

#MINDFULNESS

# Walking Yoga Finds its Footing in Everyday Wellness

A gentle practice that combines mindful movement with deep breathing to promote calm and clarity.



In today's fast-paced world, where stress walks hand-in-hand with our daily routines, a new wellness trend is inviting people to slow down, one mindful step at a time. Meet Walking Yoga, a gentle yet powerful practice that blends the calm of yoga with the natural rhythm of walking. While traditional yoga focuses on static postures and breathing, walking yoga introduces motion into mindfulness. Think of it as meditation in motion. Originating from ancient Buddhist practices and gaining popularity through modern wellness



circles, walking yoga is now being embraced by urbanites, nature-lovers, office-goers, and even seniors as an easy entry point into the world of holistic healing.

What is Walking Yoga?

Walking yoga is exactly what it sounds like: walking slowly and mindfully while focusing on your breath, body sensations, and surroundings. Unlike a brisk morning walk or power stroll, walking yoga encourages slowness. Each step is taken with awareness. Every breath is intentional. And your attention gently shifts inwards, just like it would during a seated

meditation or yoga flow. There are usually no mats or studios involved. All you need is a quiet park, a garden path, or even a hallway. You stand still, breathe deeply, and begin walking slowly, heel to toe, synchronising your steps with your breath. Some practitioners chant or repeat mantras. Others focus purely on the sensations of their feet touching the earth.

Benefits Beyond the Physical

While the physical benefits of walking, improved circulation, joint mobility, and endurance, are well-documented, walking yoga brings additional layers of wellness to the table. "Walking yoga grounds you," says Dr. Meenal Khanna, a Jaipur-based yoga therapist. "It helps reduce anxiety, improve focus, and brings a

deep sense of calm. For many of my students who find traditional yoga intimidating or too static, walking yoga is a beautiful alternative." It's also an inclusive practice. People with limited mobility, chronic pain, or mental health conditions often find walking yoga more accessible. There's no pressure to perform, no competition, just connection.

The Perfect Blend of Nature and Mindfulness

One of the most appealing aspects of walking yoga is its connection to the outdoors. Practising in nature amplifies its calming effects. Whether it's the sound of birds, the scent of flowers, or the feel of grass under your feet, every natural element enhances the experience.

Many walking yoga groups have begun forming in parks and gardens across India. Early mornings at Jaipur's Central Park or Delhi's Lodhi Gardens now host silent, barefoot walkers practising walking yoga in synchrony, almost like a moving meditation flash mob.

Getting Started

You don't need fancy gear or an instructor to begin. Simply pick a safe, quiet spot, ditch distractions (yes, even the smartwatch), and start slow. Inhale as you step forward, exhale as you continue. Notice

your breath, your posture, and your thoughts, without judgment. For those craving calm in chaos, walking yoga offers the perfect antidote: a chance to pause, reflect, and reconnect by mindful step.



Rajesh Sharma

(The text is based on the conversations with A. S. Dulat)

On 28 June 1989, according to Dulat's version; as he remembers, Farooq exactly said this to party workers during a meeting at Lal Chowk: "If you have in mind someone who ends up in jail, you can count me out. I am the last person to like being jailed. I like to play golf. What am I going to do in jail? You may suggest that I read books to while away the time, but I would not like to do that because reading puts pressure on my eyes." It was typically irreverent, but it was typically Farooq. He was clear about the fact he didn't want to be anything like his father, Sheikh Abdullah. How could he? He wanted, quite naturally, to be his own person. To paraphrase the great Frank Sinatra, Farooq has



always done it his way. Not for him the constant swimming against the current. He would do what it took, to succeed in his political goals, even if it meant indulging in some harmless theatrics in order to play to Kashmir's delighted galleries.

Those were days of Farooq being known as the 'disco chief minister'. His critics were quick to portray him as a 'playboy masquerading as a chief minister'. Farooq, in his characteristic way, didn't give a damn. He seemed, on the other hand, to mischievously revel in it. Unlike other politicians, he had never hidden that part of himself.

Farooq himself is used to public scrutiny. The first rule for a First Family is to understand this: the public scrutiny of how you walk, live, talk and dress will happen every day. And so, like the Kennedys (Jackie's style), the Thatchers (Dennis's drinking), and the Gandhis (Sonia's Italian connections), it must be endured.

The second rule, therefore, follows: zip your mouth, seal your lips and be tolerant of the inquisitives and the jealous... he told Dulat, in his inimitable style.

'Stop and Style' in its 16 March 1984 issue in the column 'Frankly Speaking,' by the late Devyani



Chaubal, described him thus: "Farooq Abdullah, chief minister of Jammu and Kashmir, stretched out on the sofa of the Rajput suite at the Taj Hotel, discussed outdoor shootings in Kashmir, Rajesh-Dimple impending divorce, filmfare awards and wondered why there were no awards for Chief Minister. Then, he discussed women, the 'difficult' ones, those who are difficult for nine days, to finally give in on the tenth day, etc."

And all this after he had spent his only night with Godly Anand till 2 a.m."

Another example was the March 1984 issue of the Onlooker, which showed Farooq sitting cosily with actor Dev Anand and three starlets. The photograph was reprinted without explanation, by a local newspaper. This kind of sensationalism did Farooq no good in the eyes of his electorate. When he began dancing with the television personality Hasina Akhtar, at a dinner for 650 travel

agents at his official residence, it did not help either.

When she met Farooq, she jokingly remarked that though she had been on many motorcycles, she never had yet ridden pillion behind a chief minister. Naturally, that was enough for Farooq. His instinctive charm asserted itself.

For 650 travel agents at his official residence, it did not help either.

The most racy incident relates to film actress Shabana Azmi. Farooq had gone up to Gulmarg on his motorcycle. It was enough for Farooq, His instinctive charm asserted itself.

Chief Ministers in Jammu do not customarily zip around on bikes. Ostensibly, Farooq had gone to do a flying check on local administration. It was one of his quirks, he liked to carry out these checks randomly, for he felt that if he followed protocols and let an entire chain of authority, from the deputy commissioner to the superintendent of police onwards, know that he was coming, he would never really know the truth of how things were being done in his state. Farooq's random check led him to the swanky Highland Park Hotel for tea.

Since the hotel belonged to his uncle, having tea there was nothing unusual.

But while he was there, he ran into V.V. Purie, Arun Purie's father, and Shabana Azmi who was shooting for a film in Gulmarg.



Farooq with Mrs. Narayanan.

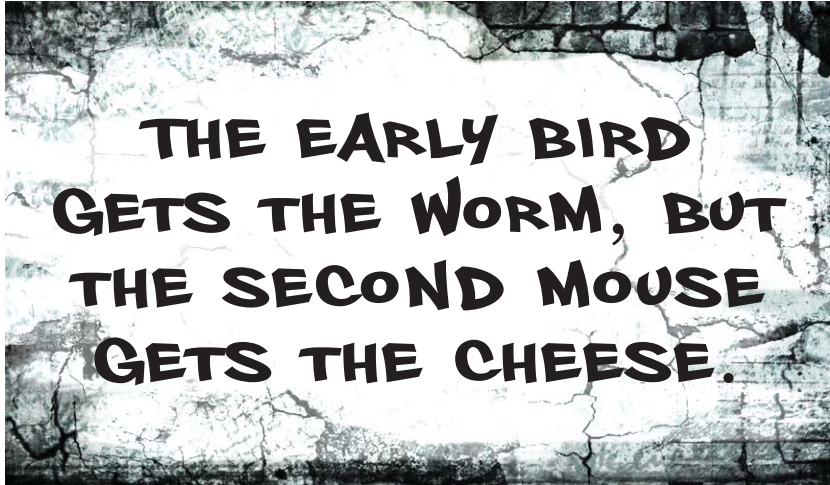


Mollie with Ammu, M.K. Narayanan's wife.

thing harmful. Otherwise, love is enough to get it done. Incidentally, Dilshad loved Farooq but was never in love with him. According to Dulat, Farooq, in those days of 'cinema-style' chief ministership, didn't feel he needed to justify his style. He was determined to play as hard as he worked,



THE WALL



BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman

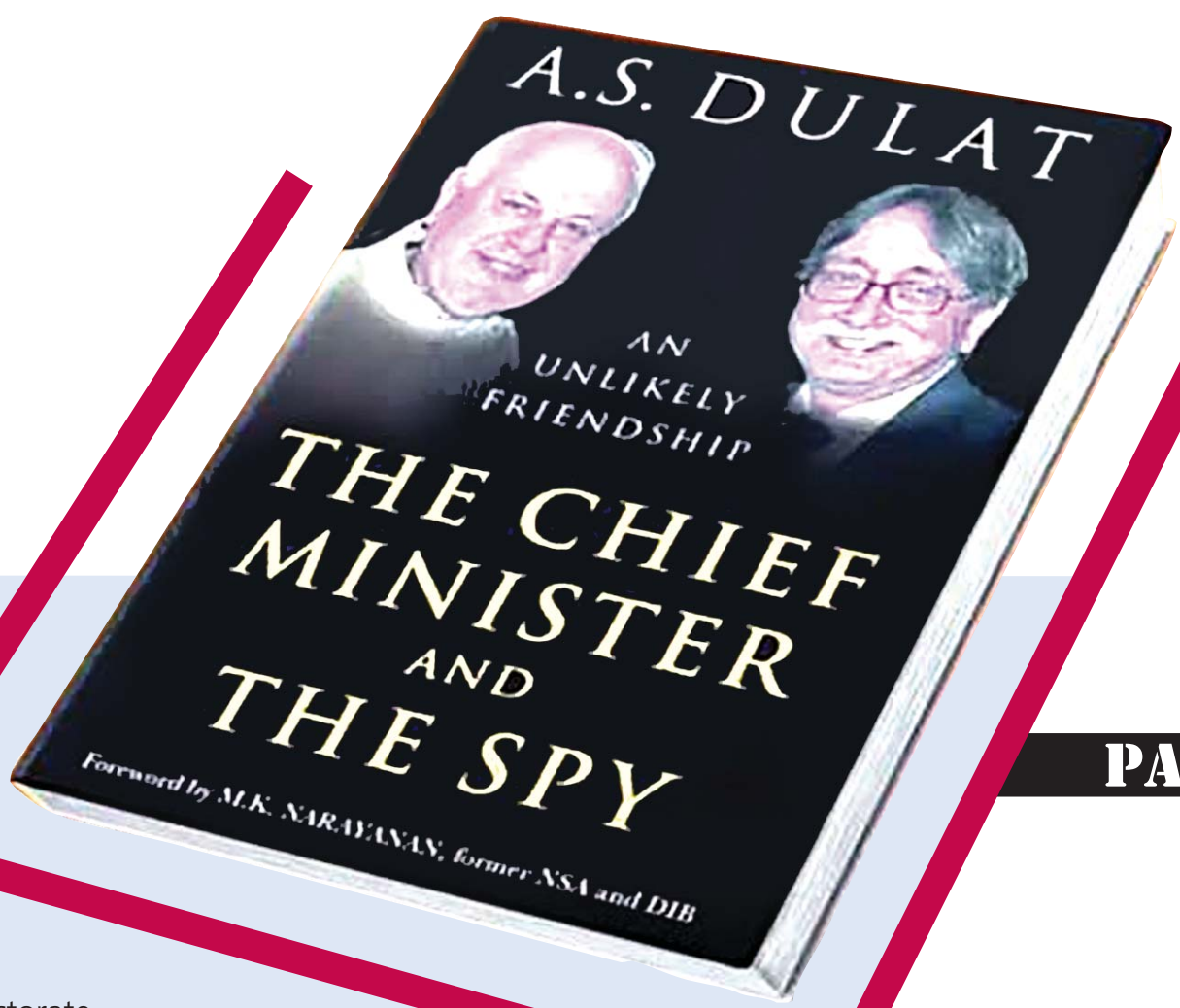
Fintastic Friday: Celebrating Sharks, Skates, and Rays

Observed annually on the second Friday of May, Fintastic Friday, falling on May 9, 2025, is a global initiative dedicated to raising awareness about elasmobranchs: sharks, skates, and rays. Established in 2011 by WhaleTimes, this day aims to shift public perception of these often misunderstood marine creatures from fear to appreciation. Fintastic Friday encourages participation through educational activities, art projects, and conservation pledges. By engaging communities worldwide, Fintastic Friday fosters a deeper understanding of the crucial role these species play in maintaining oceanic ecosystems.



# The 'Disco Chief Minister' Didn't Give a Damn

'Stop and Style' in its 16 March 1984 issue in the column 'Frankly Speaking,' by the late Devyani Chaubal, described him thus: "Farooq Abdullah, chief minister of Jammu and Kashmir, stretched out on the sofa of the Rajput suite at the Taj Hotel, discussed outdoor shootings in Kashmir, Rajesh-Dimple impending divorce, filmfare awards and wondered why there were no awards for Chief Minister. Then, he discussed women, the 'difficult' ones, those who are difficult for nine days, to finally give in on the tenth day etc. And all this after he had spent his only night with Godly Anand till 2 a.m." Another example was the March 1984 issue of the Onlooker, which showed Farooq sitting cosily with actor Dev Anand and three starlets. The photograph was reprinted without explanation, by a local newspaper. This kind of sensationalism did Farooq no good in the eyes of his electorate. When he began dancing with the television personality Hasina Akhtar, at a dinner for 650 travel agents at his official residence, it did not help either.



PART:3

#A.S. DULAT

plays a much greater role than in any other state, out of pure necessity. The I.B.'s presence is almost as pervasive, and every Kashmiri citizen and leader knows they have 29, Gupkar Road (the station chief's office plus residence) to contend with in all spheres of life. But over the years, I.B. chiefs have been too strait laced. As a result, Delhi has seen many things only in black and white. According to Dulat, this approach doesn't work in difficult areas like the Northeast, Punjab or Kashmir. Kashmir, in particular, is mostly a grey area, a state constantly in need of empathy, compassion and compromise. For example, even today, it is not understood why Kashmiri leaders talk different language in Kashmir and a different language in Delhi.

Indeed, Kashmir's relationship with Delhi is best defined by the presence of an I.B. in the state. Sheikh Abdullah raged against its presence, futilely insisting that it pack its bag and close down its desk. But Farooq, from the beginning, began close to work with the I.B. and even had excellent and warm relationship with I.B. people in Srinagar.

As described by Dulat during his earlier days in Srinagar, 1987, he spent most of his day for fresh briefings from K.P., the station chief in-charge of I.B. in Srinagar and Dulat's entertainment was looked after by K.P. Singh's younger colleague Praveen Mahindroo and his charming wife Nisha, who fed Dulat "most delicious Kashmiri food."

K.P. urged Dulat on the Kashmir he had lived in, while describing the who's who in the state and telling anecdotes of who really mattered in Srinagar. K.P. was full of praise for Farooq.

And Mahindroo was even more taken by him. Mahindroo's wife was a great golfer, and during a game, she had been hit over her eye by an errant ball. Almost as soon as he heard of the accident, Farooq visited her to find out how she was, a mark of his solicitude for those whom he knew. Nisha was fine, but was touched by the chief minister's visit.

Remarkably, neither K.P. nor Mahindroo uttered a word on the so called rigging of the 1987 elections. The word 'remarkably' is used

because those polls, and what came before and after, became the main focus once the bloodbath began in Kashmir.

It was such a sensitive topic but emboldened by the I.B. offices' 'goodwill,' Farook shrieked when a reporter asked him about rigging. "Rigged election, my foot! All of you make 1987 election to be the turning point. It is India which is responsible for what has happened to Kashmir and not Farooq Abdullah."

The doyen of intelligence agencies in India, M.K. Narayanan who also had served as the I.B. and RAW chief, also had a warm and intimate relationship with Farooq Abdullah.

M.K. Narayanan was not a Kashmir expert by any stretch of imagination, but Farooq's relationship with Narayanan grew with passage of time.

Narayanan, a teetotalter and vegetarian, was a complete workaholic, and as I.B. chief, Farooq encouraged him to visit the Valley more often than any other director. In fact, Narayanan took a two-day break in Pahalgam. Dulat writes, "Ask anyone of Dulat's vantage and they will tell you that for a workaholic like Narayanan to even dream of taking a break anywhere, two days or any other amount, is really...short of unthinkable." But

those two days, Narayanan's influence with Farooq was at its height.

On a visit to Srinagar, Farooq insisted that the I.B. chief travel in a four-star car, surprising Kashmiris who wondered who the Field Marshal in town was!

Yet another incident that illustrates this point is from winter of 1988.

Dulat received a message from I.B. headquarters in New Delhi, "Your chief hasn't been to Delhi for a while and the home minister (Buta Singh) wants to know why the chief minister is avoiding him."

Dulat went off to meet Farooq and in the course of conversation, Dulat said, "Buta Singh is remembering you."

It was a matter for great puzzlement.

"Who the hell is Buta Singh?" he snapped.

"Why should I meet him? When I go to Delhi and when I want to meet, the prime minister's son keeps waiting and I am told he doesn't have time for me. Why should I have time for your home minister?"

"Well, sir, the I.B. director would like to see you," Dulat recalls. "Then tell him I will be coming tomorrow," Farooq said immediately.

To be continued...

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