



## Yet ask any number of people what Yoga is and you are likely to...

The word Yoga is by now well known outside India. In fact over the last four decades we have seen it quietly and steadily taking root within our Western culture and language. Yet ask any number of people what Yoga is and you are likely to get many different responses.

These responses are often diverse, and sometimes contradictory. However, Yoga can generally be summarised into three possibilities or approaches:-

### 1. Yoga as Power

Firstly Yoga can be explained as a means to attain a degree of power or control over our body and mind.

Here Yoga links the body and the mind through intense physical and mental effort.

For instance through rigorous physical practices we develop and maintain a state of concentration which is used to hold power over the body and the breath. Within this approach such control is often seen as a prerequisite to the body and mind becoming free of disturbances and distractions.

This power arises out of three areas of personal development:

- i) Mastery of the body through physical postures.
- ii) Control of the breath through breathing techniques.
- iii) The ability to concentrate through mental techniques.

The consequences of this intense effort are energy and control that is available for whatever purpose suits our direction in life.

Many people could usefully enjoy more power over certain areas of their lives. The question is, are we prepared to put in some effort to reach this point.

In the words of a teacher from long ago:

"Yoga is the means by which that which was not attained earlier is now attained."

This approach is known as the Yoga of Energy and Will.

As such, this aspect of Yoga is an art and offers a fascinating field. It is appealing to many people searching for power in and over their lives.

However this approach is only a means towards a more important goal.....

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