

KUNDALINI RISING

SHAZIA OMAR

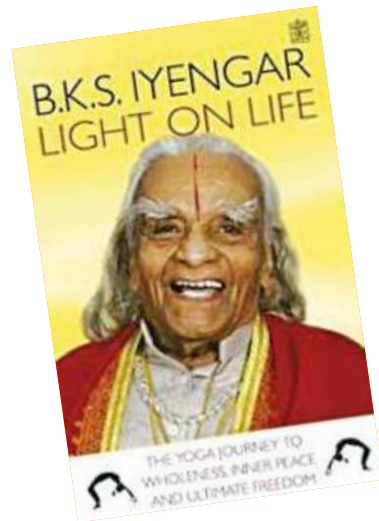
Writer, activist and yogini
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My five fave books on yoga

BKS Iyengar's *Light On Life*

Iyengar is a great yoga guru, student of Krishnamacharya, who died in 2014 at the age of 95. Though he was a sickly child, frail and weak, through yoga therapy, he was able to overcome his weaknesses and live a fulfilling and long life. In this book, Iyengar offers many insights on how to practice yoga in the most spiritual and meaningful way. This is my all-time favourite guide to yoga because it reminds me that I am a divine being and yoga is my art.

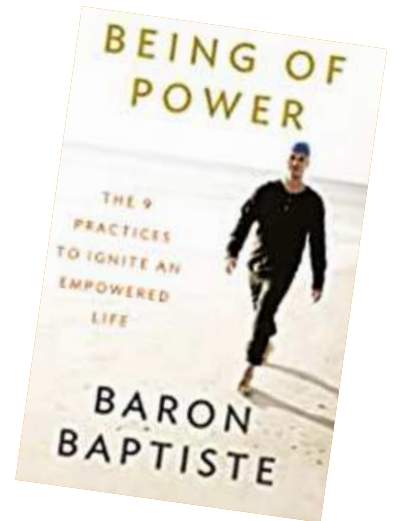
"A rigid body is like a stiff shell. Living in an inflexible body is like living in a straitjacket, cut off from the free flow of cosmic energy, and constricting ourselves from the infinite possibilities of the universe."



Baron Baptiste's *Being of Power*

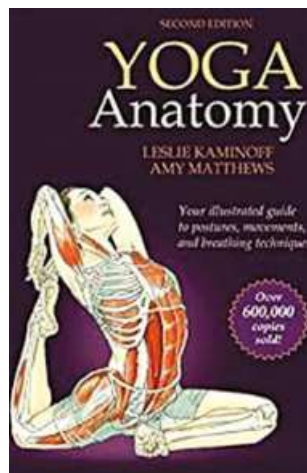
In this book, Baptiste shares insights on how to live an empowered life. He talks about how to transform your relationships with others and with yourself, how to align with your true purpose in life, how to break through holding patterns to heal. This book helped me think about who I am, about shedding my masks to live in the most authentic way possible.

"When you change your focus from limitations to boundless possibilities, from doubt and fear to love and confidence, you open your world in entirely new ways. You stop worrying about fixing what's wrong with you and start living from all that's right within you."



Leslie Kaminoff's *Yoga Anatomy*

A standard textbook for all yogis. I love it because after a few days of flipping through its illustrated pages, I started to visualise myself, and my students, as a collection of muscles. This helped me think about the physical aspects of yoga in tandem with the divine and psychological. Through years of practice, I have a deeply embodied knowledge of which poses will stretch which parts of my aching body, but this book gave me beautiful, coloured images that enhanced this knowledge. As yoga is a healing practice, I often have students who come to me with injuries from other sports or from their sedentary lifestyle. I recommend this to them.



Kaivalya & van der Kooij's *Myths of the Asanas*

The book is fascinating as it tells us the myths behind the various poses. After reading this, I was able to think about the more metaphorical purpose of each pose. For example, have you wondered what *halasana* – plough pose – is all about? Or *virabhadrasana* – warrior pose? How about fish pose – *matsyasana*?

On my YouTube channel, I have shared 15 of these stories and the associated poses – check it out: <https://www.youtube.com/J0FCcm6WzeT4FvMM5Nw7CCUNNEa>.

Michael Stone's *The Inner Tradition of Yoga*

Stone highlights some of the transformative dimensions of yoga. He explains how suffering continues in cycles. The turning of the wheel of suffering (*dukkha*) is called 'samsara,' which is a metaphor for meaninglessness. It refers to the endless cycle of birth, death, and rebirth. Each moment of experience, whether in stillness or reactivity, sets up

the pattern for the next consecutive moment (*karma*). As we take actions (*karma*), based on our habitual patterns, we reinforce in the mind and body those same patterns.

We are unable to experience the present moment without filters of perception. These feedback loops we create form our psychological and physical patterns (*samskaras*), as ingrained and self-perpetuating matrices that keep us bound to our conditioned existence, preventing us from experiencing each moment with freedom. With practice, we are able to transcend our patterns and meet each and every moment with openness. Then we arrive in the present moments of life, free to respond with an open and creative heart. Yoga is a path out of our present conditioning towards this freedom.

Shazia Omar is a writer, an activist and a yogi. To enjoy her classes free online, subscribe to: [YouTube.com/ShazzyOm](https://www.youtube.com/ShazzyOm).

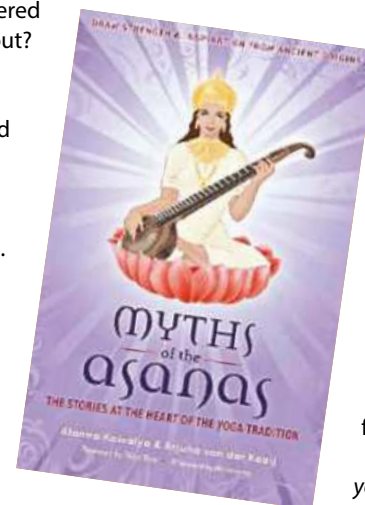


Photo courtesy: Shazia Omar

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ঠিক যেমন রূপচর্চায় আভিজাত্য মানেই

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