

Gitananda Yoga Association

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Namaste!

We start the new decade with a change to our structure. Cathryn Doornekamp has been secretary for Australia and New Zealand groups for the past six years and has done an amazing job, but as her time and energy are needed now for the Lotus Yoga Centre and the new Lotus Eco Village being built and it seemed an appropriate time for New Zealand to have its own branch so Cathryn is now the New Zealand Secretary and Margo has taken on the role of Australian Secretary. Thank you, Cathryn, for your efficient secretarial work and for the time and effort you gave to the Association. We continue to look forward to news from the Lotus Centre and receiving updates on the new Eco Village.

What a memorable start to 2020. The whole world is in lock-down either at home unable to go out or keeping their prescribed distance from other human beings when they do go out. It is a remarkably strange global situation to find ourselves in and one thing is certain, it will be a very different world when this is over.

Clever song parodies and jokes are filling cyberspace and helping us to maintain our sense of humour. Here are a couple that appealed to me:

'I've completed my 90-day trial of 2020. How do I cancel'

'Have we tried unplugging 2020, waiting 10 seconds and plugging it back in?'

To thrive in
life you need
three bones:

A wish bone,
a back bone,
and a funny
bone.



All over the world Mother Nature is rejoicing, the skies are blue again, birds are appearing in places they where they were thought to have disappeared. This is from an article in *The Live Nagpur* featuring photos of Mumbai with NO CROWDS and a station with only one person waiting. Can you believe it?

"People are even mesmerized as they can see a flock of birds in their surrounding which were once nowhere to be seen. As India is said to enter in Phase 3 where the spread will rise rapidly and all we can do is stay safe and stay at home and be a responsible citizen while appreciating the view of Nature."

<https://thelivenagpur.com/2020/03/28/covid-19-lockdown-a-makeover-for-mother-nature/>

We begin this edition with:

SOME WORDS OF WISDOM From our beloved Ammaji

Thank you keeping us in your mind and thank you for the positive thoughts on the amazing situation that is facing the entire world. We are very much united in spirit if not physically. There are no spiritual distances when we are ONE despite time and space, name, and description.

I would like to share with you an interesting idea which is relevant to this period of human evolution. It is called the Stockdale Paradox. The Stockdale Paradox (giving something a name always sticks more firmly in the mind) is very interesting and I especially like the phrase - between optimism and pessimism is realism, a kind of spiritual dialectics in the "Age of Corona". Read on!

This is not the time for optimism or pessimism. This is the time for realism. When we are facing a severe crisis we are better off following the Stockdale Paradox. James Stockdale was a US Vice Admiral who survived eight years as a prisoner in a Vietnamese camp not knowing if or when his ordeal would end. Jim Collins wrote about Stockdale's experience in his book "Good to great". What the Stockdale Paradox says is that we must never lose faith that we would make it through difficult, uncertain periods - like the one we are facing right now. However we must not get over-optimistic. That's the paradox.

Many of us are over optimistic and expect things to be normal soon. And when we realize that the uncertainty could last longer and things could get worse, we lose heart and give up. Instead, we are better off being aware of the most brutal facts of our reality and figuring out how to cope with them day by day.

As Plato is reportedly to have said, "Be kind to all you meet for all are involved in a life and death struggle". This pronouncement is truer in the "Corona Co Virus" reign than ever before!

What is the struggle?

Between consciousness and unconsciousness; between animal nature and humane nature; between light and darkness; between ignorant sleep and wakefulness!

From what does man (Humankind) suffer?

In the words of the Great Rishis of yore, "Lo! Ye who suffer! Know that ye suffer from your-self!"

Dear One: Fear Not! All this will pass!

Let the Guru's Light shine in our hearts and all will be bright!

Do your best and leave the rest!

Affectionately yours in yoga

Ammaji

FROM ACROSS THE DITCH

We, in NZ have been in lock down alert level 4 (essential economic activity) since 25 March, so everything has come to a grinding halt with the development. We closed our doors to in-house classes on the day of the announcement that we were going from alert level 2 to alert level 4 in 2 days' time.

While we have welcomed the opportunity mother earth has been given to heal, and that mankind has been given for introspection; we have been busier than ever getting on-line classes up and running. It has been a real learning curve. Our son, Ananda has been most helpful with his expert technical skills, of which I am very grateful.

We are awaiting the Prime Minister's announcement on Monday 20th as to whether level 4 lockdown will end at midnight next Wednesday or whether it will be extended. Shifting to alert level 3 will allow for safe economic activity, so some non-essential businesses will be allowed to reopen.

Thank you for your glowing comments acknowledging me for my Secretarial skills over the last six years. I have enjoyed being of service,

Healthy blessings,

Cathryn 🍀🍀🍀

FROM MURALI

This year as usual I travelled to India in January to participate in the 2020 Yantra Course. I went with the intention of staying for two months, however like many other people my plans were cut short and I left in late March arriving home four days before the Australian lockdown. While I was in Pondicherry I took the opportunity to check on the development of the new City Centre which, like everything everywhere, has come to a halt. I have included a few photos to show you how it has been progressing.

Interior taking shape



MEMBERSHIP FEES

Have you renewed your GYA membership for this year?

Please note that **Subscriptions to Yoga Life** are paid to the Ashram in India and are entirely separate from GYA and do not include membership of GYA. The membership fees you pay plus a small income from our annual retreat are the only form of income generated by our association.

Our fees for 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021 are due now, so if you have not already done so you could help our association by renewing them as soon as possible. Please pay by EFT then email your payment details to muralidharan33@yahoo.com.au.

- \$30 Associate membership. Open to anyone with an interest in Gitananda Yoga
- \$50 Accredited membership. Includes a listing on the GYA website.

New Zealand members please send membership fees to Cathryn Lotus Yoga Centre lotusyogacentrenz@gmail.com

DR ANANDA'S WORKSHOP 2021 or 2022

While in India I worked with our designer to make improvements to our website to make it easier to promote our events and I was in the process of finalising plans for a special **4-day workshop with Dr Ananda to be held in Brisbane in April 2021**. The venue had been booked and the details had been put up on the website when COVID-19 reared its ugly head and put a stop to our plans. If it is not possible for it to go ahead in 2021 we will aim for 2022 but this will also depend on our financial situation as it is our membership that enables us to bring Dr. Ananda to Australia. Our fees have remained unchanged since March 2006 and yet membership has diminished by more than 50% since his visit in 2009.

However, to continue to keep fees low and be able to bring Dr. Ananda to Australia we need you to support us by maintaining your membership each year. If you have allowed your membership to lapse, I urge you to become financial again by paying the amount in arrears necessary to bring your membership up to date.

Expressions of interest are being taken now for Dr Ananda's Brisbane workshops in the hope that it will go ahead on 22nd April 2021. Please email muralidharan33@yahoo.com.au.

GYA GET-TOGETHER 2020

We are hoping our annual retreat will still be able to go ahead in October as planned. The BreakFree resort proved to be an ideal location with the beach 2 to 3 minutes' walk away and Pacific Fair Shopping Centre 5 to 10 minutes away but with our tourist and airline industries in disarray this may also need to be postponed. Take a moment to click on the link <http://www.gitananda-australia.org/> and scroll through our photo archives. You may even find yourself there.



Rooftop area for classes



Street frontage



Plenty of space for classes here

MORE WISDOM FROM AMMAJI

Dear Fellow Human Beings! Living together mysteriously on a fragile planet!

Namaste

It occurred to me today as **BIG BOLD LETTERS** flashed across my mental screen: **FEAR NOT!**

Fear not! We have nothing to fear except fear itself!

(American President Franklin Roosevelt to his people during World war II)

As Dhivya Priya informed me

FEAR is

F-False

E-Evidences

A-Appearing

R-Real.

Fear, said Swamiji, is the primal root emotion of the mammalian brain (reptilian brain does not have emotion). It is intrinsically linked to Abhinivesaha, the survival instinct- just like night is to day.

They go together like a horse and carriage.

Fear is the motivating urge behind violence: I must kill you before you kill me. That is, jungle law-survival of the fittest.

Fear causes

Flight

Fright

Fight and

Freeze responses.

The Abhaya Mudra of Indian culture-means-"Fear not"!

It gives us the reassuring message: I, the Divine am here to protect you (ultimately).

Conquering fear and understanding fear is the prerequisite of Ahimsa, the first limb on the yoga path.

Let Plato have the last word, "We can easily forgive a child who is afraid of the dark; the real tragedy of life is when men are afraid of the light".

Remember: Fears are not real; they are false perceptions of the circumstances surrounding us!

Ammaji



Top floor Interior view above and below



Create Inner Sanctuary

There are times in our life when our worlds fall apart, when we are overwhelmed by the intensity of events, when we feel alienated from ourselves or others, and when our life seems to make no sense. In those moments when we feel most adrift and confused, there is still a way to find a sanctuary of renewal.

Silence is a refuge, offering a sanctuary of renewal. In moments of confusion and complexity we are tempted to do more, to act, to find explanations, to speak. If we listen to our heart,

we come to know the wisdom of being still. We calm the turmoil of our mind, feeling our feet on the earth and connecting once more with a depth of inner silence that can guide us, heal, and restore us.

Silence is an ever-present reality revealed to us in the moments when we remember to listen. Silence is revealed in moments of wholehearted attention when we are fully present in this life. As a Christian mystic reminds us, “Absolute, unmixed attention is prayer.” The art of cultivating silence does not take us to a destination divorced from the present moment of reality in our life. Cultivating the art of silence, we learn to discover its richness in all moments and encounters. Treasuring its rich potential we learn to discover what it means to live with a silent heart, rich in vitality, creativity, energy, and life.

Silence is the ground of happiness, communion, and oneness. We can learn to find it in all moments and things: we discover it has never been lost but only hidden.

Accept What Is

In one sense, accepting ***what is***, is a given. ***What is*** – the reality of the moment – it cannot be otherwise, so why fight it? But acceptance does not mean resignation. It is an invitation to dig deeper. That’s where we strike gold. Beneath appearances lies a more nuanced level of reality. It’s like looking at someone’s face and seeing the story behind it. Everything is precious once we know how to look.

I accept ***what is*** – then decide if I should, and can, change it. When I can’t change it, I look for a deeper meaning. I’m always panning for gold. Accepting ***what is***, means taking what comes graciously. Sometimes what comes is a gift or compliment. Gifts make many people uncomfortable particularly if they suspect the givers motive, or they feel undeserving. But refusing a gift or complement cheats the giver of good feelings – and good karma, so practice accepting compliments with a simple “thank you” and offers of help with “Yes please” then receiving it graciously.

Being OK with ***what is*** frees us to imagine even better things to come. As golfers tee off, they visualize themselves sinking the winning putt. Studies show that vividly imagining an outcome and achieving it are pretty much the same to the brain. Practicing acceptance prepares you to live in this changing world, where you never know what’s going to happen next. Acceptance is like protecting yourself with your own shield.

Contributions are welcome for our next eNewsletter, have you a favourite practice, a meditation, a recipe, an anecdote, an interesting story, or **something** you could share with us all? Please email your contributions to Margo at margosyoga@hotmail.com for the March 2020