



YOGA FLOURISHES IN BRAZIL

□ IGNEZ NOVAES ROMEU

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About some eleven years ago, I went to Kaivalyadhām, Lonavla, and there took the diploma course in Yoga. Before going to India I was already interested in Yoga and had been attached to a Yoga Institute in São Paulo. Previous to that I was trained as a teacher of Physical Education and afterwards went to the States where I received a degree of Master of Science in Corrective Physical Education at "Smith College", Northampton, Mass., U.S.A.

Because of this background I found myself very much at home in the Yoga School of Kaivalyadhām, where the scientific aspect of Yoga is stressed, without losing sight of the spiritual aspect. I was really lucky to have chosen Kaivalyadhām, where the Yoga students have a chance to receive the generous and competent guidance of Revd. Swami Digambarji. Since then I have returned twice to Lonavla and Rajkot to continue my studies, and I am glad to say I have been able to maintain the good relationship established since my student days.

I try as much as possible to keep in touch with the work being continuously done in the field of Yoga at Kaivalyadhām.

During my last visit to Lonavla, two years ago, I asked and received permission to represent Kaivalyadhām Institution in Brazil. I have considered it a great honour but this is also a great responsibility for me.

My work is centered mostly in São Paulo city, where I live, and which is the Capital of the same State ; being a city under continuous development where changes and growth constitute her distinctive mark, we all suffer the growing pains and have to face all the consequent problems.

This being the case and so many cultures coming together in a truly melting pot, we have here a fertile soil for all kinds of experiments. Naturally all cults, all sects, philosophies, etc., have a place in this city. Yoga has its share and like all over the world it is practised here in all aspects and combinations.

We hear all kind of opinions—pros and cons—and only the future will tell what the firm root will be. However some sort of stability is already taking place : groups are being formed, associations are taking shape and some paths are being opened.

There is a growing consciousness about Yoga in Brazil. Several individuals and centres are working in the field of Yoga in their own capacity. In spite of great interest about Yoga there are also many misconceived ideas associated with Yoga. It is necessary that the superfluous elements about Yoga are removed and Yoga is presented in its true nature. Various aspects of Yoga need to be clearly brought out and explained to the people.

Various associations and individuals working in the field of Yoga may create confusion in the minds of novice when they hear different views on Yoga. There is also a need that different associations working in the field with common objectives come together and strengthen the

movement of Yoga unitedly. This is obviously a difficult task, but we have been successful in bringing three schools of Yoga together and forming one association.

Physical and mental health being the primary concern before us, we are centring our attention on projecting Yogic activities in a scientific manner in the departments of physical education. Our scientific approach and rational outlook of the problems of modern living tackled through Yoga is being appreciated in many quarters.

In order to deal with the stupendous task of educating the masses we have to depend on the adequately trained teachers. We are engaged in preparing the teachers of Yoga along the lines of and under the guidance of Kaivalyadham, Lonavla.

We are aiming our efforts in two directions : among the Official Schools and the Private Yoga Institutes. The work towards the Official Schools has found a footing in the Physical Education Schools.

For the last two years I have been teaching Yoga in the School of Physical Education of the São Paulo University. Upto now the work has been done on an experimental basis. There is a great interest on the part of the students and by now we hope to have established a permanent footing there.

Besides the São Paulo School, we have also established contact with the Physical Educational School in Goiania, capital of the State of Goias, where the Yoga has been taught for about two years. Since my visit to Goiania last October, we have the pleasure to learn that the orientation of Yoga adopted by that School will be in accordance with the lines of Kaivalyadham.

The book "Āsanas," which I have translated into Portuguese (duly authorized by Kaivalyadham) has been adopted as text book for their students in Goiania.

Furthermore, we have established contact with a private Yoga Institute in Goiania. Since geographically Goiania is situated in the centre of Brazil, very close to our new capital—Brasilia, this new association has a very auspicious meaning to us. We are very happy indeed with this last development of our work.

On the other hand, the work with the private Yoga Institutes and Yoga teachers in general is also taking shape. We have founded an Association as an effort to join all the Institutes and teachers willing to practise and to develop on the lines of scientific Yoga lines as directed by Kaivalyadham. The newly founded Association has already organized a training course whose candidates came from those Yoga Institutes forming the Association. This was our way to give them the fundamental tenets of scientific Yoga. Some 25 teachers completed the course and have already organized themselves in the "Association of Teachers of Scientific Yoga". And the new Association is already very active.

The translation of the book "Āsanas" by Kuvalayananda into Portuguese was a landmark in our efforts. First, because it is a deserved homage from ourselves to the great Swami, founder of Kaivalyadham. Then, because through a book the spreading of Yoga on the right lines can reach anywhere, everywhere. It was a very difficult task to finish and still today it gives me a thrill to see the book in some libraries or displayed for sale in book-shops.

Another land-mark was to have a headquarter to all our activities and also a place to practise and teach Yoga. So, our Institute came to life and a group of students attend regularly Yoga classes under our guidance. It is a very gratifying experience, the real basis of our work.

It is our general experience that most people look after Yoga for mental and physical health reasons. Quite a few come to Yoga directed by their physicians. Sometimes a Yoga teacher finds himself dealing single-handed with therapy cases, besides trying to attend to all different needs of the group. So the requirement of joining forces and more guidance is very great indeed.



There is always a small but important group of people looking after Yoga for its spiritual value also. Those are the students who become our close helpers and main support. It is with their kind help that our task can be carried on. And it is on their account that our link with Kaivalyadham is so important to us. Without our total trust in the guidance of Swami Digambarji and in the help of our teachers, even from a distance, we could not aim to the higher aspects of Yoga and **MAY GOD BLESS AND PROTECT THEM.**

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The Self, encased in the body, undergoes various sorts of sufferings, because of this connection ; therefore those who desire Deliverance of their Selves, should avoid this corporeal contact either through mind, or speech, or action.

Liberate Thyself from the trammels of doubt through which Thou art lost in this world-forest. Realise Thyself as separate and absorbed in contemplation of the Highest Self.

—Acharya Amitgati

