

What is Yoga, to me?

In the various ancient texts on yoga there are as many definitions of yoga as there are modern "styles" of yoga. Over the last 15 years yoga has evolved for me personally although, however different my practice has "looked" from the outside, in the end it has always been defined as something that clears my mind and brings me balance.

Patanjali defines yoga in his famous Yoga Sutras as "yoga is the cessation of the mind-stuff". And, Krishna defines yoga in the Bhagavad Gita thus: "Yoga is balance." These two scriptures are beautifully written works explaining the practice of yoga in infinite detail. I've been reading them for many years to give me guidance and inspiration on how to live my life in a way that works towards a calmer mind and finding inner and outer balance. They are indispensable tools alongside my asana, pranayama and meditation routines. Due to the esoteric nature of both scriptures I felt the need to study them more in depth with a teacher therefore, in the last few years I've been studying under the tutorage of the renowned scholar, Georg Feuerstein. These studies have given me a glimpse at the deeper, more subtle messages from these great masters of yoga. And, I'm pretty sure I'll be inspired to continue to discover the fine layers for the rest of my life.

Pattabhi Jois used to say "99% practice, 1% theory". Only with my 1% theory have I come to truly appreciate this advice. Understanding that the yoga isn't just about doing yoga asanas two hours a day et voila finished. And, it isn't about *reading* about yoga. It's practicing the values written in the Sutra and the Gita all day, every day, whether you are on your yoga mat or taking the metro to work. It's all yoga, if you consciously make it that. Being present, aware, kind, considerate, perseverant, disciplined, forgiving, honest and devoting all your work and its fruits to the Divine. We all fall from the virtues from time to time, this is human nature, but seeing your falls and slowly evolving on the loving path of yoga IS yoga; it is clearing the mind and cultivating balance in addition to disciplining yourself to put time aside to do your asana, pranayama and mediation practices; which may one day reveal to you the never changing Absolute Divine.

Good luck and namasté (the divine in me bows to the divine in you).

Love from,

Linda