

Kriya Care

By CELIA MILNE

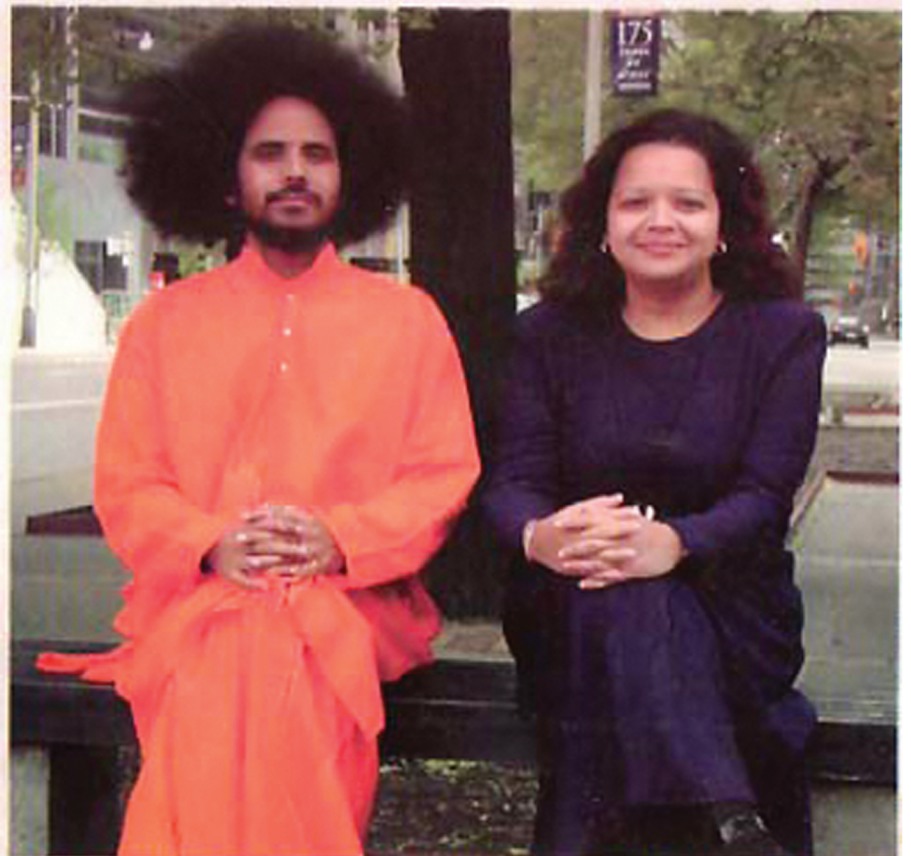
Dr. Zena Bedessee has had little sleep lately. She's been busy - running a family practice, preparing a presentation for the American Holistic Medical Conference and studying with her mentor, Swami Shree Yogi Satyam, who has come all the way from Allahabad, India.

Despite Dr. Bedessee's lack of sleep, she looks rested and relaxed. At 34, her face is unblemished and wrinkle-free; her eyes are wide and smiling; she moves with an unhurried grace.

The Kitchener, Ont., physician's secret - one she would like to share - is Kriyayoga, a type of yoga that focuses on meditation, posture and breathing. She practises it at least twice a day and believes it to be the force that keeps her balanced, charged and healthy.

"It is all-natural. It is the purest science," says Dr. Bedessee. "I do not require medication. Any headache I get I can get rid of with this science."

Dr. Bedessee also encourages her patients to try Kriya yoga. She offers free three day peace retreats as well as regular classes at the Yog Fellowship Temple in Kitchener. "It is a treatment, a cure, a prevention and a useful adjunct. And, it won't hurt



Kitchener, Ont., physician Dr. Zena Bedessee (right) and Swami Shree Yogi Satyam (left) pose for a photograph in Toronto during the recent American Holistic Medical Conference.

She believes Kriya yoga is a useful addition to modern medicine because medicine is not a holistic approach.

"Kriya yoga unites the body's elements, whereas medicine separates them", she says, "It is part of the evolution of medicine. The biggest mistake is the homeopath saying 'Don't go to your family doctor' and the family doctor saying 'Don't go to your chiropractor.' We have to pull it all together."

Dr. Bedessee says many of her patients are tired of taking multiple medications and feeling their health is out of control, and are ready to try something natural.

Kriya yoga has restored good health to many patients, she says, most notably one with fibromyalgia and one with osteoporosis. In the latter, a dramatic reversal showed up on bone mineral density testing.

"If we're seeing people improve, why are we ignoring this ? It may seem way out in left field but its working for people. Why is that happening ? There's something to it"

In an effort to boost interest in therapeutic Kriya yoga in North America, Dr. Bedessee works tirelessly (and without pay) on teaching and promoting it. In Kitchener, she is chairwomen of the board of trustees of Canadian Centre of Kriya Yoga.

She was instrumental in organizing Yogi Satyam's presentation to the recent American Holistic Medical Conference in Toronto, and she would love to see Kriya Yoga taught in medical schools.

Earlier this year, she travelled to india for two months to study with Yogi Satyam at the Kriyayoga Research Institute, Allahabad. Yet she is practical about its limitations. "I'm not stupid. If someone has blood pressure over 200, I wont say, 'let's meditate it away'. I 'll say 'take this pill and it'll bring it down.'"

Once the illness is under control, she'll encourage them to try Kriya yoga. "As that person practises more and more, their blood pressure wil go down."

Describing Kriya yoga to anyone not taking part is frustrating for Dr. Bedessee because its basic seems far-fetched. It involves ideas reminiscent of hippy 60s, like connecting with one's body searching for utter calm, seeking the infinite cosmos, finding a higher consciousness.

"I know it sounds like Carl Segan or something," she admits Dr Bedessee. But she believes it has a direct beneficial effect on the source of a body's imbalance. She grew up with Kriya yoga, as her father, Dr. Manwel Bedessee, also a family physician, has practised it ever since she can remember. Yet she confesses to bouts of disbelief. "I'm from a science background. I am the world's greatest skeptic," she says, "I test it all the time; I skip it, just to see what will happen."

Sure enough, every time Dr. Bedessee drops Kriya yoga, she feel irritable. She always goes back.