

# YOGA AND WHOLENESS: A PORTAL TO WELLNESS

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*Puehr tea. Dog sleeping next to me. Bird singing outside my window. My soft, velvety green yoga pants and silk purple shirt against my skin. The blankets beneath my feet, my sit bones, the feel of these keys against my fingers, the light coming through the windows.*

All of these “things” of the material world, *gashmiut* in Hebrew, are works of creation; by science, God, people, circumstances.

In the Old Testament, we have the phrase “In the beginning God created the (Et)...” The mystics teach that the word “Et,” which has no literal meaning in Hebrew, actually refers to the alphabet: Aleph—the first letter, through Tet—the last letter. These letters are the building blocks of all matter and form. They exist in every single physical particle of the universe. They are in my tea, in the birds, in the silk, in the velvet of my clothes, and inside of me.

So, how is our awareness of these intricate details related to yoga and wellness?

When we bring our attention to our physical world, we expand our awareness

to all levels of being. This is known as the practice of mindfulness; watching our breath and sensing our bodies, we are aware of ourselves being aware. Even when we sit typing, our circulatory, respiratory and digestive systems are moving oxygen, blood, nutrients and fluids through us; our eyes are moving and blinking; our spine is lengthening and folding ever so slightly with every breath.

## JEWISH YOGA IS NOT “JEWISH” YOGA

Yoga is a physical practice that can help raise awareness by bringing attention to the present moment. This toe. This breath. This placement of the feet in a wide stance. My yoga practice is a means for me to enter more deeply into connection with myself. It begins with the physical and expands from there. And for me, because Hebrew, *Torah*, and love are in my heart, my yoga practice is an integration and expression of all of me, not just my “Jewish” part.

I am not practicing “Jewish Yoga.” I’m practicing “Julie Yoga” and anyone who

comes to my Yoga and Wholeness classes at the PJCC is practicing their personal version of yoga. The more we practice on the mat, the more we can begin to invite all of ourselves to be present in other parts of our lives as well.

## AWARENESS IS A PORTAL TO WELLNESS

On any level, the first step to health and wellness is conscious awareness of our bodies, our thoughts, our feelings, and our habits. I invite you to use yoga, which is based in the material world of the body, as a gateway to expanded awareness of yourself as a work of creation imbued with life and breath, heart, and consciousness.

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Yoga and Wholeness with a Jewish Twist is held Wednesdays at 7:00 pm. To register, call **650.212.7522** or visit **Fitness & Sports at [pjcc.org](http://pjcc.org).**

