

## Associazione Studio Iyengar Yoga

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### Online Education in the tradition of Yogacharya BKS Iyengar by Sri Prashant S. Iyengar Lesson 2 recorded on April 10, 2020

Namaskar.

This is our second session in the series *Education about Classical Yoga*.

There are two aspects as far as the students, seekers of yoga are concerned: one is there are very few people who are interested in yoga and there are many who are interested in knowing what is good for *me* in yoga. The majority of people today are interested in the second aspect in pursuing yoga, to identify, to get to know: what is good in yoga for *me*. But in the classical approach, this was not the case, because that is a consumerism.

In Classical Yoga, what is Yoga? So, one was keen to know what is Yoga, that is the student's channel. So, sooner or later all of us need to get into this track. Now, we are all familiar with the idea, the notion, the concept 'yoga is for one and all'. No doubt, but that is a sweeping statement, not a precise statement. Precisely there is something in Yoga for everyone, this is the more precise statement rather than saying 'yoga for one and all'.

So, people of different dispositions and inclinations will be there, however, there is something for them to be offered by the subject of Yoga. There can be materialistic people, spiritual people, these are polarities; those who are looking for physical wellbeing, mental wellbeing and there can be atheists, there can be theists so, you'll have variety of people and Yoga has something to offer for each one of them.

And that's why we look for what is good for me. That is, we don't want to change ourselves on one hand, and just want to identify what is good for me. But in Classical approach, that is not the case. It is just doing Yoga for the sake of Yoga.

Now, as I said, this is an educative process, we are trying to understand the educative process that was there in classical times. Education was about *what is Yoga* rather than today, *what is good for me in yoga*.

Now, let us try to understand what is the Education here. What is Education all about when I say there is an educative process in Yoga. Education about what? It is Education about not yoga; it is not about getting educated in yoga. Yoga is education about oneself. Yoga, being **Adhyatmic**<sup>1</sup> subject, is an **education about oneself**.

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<sup>1</sup> Adhyatmic, Adi-atmic (adhi-aathmika). Pertaining to adi-Atma. Adi = first. adi-atma (adhi-aathma). Pertaining to the individual soul, spirit, or manifestation of supreme Brahman.

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We get to know ourselves by getting to know yoga. That is why yoga has been described as a mirror. It is a *darsana*, it is a mirror. **So yoga is a mirror for understanding yourself.**

*Bhāgavadgītā* in the 13th chapter says:

13.1 *idaṃ śarīraṃ kaunteya  
kṣetram iti abhidhīate*

... ..

this *śarīraṃ* is *kṣetram*, field, it is called field. And we are supposed to be knower of the fields. See the unfortunate travesty because of materialism.

We do not want to know ourselves we want to know everything that is around us.

Another example I can give you is that we want to eat food and we want to digest the food, but we do not want to know how the digestion takes place. We want to be intelligent, but we do not know what is intelligence and how the intelligence functions. We all want to use our brains, but we do not want to know what our brain is.

Now, this is something that it not sound in logic. If you want to be using the brains, it implies, entails, that we should know a little bit about the brain. But in our busy activity of life we don't need it. We don't want to understand our bodies and our mind and our brain and just want to use our body, we want to use our mind, use our brains. But in the philosophical approach this is not done. That is why **we are supposed to be knowers of the kṣetra**. The *śarīra* is the field and we are supposed to be knowers of the field rather than in the practicality of life and business of life we want to use ourselves, we want to use our body, we want to use our mind, we want to use our brain, we want to use our intelligence and we are just bent upon using it.

6:40

This is a kind of animal tendency in us. If you want to overcome this animal tendency within us this must be realized: that this embodiment is meant to be known. We are supposed to be the knower of the embodiment particularly in the Adi-atmic realm, we are supposed to be knowing this. That is why you have this question: *Who am I?* In philosophy you are familiar with this question that you should be knowing *who am I?* Apart from other questions: what is all around me etc..

So, Yoga being an Adhyatmic subject, **the śarīraṃ becomes kṣetra and we are kṣetrājña**. *Jña* means to know, so we are the knowers of this field. We are supposed to be knowers of the field, if not during the business activity of life sometimes we must ponder over this, that we must become knowers of this *kṣetra*, this *śarīraṃ*.

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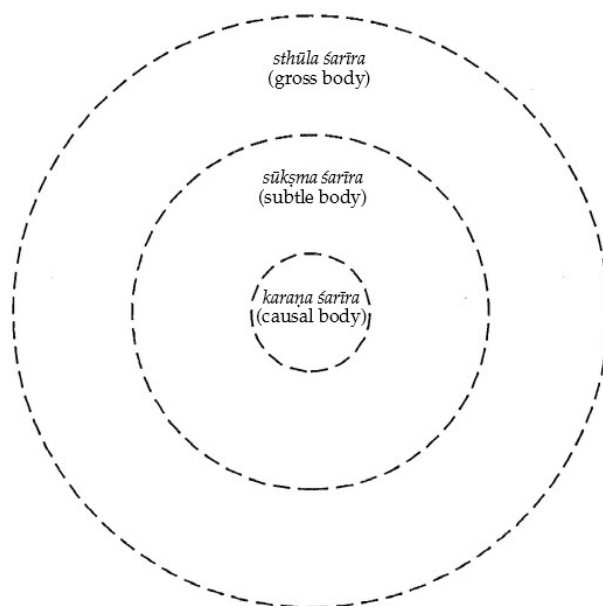
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Again, when the word *śarīraṃ* comes, we are familiar with the connotation of the *śarīraṃ* means it is body. So it doesn't mean it will be a cavil on the part of an inquisitive mind, saying I should know my body, I should know my anatomy physiology. That is not being suggested here. *Śarīraṃ* is not just anatomy. So, *śarīraṃ* is usually rendered as body and it is not suggested we should know our body like an anatomist does; in the medical realm, they try to know the body, but that it has not being suggested here. Because *śarīraṃ* means there are three *śarīras*, three bodies: gross, subtle, causal - ***sthūla śarīra* (gross body)** ***sūkṣma śarīra* (subtle body)** and ***karaṇa śarīra* (causal body)**.

That is what *śarīraṃ* is when it is *kṣetra* and we are supposed to be knowing this, knowers of this at least. So Yoga makes you know about this *śarīraṃ*. It is a process to know our body starting with the gross.

And the gross is our physical body and psychological mind. These are the gross aspects of our *sthūla śarīra* with which we take birth and then on the point of death we leave it behind. The *sthūla śarīra* is that which is only meant for one lifetime and every time it is redone, reconstructed, reconstituted for every life, of every incarnation.

That is the gross body, behind the gross body there is a subtle body, astral body, what is also called astral body, which is a transmigrating body, it is there before the birth and it is there after the death as well. So there is something like that, which is called *sūkṣma śarīra*. And *karaṇa śarīra*, causal body.



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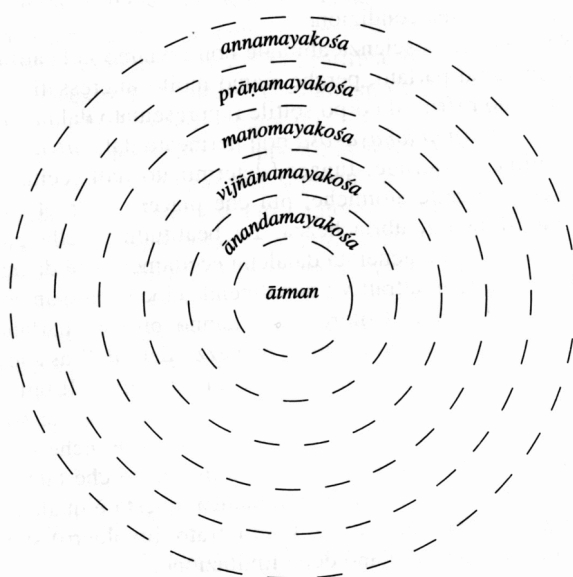
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10:11

So, Yoga is the pursuit to know these *śarīras*. So *sūkṣma*, *sthūla*, *karāṇa* the three bodies.

Then there is *Annamaya*, *Prāṇamaya*, *Manomaya*, *Vijñānamaya*, *Ānandamaya kośas* which again is explained in the Science of Yoga.

That's how we are; our embodiment is of the nature of onion. Onion has a skin. You don't eat onion with the skin, you peel the skin and then you eat onion. But that onion has several petals. So when you peel one petal, still it is onion, when you peel the second petal, layer or petal, again it is onion, when you peel the third, or fourth and fifth, and sixth layer of petal, yet it is onion: until it comes to stem. So, between the stem and over the stem, between the skin and stem there are several petals of onion. Similarly our embodiment is. We have several layers and we need to explore those layers.



So, Education about what? Basically on the grosser plane, what our manifestation is, the body, mind, breath. So how the body, mind, breath interact, how they interplay with each other, how they have interface with each other.

So, in asanas, we have this notion that I should do an asana, I should do yoga, but question yourself. Do you just want to be doing yoga or eventually you want Yoga to happen on you?

So, on one hand, we get to do yoga, we want to be doing it, we want to be doing everything that is possible, everything that is probable, we want to be doing it and doing it and doing it; but when we come to assessment of it, we want to see how

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much yoga has happened on us. So, we wait actually for Yoga to happen on us, whereas we are handling the track of doing it.

So when you embark upon Classical Yoga you will open out the field of your embodiment, let's say the field of our body here, for the body, mind, breath to have interface. So, yoga depends upon what they do for each other, rather than what and how much you do for your body, how much you do for your mind, how much you do for your breath. It is more important what they do for each other. So, Classical Yoga depends upon their profound interactions. When they have interface they will work for each other. How much they work for each other will be really deciding on how much yoga has happened on you.

So any posture, as I said, you can take any posture particularly when you want to have Education about yoga you have to settle to a posture not that which is fascinating to you. Do not settle down to a posture that is fascinating to you or don't settle down to a posture that you want to be trying it, trying and getting it.

13.56

Settle down in a posture which you have done, with which you are familiar and where you are relatively comfortable, and where you can be staying for a longer period of time and you can be staying also relatively comfortably.

So opt for such a pose, for example *Supta Virāsana*, *Supta Baddha Koṇāsana*. And then get Education. Do not try to get Education in a difficult position where you are struggling, or where you are not comfortable, you are uncomfortable or there is a discomfiture; you will never learn yoga in such a position. So learn in a position which is relatively easier, comfortable and also of a long duration.

Now settle down in such a position, where you can relatively stay longer, and then, as I said last time, body mind breath awareness, body mind breath activity. They're activating each other, you're activating them, etcetera. So go for those preliminaries which I explained in the last session.

Now today allow the interface in a more pronounced way, between body, mind and breath rather than the wordly way of how much the mind can do for you, and how much you can do for mind, how much the body can do for you and how much you can do for your body.

Let's try to understand how much the body can do for mind, how much the mind can do for body, how much the body can do for breath, and vice versa, how much the breath can do for mind and vice versa. Because the position that you have taken is a wonderful position which facilitates for body, mind, breath to interact, have interplay, have mutual subserviency, have mutual addressal. So, they will be able to work on each other more profoundly by this being a yogic position.

It doesn't happen in any other position, any other posture.

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So avail of this and then try to understand how much they can work for each other. How much they are mutual benefactors and mutual beneficiaries, rather than the materialistic and wordly way of looking at the thing, how much I can be beneficiary of yoga.

You will be in any case a beneficiary indirectly, because if your body mind breath are having advantage do you say: they have advantage but I don't have advantage? Is there any condition that they have benefit but you don't have benefit? So when they have benefit and then you have benefit on account of it, that is indirect process and this is more advocated in yoga, rather than going for a direct benefit: to body and from body, to breath and from breath, to mind and from mind. So in yogic culture we encourage the indirect benefits coming to us by they getting mutually benefitted.

Now in our wordly life we say: this is my body, this is my mind, these are my senses, this is my breath.

That means you are according some relationship between you and your body, you and your mind, you and your senses, you and your breath. So you are establishing a relationship between them.

Now find out in your position that you have taken, these relationships. Now if they are related to you, then they are mutually related to each other.

Now in the internal social we are atrocious? We want the mind to be related to us, we want the body to be related to us, we want the breath to be related to us, but we do not want to establish mutual relationship between them?

You have a father, you have a mother, you have a sister, but if we do not allow the sister to be treating the mother as mother and she as daughter to her mother, it is atrocity.

You can't just say that you should only be my sister, or you can't just say that you should be only my mother. Or a father, you should be only my father. Because father is husband to wife, mother is wife to husband, the father. Then other siblings are also related to each other. So we must encourage the mutual relationship to also evolve. That is what happens in a good family set up.

Now here they are all related to us, but we do not recognize that they are all mutually related to each other, we do not encourage them to nurture the relationships. We want to be drawn towards us, we want to become center of attraction, we want to see mind is mind, it is related to mind. We don't think that the mind is our body and it has a relationship with body. Breath has a relationship with body and mind. Mind has a relation with body, with body and breath.

So they have mutual relationships, and in asanas we encourage that. And that creates a healthy family system within us. This is so important. Otherwise, in our

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practicality of life, mundanity of life, we are atrocious, we don't allow them to have their own relationships, nurtured. We don't allow them to be in those relationships. We want them to be related to us. But in asanas we are taught this lesson, so we are taught the sociology within a family. How to nurture relationships, how to encourage relationships, how to facilitate relationships. We don't know those which are related to us, my body, my breath, my psyche, my consciousness, my senses. And in asanas you will be able to establish the relationships.

20:26

So let us see how they work for each other.

If body and mind are two sisters, let us see how the two sisters interact within them. Let's open up our field for them to interact within themselves. Rather than saying: A sister you are my sister therefore just be sister to me! B sister, you are my sister therefore be only sister to me, but do not be sister to A, or A sister to B. This is atrocity.

So, in our business of life of activity we commit lots of atrocities within the society in us, within the family, within us. Asanas open out that field, so they all have wonderful family relationship. So we'll develop healthy family within ourselves. It's a family!

Our body cells, body matters, mind matters, senses, psyche, consciousness, breath, so these are all having mutual relationships. In asanas we can open out these relationships and therefore give the benefits to them.

So, it is to know how they interact with each other. Education here is about how body, mind, breath, senses interact with each other, that is the deep matter of Education.

So, in this Education, we will be getting to know much more about their potentials, their trades, their dispositions, their gravities, when they work for each other. While when we are in wordly activities we are going to engage them to work for us? So, when I go to my workplace I want intelligence to work for me, so I employ it to work for me, I employ my body to work for me. I employ the mind, psyche to work for me, and we don't allow them to work within themselves.

In yoga we allow this. And therefore we will learn the interactions. That's the Education about. What the body does for body mind and breath? What the breath does for body mind and breath? What the mind does for body mind and breath? So these are grosser aspects of us because we are nothing but: body plus mind plus senses plus breath. That's all our equation of ourselves. What are we? We are sum of all these.

So let's see how they work for each other, how do they interact.

So in asanas you should just not do your chest, or back, or abdomen.

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The Education about the breath and the abdomen interaction, the breath and chest interaction, the breath and back interaction, interaction of the limbs with the trunk, the trunk with the limbs. So let them mutually interact and this is the Education here as to know what are these interactions. What are these interfaces. So, I've tried to give little opening to the matter of Education, Education about what? And this Education is the first step in Education about yoga.

So in any asana you can go for this educative process.  
So that should be enough for for the day.

So try it out, experiment about it, and try to get what knowledge process you are getting out of this, out of their interactions.

Like when two wise persons are interacting we should be just auditors, we must just listen to them, not interfere in their dialogue. We will get lot of wisdom. But if we interfere we get inferior Education. So when the two wise people are interacting, we must just be witness, we must just be auditors, we must just be spectators, we must just hear about their dialogue.

Similarly allow the body mind and breath to have a dialogue.

Breath at a later stage, we'll know, is one of the most wisest, entity in our embodiment.

Let us see how the wise breath interacts with inferiorly intelligent body and mind and other things. How do they interact with each other? That is Education about yoga. Education about yoga is within, when you are in asana, when you are in pranayama, when you are in any yogic process.

So that's the matter of education here and I try to give little bit of insight about the matter of Education when I say yoga is an Educative process. Education about what? Education about one's own body, mind, breath, senses, psyche, consciousness.

Thank you very much.  
Namaskar.

This transcription is the result of the collaboration of the following Iyengar Yoga Teachers:

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