to sutra I.41, which defines *Samapatti*, another name for *Samadhi*.

To make sense of this in sentence form, Edwin Bryant admirably translates this as, "*Samapatti*, complete absorption of the mind becomes just like a transparent jewel, taking the form of whatever object is placed before it, whether the object be the knower, the instrument of knowledge, or the object of knowledge." A more literal translation would go something like thing like this: "From weakened fluctuations, *Samapatti*, colored by that standing near it, grasped-grasping-grasper, like a jewel of high quality." This makes little sense on its own, however, until one maps it. To do this, I decided to teach myself to draw, and rendered this sutra as you see here.



What sticks out is not the meaning of the words, so much as their grammatical inflection, particularly

the cases in which the various nouns and adjectives are declined. English and most modern languages have far less grammatical inflection than ancient languages. To some degree, we conjugate verbs to indicate who is doing what and when. Sanskrit, like Latin and ancient Greek, also declines nouns and the adjectives that modify them to indicate whether that noun or adjective is the agent, the recipient of the action, a possession, and so on. Latin assigns names to these cases like nominative, accusative, and genitive. Sanskrit simply numbers them.

*I arrived at the
source of my pain:
my earnest but
confused will to do.*

Samapatti is the word being defined so it is in the first case along with the adjective "colored," which defines it. To elaborate, we have a point of departure in the fifth case, three locations declined together in the seventh case, a possession declined in the sixth case, and an instrument (implicitly) declined in the third case. It also helps to keep in mind that each sutra builds on the ones before it. In many ways this sutra is a continuation of I.17, which tells us the various stages of *Samadhi* include absorption on objects consisting of the gross elements, our perception of those objects through the subtle elements, pure experience, and our sense of self. These stages are reiterated in I.41 (the first two stages being collapsed into one) as the three nouns, grasped-grasping-grasper

(or object of knowledge, instrument of knowledge, and knower) joined together into a single compound.

As this image of sutra 1.17 came to mind during my daily practice, I found that my consciousness fluctuated less and began to take on the quality of the various body parts it focused on. When I practiced *Ut-thita Hasta Padangusthasana*, for instance, this meant that my mind became fixed on the pain in my legs. Although initially distressing, I did not immediately jump into action, as was my habit, by gripping or flexing indiscriminately. I simply witnessed the pain, homed in on its precise location, and followed it through the sartorius, anterior tibialis, and peroneus muscles, which I did not previously know.

I arrived at the source of my pain: my earnest but confused will to do. As this state of mind was grasped by my consciousness, I witnessed the twitching in my muscles settle down. Before I knew it, my leg had come to my head.

Gary Jaeger is a Senior Intermediate I certified Iyengar Yoga teacher. He lives in Nashville where he also teaches Philosophy at Vanderbilt University. He began practicing Yoga 17 years ago as a graduate student, while he was working towards his Ph.D. at the University of Chicago.

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hints and directions to stay aware of what you are thinking and feeling (physically and emotionally) as you set up for the asana, move into the asana, stay in the asana, and move out of the asana. The result of this focus is stillness that leads to silence that leads to connection that leads to wholeness and oneness with spirit that leads to being in the world with happiness, compassion, and friendliness.

Stay curious. Avoid saying, "I am going to make something happen in the pose." Instead, wait and observe. You might get a gift because something unexpected might happen in the pose. Then you can say, "What just happened?" You can't divine it; it divines itself. We encourage you to remember Gururji's words: "It is through the body that you realize you are a spark of divinity."

The practice feeds the soul and soon there is a charm in day-to-day living.



1. Tadasana

"The body is my temple, asanas are my prayers." —BKS Iyengar

Start with this quote as your intention. Whether you choose an action, a desire, or a thought, develop its form here to carry through the sequence.

You will notice that this asana and the next are repeated two more times in this sequence. Use this as a marker for your self-awareness. Ask yourself, "How am I now? What am I aware of within myself? How have I changed? Does my asana speak my prayer?"

2. Urdhva Hastasana in Tadasana

With the rather simple movement of holding of the arms overhead, what happens to your focus? From where did the movement originate? From where do you stay in the pose?



3. Chest opening over blocks

Arms alongside or overhead. Be sure to use appropriate props to enhance comfort. How does this extension differ/same from the last pose?

4. Breath awareness (in same position as the previous)

Iyengar tells us to think of the contact of the breath against the inner lung as the connection between universal soul and individual self. Consider the three P's of breathing (of *pranayama*): pace, pattern and power.



5. Adho Mukha Vajrasana with support for the forehead. "Your body is the child of the soul. You must nourish and train your child." —BKS Iyengar

From the previous opening and extensions, become compacted and grounded with the pace, pattern and power of your breath.



6. Adho Mukha Svanasana

As BKS Iyengar puts it: "As the trunk is lower in this asana ... healthy blood is brought to this region ...and invigorates the brain by relieving fatigue."

Is this sensation of the brain being invigorated possible to feel? What is your experience of this first inversion?

7. Urdhva Mukha Svanasana with support. "Activity and passivity must go together." —BKS Iyengar

How do you make this change from downward facing to upward facing dog pose? Yes, it requires whole body movement, muscular action, spinal undulation, and joint rotation. Can you explore how you move between active and passive actions?



8. Tadasana and Urdhva Hastasana

Time to return to the opening two postures. How is it now for you? "The quality of perfection in an asana is achieved when the effort to perform it become effortless and the infinite being within is reached." —BKS Iyengar



9. Utthita Trikonasana with chair

In this posture, Mr. Iyengar says that you need to "entwine the muscles to the bone" of the leg. A simple translation is when the muscles are firm, they "hug" the bones providing strength and support. What is the quality of your hugs?

10. Parivrtta Trikonasana with chair

BKS Iyengar describes twists

as a "squeeze-and-soak" action. How do you experience this contrasting action?



11. Uttanasana with support

BKS Iyengar says, "Any depression felt in the mind is removed if one holds the pose for two minutes or more." If you have had any harsh evaluations of yourself at this point of this practice, feel what this pose offers you.



12. Salamba Sirsasana

Mr. Iyengar says that "Regular and precise practice of *Sirsasana* develops the body, disciplines the mind and widens the horizons of the spir-

its. One becomes balanced and self-reliant in pain and pleasure, loss and gain, shame and fame, and defeat and victory." How does this insight inspire you?



13. Setu Bandhasarvangasana with support

Mr. Iyengar also says that "Backbends are rejuvenating. They give energy and courage and combat depression. They open the chest and stretch the heart, and make the spine flexible. The mind and body become alert." Can you sense how this pose affects the heart, literally and figuratively?



14. Salamba Sarvangasana

"Yoga is a mirror, to look at ourselves from within." —BKS Iyengar

In this pose, the eyes gaze more easily inward. At this point in the practice, what do you discover?



15. Halasana

"It is while practicing asana that you learn the art of adjustment."
—BKS Iyengar

Even if you have done this inversion sequence many times, what can move, what needs to move, what is not willing to move today? Can you let it be?



16. Jataro Parivartanasana

"When there is strain, it is physical yoga. When the brain is passive, it is spiritual yoga." —BKS Iyengar. Quieting into this twist, can you feel the brain itself become passive?

17. Savasana

"Yoga allows you to rediscover a sense of wholeness in your life, where you do not feel like you are constantly trying to fit broken pieces together." —BKS Iyengar



18. Tadasana and Urdhva Hastasana

Once again, come to standing with these two poses.

"You have to create love and affection for your body for what it can do for you." —BKS Iyengar

Kandy Love has been a yoga student since 1978, a yoga teacher since 1980, and a certified Intro II teacher since 1997. She founded Health & Harmony Center in Ft. Myers, FL, in 1990, and now teaches workshops and private sessions.

Bobbi Goldin has been the director of the Yoga Institute of Miami since 1978. She was certified by Mr. Iyengar in 1983 as Intermediate Junior III. Bobbi is known to teach with great support, challenge and humor, so everyone's needs are met.

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For these three reasons, I'm in favor of shifting out of doing in-person workshops and towards doing short, one to two-hour video workshops that we make available at a reasonable cost to everyone in the IYASE region. If you are a videographer or film editor within the region, keep an eye out for requests for your work. We want to work with fellow practitioners and spend funds in ways that support our region.

In light of this shift, and to help more people in the region study with excellent teachers, we are also developing new methods of bringing in funds that we can then use to further disseminate Iyengar Yoga. We would like to increase the number and types of scholarships available to members, and offer Iyengar Yoga in communities not currently aware of or served by Iyengar teachers. Your Vice-President, Leah DiQuollo, who becomes President in 2019, has many exciting ideas on how to grow. Keep an eye out!

- Begin Updating the IYASE Bylaws

Steadily, we have been improving the IYASE Bylaws. In 2015, Jann Boyer led a heroic effort to update them, which has taken us some distance. As we continue to work with these bylaws, we find that they could be simpler still, and could more clearly state what we do. This would help to minimize repeat discussions about historical practices of the region, make it easier for new Board members to transition into their roles, and make it simpler to conduct the business of the IYASE region.

Our Scholarship Chair, Inge Myllerup-Brookhuis, has already begun

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the process of clarifying our scholarship award practices. I have started and will continue to revise the overall Bylaws.

- How you can help?

As we proceed through this transition, we can use other eyes to assist us. Just as going to a class with a teacher gives us information we might miss in our home practices, we ask you for information to help the region. Please let us know the following:

- What is the Region doing that you'd like it to keep doing?
- What is the Region doing that you'd like it to stop doing?

- Are you or someone you know interested in co-creating a good and ongoing smooth transition for the Region?

Please reach out. We can always use your feedback. I look forward to connecting with you.

Namaste,
Leanne

Leanne Cusumano Roque is a Certified Iyengar Yoga Teacher and IAYT Certified Yoga Therapist who offers yoga through a home-based studio in Reston, Virginia.

Teacher Training

Randy Just Weekend Teacher Training

June 22-24, 2018

Studio Om, Jackson, MS

nicholebakeryoga@gmail.com

(601) 209-6325

Jan Campbell and Gary Jaeger Teacher Training

July 29 & September 23, 2018

Nashville, TN

jcampbell@

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(615) 383-0785

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Renew Your Membership: We encourage all members – teachers and general members – to renew at IYNAUS.org. If you have questions contact Membership@IYASE.org.

