

## Contents

<b>Editorial: Whither Yoga Therapy?</b>	<b>5</b>
<i>by Georg Feuerstein, Ph.D.</i>	
<b>Neurophysiology of Yoga Meditation</b>	<b>9</b>
<i>by Roy King, M.D., Ph.D., and Ann Brownstone, M.S., O.T.R.</i>	
<b>Quantum Neurophysiology, Consciousness, and Yoga: A Dialogue</b>	<b>19</b>
<i>by Subhask Kak, Ph.D., and Georg Feuerstein, Ph.D.</i>	
<b>Carpal Tunnel Syndrome and Repetitive Stress: A Yogic Perspective</b>	<b>25</b>
<i>by Ellen Serber</i>	
<b>Nostril Dominance (Svara) and Bilateral Volar Galvanic Skin Resistance</b>	<b>33</b>
<i>by Mitti Mohan, Ph.D., M.Sc.</i>	
<b>A Pilot Study on the Effects of Saline Nasal Irrigation (SNI) upon Nasal Symptoms in Woodworkers</b>	<b>41</b>
<i>by Swami Bhavchaitanya Saraswati and Steve Rabone, M.D.</i>	
<b>Face to Face: The Student-Teacher Relationship and Private Yoga Classes</b>	<b>63</b>
<i>by Judith Lasater, Ph.D., P.T.</i>	
<b>Insurance Asana: A Standing Pose</b>	<b>65</b>
<i>by Dy Jordan, M.Ed.</i>	
<b>BOOK AND VIDEO REVIEWS</b>	
<b>Stephan Cope, <i>Yoga and the Quest for the True Self</i></b>	<b>69</b>
<i>reviewed by Richard Miller, Ph.D.</i>	

<b>Larry Payne's User Friendly Back Yoga with Larry Payne</b> <i>reviewed by Richard Rosen</i>	69
<b>Sonia Kumar, Yoga for the Special Child: A Therapeutic Approach for Infants and Children with Down Syndrome, Cerebral Palsy, and Learning Disabilities</b> <i>reviewed by Richard Rosen</i>	70
<b>T. K. V. Desikachar and R. H. Cravens, Health, Healing &amp; Beyond: Yoga and the Living Tradition of Krishnamacharya</b> <i>reviewed by Richard Rosen</i>	70
<b>David Frawley, Yoga and Ayurveda: Self-Healing and Self-Realization</b> <i>reviewed by Georg Feuerstein, Ph.D.</i>	71
<b>William Weintraub, Tendon and Ligament Healing: A New Approach Through Manual Therapy</b> <i>reviewed by Richard Rosen</i>	71
<b>Contributors</b>	72

### Editorial Note

We cordially welcome Jamie B. Shaw, M.P.T., as IAYT's new associate director. We also would like to extend our special thanks to John and Amy Gage for helping with the integration of the former IAYT into YREC.

We have made every effort to update the database we inherited from the former IAYT and reach both current and previous members with mailings. Please help us to minimize mailing costs by promptly informing us of any change of address.

For the present issue, we received valuable and timely editorial help from Steven Kleinman, M.D., Trisha Lamb Feuerstein, Richard Miller, and Richard Rosen, as well as marketing help from Jamie Shaw and Gabriele Gatdula—to all our sincere thanks.

Please note that the standard length of each issue is sixty-four pages and that the current issue contains eight extra pages.

Kindly send us your suggestions and proposals for articles to be included in future issues. Your continued support will enable us to develop the journal into an increasingly effective professional tool.

## Editorial Whither Yoga Therapy?

by Georg Feuerstein, Ph.D.

**Y**oga therapy has been called a modern invention. This is only partially true, however, for even the most ancient Yoga traditions—to be found in the Vedic hymnodies of c. 2000–4000 B.C.E.—mention the health benefits of a spiritual (read: yogic) lifestyle.

*Yoga-cikitsa* is the traditional name for yogic therapeutic intervention. It has for centuries been closely associated with Ayurveda, India's naturopathic medicine. Today Yoga—notably Hatha-Yoga—is widely employed for stress management and relief, yet it demonstrably can be utilized for preventing major diseases and even as a complementary curative system. In addition, it is a valuable diagnostic tool that relies on the Yoga teacher's experience and fine-tuned intuitive sense. As such it can be employed in addition to, or in many cases as an alternative to, conventional medical diagnostic means, depending on the teacher's capabilities.

One of the most reliable indicators of health or illness is the body's subtle energy field (*prana-maya-kosha*), which Yoga masters can perceive directly. Disturbances in the pranic field suggest possible future physical pathology. In turn, present physical diseases are somatizations of preexisting pranic imbalances. It is clearly desirable, through the various yogic techniques, to diagnose and correct any disharmonies in the pranic field before they become somatized. Physical manifestations of illness are far more difficult to correct than pranic imbalances.

The art and science of *yoga-cikitsa* is outlined in Sanskrit texts like the *Sat-Karma-Samgraha* (also called *Karma-Paddhati*) and *Mishraka*, both by Cidghanananda Natha (18th century), and the *Shiva-*

*Svarodaya* (17th century?). Yogic or Tantric medical information is also contained in various *Tantras*. The real knowledge of *yoga-cikitsa*, however, is passed orally from teacher to student.

No modern Yoga teacher has contributed more to the fund of knowledge about the therapeutic applications of Yoga than Shri B. K. S. Iyengar. He has trained thousands of students and was himself a pupil of the late Shri T. Krishnamacharya, arguably this century's greatest Hatha-Yoga master. Iyengar's book *Light on Yoga* (1976) has become a classic, and in his description of 200 postures (*asana*) he mentions their respective therapeutic effects, as well as lists in Appendix II appropriate curative postures for various diseases.

At the same time, Iyengar has always remained true to the *spiritual* import of Yoga. Using the metaphor of the tree to describe it, Iyengar (1989:6) observed that the practice of Yoga “has to culminate sooner or later in the spiritual fragrance of freedom and beatitude.”

Since ancient times, Yoga adepts have included health concerns as part of their spiritual agenda. They have always appreciated that the self-transformative process underlying spiritual life is demanding not only on the human mind but also on the physical body. Therefore, both body and mind need to be properly stabilized and strengthened.

Hatha-Yoga, a product of medieval India, took this insight particularly seriously and developed a comprehensive battery of techniques designed to purify and vitalize the body and thus prepare it for the rigors of a vigorous meditation and visualization discipline. There was never any question about the spiritual orientation or purpose of Hatha-Yoga, which was regarded

by its own masters as “a ladder to Raja-Yoga”—that is to say, as a stepping-stone to intensive meditation practice.

Today, however, a new attitude prevails among Yoga practitioners in the West. What we are widely witnessing in the contemporary Yoga movement is Yoga practice divorced from its original spiritual content. Yogic techniques are being utilized to boost or restore health and fitness, but the question of what a healthy and fit body is best used for is answered only incompletely. A complete answer surely would require us to make reference also to the spiritual dimension of our life.

Contemporary Yoga therapy has an ancient basis, but its orientation is quite novel. We are therefore entitled to ask, What will be the future of Yoga therapy? I don't have the space to develop a detailed answer, but I would like to share with you some fundamental thoughts.

In particular, I would like to pose two questions: First, Can true health be attained without inclusion of our spiritual nature? Second, Does Yoga therapy that excludes the spiritual aspect of our being serve the betterment of humanity, or is it just another manifestation of materialism (and narcissism) and subject to vanishing together with a materialistic civilization bent on self-destruction?

The answer to the first question depends on how we define health. If we regard health as a purely physical phenomenon, most contemporary Yoga therapy will undoubtedly serve as an excellent tool. If, however, we extend the concept of health to our psychological well-being, we are justified in asking just how deep the effects of a purely body-oriented Yoga therapy can go.

Since body and mind form a synergistic system, we can expect

optimal physical health to be accompanied by a reasonably positive emotional and mental state. Psychologists and psychotherapists will have no problem, however, in admitting that there are any number of fit individuals who, despite their physical well-being, suffer from emotional problems. As Carl Gustav Jung (1933) saw more clearly than most, emotional problems hide, or at least may hide, a far deeper spiritual problem.

In light of this, we may justifiably argue for an extended concept of health that includes the physical, emotional (or mental), and spiritual aspects of our being. When, however, we operate with such an extended concept of health, we must wonder about the usefulness of a purely physical Yoga therapy and also about the future of such an orientation.

We are today, without doubt, harvesting the benefits of an astounding merger between medicine, psychology, and spiritual values. This was initiated by Humanistic Psychology and taken farther by Transpersonal Psychology. Thus, in a way, a purely physical Yoga therapy turns the clock back on ground gained over the past three decades. While it may still be an effective tool for correcting some existing physical problems, it does not make a significant contribution to the betterment of humankind. For that we must include the spiritual dimension. If anything, Yoga teaches us that we are not merely the physical body, and more than that it teaches us that we are not merely the brain-mind. Rather, it always points to a body- and mind-transcending core within us, which is pure consciousness. This transcendental core is called *atman* (“Self”) or *purusha* (“Man”) in the Sanskrit texts. Other traditions speak of it as the “Spirit.”

It is the testimony of all the great masters of Yoga that this transcen-

dental core is our true identity and that when we have realized this, we have truly found our way “home.” Upon Self-realization, we discover our identity with all beings and things. This state of awakening or enlightenment is permanent, as it does not depend on any specific brain activity. Instead of identifying with a particular body or the mind, we realize that we are the all-comprehensive Being-Consciousness behind all bodies and minds. This realization is the goal of all types of Yoga, and Yoga therapy, understood in its original sense, is intended to aid that very realization by removing or preventing obstacles in the form of physical illness or mental disharmony. At least this is how I see it. I welcome a discussion.

## References

- Iyengar, B. K. S. 1989. *The Tree of Yoga*. Boston, Mass.: Shambhala Publications.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1976. *Light on Yoga*. New York: Schocken Books.
- Jung, Carl Gustav. 1933. *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company.
- Maslow, Abraham. 1971. *The Farther Reaches of Human Nature*. New York: Penguin Books.
- Walsh, Roger N., and Frances Vaughan. 1980. *Beyond Ego: Transpersonal Dimensions in Psychology*. Los Angeles: J. P. Tarcher.
- Wilber, Ken. 1980. *The Atman Project*. Wheaton, Ill.: Quest Books.