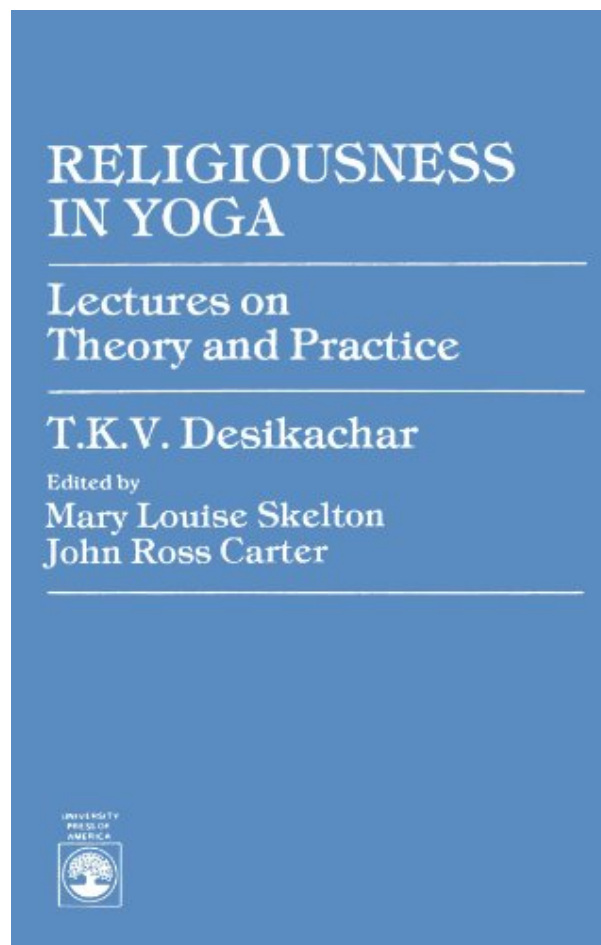


RELIGIOUSNESS IN YOGA: LECTURES ON THEORY AND PRACTICE BY T. K.V. DESIKACHAR



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RELIGIOUSNESS IN YOGA

Lectures on
Theory and Practice

T.K.V. Desikachar

Edited by

Mary Louise Skelton
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The value of the book lies in the author's expertise in yogic theory and practice, the questions and responses of the students attending the course, and the many figures designed to facilitate understanding of yogic concepts and practice... both teachers and students will find the book useful as a supplemental text. The questions by the course participants are invaluable to instructors since they reflect the understanding and difficulties of beginning students...>>>> (Religious Studies Review)

Theirs is the most intense and effective approach of direct personal encounter between the teacher and the disciple.>>>> (Swami Venkatesananda)

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My favorite book on Yoga.

By Scary Mary

This little book written by one of the less well known student of Krisnamacharia, his son TKV Desikachar was originally published in the early 80's and exhibits a freshness that has been lost in his better known book

"Heart of Yoga". This is just as relevant to the practice of yoga today as it did when it was written.

Although at times he seems to keep going over the same material, you will find that with every explanation, the concepts become more meaningful.

This is not a book to be read and put aside, but it is one that warrants being read time and time again.

This has instantly become one of my favorite books for reference.

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Five Stars

By Amazon Customer

As described and on time.

20 of 20 people found the following review helpful.

Fine overview of Patanjali yoga

By Jai

This book is based on a Special Studies Seminar on Patanjali yoga held at Colgate University in January, 1976, "an act of sharing a religious undertaking ...now appearing in printed form [vi]." The subtitle aptly summarizes the contents: "Lectures on Theory and Practice" of yoga. In it, the author presents many important facets of the yoga teachings of his father, Sri Krishnamacharya. There is no perfect asana form. We all start where we are. Since the goal is internal and personal rather than external spectatorship, he uses simple drawing of human figures rather than photos of attractive and athletic young people modeling "perfect" asana form. The book is strong on beginning poses, counterposes and the use of vinyasa krama, a sequence of postures building toward an individualized goal [Figs. 19-20b]. The 18 chapters alternate between theory and practice and give an excellent overview of the 8 limbs of classical yoga, including interesting and useful chapters on Samkhya/Yoga philosophy and on overcoming obstacles. The chapters on bandhas and pranayama are very complicated and advanced. Despite appropriate warnings ("Coming to learn of yoga only through reading leaves much to be desired" [ix] and "If you were to study pranayama with me, I would not mention any of those practices for a long time" [176]), advanced practices can still be misused by readers not ready for them and who may thereby harm themselves. Diagrams are used to good effect throughout (for example, Figures 73a-c depict the progression from dharana to dhyana to samadhi). Desikachar's presentation is mostly from the Samkhyan perspective of personal effort; consequently, religiousness in yoga is deemphasized. We are always working to improve ourselves; Ishwara is mainly an effective way to overcome obstacles. Yet yoga differs from Samkhya by the introduction of the chosen deity, Ishwara. Sankara devoted 17 pages of his commentary on the Yoga Sutras to Ishwara. Desikachar explains passage I.23, "Or devotion to the deity," not as love and devotion toward one's deity but as a Samkhyan emphasis on excellence in action. This may be a deferral to those who, like the author, originally came to yoga unwilling to acknowledge a spiritual force higher than one's own ego. (I also suspect the sponsoring Department of Philosophy & Religion needed something tangibly "religious" in the title.) All in all, this is an excellent overview of yoga theory with many keen insights on practice. For beginning a yoga practice, one might better turn to a work by another of Sri Krishnamacharya's students, A.G. Mohan, whose fine "Yoga for Body, Breath and Mind" presents these teachings in clear, coherent and gentle form.

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