



Alchemy

Alchemy is a new and somewhat different dimension of The Gnostic Centre's work. In fact, outwardly it is quite different – it has a Gym, a Massage centre, a Yoga & Aerobics studio, a health food Café – activities which normally one does not associate with a spiritual life or a spiritual centre.

But, look deeper, and one finds that this is only the surface. Even though fairly recent (began in November 2007), Alchemy is already attracting those who have a seeking not only for physical fitness and health, but also for a higher life. This I have discovered through my interactions with the gym members, in my role as a physical instructor.

I was working with tribals in Orissa, involved in education, health, administrative work, construction, and public relations – largely field work in difficult and remote conditions. I had always been interested in physical education because I deeply felt that the physical is the essential foundation for a higher inner life. So, when this opportunity of actually anchoring an integral health centre was offered to me, I took it up enthusiastically.

I prepared myself for the work – both outwardly and inwardly. I honed up my skills and knowledge by training under a capable physical fitness expert (from Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry), and also read the words of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother on the growth and training of the physical. I developed sets of exercises and work-out schedules keeping different needs in mind, as well as compiled together a lot of information on postures, strength and cardio-vascular training. But, behind it all, I always kept the following too in my consciousness:

- The Gym should become a place that helps people to understand their body and work on it to prepare it for a higher life.
- Massage should help people relax, and also to get the needed energy to withstand negative forces.
- Yoga studio should be a place where people can make a connection between their material physical life and their deeper self, the psychic being.
- Alchemy should be a place where people can understand and engage in growth of consciousness at the physical level.

As an Integral Health Instructor, I feel my role is to guide people in developing a sound physical basis, which, for those who are seeking a higher life, can serve as a reliable foundation for inner work. In order in to do this, while working with people, I focus on:

- Understanding the nature of each person's body and the physical problems, as well as the potential.
- I work out a schedule that would help the person gradually overcome the problems, and build upon the potential.
- I emphasise on doing the exercises in the right way and to come in touch with their body consciousness.
- I encourage people to practice as much as they can.



It is very important for me to understand deeply the concept of integral health, and apply it for providing the right guidance, work-outs and helping people develop the right physical foundation.

A special atmosphere is created at Alchemy... clean, tidy, open to natural light and air, fragrant with incense and flowers, peaceful amidst green surroundings and filled with music suited to the activities... at times soothing, at times energetic to dissolve the physical inertia and get into a rhythm. All this contributes in my work.

Given below is one of the recent case studies of a person I have worked with since April this year – through individual Yogasana classes.

Case Study of R

R's needs...

R wants to be flexible. She wants her body to be in shape and toned up. Though everything is fine, she wants to be more relaxed, generate more energy and power in herself. She also wants to do meditation for inner peace and to organize her mind.

Week 1

- ***Condition of the body:*** In my view R has quite a normal body structure and is healthy. She is overweight. Also she lacks stamina, flexibility and strength in her body. She has no physical power or energy to assume the correct postures. Due to lack of flexibility and strength, for her every movement or posture is very difficult. The body itself is not ready or she has never done any physical exercises before. It is going to take her some time before she reaches the actual starting point for a full yogasana work-out.
- ***Practical session:*** During the practical session, R has a very good inner will to be fully energetic in activities. Whatever was shown or taught to her, she could follow it very nicely, but after the very next movement or by the next day, she forgot all the postures. Still she tries her best always. Tries to do it perfectly and assume the same posture as shown to her. She also tries to retain the postures in her memory.

Week 2

- ***Condition of the body:*** After one week, I had seen very good changes in R's body movements, posture, as well inner sprit. It is a very good sign for me that something is opening towards the higher body. But still she needs to be more flexible and do more stamina work-out.
- ***Practical session:*** During the practical class of yoga R's steps, posture and body movements are indicating a good progress. Some asanas, like Surya Namaskara, she is not able do with perfect postures. Still I am happy that now she is able to understand the function, steps and right posture. Next level is to do these with grace and perfect posture, in coordination with body, mind and sprit.
- ***Result:*** At the physical level, R has done very well and at the inner level she wants to become more and more in contact with the higher level. Every thing seems to be done



with a consciousness towards divine. I have also seen that her inner strength and all aspects are progressing fine. Well done!!

After one month

R's flexibility, strength and endurance have increased very well. There seem to be great changes in her body level. She can bend and can do the movements very gracefully, with the right posture. Still she has to work more in the fields of flexibility and perfection.

R is getting more energy, feeling happiness and enjoyment. She is trying to do according to her capacity. She has to work on her emotional, vital and will power.

Mentally, R is feeling relaxed and organising her mind well. Now she can understand the movements and can remember all the steps and postures, with full confidence.

It is good to see a greater quietness in R's nature. She feels more relaxed and happy after doing the class.

R's own account

- **About me:** I am a working mother – so I have a 9.30-6.00 job and a four-year old. Managing both it was hard to find time for myself. The opportunity came when my daughter started school and left home by 7.30. I decided to use the spare one hour in the morning and join yoga with the Gnostic Centre.
- **Before joining:** I felt I was tired all the time with low energy levels, also frequent backache problem. In fact, I could not sit without back rest for more than 5 minutes. I used to sleep till late in the morning and still get up feeling tired & sleepy.
- **After joining:** I think I can now cope with my dual job as a working mother much better. Yoga gives me the energy and strength to manage what I need to. I get up at 6.00 a.m. and feel perfectly fine with it. I also see a change in my back; I can sit without back rest for 10-15 minutes at a go. I must acknowledge the patience and understanding with which Durjee bhैया understood my problems and helped me with relevant exercises e.g. special stretches for the back that really helped me. He has never pushed me to move to the next level but let it come at my own pace.

What also helped is the meditation and the awesome environment that the Gnostic Centre provides for it that helps you generate energy from within.

Overall, I am really happy that I am able to come across and start my day in this wonderful yoga way!

🙏 Durjee Bhoi

Durjee is the Fitness Instructor, as well as Alchemy Coordinator.

Alchemy presently offers...

- Gym Memberships with individualised work-out schedules
- Individual Yogasana classes
- Aerobics based Fitness classes, including Pilates, Kick-boxing (thrice a week)
- Massage (by appointment; for women only)
- Health Food Café (order special Raksha Bandhan gift packs)

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