



My Yoga of Devotion

Words & Model:
Angela R. Pashayan
I teach and practise Bhakti
Yoga. My teaching style
includes Bhakti, alignment
and pranayama, with
emphasis on personalising
your practice.

My classes encourage an inner pathway to the “self”, taking responsibility for shaping your state of mind each day and integrating yoga into your day. May the Divine bless you as you read this piece, and may something stir within you to help you deepen your practice.

My Yoga of Devotion came to me by default. My yoga teacher moved away from town after one year. I practised her routine at home twice a week, and six months later I was practising seven days a week using my own “personalised” sequence that honoured how “my” body felt each morning. In addition to yoga I began meditation twice a day.

One morning during my asana practice something stirred in me, a longing for the postures to speak to me. I was so intimate with each posture, practising every day, that I felt as if trikonasana should say “good morning” to me personally.

During my usual start with seated side stretches, a warm feeling flushed gently over my heart like running water and whispered



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“stretching to reach new heights”. Stopping abruptly, I looked around but there was no one else in the room. I took a moment to get centred again and continued my practice, transitioning into cat crawl/chakravakasana when I heard “Be flexible with today’s encounters.” I paused briefly but continued my practice, carefully listening and realising that the postures did have something to say! As I stood in tadasana to begin surya namaskara, a rush of gratefulness flooded my body and spirit – I stood in the majesty of the Divine, tall and erect to show respect; I lifted my arms in praise for another day, taking in all the good that surrounded me; I swan-dived with grace into whatever the day would bring me, uttanasana.

Looking forward to stay “centred”, I stepped back into plank and held it before moving into chaturanga and up dog – “Life may bring difficult times where you feel you cannot hold yourself up”, lowering into a push-up – “I will lower my expectations of others,” up dog – “moving through whatever the day brings, always looking up to the Divine from where my strength comes”. And as I push back into adho mukha svanasana, I “push back into my own strength with grace and ease.” Stepping/hopping forward, I – “Spring forward into my life today” to resume my regal stance of tadasana, lifting my arms again in praise and thanking the Divine for all that is, all that was, and all that is to come.

My practice that day consisted of ten sun salutations including plank, urdhva mukha svanasana and adho mukha svanasana. With those phrases ringing in my ears, I wanted to do nothing else but hear them again and again. With each repetition the phrases stirred my mind, body and spirit more and more until there were tears of gratefulness running down my face.

Over the next week, each day more inspirational phrases would come to me for different postures. Trikonasana will never be the same once it has meaning for you. Other postures included navasana, sirsasana, urdhva dhanurasana, arda chandrasana, marichyasana, vrksasana, and virabhadrasana. Of course with Bhakti Yoga, savasana at the end of practice has a profound effect on the inner spirit and sends you off into your day literally soaring.

The beauty is that anyone can do this practice. It’s not about holding the pose forever, or tolerating a 105°F degree room, or breathing loudly like Darth Vader for hours.

It’s about being grateful with your mind, body and spirit each day for whatever period of time your life schedule allows. The inspirational phrases can be made personal to any individual and tailored to fit daily circumstances. Every day is different, every moment is different, and my Yoga of Devotion offers a “tailored suit” for every yogini. This is a gift from the Divine that has come through me with the purpose of sharing it with you. If you are open to experiencing an easier way to walk your path, I am here to help lay down the bricks.





Though I never wanted to be a yoga teacher, after experiencing Bhakti and joyfully practising at home, it was pressed upon my heart to share my method with others.

I pretty much got a tap on my shoulder during meditation with the question, "Are you going to keep this yoga to yourself or do you think you might want to share it with others?"

I'm 42, married for 18 years (mixed marriage), we have 3 sons, I'm a breast cancer survivor, and the daughter of a Baptist Minister (Rev. Joseph L. Holmes). I studied abroad for 1 year in London, lived in Europe for 3 years thereafter, am a former model, lived in NYC for 10 years, and enjoyed The Hamptons

before it became a craze. Ina Garten of Barefoot Contessa catered my wedding before she became super-famous. All of this, mind you, in the life of a young black girl from "the hood" in Compton.

Patanjali's *Sutra I - 2 and Sutra II - 45* are the foundations of my teaching; Stilling the mind and total surrender to the Divine to achieve samadhi. My Yoga of Devotion practice helps still the mind and flip the gratitude switch into the "on" position.

Yoga of Devotion brings about an inner peace, and may "that peace stand sentinel at the gateway to your heart, keeping out all those things that discourage and destroy, and accepting only those things that sweeten, enrich, and beautify!"

All proceeds I make from workshops, materials, or teaching my Yoga of Devotion go to my children's charity - www.tellurideflights.com. I may be contacted for appearances at apashayan1@aol.com.

Namaste.