



PIYM NEWS

#06
APR - JUN

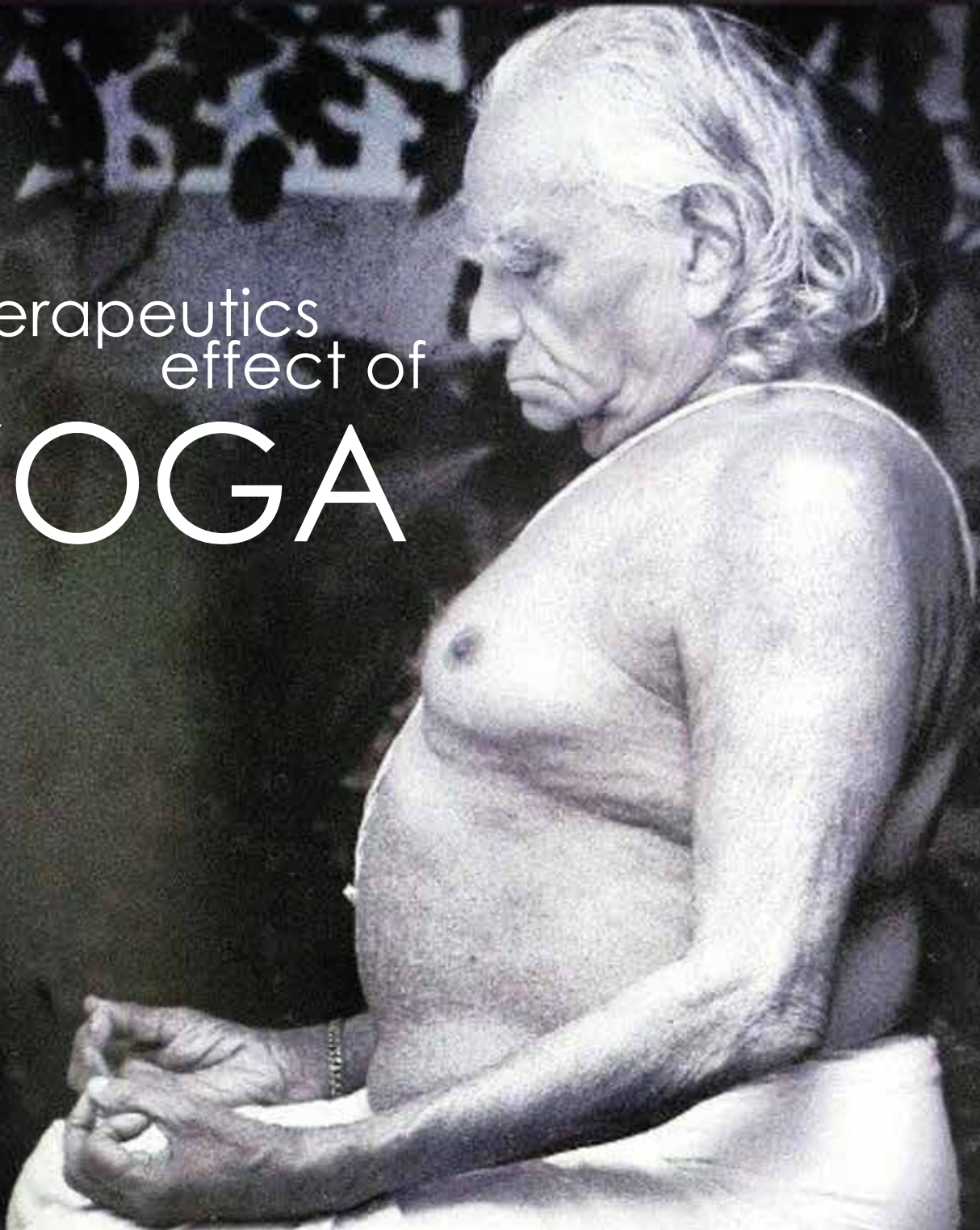
Doing, Learning
and Feeling
by Guruji

New Perception
of Yoga
by Christina

'Imagine If'
A novel by
Rajvi Mehta

A talk & dialogue
zoom session
with Rajvi Mehta

Therapeutics
effect of
YOGA



Contents

1. Committee Members. Finding a teacher in your area.
2. Editor's Note
3. Doing, Learning and Feeling by Guruji
4. New Perception of Yoga by Christina
5. PIYM Past activities
6. PIYM Ongoing and Upcoming activities
7. A Talk & Dialogue with Rajvi Mehta



Finding a certified Iyengar Yoga teacher in your area



MALAYSIA

<https://myiyengaryoga.org/find-teachers>



INTERNATIONAL

<https://bksiyengar.com/modules/Teacher/teacher.asp>

Committee Members 2021



Sin Yue Tan

CHAIRPERSON

chairperson@myiyengaryoga.org



Carol Ong

TREASURER

treasurer@myiyengaryoga.org



Angel Yew

VICE CHAIRPERSON

vice.chairperson@myiyengaryoga.org



Prema Chandran

ETHICS & ASSESSMENTS

ethicsassessments@myiyengaryoga.org



Veun Chin

SECRETARY

secretary@myiyengaryoga.org



Josephine Chai

MARKETING

marketing@myiyengaryoga.org

EDITOR'S NOTE

While we are navigating into our second year of the coronavirus pandemic, we have to be positive that we will overcome this invisible enemy and go back to normalcy or some form of "new normal" sometime in the future...and when will that be? I think as yoga practitioners we will take whatever comes our way and make the best of it.

Having said that, you will be happy to note that yoga is now being practiced by more people than ever not only because of the pandemic but also yoga has been seen with new eyes and understanding. Can we look forward to a world of less conflicts, less inhumane acts on humanity, and more love for our planet and the creatures that reside around us? Positive thinking: we have to introduce yoga to the Taliban, Boko Haram, Kim Jong Un, Xi Jinping, human traffickers and a few more!

This quarter PIYM celebrated International Yoga Day (21 June 2021) on a quiet note with two noteworthy events. Thanks to the committee, our first event was "A Talk & Dialogue Zoom Session with Rajvi Mehta," senior Iyengar yoga teacher, founder-editor of *Yoga Rahasya*, and now author of *Imagine If* on 19 June 2021.

The next anticipated event was a 2-hour meditation session with Father Joseph Pereira, entitled "A call to "Be" more, rather than "Be More"" on 26 June 2021 which will be covered in our penultimate issue for this year.

Of course, there are more of such exciting events coming in the next quarter so stay tuned.

We have a short write-up of Rajviji's book, *Imagine If*, and PIYM members can get the book at a special price (compliments from the author herself!) from the order form in the article.

In this issue, we followed the transformation of yoga from being perceived as low impact exercise in the



Can we look forward world of less conflicts, less inhumane acts on humanity, and more love for our planet and the creatures that reside around us? Positive thinking: we have to introduce yoga to the Taliban, Boko Haram, Kim Jong Un, Xi Jinping, human traffickers and a few more!



US to a scientific non-medicinal intervention specifically for people who suffer from mental health, debilitating/chronic pain, insomnia and trauma.

Yoga has come a long arduous journey from the time Guruji introduced it to the west. It was a bumpy journey but a journey well-travelled.

Yoga has been scientifically proven to be beneficial. In this pandemic, it is more so needed by those affected by the coronavirus – people who have recovered, people who have lost loved one(s), people (essential workers) who have not stopped working and people who have been locked down...basically, everyone in the world! We also have a complementary article by none other than our beloved Guruji on *Doing, Learning and Feeling [Yoga]*.

The committee and I look forward to your comments, ideas, suggestions, articles or just a note to say "Hi!"

Until the next issue...Enjoy!



Doing, Learning and Feeling by Guruji

Intelligence is fluid – it moves in the body from asana to asana, therefore, the learner cannot just do the asana without intelligence.



Whenever the *sādhaka* practices, he/she should keep the mind attentive and look within the body in the practice of yoga to observe, absorb, adjust and readjust, to see that either side of the body, the nerves, the organs, the joints are kept rhythmically in a steady position along the alignment. If these feelings are not observed, then it is known as “doing”, where the body movements take place without the involvement of the mind.

The *sādhaka* should feel the flow of

“Yoga not only clarifies our bodies, it also purifies. Each *asana* cleanses and filters the cells in our body and rids them of impurities.”

intelligence in the body. What is intelligence in this context? It is the sensitivity in the body that the mind feels. Intelligence is fluid – it moves in the body from *asana* to *asana*, therefore, the learner cannot just do the *asana* without intelligence.

In your practices you need to identify the insensitive areas, bring intelligence to them and observe whether the sensation is equal or not. The *sādhaka* then studies and adjusts the *asana* to bring the flow of intelligence equally to either side of the body. There has to be a synchronisation of sensitivity between the *asana*, body and mind.

One who studies all these is a learner, not a doer. Everybody starts out as a doer and with repetitions at the beginning, you will develop a memory. That memory should not be used to repeat mechanically but to guide you to observe and re-educate the body, mind and intelligence and further penetrate the inner body.

A learner observes moment to moment, what is going on in his cells, in his mind, in his body, and brings back life to the different parts of the body while staying in the *asana*. Whilst a doer does for showmanship, a learner does to develop finer intellectual quality. Therefore, a learner is an introvert and a doer is an extrovert.

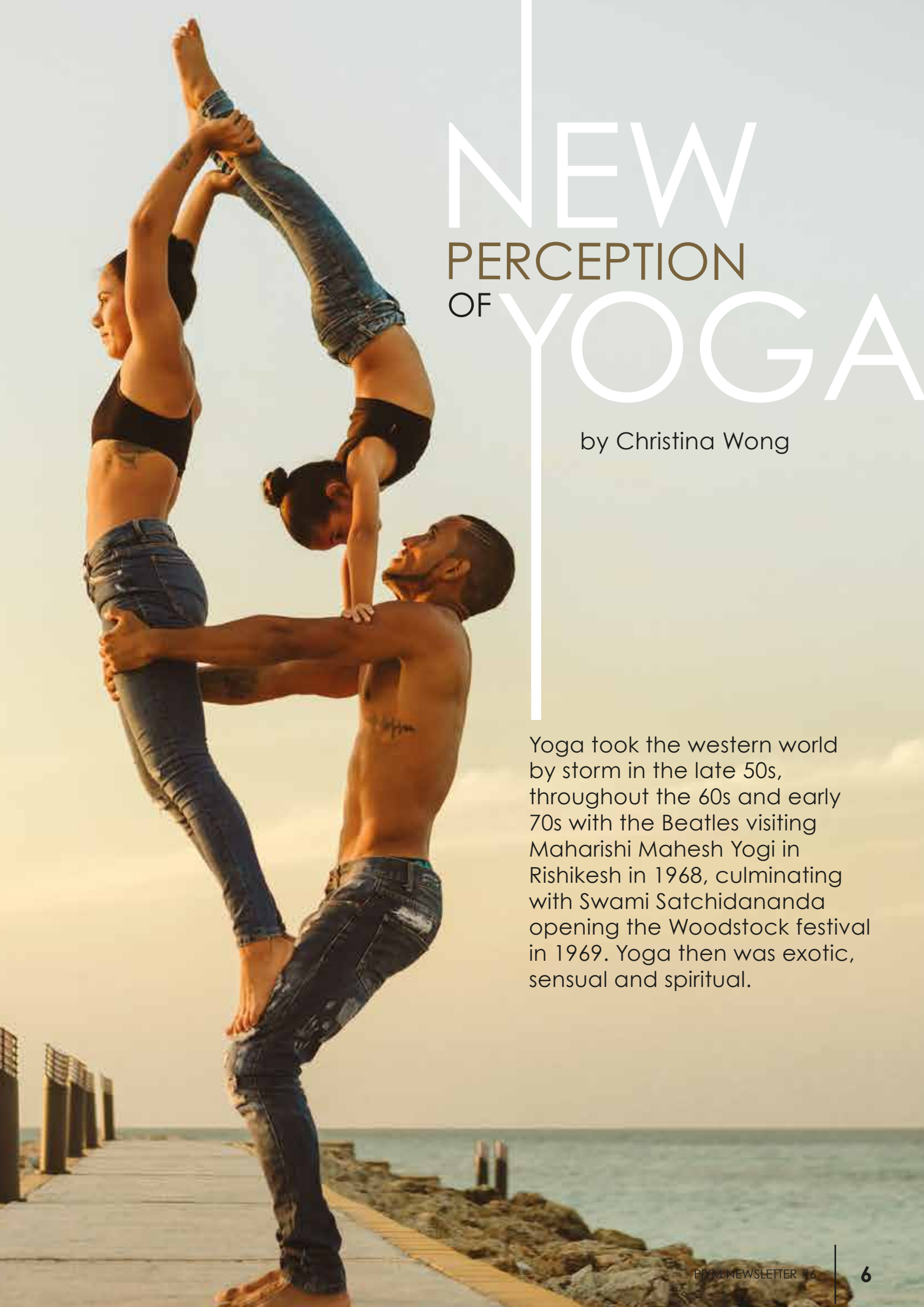
Life is dynamic, life is motion. New healthy cells grow, new chemical action takes place in the body, new changes in the blood system as well as physiological and psychological systems. But our body and mind get polluted or disturbed through our eating habits, ways of thinking and lifestyle. Yoga not only clarifies our bodies, it also purifies. Each *asana* cleanses and filters the cells in our body and rids them of impurities.

Our practice of *asana* has to be more penetrative to re-filter the system every now and then. By this, the blood is purified, the cells are purified, the mind becomes pensive.

Learning [while doing *asanas*] includes the process of sensibility, sensitivity of touch, intelligising, vitalising, placing and spacing of the cells.

In the doing process you do not attend to these actions. Hence, the doer's mind goes outwards whereas the learner's mind goes inwards.





NEW PERCEPTION OF YOGA

by Christina Wong

Yoga took the western world by storm in the late 50s, throughout the 60s and early 70s with the Beatles visiting Maharishi Mahesh Yogi in Rishikesh in 1968, culminating with Swami Satchidananda opening the Woodstock festival in 1969. Yoga then was exotic, sensual and spiritual.

In the late 70s and 80s, yoga was seen largely as another form of exercise albeit low impact exercise alongside aerobics and jogging and practiced by a small minority of westerners.

Yoga is sweeping through the western world again in the new millennia and has become stronger than before. It is no longer a fad, nor looked upon as mystical or exotic just because it is from Asia, it is now looked upon with scientific eyes.

According to a 2017 National Health Interview Survey, yoga was the most complementary health approach among US adults in 2012 (9.5%) and 2017 (14.3%) and one in seven adults in the US practiced yoga in the 12 months in 2017.



In the 21st century, hybrid forms combining yoga led to beer yoga, goga or goat yoga, doga or dog yoga, feline yoga or cat yoga, rage yoga, horseback yoga, aerial yoga, laughter yoga, Hoop Yogini, SUP (Stand Up Paddleboard) yoga, slackline yoga, AcroYoga, aqua yoga, and rocket yoga. Really? Surprisingly these variants were founded and led by long-time yoga practitioners and not only have they commanded a decent following but teacher certifications were earned!

For decades, the yoga fraternity has espoused the therapeutic benefits of yoga. The scientific study of yoga increased

One of the main goals of yoga is to achieve tranquillity of the mind and create a sense of well-being, feelings of relaxation, improved self-confidence, improved efficiency, increased attentiveness, lowered irritability, and an optimistic outlook on life.

substantially from 1990 until recently and many clinical trials have been designed to assess its curative effects. These studies and research were published and peer reviewed in many scientific journals and analysed and examined in numerous health magazines in the US.

In 2017 the US Department of Defence's study on a trauma-sensitive yoga sequence namely *Vinyāsa* flow with *pranayama* and meditation lodged an impressive decrease in PTSD symptoms on post 9/11 veterans.

Mental health problems such as anxiety, stress, debilitating/chronic pain and insomnia were among the most common symptoms for individuals to seek psychotherapy and/or pharmacological



treatments and now with complementary non-medicinal intervention like yoga.

From the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, health professionals highlighted the importance of monitoring rates of depression, stress and anxiety across vulnerable populations, including health workers.

Al Jazeera News reported that the most affected ones were the young people, those living alone, those with existing health conditions and front-line health workers. There was also an increase in suicides and suicide attempts among adolescents.

To compound the situation, psychiatrists noted many COVID-19 survivors were likely to develop mental illness, after a large study found 20 percent of those infected with the coronavirus were diagnosed with a psychiatric disorder within 90 days.

According to the *International Journal of Yoga*, yoga encourages one to relax, slow the breath and focus on the present, shifting the balance from the sympathetic nervous system and the flight-or-fight response to the parasympathetic system and the relaxation response. The latter is calming and restorative; it lowers breathing and heart rate, decreases blood pressure, lowers cortisol levels, and increases blood flow to the intestines and vital organs.

One of the main goals of yoga is to achieve tranquillity of the mind and create a sense of well-being, feelings of relaxation, improved self-confidence, improved efficiency, increased attentiveness, lowered irritability, with an optimistic outlook on life.

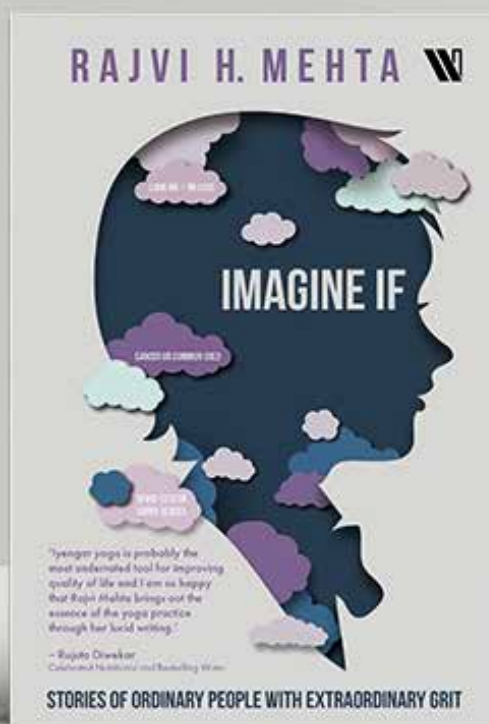
International Journal of Yoga stated that restorative postures, *savasana*, *pranayama*, and meditation encourage *pratyahara*, a turning inward of the senses which enables downtime for the nervous system, the by-product often being improved sleep.

Today many people who practice yoga believe it works simply because they feel good afterward, wrote *Psychology Today*. But the numerous studies support the concrete physiological and psychological effects of yoga, helping to explain why it is effective on mental health issues and emotion regulation.

It has taken decades and truckloads of research, reviews and even books to advocate the beneficial effects of therapeutic yoga that it has found its rightful place as a scientific alternative to alleviate mental health problems that have plagued the young and old despite the highly creative hybrid yoga variants.

“Yoga teaches us to cure what need not be endured and endure what cannot be cured.” – Guruji.





“Yoga teaches us to cure what need not be endured and endure what cannot be cured.”

– Guruji Iyengar

“Iyengar Yoga is probably the most underrated tool for improving quality of life and I am so happy that Rajvi Mehta brings out the essence of the yoga practice through her lucid writing.” - Rujuta Diwekar, celebrated nutritionist and bestselling writer.

When you pick up *Imagine If*, you see two quotations jump at you. One by Rujuta Diwekar who wrote a one-para foreword printed on the cover and Guruji’s quote on the top of the back cover. This was followed by the often-narrated story of how Guruji used yoga to heal himself and took yoga to a higher level where it became transformational.

Yes, you have an idea what *Imagine If* is all about!

And when asked how the title came about, Rajvi Mehta said, “It is a compilation of 6 to 7 stories of people with extreme adversities. Today in the pandemic, a lot of us feel that we are in a worse condition but there are people who have conditions which according to me is unimaginable! Imagine in 25 years having cancer five times and going through the entire chemotherapy,

cancer treatments and living with cancer; imagine someone in his 20s and walking on a landmine and losing both his legs and then going on to climb Mt Kilimanjaro; or somebody who is spending his life in prison...etc. This for me is very difficult to imagine, being in such situations. And I dread that anybody I know should be in such situations. But when I meet these people, the way they perceive life is so different. And obviously the common thread is they are practitioners of Iyengar Yoga!”

It is a book that once you turn a page, you will not put it down until you reach the back cover. It is poignant, it is heart-wrenching, it is sad, it is happy, but most of all, it is inspirational.

If you want to get your hands on a copy of the book, there is an order form (for PIYM members only) to purchase *Imagine If* at a special price directly from the author herself.

PIYM : Past Activities



A virtual 'Talk & Dialogue' session with Rajvi Mehta, Iyengar Yoga Teacher from Mumbai,



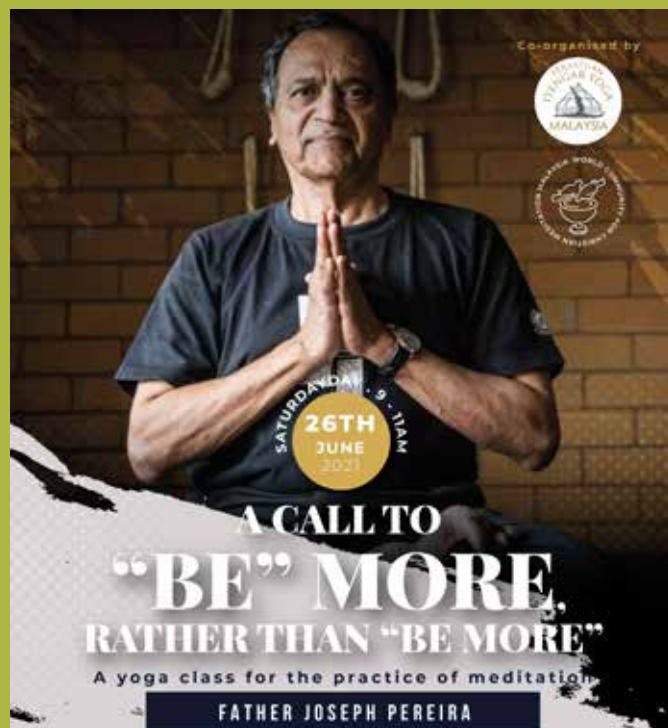
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aqvcbiM8JEs>



PRE-ORDER 'Imagine If'

Please click here to order the book,
before **31 July 2021**

<https://bit.ly/3xCtJn6>



A 2-hour Yoga for the Practice of Meditation class and Q&A, conducted by Father Joseph Pereira



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qMfzu6wkACU>



PIYM : Ongoing Activities

Special Price for PIYM members

Stay Safe, Physically Healthy & Mentally Well @ Home

Come join our online daily classes conducted by trained Iyengar Yoga Teachers

PRICE STARTS AT

15 123 RM	40 168 RM	75 188 RM
--------------	--------------	--------------

REGISTER NOW

<https://bit.ly/35G9atZ>

PIYM is offering Online Yoga Classes for the months of June - August 2021.

The classes are taught by several certified Iyengar Yoga teachers from all over Malaysia, and are suitable for absolute beginners and those looking for a refresher after a break.

Register and book your classes here: <https://bit.ly/35G9atZ>

*Attendance is advisable before expiring date and cannot be refunded or made up.

PIYM : Upcoming Activities

PIYM is co-organising with Homevilla Yoga for the following online classes

Watch out for our email announcements together with special offers for PIYM members only

HOMEVILLA YOGA

ENHANCING THE POWER OF YOUTH WITH DEVKI DESAI

21st & 28th July, 2021
6:00pm to 7:30pm IST

www.homevillyoga.org

HOMEVILLA YOGA

Working With The Wall

Join A 3 Day YOGA Workshop With DAVID MELONI

23rd July - 25th July
3:00 PM - 7:00 PM IST

www.homevillyoga.org

Guru Purnima Celebration

SATURDAY 24th July 2021 10:00am - 12:00pm

《瑜伽经》工作坊
YOGA SUTRA WORKSHOP

日期 (Date) : 25/7/2021, 22/8/2021, 26/9/2021 & 17/10/2021

时间 (Time) : 10am - 12pm

费用 (Fee) : RM100 (一次性费用, 本次课程并会获赠瑜伽白旗)

报名链接 (Registration link) : <https://bit.ly/35G9atZ>

PIYM will be celebrating Gurupurnima with online sessions

Watch out for our email announcements coming soon.



A TALK & DIALOGUE

ZOOM SESSION

WITH

RAJVI MEHTA

On 19 June 2021, over 160 yoga practitioners logged into a zoom meeting with Rajvi Mehta, a senior Iyengar Yoga teacher, founder-editor of *Yoga Rahasya* and author of the recently launched *Imagine If*. We spent two hours with her and basically kept her talking the whole time.

Topics covered in the dialogue session ranged from *Yoga Rahasya*, Guruji, yoga and stories in *Imagine If*. PIYM Secretary, Veun, started the ball rolling by asking Rajviji how did the title *Imagine If* came about and from thereon, the dialogue session became very interesting and exciting.

Rajviji was introduced to yoga as would many Indian girls were at that time – by their parents – and in her case her Iyengar Yoga practitioner dad. Her initiation to Iyengar Yoga was preceded by her brother and sister. So, two hours every Sunday mornings they were taught by Guruji himself.

Throughout the dialogue session, Rajviji

made references to Guruji and you can see her reverence for Guruji, her admiration for him, her love for him, and her deep respect for him.

In her book, Rajviji said yoga can transform somebody and was asked to elaborate, she said, “This is Guruji’s court that yoga does not change the way you see things but it transforms the person who is seeing. We have to understand change and transform.”

According to Rajviji change is something that happens and it comes back to where you were. While transformation is a gradual change that it is sustained and maintained over a period of time.

She gave us an example that someone with back pain comes for yoga class. Generally, he will be taught poses to extend his body and he may feel relieve. He continues with class and the relieve period increases until he is pain-free. “So, what happened was

initially this effect which builds up over time and that's where it brings change," she said.

On the mental front, Rajviji gave another example, people who smoke. She said that Guruji has never advised people on their habits. In fact, Guruji said that *yama* and *niyama* are not like the 10 Commandments that you have to do this or do that.

"Because the moment you say it, it will be there as long as the pressure is there. The moment the force goes away, the discipline goes away," she said. "The real freedom is when there is no pressure for you to do certain things and that is transformation."

"It is in your system somewhere. You get transformed over a period of time and it's not magic, it's not overnight, and that's what yoga is. When we *practiced* over the years, it sorts of seeps into you – that's how it transforms you."

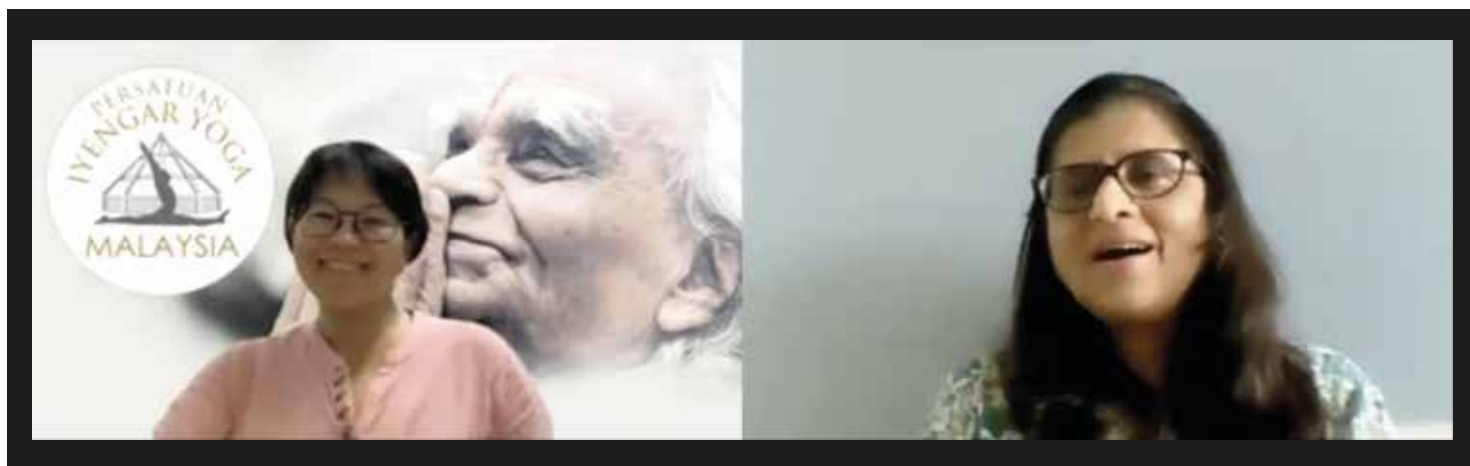
Rajviji was asked whether one started with asanas first before meditation.

She said that according to Guruji, *yama* and *niyama* are how to lead your life following their principles. Asanas and pranayama are the science where you can experiment. *Pratyahara*, *dharana* and *dhyana* are experiential and cannot be taught, one can only experience them.

"Even if I say I want to meditate, I may have a desire to meditate but whether I meditate or not is not in my hands because when I have a desire, I cannot meditate," she continued. "Meditation is a state where you are in *jnana* in ashtanga yoga, it is a state where you are so absorbed...it's an experience...feeling."

She went on to say that if you want to have an effect on the mind, you don't have to act on the mind, you act somewhere else. There are poses which relaxes you, which rejuvenates you, which charges you, so these poses not only act on the body, they act on the mind too.

"When somebody feels his mind is very disturbed or want to meditate during the pandemic, then you utilise these kinds of *asanas* to quieten the mind," she said. "On the other hand, if you want to get into the other states of ashtanga yoga, you get absorbed. Initially we do *asanas* with our limbs, with our head, with our trunk, then we start feeling with the connection – our mind is moving with awareness. When that happens, the mind becomes absorbed with the flow of awareness and therefore, it naturally gets quietened. So, you don't quieten your mind directly, you do through *asanas* to get the mind into the quietened state.



Rajviji elaborated, "*Asana* and *pranayama* are somethings which can be done, *pratyahara* to some extent, can be done when we are in *savasana*, etc. *Dharana* and *dhyana* are experiential which can only be experienced.

"Meditation is an experiential state and it's very important that you start with *asanas*, otherwise it can be in an illusion. I am sitting quiet but it's not meditation. Meditation is not the state when the mind is quiet, meditation is the state when there is uniform

absorption all over, there is absolutely zero duality," she concluded.

Rajviji was asked how a practitioner would cope with the current trauma. She said that there are various levels of trauma during the pandemic. The worst one is to have a severe bout of Covid and/or to lose a family member to Covid.

The other levels are those mentally affected by Covid, fear of contracting it or fear of not knowing where the virus has gone as you heard so many stories of those who have contracted the disease.

Another level of this crisis is when people have lost their jobs and facing financial problems.

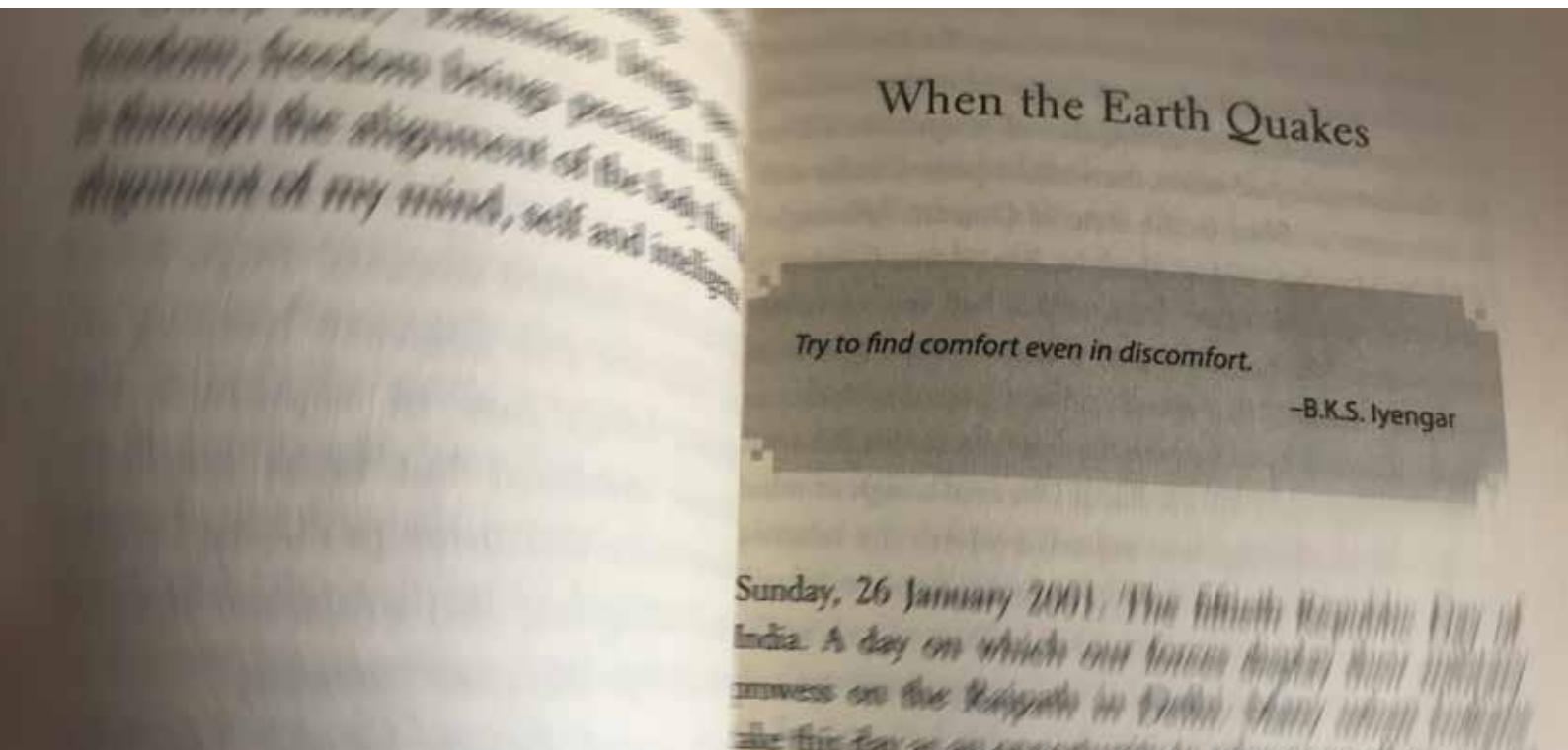
Rajviji continued, "For example, we went to teach the people affected by an earthquake, a month later. This was an area where it was

our pains, what has happened we have to bear, you all can help but you are the first people who have shown us how."

When the old lady said that we have shown her how, we realised the impact of actual practice does in such an extreme situation, to your emotions, to your mind and gives you that strength and resilience to cope in that condition.

To another question, how do you even guide people in such a trauma, she said that "it is totally, totally different from teaching a group of people who come to us for yoga class! You have to be careful of what you say because [affected] people are extremely sensitive.

So, when we met Guruji, first thing he said to us was, "Be like them! Simplest thing is don't go in your t-shirts and shorts. You're going to a camp in a village, be one of them so that people will accept you."



total destruction...the village was heaps of rubble. You know it was as if the mountains and hills were made of rubble, you sort of froze in such a situation."

An old lady told Rajviji that the month after the quake they had a lot of people who came to help – counsellors, psychologists, religious people, preachers. The old lady also said, "We all know whatever has happened to us, we have to endure it. Nobody can take

We have to go to that level to understand, even if we never felt it, haven't experienced it, at least outwardly move along with them, talk to them, don't advise them, and just be there for them.

At the camp with 400-500 inmates, one person showed up for yoga the first night. The next morning, no one came. Rajviji and her group were at the camp in February and have planned to stay until May. Naturally, they started to get



Rajviji felt that the first thing to give the people at the camp was sleep because even a little sound disturbs them.

“The second thing is one should never get them to close their eyes. There is a lot of fear – no closing eyes – even in *savasana*, eyes should be opened!” said Rajviji firmly.

“Imagine your temples are your “eyes” and you are opening out those “eyes”, the temples are subjectively opening and that get the mind to be very quiet. So, if you are going into *Tadasana* or you’re in a sitting position, you can do it.”

Using the temples as “eyes” so that your mind stops thinking. Rajviji continued, “Otherwise, the mind sways from past to future – the memories of the past which are quite drastic to the anxiety of the future. The mind is like a pendulum which creates so much of anxiety and disturbance. So, when it becomes so bad, normal functioning becomes affected.”

Reluctantly the dialogue session came to an end. The participants bade her farewell and hoped that she will come back again. Thank you and namaste, Rajviji!

jittery because no one came. The organisers arranged a talk and forced all the camp inmates to attend. We started talking about yoga and we mentioned about sleep.

“At the end of the talk, a lady came up to us and she said that her father-in-law has not slept for the whole month! He is very restless; he sits up in the bed in the camp. There were seven families staying together in the tent so it’s very disturbing for him. He has lost everything and he is very disturbed,” Rajviji said.

“We put a pillow under his back like we do for a short *savasana*, tied up his legs and put some weight and I think in 10-15 minutes, this man went to sleep. After 15-20 minutes later, he got up, smiled and asked for his glasses,” said Rajviji. The lady was in tears, “this is the first time he is smiling and he wants to look at you. Can you come back tomorrow?” Rajviji gave a resounding, “Sure!”

