

# Yogacharya to the world



**Padmashri Dr B K S Iyengar, referred to simply as Guruji, has made a seminal difference to the practice and propagation of yoga. Rohini Nilekani speaks to the yogacharya**

**AT 83, after 70 years of practice behind you, how do you feel about the future of yoga in India?**

I am sure yoga is going to become very popular even in India, in the near future. Health consciousness has come to India. For me, yoga did not become popular on account of my teaching classical methods. I took the therapeutic value of yoga and through that value I propagated yoga. That's why it became very popular in America and England.

Life is becoming very costly. Medical treatments are expensive. People may not be able to afford them. The only preventive measure is yoga. Patanjali says Heyam dukkham anagatam (The pains which are yet to come can be and are to be avoided). Why do you allow your body and mind to become

a victim? Work from now on so that you won't become a victim at all. People cannot afford medicine but they can afford yoga in their own homes. Today, they call me furniture yogi. But the props that I founded are the ICU in yoga tomorrow. My radical method has been proved now. In the West, they are asking why hospitals cannot introduce props of Mr. Iyengar's method for physiotherapy.

**Have you stopped teaching completely?**

I have not stopped teaching completely but have stopped coming out in public. It is a personal matter. I have talked to philosophers of the world, I've met philosophers of the world, I have talked to them, I have also taught some of them. Somehow or the other, it struck me that these people who speak of phi-

losophy and are considered masters in that side kept their ambition till the last breath. What they did in their old age, I should not do. Today also, I have got invitations from all over the world. I tell them I have come when people were opposing yoga. Now there is no opposition, so why should I come?

**Would you say your life's mission is accomplished?**

Whatever I have stood for, I have done it. I can do still more. And I am only worried that ambition is very bad in my life. As for teaching- when they ask me, I guide them. But I will not stand on the platform to guide. I will not come in public. But I have not stopped my practice. I have learnt that I should be attached to my practice but I should not get attached to the public.

**What is your routine now?**

I practise five hours a day. I am writing. I have taken the responsibility of writing on yoga. Two volumes of Ashtadhala Yogamala are out. I have just written the third volume and the 4th and 5th volumes will be coming. I spend several hours a day in the library.

**Finally, though you have been talking about the physical aspects of yoga, eventually it has to be about self-realisation?**

Definitely, that's the aim. It's the end, not even the aim, but the end of yoga. It has to take us there. Think of a tree. If you look at it, a tree has to give fruit. So if I go on practicing, the fruit has to come on its own. Why should I bother? It will come.

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