

“In *Yoga in the Kashmir Tradition: The Art of Listening*, not only does Billy Doyle faithfully represent, in a clear and contemporary manner, the perennial understanding that lies at the heart of both the Vedantic and Tantric traditions. He also infuses this book with the transparency and luminosity of his own experience, imbuing it with a gentle power that will return the reader to the heart of their experience again and again.”

—Rupert Spira

Author of *Presence Vol.I&II, Being Aware of
Being Aware*

“When I began studying with Jean Klein, a European master of Advaita Vedanta, in the 1980s, the nondual teachings of this ancient tradition were still barely known in the West, and his gatherings in the US would rarely draw more than 50 or 60 participants. In recent years, however, the nondual approach has become increasingly popular, and a number of excellent Western teachers have emerged, several of whom were deeply influenced by Jean Klein, either through his many books or through others who studied with him and went on to teach themselves.

Fortunately for contemporary students, Jean’s written teachings eloquently convey the “perfume of their source.” But they fail to transmit the “body approach” that he taught at his retreats, a form of hatha yoga that works primarily with direct sensation as a doorway to freedom from contraction and identification.

In this book, author Billy Doyle, who was a yoga teacher before he met Jean and spent 15 years studying the body approach closely under Jean's tutelage, brings us a carefully curated and meticulously presented guidebook to this work that can be applied by the reader to powerful effect.

Jean realized that identification as a separate self is more than just a mental phenomenon—it's deeply rooted in contraction and fixation in our physical and energetic structure, as the result of a lifetime of conditioning. By bringing gentle, nonjudgmental, nonmanipulative awareness to sensation as we move through the poses, we can release the hold that separation and identification have over us and free ourselves to realize our essential nature, as beings of light.

For yoga teachers, this wise book introduces a method for using the practice as a doorway to a deeper dimension of being. And for students of Advaita, it helps ground the teachings in direct apperception and allows conceptual understanding to dissolve in being understanding. As a complement to your other practices and readings, I believe you'll find that it has the potential to increase your understanding immeasurably."

—Stephan Bodian

Author of *Wake Up Now* and *Beyond Mindfulness*

YOGA IN THE KASHMIR TRADITION: THE ART OF LISTENING

FOLLOWING THE TEACHINGS OF JEAN KLEIN

BILLY DOYLE

NEW SARUM PRESS
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YOGA IN THE KASHMIR TRADITION

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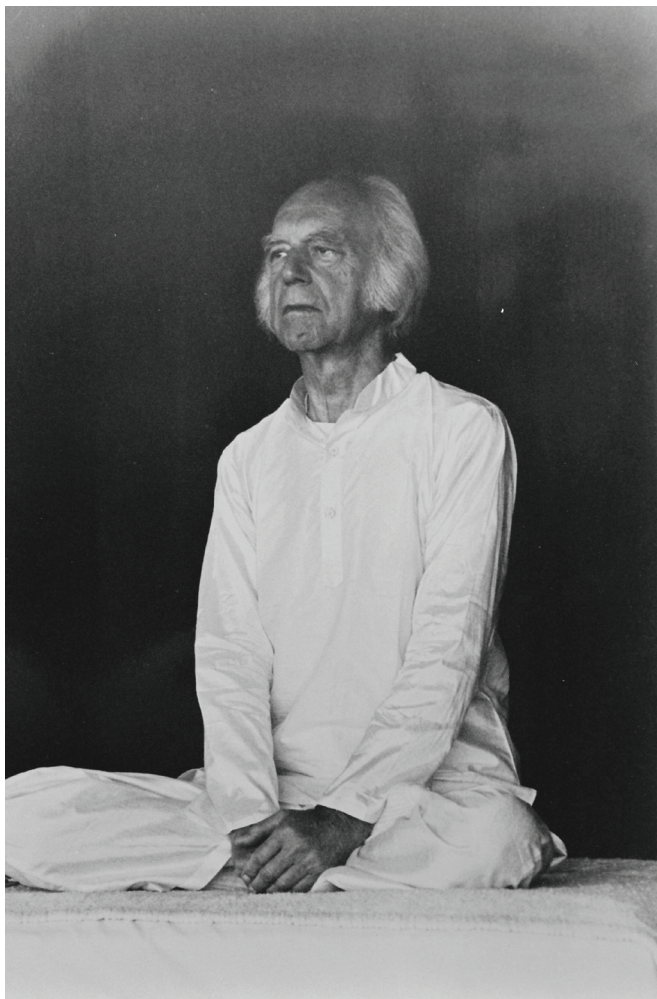
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in gratitude
to Jean Klein,
my teacher



It is important to live this directionlessness, this not-knowing, this waiting without waiting for anything. It acts on your cells, on your psychosomatic body, bringing them to dilation and harmony. All that remains is your directionless awareness. Live in this absolute absence of yourself. It is the threshold. You are in complete openness, open to nothing, free from all ideas, free from all hope. And when you are completely transparent, open to openness, you are taken by Truth, by Grace. That is certain.

Jean Klein, *The Book of Listening*

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FOREWORD

The array of non-dual teachings available on YouTube and other internet platforms is in many ways a blessing for our time, allowing people at the four corners of the earth to be touched by the truth and for their search to be ignited or their understanding to deepen.

However, there is also a price to pay. As the internet becomes the shrine and anyone who has had a singular awakening experience becomes the guru, the risk arises that the teaching will be watered down or even deadened. The living tradition, consisting of the direct transmission of truth and the means to establish oneself there, and carried down through the generations by a lineage of sages, is often discarded or ignored, leaving many frustrated and confused before long.

With some exceptions, few or no means are provided to investigate the existing or remaining beliefs in separation that continue to rule our lives after a moment of understanding and that seem to obscure the shining of our true nature. Furthermore, many contemporary non-dual offerings misunderstand and therefore neglect the importance of including the body and the realm of feeling and perception in the investigation of such beliefs and conditioning.

In this context, Billy Doyle's *Yoga in the Kashmir Tradition*, updated and fleshed out in this second edition, is a great relief and a true gem. It is first and foremost a bow to his teacher, Jean Klein, paying homage to his lineage and the tradition of direct transmission and placing Billy's own teaching within that sacred current.

Billy beautifully renders this experiential yoga as he received it from Jean Klein, having made it his own experience. He carefully places it within each of the traditions that Jean so deeply explored: *Advaita Vedanta*, *Kashmir Shaivism*, *hatha yoga* and meditation. He makes palpable the essential tradition of 'the art of listening', in which perceived experience is welcomed unconditionally and tasted fully, free of any concepts, memories or agenda. In this process, attention naturally relaxes more and more, until the subject and object of experience can reunite effortlessly in and as our essential, open nature.

With the pedagogical sensitivity that characterises his yoga sessions and retreats, Billy then guides us into a sequence of short and exquisite experiential explorations of our direct perceptual and tactile experience.

I never met Jean Klein, but he was the teacher of my teacher, Francis Lucille, and over the years I have also had the privilege of sitting with Billy Doyle as well as Eric Baret, another very close student of Jean. It is extraordinary to taste such vigour and variety in the expressions by which the truth shares itself within this particular lineage. Each of these teachers has taken in the transmission so deeply as to let its form be shaped organically through the impersonal process of resonance and creativity.

—Ellen Emmet, 2019

INTRODUCTION

Yoga in the Kashmir Tradition presents yoga as I experienced it working with Jean Klein. Jean brought this approach to the West in the 1950s and during subsequent years he further developed and refined the teaching.

Jean Klein was a master of Advaita Vedanta (non-duality) in the tradition of Ramana Maharshi and Shri Atmananda Krishna Menon; however, he had his own distinctive and unique approach.

I first met Jean in 1982 when he was giving a series of discourses in London. I was deeply affected by his talk and afterwards he mentioned that he also taught yoga in his retreats. Being a yoga teacher myself, I was intrigued that he should also teach body work.

He was to become my teacher and for the following fourteen years I attended his retreats and talks in Holland, England, France and the USA as well as receiving private tuition. The retreats consisted of dialogues, question and answers, silent and guided meditation and the practices of yoga. He called this approach to body work, 'Yoga in the Kashmir Tradition'.

Here I will be focusing on his teachings regarding yoga, but as the whole sphere of his approach, be it self-enquiry, meditation or body work, was totally integrated, so these

different aspects are intertwined through the book.

Jean had studied medicine and was a musicologist. In 1954 he left France and went to India for three years; it was at Bangalore University where he was studying that Jean met his guru, Pandiji, who was a professor of Sanskrit. His yoga teacher was Krishnamacharya of Madras, but whilst Jean was living in Bangalore he also met a yogi, Dibianandapuri, who had lived a long time in Kashmir. It was Dibianandapuri who introduced Jean to the Kashmir teachings and confirmed his understanding that the real body was the energy body and not the physical body. He showed him how all the yoga postures could be carried out on the subtle level independently of the physical body.

The nature of Jean's teaching when he returned to Europe was focused on the questions: *What is our real nature? Who am I?* Yoga was part of this enquiry. Even before his visit to India, Jean had a particular interest in the relationship between body function and psychology. Most teachers tend either to stress self-enquiry to the exclusion of body work or focus on body work with little regard for self-enquiry, but with Jean there was a marriage of approaches.

Jean explains in the following two paragraphs why the body work is important:

About a year after I returned from India I found it necessary to expand the teaching to the psychosomatic level. It became apparent, through meeting people, that identification with what we are not is confirmed and reinforced by contraction on the psychosomatic level. The I-concept is only a contraction on the level of the

body-mind. It has no more reality than a bad habit. It is a defence against being nobody.

In getting to know the body-mind, one can discover more clearly the nature of identification, and so let it go. The relaxed body is a relaxed mind. In a relaxed body and mind you are open to receiving, available, welcoming, open to the openness. The relaxed, light, energetic, sattvic body-mind is a near expression of our real nature. It is almost impossible for a conditioned body-mind to be receptive to truth, open to grace. It can happen that truth pierces through all conditioning, since the insight into our true nature ultimately has nothing to do with the body or the mind. But it is exceedingly rare. My teaching also on the level of the body was only to make discrimination more likely, to help more of my friends be available to global insight.

Jean Klein, *Transmission of the Flame*

We might say, and understand theoretically, that we are not the body, senses and mind since they are simply objects in awareness. But just to say that I'm not the body remains an intellectual idea, an abstraction; do we really know what this body is? It is the contraction and defences on the level of the body that reinforce our identification with a particular body-mind. The body is in many ways an intricate defence mechanism which maintains our self-image. It is only by exploring the body that we free it from its habitual patterns and discover the real body. This exploration is the art of listening; of course this listening is not restricted to the ears—all the senses are involved, it is our total receptivity. In freeing the

body from restriction and coming to the expanded body, we have a forefeeling of our real nature, our globality. The understanding of our real nature takes place on every level of our being, even the cells of our body are affected in the transformation—otherwise the transformation remains partial.

This exploration does not involve a dictatorship over oneself; it is not a discipline that implies compulsion and conflict. The understanding comes through discernment.

ADVAITA VEDANTA

At the core of the great religious traditions there is the understanding of the oneness of the whole of life. In the Indian tradition this is known as advaita, which means 'not two'. This truth lies at the heart of the Upanishads, and was later expounded by Sri Shankaracarya in the ninth century. Indeed, this is a current running through the whole of Indian culture.

Advaita asks us to question what is real, to question the common-sense view that we are separate entities, each body-mind being distinct from other body-minds and from the world. It asks: *What is our essential nature?* The body and mind are always changing. Is there not something that is beyond the flux of time? Is there not something beyond the mind? To recognise change there must be something in us that is changeless. What is changeless in me? Is it not the sense of presence, the sense of knowing? I know myself, I know the world, but the real question is: *Who is the knower?*

We don't cease to be when there is no thought; we still know that we are, but we generally only know ourselves in

relation to objects, such as thoughts, images, memory. In other words, I am a woman, I am a doctor, I'm young, a person of worth. We don't know ourselves without the adornment of a string of characteristics.

It is this identification with an I-image, which is no more than a projection of the mind, memory re-enforced by habit, that veils our true reality. Taking myself to be a limited separate entity in a universe invites fear and desire. In fact, fear and desire are the very essence of this separate personal entity. It is from this state of insecurity that we begin to look for happiness, for security. In the beginning this search is usually directed towards material objects, acquiring knowledge, enhancing our self-image, or towards relationships. Only when we realise from our failures that nothing in the world will completely satisfy our longing, do we begin to ask deeper questions.

This is the beginning of a more conscious spiritual search. For this search to reach fruition, it must be accompanied by an intense desire for liberation and for truth. Except in rare cases, because of our conditioning, we will need the guidance of a teacher; one who knows, who emanates truth in his being. We are brought to realise, what we are not: not a body, not a personality, not a series of images, not any kind of object. Our real nature is prior to any image, any thought. The body is in awareness, the mind is in awareness, the world too exists in awareness. Thus, awareness is prior to all manifestation.

We begin to give precedence to awareness and not to what we're aware of. We begin to feel ourselves as awareness, a witness to the passing show. Like the screen in the film show,

the images are always changing, but the screen is unaffected. A feeling of space opens up between what I am and what I'm aware of. I begin to feel my autonomy, that I'm free of all things. I'm no longer locked in space and time, rather space and time are in me.

We come to understand, and actually *feel*, that consciousness is non-localised, that all that is perceived is in consciousness. There is not a separate seer and an object seen. The seen is in the seeing; there is no seen without the seeing. All that is perceived is of the very nature of consciousness. Here we stand in freedom, no longer an inside or outside, a separate me and a separate you. It becomes totally clear that my essential nature is unlimited consciousness. All is an expression of love, all is love. All is God, there is nothing but God.

The separate 'I' of the mind dissolves with this understanding. Life carries on, but without the burden of being somebody there is real functioning, not from a centre, but from love. It is not that I become something other, it is simply the recognition of what I always am, free of the illusion of being some separate entity. It is not that I progress through various spiritual levels, rather there is an ever deepening seeing that this 'me' that I have taken myself to be has no reality. Enlightenment is not of somebody, but freedom from *being* somebody.

When you proceed from the relative to the ultimate in stages your ego remains engaged. There is end-gaining. You are bound to the object. You may undo earlier conditioning but you merely learn a new conditioning, often one that is less flexible and interesting! When even

the slightest emphasis is put on attaining, you continue the habit of objectifying your freedom and joy. You still say, 'I have experienced this.' You are still doing something. You remain in fraction. You take yourself for a prisoner with the goal of freedom. But the premise itself is an illusion. There is nothing to gain, and nothing to lose.

Jean Klein, *Who Am I?*

Jean's teaching points directly to the ultimate, but he used elements of the so-called progressive approach in his teaching; these are outlined in this book. From the beginning, he stressed the importance of being open to the possibility that our real nature is timeless, spaceless, and we are not simply a body-mind. Therefore the emphasis is not on attainment, or some spiritual evolution which keeps the ego thriving, it is something much more simple: to see what we are not. What we are fundamentally needs no improvement. It is this insight that leads to a purification that comes, so to speak, from above to transform the whole psycho-somatic level.

So if you explore what you are not without the immediate background of what you are, you are stepping on a road that may take more years than you have in a lifetime.

Jean Klein, *Who Am I?*

When the mind is free of its encumbrances we are open to what is beyond the mind. Jean would often use Heidegger's phrase 'waiting without waiting'. We are in a place of availability open to light, to grace. But there is not the slightest emphasis on waiting for something or a somebody waiting.

It might be asked: *How does coming to know myself, to know truth, change the world?* But it is only when we know ourselves that there is real intelligence, and hence the clarity to act in the world. Otherwise, we're part of the problem. Free of the 'me', the person, there is love, and action will be for the good of the whole. There is no separation. You are the world.

GIVING WEIGHT TO THE GROUND:

SHAVASANA

Before we feel our lightness and spaciousness we should first experience the heaviness of the body and give up this weight to the ground. It's not just weight we are giving up, it's our defences, the psychological 'me'. When there are deep-seated tensions in the body it may take some time and practice to allow a letting go of the weight of the different parts of the body to the ground. These resistances can be so ingrained that we may hardly be aware of them. They can become chronic because of the way we use our body, living in anticipation or using too much tension to perform a task and not releasing tension after an action.

Lying on the floor:

If your head feels uncomfortable whilst lying on the floor you may need a pillow or some support.

Feel where the body touches the ground; feel the different points of contact, heels, calves, thighs and buttocks, where the weight is given.

Feel each area in turn. Take your time.

Do you really release the weight?
Feel the whole contact your feet and legs make.

Feel their heaviness, let them fall away from you.

Now feel the contact of your hands, forearms, upper arms and shoulders.

Can you let them go as if they don't belong to you?

Feel the contact of the hips; it may take time to feel the release.

Allow your back to spread over the ground.

Are there areas in your back that feel resistant?

Feel the contact of your head, can you let the ground carry it, or are you holding on to it?

Now feel all the points of contact fusing into one feeling of contact.

Feel the body entering the ground.

Feel the ground entering the body.

Feel them as one.

When we do release, the actual area of contact increases, as the tense muscles give up their hold.

*

Some alternatives to help release of the body whilst lying on the floor:

Tensing—releasing

Tense and release each part of the body in turn. You can inhale with the contraction and exhale with the release.

Begin with your hands, make fists with your hands and release.

Stretch your fingers open and release.

Tense up your shoulders towards your ears and let go.

Now tense your hands, arms and shoulders together and let go.

Continue with your toes, feet, legs, buttocks and then all these simultaneously.

Tense up the abdominal area and release.

Now, in turn, the mouth, eyes, whole face, and then whole body.

You can tense and release each part three times. What is important is to feel the effect after the exercise.

*

Lifting—Dropping

Lift the right arm off the ground about 30 cm (twelve inches) with the inhalation and let it fall, letting go completely with the exhalation.

Now with the left.

Keeping the knee a little bent, lift the right leg with the inhalation. This lift should be only a few centimeters so as not to hurt your heel. Let the leg fall with the exhalation.

Repeat with the left.

You can do this several times with each limb.

*

Lifting—Placing

With each inhale lift each limb in turn a little off the ground, hold it a moment and then place it slowly on the ground with the exhale.

Experience its weight.

Do the same with the head.

With each exhalation you can also let your head roll to one side, as if falling. Return to the centre slowly with the inhale and proceed to the other side with the next exhale.

*

Letting go with each exhalation

The out-breath represents a letting go, a dissolving of all holding; we can use the exhalation to help us release tension in each part of the body. Be sure to let each exhale come to an end and allow the natural pause before the inhale, otherwise old patterns reaffirm themselves with the inhale.

Be aware of your breath and with each exhale feel the letting go of your hands.

With each exhalation feel a letting go of your arms, a letting go of your shoulders.

Proceed through your body, each area in turn, your feet, legs, buttocks, back, head, allowing release with each out-breath.

Generally our contact with the ground is passive. But when we see that there is contact and a counter-contact, that is, body and ground are interwoven—the body goes in the ground and the ground goes in the body—when this

happens there is no longer resistance or opposition. Then there is harmonisation of energy. Our body is no longer felt as separate from global energy, but is integrated in the living ground and the ground is integrated in our body.

Jean Klein, *The Book of Listening*

Once we release the weight, along with the tensions and resistances, we are more available to the subtle energies of the body. A relaxed body is a beginning, but this relaxed body, the corpse pose, is an inert body. We need to explore more deeply to come to the living body, the energetic body with its dynamism.

The relaxed body, where we are still emphasising the object, is still in duality; we must allow it to dissolve in light, in silent presence.