

Together we fall. United we rise.

Greetings from the Viniyoga® family worldwide.

The world has been given a massive lesson. In the last few decades, we have been pushing towards a more globalised world. Using the mantra of globalisation, we have built a very interconnected world that has made the globe smaller and smaller. However, this means that our fates are also interconnected, and we are experiencing this through the current COVID-19 crisis.

Many people complain that the Corona crisis broke our system. I feel that it did not. Instead, it exposed the broken system we have created in the past decades. In India, there is a saying that when you grasp the tail of a tiger, you can't let it go. We as a collective society not only created this tiger, called the consumption-based globalised economy but have also grasped its tail. We have become so dependant on it that we cannot let it go. Not only that, but we have also made it so intricately interconnected with players across the globe, that when we fall, we shall almost certainly all go down together.

Many people are praying and hoping that this crisis will end. The Corona crisis is merely a test to ready us for what will happen after. The Climate crisis is even more significant, and that will most certainly be the next crisis that will hit humanity. Are we prepared for that? Given what the current situation has revealed, we are definitely not ready.

The only way to let go of the tiger is to weaken it first. And the only way to make it weaker is by making collective conscious choices. We must unite together and redefine our consumption patterns. We must try and embrace local produce, that is both ecologically friendly and sustainable. We need to reduce our carbon footprint. We need to reduce the pollution of our waters, air and land. We need to accept and honour our differences and diversity. We need to start making decisions that are not just based on economic factors, but on moral, ethical and ecological ones.

Globalisation, while we will most certainly fall together, has also given us an opportunity to unite and rise together. If we can put aside our differences and connect to our hearts, and make decisions from there, I am quite sure we will not only survive this pandemic but be better prepared for the next.

Here is where Yoga comes in handy. We must look to practice the holistic discipline so that we can more deeply connect with our hearts. As Yoga teachers and practitioners, we must boldly go into this heart space, and help those around us do the same. Such internal changes will change the way we live, giving us greater respect and regard for nature.

Let us come together, connect with our hearts and rise together, not only to overcome this current crisis but also to be well-prepared for the next.

Namaste.

Dr. Kausthub Desikachar

Krishnamacharya Healing & Yoga Foundation
The Viniyoga® Tradition

VINIYOGA INTERNATIONAL GLOBAL PRAYER

Since April 2020, in response to support students around the world to deal with the COVID-19 crisis, Dr Kausthub Desikachar is offering a **free daily healing chant session.**

Each day after offering the traditional prayer chants (Prārthana-ślokāni), he chants one healing or protective chant and ends with a small reflection for all to consider.

Everyone is invited to participate in this **INTERNATIONAL GLOBAL PRAYER** to help us find light during this challenging time. You can also invite others to join this meeting, by sharing the link. The more we connect through prayer, the more positive vibrations we create in the world. Click here for more information.

The meetings were held each day from the 09 April 2020 to the 30th April at 11.00am India Time (7.30am Europe Time, 6.30am UK Time, 5.30pm NZ Time).

In May 2020 it transitioned to a thrice-weekly schedule starting from 04 May 2020. The sessions will be held on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

We welcome you to join these meetings by joining the Zoom Room at the appropriate time. Link to join the meeting is - https://zoom.us/j/183178005

For recordings and information on each day's prayers held so far, visit here>



His Master's Voice - Yogasūtra of Patañjali

Explained by Dr. Kausthub Desikachar

1.10 Abhavapratyayalambana tamovrttirnidra

Patanjali is discussing the five different citta vrtti-s, the mental activities, and this, nidra, is the fourth.

Nidra is a state of deep, dreamless sleep. We know this because Patanjali uses the term abhava pratyaya.

Bhava means manifestation or existence and abhava is the opposite, meaning an absence, a non-existence.

So sleep is a state where there is no pratyaya. Pratyaya means a kind of knowledge, a kind of awareness. So sleep is a state where there is no knowledge: we don't know where we are, who we are, whether our cat has just walked by. (Patanjali is not saying that there is an absence of objects, but an absence of awareness of what is going on).

This has another level of meaning as well. Patanjali chooses his words very carefully, and uses different terms to express the different kinds of mind – manas, buddhi, asmita, citta, pratyaya and sattva. Pratyaya means, as well as a kind of knowledge, very subtle movements of the mind. It is also the name of one of the most subtle minds - we could call it the subconscious mind - and it is associated with two important states. The first is meditation, dhyanam and samadhi, and the second is when we dream. Dreams have a very fluid, subconscious movement: they are not deep sleep, and when we dream there is still an awareness of the dream. Patanjali is therefore defining nidra here as deep, dreamless sleep.

There are two states in which there is no pratyaya. The first is the highest samadhi, when the mind is supported by sattva and is completely silent. This is what yogis call yoga nidra. (Yoga nidra is not a state of relaxation and sleep, as is commonly thought in the modern world.) In this sutra, Patanjali is discussing the second state where there is no pratyaya: he makes it very clear that the nidra of which he is talking is sleep supported by a different guna, tamas, the state of heaviness. Tamonidra is the state of dreamless sleep.

A philosophical question may be asked: how can a state of non-activity be called an activity of the mind? The answer is in another question: how is zero a number? Zero is the most important number, the reference number, from which other numbers evolve. In the same way, sleep is that state from which other states of consciousness are measured, and that is

why Patanjali includes it. Nidra is one of the five mental activities even though it is a state of non-activity.



Yoga FAQ | How do I know which mantra has which effect?

Mantras are very powerful and complicated tools.

One mantra can have more than one benefit and different mantras can have the same benefit. It all depends on how each mantra is initiated and practiced.

The same mantra can have multiple benefits. For example, we do the Gayatry mantra for the purpose of health or wellbeing, for the wellbeing of others, for clarity, for the removal of illnesses, to please the divine, etc.

Every mantra is done with an affirmation of Artha, for a purpose. The Artha defines the benefit of the mantra.

We need proper teacher advice and guidance in our initiation into mantra practice. A competent teacher will help us define and practice the purpose in each mantra. Therefore, don't seek mantras for specific benefits because it's not as simple. Competent guidance and initiation is needed.

Don't practice mantras just for the sake of benefits, since benefits will come anyway.

Watch the full video here>

Viniyoga® Teacher of the month

Viniyoga is in practice all across the globe and we have amazing teachers who share these profound teachers in their local areas. We are proud of their dedication to carry on this

tradition worldwide and honour their work. Each edition of our newsletter will feature one qualified Viniyoga® teacher from around the world who is a shining star of this tradition as they touch the hearts of their students with their quality of teaching, the openness of spirit and selfless love.



<u>Deborah Robertson, Melbourne,</u> Australia

My name is Deborah, Deb for short. I'm a mother, a wife, a student of yoga, as well as a teacher of Yoga and Vedic Chant, and a Yoga Therapist in the Viniyoga Tradition of T. Krishnamacharya.

My Viniyoga journey began in 2001 when I was fortunate to be with TKV Desikachar and his wife Menaka Desikachar for their seminar in Melbourne, in December. I can't really put into words the effect their teachings had on me. Desikachar was so humble, yet so knowledgeable, he was able to

teach effortlessly across different levels of experience and practice. I was in complete awe, no notes were in hand, just a few Sanskrit words on the board, each holding profound meaning, Sir gave contemporary examples we could all relate to, illustrating eternal principles.

Desikachar is known for saying "yoga is about relationship". His humble teachings, drawing out his wife, providing clarity on questions from the simplest to ones that went well over my head, the practices, extending my breath, everyone's breath as never before. We had a couple of wonderful group discussions, questions, I remember a young woman saying she wanted to leave her partner and her young child, find 'a cave' so she could pursue yoga without distractions. Desikachar gently explained our first duty is always to take care of our responsibilities, our dharma, and that in her role as mother, supporter of the household, she needed to keep well, to take care of her body and mind everyday so she could fulfil the responsibilities of this stage with grace and ease.

These words really resonated, although my husband thought he'd lost me to yoga; our children were 10 and 4 at the time, I was off each day, then spent the evening reading yoga books and my notes after the children were in bed. I still have my notes containing this

quote: 'Yoga is a universal teaching talking about the mind. Viniyoga is to respect who is in front of you and to adapt.'

These teachings answered my search as a catholic (of sorts) and as a student of comparative religion. Everything made sense, bringing body and mind together, giving me an internal framework for further reflection and exploration. The concept of dukha was discussed, and yoga's tools for moving us from a place off suffering to a place of sukha, of stability and ease. As a chronic asthmatic with early onset arthritis I had explored diet, swimming, gym, walking and finally came to yoga to help me manage pain. However, my practices were leading to more pain not reducing it. I thought I wasn't trying hard enough, a yoga teacher from another school even suggested this to me. I had never heard of sthiram sukham.

Discovering the Viniyoga approach of breath lead movement, of pose and counter pose, and step by step progression completely transformed my experience of yoga from the inside out. Not only did my body respond with ease, but my breath became longer and smoother in ways I never thought possible. My mind was no longer calling me away, distracting me from my practice; it felt as though all aspects of me were flowing in the one direction.

Not only was my yoga practice resonating, I'd found more than enough to keep my inquiring mind studying for as long as it is able: the Yoga Sutras, Yoga Therapy, leaning to chant the Veda-s, ananta, never-ending, infinite, perfect!! I had found my well, I had a glimmer of how deep it was, and I was ready. It felt like I had come home.

What kind of classes do I teach?

I have taught therapeutic and gentle yoga in Williamstown for many years; my Yoga Therapy training and observations in Viniyoga have been invaluable helping me to make yoga possible for people in the mid and later stages of life. Most of my students are women, though I do have some men including two dedicated 84 year old's. Some students have been coming to my Therapeutic Yoga for 15 years. When they began, I felt young, but I've caught up now! It's been such a privilege to have their commitment, over the many changes and health challenges in their lives and its been rewarding to see friendships grow.

Over time, students learn to observe and appreciate the changing needs of their own bodies, and it always makes me happy to observe when a student listens and chooses the gentlest option. The step by step approach to course planning, always with function over form, the many ways to approach different postures, vinyasas and breathing, ensuring students are

safe and comfortable to practice within their limitations, without forcing their body, breath or their minds. They all stand taller, look brighter and happier as they leave.

Some older or less flexible students say they have felt alienated by modern yoga studios with hot, fast classes and payment plans. They feel left behind in classes, excluded, and that they are somehow not good enough for yoga anymore; I love to tell them that Krishnamacharya used to say "if you can breathe, you can do yoga"

On Monday evenings I teach a Meditative yoga class, a langhana practice with mantra in asana, pranayama and dhyana. This class works even better on line, students are really enjoying being able to create and hold this space in their own homes, and not having to get in the car to and from the yoga studio. This is my favourite class, helping students release the anxieties and accumulation of the day through the subtle power of mantra, coming home to a settled, peaceful and appreciative place within.

Yoga teachers sometimes seek me out as a mentor, as they meet challenges and changes in their lives and their teaching. I really enjoy this work, having serious students asking deep, intelligent questions.

I couldn't recommend Yoga Therapy training with the KHYF enough if you wish to understand the possibilities for healing and the more subtle tools of yoga with one of the oldest lineages in India. The training covered so much: the framework of the Vyuha and Panchamaya models as an approach to healing, training and case studies to develop our observational and listening skills, holding a space for the care seeker, developing trust, encouraging commitment to their own healing process.

The practices I've received from Dr. Kausthub Desikachar over many years have taken care of the changing needs of my body and provided me with an anchor, steadying my mind. It was so good to be heard and seen as a person, not a disease. I've always wanted to help people in some way, as Yoga Therapy helps me so much it was natural I was inspired to study. We had the extraordinary privilege of being taught our first module by TKV Desikachar and Kausthub. I still remember Sir's diagram on the board: 'there is a care seeker, a care provider, and between them is care' this is my guiding principle.

Recently a couple of care seekers with chronic disease and various complications have moved away from a physical practice; they simply want to relax and receive Vedic Chanting.

They feel this helps them to let the repetitive distractions of their minds and bodies drop away, and that the vibrations stay with them long after.

What is your favourite part of teaching in the Viniyoga tradition?

The greatest gift and perhaps the most unexpected is Vedic Chanting. I had been interested for years, always attracted by courses, but the time was not right. In 2003 Kausthub gave me Ayurdhehi, to prepare emotionally for my first hip surgery. In the weeks of pain that followed, chanting was my salvation and sanity. I continued chanting regularly as part of a small group for some years, but finally the time was right to immerse myself and I signed up for the two-year Vedic Chant Teacher Training(VCTT) offered at KHYF in 2017.



I am blessed to have Menaka Desikachar as my teacher, daughter in law of T. Krishnamacharya, who has more than 45 five years of dedicated Vedic Chant experience. At the KHYF, with Krishnamacharya on one wall, Sir on the other wall and our teacher Menaka in front of us, we learn by call and response in the age-old manner of transmission. It's testing when it's our turn and we have to chant a passage out loud before we are familiar; its challenging to stick to even one of the six rules of chanting when Menaka pushes us, and accelerates the pace! Dr Sreeram Jaganarthan taught us Sanskrit and some of the meanings behind the chants, as well as and introduction to Vedic philosophy, a vast topic! When I was a student at University I studied Comparative Religion, I still have my texts. It seems

incredible to me that 40 years later, I can chant some of the Upaniṣads and what was once words on a page, intellectual translations, now resonates with meaning in my whole system.

When we were offered the opportunity of continuing on with Menaka in the Advanced VCTT, I couldn't resist, How wonderful to be part of this small, dedicated practitioners from Japan, China, Europe, US and NZ, and Australia. Four trips to Chennai in two years then four more! We were due to graduate in June this year, but of course this is now on hold. However my practice is not; now more than ever it is my source of strength, clarity and hope at this time of Covid. I'm very glad, I kept going with Menaka and our small, supportive and sincere international students, I can feel changes. Twice a week I continue to practice with my dear study buddy Monique in Taos, New Mexico on FaceTime.

But it is my private sessions with my teacher Menaka in Chennai that I value most, face to face, and not a mistake nor lack of breath passes her notice. This is the time-honoured tradition of transmission, of teaching Vedic Chant in the classical manner where it is said' two people, four ears'. This is the foundation for Adhyanam - listening, following and learning, repeating as the teacher does. Thus listening, patience, memory and mutual respect are enhanced.

Chanting has also had enormous physical benefits for me, my lung capacity has increased and my respiratory system is stronger and more resilient. My respiratory doctor calls me a 'true asthmatic' and always encourages me to keep doing what I'm doing as she reviews my lung function tests, these days surprisingly good considering scar tissue. I love the way I find myself chanting snippets of chants that come to me during my day. To me Vedic Chanting, and the whole of the Viniyoga tradition seems like the gift that keeps giving, always more lo learn, more to practice and more to share. The quiet, stable feeling of connection I experience at the end of my own practice is beyond words, I can't imagine my life without this now.

I love the community, the Sangha, the deep feeling of connection to the teachers, the lineage. The KHYF feels like a second home, Rupa always there with her warm welcome and I've met many dedicated and lovely students over the years; I'm sure we all feel this.

Kausthub has nurtured this Sangha at this time of COVID, of social isolation; his Global Prayer offering has been welcome feature of my lockdown days, we 'see' each other, receive, and feel part of this wonderful Global community.

I am very fortunate to have these authentic teachings in my life, they resonate so deeply. Viniyoga is the anchor in my life, and I'm grateful to my teachers Dr Kausthub and Menaka for awakening my potential, I know studying intros authentic lineage makes me the best teacher I can be for my students.

Namaste

Deborah Robertson can be reached at debyoga.au@gmail.com and her website https://www.debrobertson.com.au/

Viniyoga® in Action

Among the different traditions of Yoga around the world, the Viniyoga® tradition is most suited for Yoga Therapy, thanks to its individualized and holistic approach that respects and honours the practitioner. In this section, we will share the extraordinary work of our Viniyoga Practitioners from around the world to bring forth their magnificent work to integrate Yoga into their specialized field of professional practice, thereby also building strong bridges with other healing paradigms.



Viniyoga® to War Veterans

Carmen Martinez, Spain

1) What brought you to Viniyoga in the first place?

Without knowing, I have been linked to this tradition since the beginning of my practice and yoga studies. My very first yoga teacher told me I should get a certification with a school in Barcelona, because it would fit with me. So I started with

Síntesis/Sadhana, then Pranamanas Yoga. Most of my teachers there, were related in some way with Krishnamacharya and TVK Desikachar teachings and tradition. And my first teacher

was right. I like the freedom that Viniyoga has to adapt the postures to each person's needs and capacities, without going away from the tradition. One day I met Kausthub through my yoga therapy teacher Grazia Suffriti and now I am one of his students. Some times it seems just like a dream, since I never expected it. I feel thankful.

2) How did your work of teaching Viniyoga to the War Veterans manifest?

One of my students once told me she was a therapist assisting a war veterans' group. I offered myself to teach them a free yoga class. Months latter, she asked me if my proposal was still valid and at that precise week I had been wondering about the theme for my Viniyoga Therapist Thesis. So I had this impulse to turn this "free class" into a program for my thesis' work.

So, thanks to this local team of the national health program for war veterans I had access to a group of around 20 people. To my surprise, the group was mixed with men and women , ex-guerrilla members and ex-official army members. Their range of age is between 50 and 80 years old. We meet once a month and the group still has an average of 15 people attendees, which is very satisfactory. Usually this groups decrease after the second or third session. They have two short practices they take home. And some of them practice it in a regular basis.

3) How do you find the acceptance of Viniyoga by the students?

Actually, sometimes I have to say the word "yoga" like in a whisper because it could bring about some cultural and religious resistance that would prevent people to even trying yoga. But once they do their first practice and realize that something hsd happened, then I start talking about yoga. Marketing has it that in some people's minds yoga is just for skinny, blond people and a yoga class is like a Cirque du Soleil rehearsal. So, when they realized how much benefit they could take from a simple movement, breathing, chanting, visualizing, and that they could practice with their daily clothing, they were amused in a positive sense.



4) How has Viniyoga helped your student in their healing process? Can you explain some of the improvements they have had since beginning Viniyoga practice?

These people went through rough experiences, not only by losing family and friends, but also by having spent many years of their lives at war zone. After the war many of them did not have a profession and or occupation. So they have deep "vasanas" of suffering and fighting in life. You could see it in their eyes, hands, back, breathing, etc.

Practice has brought softness into their lives. Little by little they have recognized the need for a change in their mental patterns that make them suffer more. For example, some of them do not watch war movies or news at night. They avoid stimuli that may trigger negative emotions.

Most of them sleep better and that makes them feel different during the day. Also for a couple of them, this year was the first time they did not feel depressed during a specific time of the year related to deaths or jail episodes. The amazing thing is that they can recognize these improvements.

At the physical level they could tell the difference after the third practice. Their back and breathing patterns were changing, their hands were softer and they could feel the smile in

their heart. We usually close the practice visualizing a smile in the heart, but it was difficult for some of them to do this at the beginning.

5) What challenges have you faced in bringing Viniyoga to these students?

Frequency is the big challenge. Given the lack of resources it is not possible to do more than a monthly session with this group. Every time we meet, they have to invest resources to attend the session, so as the Local Health Centre does. I cannot go to their houses because there are gangs operating around. Even to get in or out the local health centre I have to be escorted by someone known in the area. So we cannot have enough time to give a personal follow up and a personal practice. Even though they have two different practices they can do at home, some of them are not in condition to do so in terms of space, silence, etc.

6) How do you see the role of Viniyoga in the future of Viniyoga Therapy in the world?

I see Viniyoga tradition as sustained, the fundament and the sense of Viniyoga Therapy. With this particular current situation with Covid-19, Yoga is getting into the people's houses. And it will stay there. So there is a big chance to understand that Yoga is a personal practice adaptable for everyone's needs, capacity, time, etc. Yoga is not a showcase for the ego, but a construction for us to understand that we are more than body and mind. Viniyoga Therapy has all the right tools to develop a personal yoga practice that works in our own particular process but only because it is sustained with Viniyoga tradition.

In another sense, the physical distance implemented around the world, will make us reassess our concept of connection. Viniyoga also develops amazing tools to increase this sense of being connected to everything. The profound work that Viniyoga proposes with Mantra and visualization take us to that big space where everything is connected.

Carmen Martinez can be reached at carmenvgmartinez@gmail.com

Living Luminaries - Yogis of distinction

In this section of our newsletter, we will honour living legends from all traditions, who have contributed immensely to make Yoga a household name worldwide. They toiled hard when

Yoga was not yet popular and dedicated their lives to one of service and duty. Without their efforts, modern-day practitioners will not be reaping the benefits of Yoga's popularity.

Yogi Dr Pranav Pandya ji

Dr. Pranav Pandya is renowned world over as a pioneer of scientific spirituality. As the Head of the Organization, he disseminated the message of Indian culture, in its true spirit, across the globe and established branches of Gayatri Pariwar in over 80 countries. Under his dynamic leadership



the Dev Sanskriti University at Haridwar is establishing new milestones and reforming the face of modern education.

A Gold Medalist in Medicine MD Dr. Pandya qualified for US medical service s in 1976. But upon the insistence of His Guru Pandit Shriram Sharma gave up the lucrative offer and stayed in India. This was the beginning of a Guru -disciple relationship that asked for more sacrifice and penance before moulding Dr. Pandya into a global messenger of Indian Culture.

After giving up his job, Dr. Pandya laid the foundation of pioneering work in bringing science and spirituality together. Under his guidance path breaking research on Ayurveda, Psychology, Yagya pathy and therapeutic benefits of meditation, pranayam was carried out.

He did intense research, study in Ayurveda, Indian Scriptures, co-authored many books on scientific spirituality during the years 1978 to 1990 in close proximity of Acharyaji. Even more significant phase of his life began in 1990 when Gurudev Pandit Shriram Sharma Acharyji took Maha samadhi. This time the world was waiting for his treatise on scientific spirituality in the light of hoary Indian Culture. As the head of Global Gayatri Pariwar he established branches in 80 countries. In continuance of his efforts he has presented scientific aspect of Indian culture to the Parliament of Worlds Religion. He has addressed joint session of House of Lords and House of Commons in UK in February 1992.

As a global messenger of Pandit Shriram Sharmaji's vision of Bright Future Dr. Pandya inspired Youth s and Talents all over India and abroad to take up the three fold path of Sadhana, Upasana and Aradhana. Self-discipline, Attainment of Divinity and Self-less service.

Under his leadership the Gayatri Pariwar fraternity has blossomed into a world wide organization with nearly 90 million followers.

As a futurist he in not only optimistic about a bright future for mankind, but also has the courage of conviction to go any length to achieve his goals. His untiring efforts manifested into a Unique University of Indian Culture. Established in the year 2002 through an ordinance by Uttaranachal Government and recognized by UGC, this University is being developed on the lines of ancient Gurukuls of Nalanda and Taxila. Here the main emphasis is on molding of a new generation of inspired youths who can take up social service along with their own development. A unique synthesis of scientific reasoning with spiritual enlightenment Dr. Pandya is shouldering the responsibility as the Director of Brahmavarchas Research Institute, Head of All World Gayatri Pariwar, Chancellor of Dev Sanskriti University, Editor of Akhand Jyoti Magazine and President of Swami Vivekananda Yogvidya Mahapeeth.

Dr. Pranav Pandya is a shining example of a Holistic Purposeful selfless life lived in the true Vedic spirit. For his noble contribution for the betterment of world, he is honoured with Life Time Achievement Award at the National Symposium on Science of Holistic Living.

We salute you Dr Pranav Pandya ji!!! Namaste.

<u>UPCOMING ONLINE COURSE | JUNE 2020</u> SAMANTRAKA-PRĀNĀYĀMA

Since the COVID-19 crisis began, many students around the world have reached out to us to organize some short term courses online.

We are thrilled to announce a new online course <u>Samantraka-Prāṇāyāma</u> that will be conducted in June 2020.

You can find all the information you need about the course here>

The purpose of this very practical seminar is to explore the utilization of Mantra-s in Prānāyāma and to take it to the next level of practice. A detailed description of the technique for the modern practitioner will be offered along with its benefits and contraindications. A potent practice based on this Prānāyāma utilising an appropriate

mantra will also be taught and guided so that participants can experience Samantraka-Prāṇāyāma.

The seminar will be most useful to those:

wanting to take their practice beyond just Āsana practice.
wanting to explore the role of Mantra in Yoga practices.
wanting to deepen their practice and take it to the next level.
who appreciate traditional teachings and how they influence Practices.

* who are fascinated by energetic dimensions like Nāḍi-s, Cakra-s and Agni.

For more information or to register for this course, kindly click here>

©2020 Krishnamacharya Healing & Yoga Foundation | Chennai 600028. India

Web Version Subscribe Forward Unsubscribe