



YOGA FOR ME

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Yoga began for me nearly five years ago and has become such an important part of my life that it is hard to remember what it was like before becoming involved. I can remember after having four children, being overweight, very tense and tired, a great deal of the time and smoking a pack of cigarettes a day. I was also aware at this time of a great spiritual void in my life—I was ready for the Guru to appear !

He came in the form of an Indian textile engineer who lives and works in this area and who teaches Yoga in the evenings. I signed up for a series of classes and found myself in a room filled with unfamiliar people, awkwardly trying to sit cross-legged and attempting to master the sounds of a Sanskrit *mantra*. However as the weeks went by and I practised the postures and chanting at home, the beginning of self awareness that Yoga brings, began to blossom and while listening to the beauty of the *Bhagavad Gita* being read and explained, I realised that this was everything that I had been searching for, a spiritual path that integrated body and mind—my *Sādhana* had begun.

Looking back, I can see how clearly defined some of the stages of my growth have been. Teachers and Gurus have appeared facilitating the transition from one growth period to the next. Workshops and Seminars have enabled me to experience some of the varied paths of Yoga. From the intense emotional surrender of *Bhakti* and the metaphysical beauty and power of *Kundalini* to the physical action of *Haṭha* and *Karma Yogas*, each experience being woven into the fabric of my own *Sādhana*. As I become more adept at *Haṭha Yoga*, the base on which my own *Sādhana* rests, the desire to smoke fell away, my weight dropped and combined with weekly periods of fasting, an awareness of my eating habits and diet developed. The biggest problem I had to face and still have to cope with is integrating the physical practices into my busy life style. Working in an office all day and coming home at night to manage a home and children does not leave much time, but somehow the practices are fitted in and if I fall asleep occasionally while in meditation, now I accept that too, without becoming discouraged or angry at myself. Krishnamūrti says that freedom is the seeing of the self from moment to moment. Yoga is the tool that helps me to do this and although I am very much aware that I have taken just the first steps of a long journey, it never fails to amaze me—how much my life has been enriched by even my limited practice. It is such an incredible thing to me that this system of man's evolution known of and complied thousands of years ago is withstanding the scrutiny of Western science and many of its concepts being confirmed by scientific study.

So as I come to the end of this paper I find myself curious as to what direction my journey will take me in the near future. My path has been leading me away from the mysteries of Shiva and Shakti and Krishna and Rādhā as I became aware that I was exchanging the rituals of Christianity for those of Hinduism. Yoga combined with some of the Western therapeutic methods is a field that is becoming of great interest to me at the present time. To bring the concepts and as many of the practices that people here in the West will accept and use for their growth, is a challenge, one that I hope my own practice will enable me to meet.

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