

Iyengar Yoga Teachers training for students from Mexico.

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To put into words the sensations of the body, the soul and all BEING, before, during and after one week of fire, is not that easy...to put into order all the feeling and the emotions: happiness, desires, fear, courage, admiration, loyalty, faith, optimism, angst, tenderness, doubts euphoria, guilt, they all create an internal chaos.....and from this internal turmoil, the willingness to continue in the path, is reborn.

This is our fourth year of training, what was started in "La Isla" (Tepoztlan-Guerrero), today the meeting is in Mexicali, Baja California, the furthest north in Mexico "the border".

From all the different corners of Mexico, luggage start to arrive with tons and tons of emotions, everybody had made much effort to separate themselves for 7 full days "full time" from their families, responsibilities, work, projects, with the main object "to meet".

Within all of us, there is someone, I will say, *the joining force*, the reason for all this movement, our teacher: Amparo Rodriguez, if some of us have to travel 8 or 10 hours, there is someone that has to travel 20 hours without complaining term after term, she is here with a smile, eyes full of light, radiant, this is what a continued and uninterrupted practice gives: a human presence from a being full of LOVE that comes to share, guide and instruct us. Here she is, with her Spanish a bit rusty but lots of understanding in her soul.

How privileged, we are! The journey that we take with a group, far from finding competitiveness, there is a family, far from divisions there is consciousness, all this is understood due to this person who leads this group. I cannot speak for other groups; I only know the group that I know. Yamas and Niyamas live in the presence of this teacher, the practice of Iyengar yoga is an experience of the soul. With so much movement, one can observe the peace in a being that does not have to make much noise, to "be" is sufficient, to know WHO she is and WHAT she knows.

The 1st day: I remember the first module that I attended; actually it was the second as I could not make the first one that everybody attended due to personal circumstances. The main group was quite big, my body was shaking inside because I knew that in reality I did not know anything, the name of the asanas, how to use the props...oh my God, what I am doing here?

The presence of Amparo together with Alicia Ramos, a wonderful Mexican yoga teacher, put me at ease at the start of the module and then...a family was started.....there was nothing to worry about...the only thing that we had to do was just to be there.

Today, the same thing happens, there are some new members and there is only Amparo guiding the group, the roots of the group are real, is like the souls of

all of us know, always known, you can feel the PEACE, the original group has developed, somehow most of us know what are we doing here...the doubts and fears have changed.

Lourdes and Socorro, our hostesses in Mexicali have planned and organized all the details; the meeting place is a beautiful sitting room, English style, decorated with eclectic ornaments, some Asian, European and Arabic. A classic tea set, a **samovar**...all ready to sweeten the soul.

We are getting to know the new members of the group, there is laughter, homework to give to Amparo, directions to the new place are given, there is so much to remember and to talk about...we can not wait any longer and it is the moment now to go to the yoga space. And Wow!! It is true that these 2 host yoginis have thought about everything: the colours, the smells, the altar, information in the walls, it is a place where you can breathe the presence of love and one can really feel welcome. It is a space that has been prepared with earnestness and splendour...

A gentle practice on the first evening helps us unwind from the travelling and allow us to have a rest to make sure that we will be on time for the next morning yoga session. The 2nd day of the T.T. always has an evaluation of our personal practice. What have we done in the last 5 to 6 months? It is only a mock assessment but the nerves, the fear...are very hard to let go of. Nevertheless there is not as much anguish as there was in the first terms, it seems like we are starting to get more in contact with our practice...we feel the postures with more understanding.

The 2nd day it is a day of exams... the extreme punctuality that characterise Amparo is noted, so everybody arrives with plenty of time to become familiar with the new space and the yoga equipment to find what we hope is engraved in our bodies and to find the balance necessary to be able to give the best of ourselves.

I think this is the rule: misalign to align yourself; internal chaos is initially addressed by external order; the bodies start to realign themselves, now our feet and legs start to respond, maybe even better than other times but nevertheless with plenty of challenges, here is where we live - the fear and the anguish; the blankets don't feel the same, their height is different, it feels heavy, there are pressure changes...and finally...balance, equilibrium...everybody starts to play their own music...so there is a symphony but I don't know how it happens. Nevertheless my mind is full of doubt "oh, but in the workshop with Jawahar my ideas were changed and now Amparo is going to correct me, ...and if this is not what should I expect?... my practice is like this now"...ufff, there is so much in my brain, this way ...that way...but all together something made sense...so my doubts for the moment are finished...it is too much stress to feel observed, that I don't dominate my space, to realise that all the obsession with control is only on our minds, and thank God what we started this morning is now finishing - I start to feel exhausted and we are only starting...later we start with the second part of the evaluation: assigned asanas in specific time to teach...the fear, the doubts, all return...anyone can think that these yoga "freaks" are so intent with so much detail...but only those that have touched the SELF when all the muscles have been

extended can understand and know that in every detail it is possible to find the source...and in the simplicity of the details it is possible to find ALL...

3rd day: There is lots of euphoria in the air; I have not anticipated the welcome that our hosts had prepared for us, all is well organized, the precision in the timetable is admirable –so suddenly we are in a tour, it feels like when you get in a bus and they tell you that you only have 15 minutes for the panoramic visit because you have more to do...so everything that is not only in the yoga room is all panoramic. The cherry on the cake is that we will be going to La Mesa, San Diego, California, to attend a workshop with Sunita Iyengar, fresh and blood Iyengar, my heart vibrates with only thinking about it, to be so close to the blood of Guruji...there are so many of us that like to go to India and now, we are only a few kilometres away from the presence of his family...wow, Lourdes and Socorro have thought about everything!!!! They managed to secure a place for all of us and from today we have to have our passports stamped so that when we are crossing the border we don't get any problems to get into our security conscious neighbour country...they thought about all the details, the precision is reflected in the organization...the only thing that was missing were the posters with photos at the arrival at the airport, but they have explained before that in Mexicali airport there is only one exit not like in Cancun, so there was not way that we will get lost... anyway, all the details were considered, so we managed to cross the US/Mexico frontier, "la border" (the way that we called jokingly)...how funny...after crossing, the only different thing was the money: dollars instead of pesos and some advertising posters, apart from that all but all of us spoke Spanish.

It took 2 hours to, stamp the passports, cross and leave passport control and be even closer to one of the Iyengars, we are so grateful to our teacher to include this visit as part of our teachers training.

Now, back to reality, the individual and teaching evaluation that Amparo put us through is like an intense camping, were you pay to immerse yourself on intensity...I think monks do it, actually the Iyengars do it too. In reality, it is necessary to have a special character to be able to walk on fire, to feel it, smell it, suffer it and to keep coming back. All that you bring in your head is forgotten, your plans get mixed up, everything that you expected to happen did not happen but many other thing happen...after all who said that it is possible to be in control?

4th day: We rise very early, a car, 2 vans and we all ready to leave...what an odyssey, to cross on foot the frontier having transport is strange, from there we start our trip to La Mesa, San Diego...we have arrived very fast or it feels that way because I am very exited.

The workshop is going to take place in a Methodist church, even this feels special, all the space is full of yoga mats, I think we are about 100 participants and here we really have a sergeant...actually a few...but the reality is that they are very compassionate with the Mexican group, someone said in Spanish that the

Mexican group were on the left of the room...silence...we all stood and she came in, I never imagined her like this. It is beautiful to break all the paradigms; this is yoga, her voice, her presence, she is capable of seeing the bodies of all 100 of us, uff...it seems like she has eyes on her hands...when she start to talk, it is like thunder, every word is full of knowledge, we are brought back to the roots of yoga with basic asanas and movements and oh!!! For goodness sake, a Uttita Hasta Padasana that I never touched with so much intensity...the turning of the head in some asanas, today have a superior meaning and then I realised that it is not that simple to really understand. To really extend the arms to the point that I though never possible...was it fear to be observed?, present inspiration...I don't know, the only thing is that her words said: **“when the mind stops, it is then that we reach the higher self, we have to surrender into the asanas”** and to finish with a gold brooch, she said **“the body is like a candle, the wax (the body) melts onto the floor and the fire of the heart rises to the above.”**

With the help and guidance of our 2 best Mexican teachers: 1 Mexican native and the other with a Mexican heart, the only thing that it is left to say is THANKS.

5th day: we think that after such intense time in San Diego with Sunita, the body won't be able to give anymore...but once more, the body and the mind are wrong; without pain and with fire in the heart, first thing in the morning, we are all ready to continue. Amparo, as always, continues demonstrating how it is possible to continue learning, that there is always something more, the most minimum detail with the body, to silence the mind...the vibrations, the quietness to be able to became whole. Even if I have been told that when we are centred, there can not be a feeling of fatigue, the truth is that I am exhausted!

For lunch, Socorro and Lourdes are taking us to taste the typical food of Mexicali, even if you don't believe it, it is Chinese, very good Chinese nevertheless.

The afternoon session, the new students surprised us, their teachers, some of them in the room are worried, and their bodies show the heritage. It is very beautiful to observe how, in one space, we all grow and learn.

This teacher training has been full of surprises and blessings. Lourdes' family has offered us the possibility to reconnect. We are very grateful also for experiencing face to face the unison of the blood families and soul families.

6th day: time passes...I did not think I will last till today, but now that we are getting close to the end, my heart did not want it to finish, I am feeling so much at home.

Alicia taught a session concerning asanas for neck and shoulder problems, and she showed us how ropes can challenge us to work beyond what our bodies think they are capable of...and the days goes on, I can see now that it is not just me that feels the fatigue, but we feel more united, closer to each other.

In the afternoon, Samantha, who we called Samantamasica, the youngest of the group, our baby, give us a fantastic presentation about anatomy and movement; she has brought with her for the talk some very special illustrations, special dynamics: we have to move, to interact, we are encouraged to feel our movements, a different technique with a result of a wonderful understanding of the body. Whatever we

thought it was stiff is actually porous and flexible, we are breaking ground here, we managed to access more movement in every space.

Did I mention before that this is a very special group? If we arrived with doubts then we are more than convinced of the power of our yoga family.

7th day: I hope that every day in our lives is like one of the practice days, sharing, living everyday with lots of passion...my body is very tired and I have to admit that I am glad that the week is more or less finished... but this only means that there are going to be more reunions and meetings. We will be back to our homes with more knowledge and more enthusiasm.

Now, I have to observe and wait for some of my colleagues and friends go through their exams, I dedicate this few words with lots of love and best wishes for their light to shine through on their dates.

We don't have a date and place for our next meeting, maybe Queretaro, or Mexico City, and why not? Maybe even London....

Today, nearly a month after my return, I know that the emotional chaos that my yoga practice generates is called: LOVE, a joining love, a love that grows and spreads.

I want to give thanks to all that made this trip possible, THANK you to the person who makes every term possible in some beautiful places in Mexico, thanks for not getting distracted by unnecessary proceedings and thanks for her unquestioning trust in us and her faith in this method that makes the blood vibrate - all this is down to the presence and our great TEACHER.

Thank you Amparo Rodriguez.