

From: <http://www.lighthouse trailsresearch.com>

## YOGA - Just Exercise or a Hindu Religion?

---

### A Hindu Yogi Speaks: "There is no Christian Yoga."

The following article is written by Yogi Baba Prem, who is a Hindu Yogi, a Vedavisharada trained in the traditional gurukural system. We hope that Thomas Nelson, who publishes *Yoga for Christians*, **American Family Association**, who sells *Holy Yoga*, and emerging leader, **Doug Pagitt** (see: <http://www.lighthouse trailsresearch.com/dougpagitt.htm>), who offers it at his church, will all read this article by Yogi Baba Prem (see below).

#### "There is no Christian Yoga?" by Yogi Baba Prem

"It was quite astonishing to see on the flyer 'Christian Yoga! This Thursday night....' I could feel the wheels spinning in my brain. 'Christian Yoga,' I thought. Now while Christians can practice yoga, I am not aware of any Christian teachings about yoga. Yoga is not a Judeo/Christian word! It is not a part of the Roman Catholic teachings and certainly not a part of protestant teachings. It is not found within the King James Version of the bible. It is a Hindu word, or more correctly a Sanskrit word from the Vedic civilization. So how did we get 'Christian Yoga'? "From this I could conclude that 'Christian Yoga' could only indicate one of two possibilities:"

---

The following from  
<http://yogibabaprem.sulekha.com/blog/post/2006/10/there-is-no-christian-yoga.htm>  
(downloaded, 2007-09-05)

## There is no Christian Yoga.

By Yogi Baba Prem, Vedavisharada, CYI, C.ay, C.va

It was quite astonishing to see on the flyer "Christian Yoga! This Thursday night...." I could feel the wheels spinning in my brain. "Christian Yoga", I thought. Now while Christians can practice yoga, I am not aware of any Christian teachings about yoga. Yoga is not a Judeo/Christian word! It is not a part of the Roman Catholic teachings and certainly not a part of protestant teachings. It is not found within the King James Version of the bible. It is a Hindu word, or more correctly a Sanskrit word from the Vedic civilization. So how did we get "Christian Yoga"?

From this I could conclude that "Christian Yoga" could only indicate one of two possibilities:

- 1) Christianity is threatened by yoga and is attempting to take over this system that "invaded their turf" pertaining to spiritual teachings and techniques.
- 2) Christianity is subconsciously attempting to return to the spiritual roots of civilization—the Vedic civilization.

I thought to myself, "why would they want to take over yoga?" Could it be due to the decline of members within the Christian church within the last 60 years? Is this an extensive marketing plan cooked up in some New York marketing guru's head? Is it an attempt to water down the teachings of yoga and import their own teachings into the system? Or is it that they cannot stand not to own everything spiritual?

I think the best reason might be that yoga, and eastern spirituality, offered answers to the spiritual questions that the spiritually hungry masses had. It offered a practical, rational, logical, and truthful approach to spirituality. It did not contain any form of self-righteous condemnation, but offered love and acceptance to all. It did not prey upon victims with terms such as "Sin" and "eternal damnation". But most importantly, it had answers! It offered a practical approach to cultivating a relationship with divinity. It offered a systematic approach and an abstract approach to meet the varying temperaments of the spirituality hungry.

The second possibility was that Christianity was itself looking for answers. A small book filled with judgment, inflexibility, and condemnation was no longer fulfilling the needs of the masses or the leaders of the church. Offering yoga classes allowed the Christian to secretly practice Hinduism without having to renounce their Christian tradition.

Possibly by embracing the technology of yoga and meditation, the Christian church could finally return to the idea of love and acceptance that it believed it was founded upon. It is ironic that one religion would need to look to another religion to teach them about love, peace, harmony, and forgiveness. If successful, it could embrace these ancient teachings and save itself from the fate it planted over the last few thousand years.

But possibly in their wisdom, the current fathers of the church realized that their time was coming to a close. So within America they must absorb yoga before they are absorbed by it. This is a common religious view that has appeared numerous times within world history. Then they would immediately move their resources to India. Taking over the country would allow them to own all the spirituality, and then 'pick and chose' which tasty spiritual treats they would share. After all they have 2000 years practice with this.

Indian being a loving, peaceful people, openly embraced their brothers from the west. They looked the other way as their temples were torn down. They accepted it as karma as their families were torn apart over differing religious beliefs. The Indians thought it was thoughtful of the missionaries to dress up just like swami's, to be "just like them" and to share in their kindred spirit.

Of course we are in a great deal of debt to the missionaries as they have single handedly undone the highly discriminatory caste system within India. Well they tried to, ...kinda. Even though dalits are not allowed into churches with other castes at times. But putting that aside, they put an end to poverty in India, well...they did purchase a lot of things, such as influence in the media, government, and elections. And of course, Christian militant groups continue to be a tremendous asset to India. They are ready to kill anyone invading their turf, except the Muslims who apparently will kill them back.

Modern day scholars from India frequently present the attitude of "let them have yoga, I am interested in protecting Hinduism." I have heard this sentiment on numerous occasions, but the reality is that yoga is a part of Hinduism. Allowing one part to be taken from Hinduism opens a door for the distortion of the teachings. We must remember that the roots to modern day yoga comes from Vedic Yoga. The same Vedic Yoga that is the authority of Hinduism. Allowing one branch to be severed from the tree of knowledge will not necessarily kill that tree, but it can produce strain and have an unbalancing effect upon the tree.

Hinduism should reclaim its full heritage and not allow other groups to rename its sacred teachings under their banner, especially when they have no history of those teaching within their own system. If they wish to 'borrow' and say this comes from our brothers and sisters in Hinduism, then that is another thing. But frequently groups attempt to privatize the information and present themselves as the original authority. Hinduism should guard against its sacred traditions becoming distorted and taken away.

Scholars at universities should take the stand that yoga is part of Hinduism, though one is one required to be a Hindu to practice yoga. It is important to acknowledge the roots of the tradition; after all we are expected to give credit to the orginial sources within books and research papers, but yet Hindu scholars have ignored this fundamental western view when it comes to their own heritage.

From: <http://www.lighthouse trailsresearch.com>

**From an email we received from the Classical Yoga Hindu Academy:**

"Is Yoga a religion that denies Jesus Christ? Yes. Just as Christianity denies the Hindu MahaDevas such as Siva, Vishnu, Durga and Krishna, to name a few, Hinduism and its many Yogas have nothing to do with God and Jesus (though we do respect that others believe in this way). As Hindus who live the Yogic lifestyle, we appreciate when others understand that all of Yoga is all about the Hindu religion. Modern so-called 'yoga' is dishonest to Hindus and to all non-Hindus such as the Christians."

**Danda,  
Dharma Yoga Ashram  
(Classical Yoga Hindu Academy)**

**East and West, The Two Shall Never Meet**

"Christianity cannot be integrated with yoga and remain Christian. To think otherwise imperils the Christian truth and faith. As the managing editor of 'Hinduism Today,' Sannyasin Arumugaswami, remarks, 'Hinduism is the soul of yoga 'based as it is on Hindu Scripture and developed by Hindu sages. Yoga opens up new and more refined states of mind, and to understand them one needs to believe in and understand the Hindu way of looking at God. . . . A Christian trying to adapt these practices will likely disrupt their own Christian beliefs.' East is east, and west is west, and if Christianity is to remain Christian, 'the twain' should never be married. **Can yogic practices be integrated with the Christian faith?** Pastor Larry De Bruyn

---

<http://www.frbaptist.org/bin/view/Ptp/PtpTopic20060522141106>

**Franklin Road Baptist Church**

Christ is our message. The Bible is our text

**POSTURE TO APOSTASY**

**Can yogic practices be integrated with the Christian faith?**

"Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet . . ." Rudyard Kipling's words accent the difference between eastern and western spirituality, between Hinduism and Christianity. But the two, "the twain" as it were, are now meeting via yogic practices being promoted in various places of worship and activities of spirituality. Take, for example, one Jewish synagogue. The weekly Shabbat services of Congregation Beth-El Zedek have included such activities as "Torah Yoga," which asks congregants to "stretch and take deep breaths" as the Torah is read, or when as worshippers enter the synagogue, they are "welcomed by Torah meditations set to drums and chanting." [1] But Jews are not alone in adopting yogic postures and practices.

"Christian yoga" is also gaining popularity. Thomas Nelson, a Christian publisher, recently released a book titled, *Yoga for Christians*, by Susan Bordenkircher.[2] In an interview with the *Denver Post*, the author, a fitness instructor, explained, "What we are attempting to do with a Christ-centered practice is fill the heart and mind with God, becoming 'single-minded' as Scripture calls it." Unapologetic for promoting so called "Christian yoga", she explains that "Christ-centered yoga is definitely not just a repackaging of . . . yoga. The difference, she says, lies in the intention: shifting the focus from self to God with yogic postures ('breathing in' the Holy Spirit, for instance), integrating health as critical to effective godly service, and slowing down enough 'from our fast-paced lives to actually hear God's voice.'"[3] Wow . . . "breathing in the Holy Spirit . . . slowing down . . . to actually hear the voice of God."

The instructor's words betray an ominous and foreboding ignorance of Christian truth. Believers do not breathe in the Holy Spirit. When by faith people are justified (i.e., saved), in a millisecond of time they are regenerated (John 3:3, 5-7), and instantly indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God. Corporately and individually, believers are the **"temple"** of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19). As Paul wrote to the Roman believers, **"However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him"** (Romans 8:9). There are only two types of persons in the world: saints and "ain'ts"--those in whom the Holy Spirit lives, and those in whom He does not. Given the Spirit's abiding presence in the life of the believer, how can He then be inhaled into the soul via yogic practice? Answer: He can't, because at salvation the Holy Spirit makes the justified believer's soul His sanctuary! Hopefully this yoga instructor isn't suggesting that regeneration takes place by a sort of yogic "inbreathing" of the Holy Spirit. If she really is, then by adding a human mechanism (i.e., "breathing in") for salvation, her version of spirituality stands in blatant contradiction to the salvation that comes **"by grace . . . through faith"** (Ephesians 2:8-9). Her spirituality formula also opposes Jesus' testimony that like the wind, the Sovereign Spirit blows when and where He **"wishes"** (John 3:8). The Sovereign Spirit will not be manipulated or controlled by yogic "inbreathing."

Additionally, practicing yoga with a view to hearing a mystical "voice of God" is anti-scriptural. Does the yoga instructor mean to suggest that yogic practices actually prepare people to "hear the voice of God"? Is not the mediated Word of God through the Son and Scriptures adequate? (See Hebrews 1:1-2a.). Does she really mean to say that yogic practices become a conduit through which to hear God speak? Incredible! That's not Christianity. That's the eastern mysticism of New Age religion. Embracing yoga with a view to hearing God's voice denigrates the sufficiency of Scripture in the Christian life (2 Timothy 3:16), and opens a Pandora's Box out of which will blow every **"wind of doctrine"** (Ephesians 4:14).

Christianity cannot be integrated with yoga and remain Christian. To think otherwise mindlessly imperils the Christian truth and faith. As the managing editor of *Hinduism Today*, Sannyasin Arumugaswami, remarks, "Hinduism is the soul of yoga 'based as it is on Hindu Scripture and developed by Hindu sages. Yoga opens up new and more refined states of mind, and to understand them one needs to believe in and understand the Hindu way of looking at

God. . . . A Christian trying to adapt these practices will likely disrupt their own Christian beliefs'."[4]

Associated with the Classical Yoga Hindu Academy, an instructor named Danda likewise stated, "Is Yoga a religion that denies Jesus Christ? Yes. Just as Christianity denies the Hindu Maha Devas such as Siva, Vishnu, Durga and Krishna, to name a few, Hinduism and its many Yogas have nothing to do with God and Jesus (though we do respect that others believe in this way). As Hindus who live the Yogic lifestyle, we appreciate when others understand that all of Yoga is all about the Hindu religion. Modern so-called 'yoga' is dishonest to Hindus and to all non-Hindus such as the Christians."[5]

East is east, and west is west, and if Christianity is to remain Christian, "the twain," meaning yoga and Christianity, should never be integrated. The soul that is engaged to Jesus Christ cannot commit spiritual harlotry by flirting with the yogic practices intended to introduce them to Hindu gods. As John the Apostle wrote: "**Little children, guard yourselves from idols**" (1 John 5:21).

By Pastor Larry DeBruyn

---

[1] Robert King, "Torah Yoga? If it draws Jews closer to their faith," **The Indianapolis Star**, 12 April 2006, 1A.

[2] Susan Bordenkircher, **Yoga for Christians** (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2006) Paperback, 224 pages.

[3] Darryl E. Owens, "'Christian yoga' strikes a new pose," **DenverPost.com**, Thursday, May 18, 2006. [http://www.denverpost.com/lifestyleles/ci\\_3819655](http://www.denverpost.com/lifestyleles/ci_3819655)

[4] Ibid.

[5] Danda, of the Dharma Yoga Ashram (Classical Yoga Hindu Academy, [www.classicalyoga.org](http://www.classicalyoga.org)) located in Manahawkin, New Jersey, in a personal e-mail to the Lighthouse Trails Research Project. Used with permission.

---

The practice of Yoga is pagan at best, and occult at worst. Its teachings emanate from the Eastern religions, all of which teach that self is God, only we just don't realize it until we do the techniques. 'The goal of Yoga is *self-realization*-to look deeply within to what ought to be the temple of the one true God and to discover the alleged *true Self* or *higher Self* to be God. Nothing could be more religious than that, yet with straight faces, all of the Yogis insist that practicing Yoga does not change anyone's religious beliefs.'"— **Mike Oppenheimer, Let Us Reason Ministries, Read More ...**

---

<http://www.letusreason.org/NAM1.htm>



## YOGA *Today's lifestyle for health*

*It has been said to steady the mind, calm the emotions, and tone the body. It claims that it is a way to Promote fitness, flexibility, and relaxation and It can be practiced in groups or by oneself at home.*

*"Nationally, yoga is a \$22.5 billion industry. Advertisements for yoga books, videos, clothes, wellness retreats and even yoga business training classes can be found in the back of magazines such as Yoga Journal, and the phenomenon is now reaching into the mainstream.*

*...35 million Americans who will try yoga for the first time this year. Once confined to New Agers with an interest in Eastern spirituality, yoga is catching on among young men, fitness fanatics, aging baby boomers and other unlikely enthusiasts who claim the mind/body practice does everything from heal illness to tighten abs"*

<http://www.registerguard.com/news/2004/10/31/ol.yoga.1031.html>

A 2002 government survey of 31,000 adults found that 8 percent of Americans used TM as an alternative medical therapy. (Americans seek stress relief through non-biblical techniques, October 17, 2005)

Wal-Mart's Web site has 990 yoga products; Target's has 4,235. (as of 2004)

*Hatha yoga exercises are taught as part of YMCA physical education programs, in health spas and given as physical exercise on TV programs. Eighty percent of clubs now offer yoga classes. Yoga is also incorporated into institutional and liberal churches on the assumption that these techniques are nothing more than benign physical exercises which condition the mind and body. It has come in under the guise of stress reduction. Touted as scientifically proven is more an assumption, that is really at worst, presumption.*

We probably all have seen Liliias on her PBS TV series introduce people to the benefits of this physical exercise. She has become an American icon for yoga, promising amazing affects from vitality, tranquility to greater concentration. Richard Hittleman was one of the first to have a television show on yoga. Now the exercise classes are being carried on TV as a new resurgence of interest is taking place.

B. K. S. Iyengar, the founder of the Hatha Yoga used in the U.S. *"Last year, (2004)Time magazine named Iyengar one of the 100 most influential people in the world, shortly after the word "Iyengar" made it into the Oxford English Dictionary."*

*His classic book "Light on Yoga" has sold more than 1 million copies, and has been translated into 17 languages" (http://www.denverpost.com/search/ci\_3087074, Yoga and its genius, By Colleen O'Connor 10/09/2005)*

*Newsweek magazine reported that "yoga classes are in demand at urban health clubs across the country, and longstanding yoga studios in New York, Chicago, and California report sharp rises in attendance in the past years. It is estimated that there are 10,000 yoga teachers in the United States, who teach between 4 and 5 million students a week. Newsweek also noted that "such high-profile practitioners of the 6,000-year-old art as Kareem Abdul-Jabbar and Raquel Welch (whose exercise videos are promoting yoga).*

Yoga's popularity has grown especially as of late. Peter Jones in his Christian Witness to a Pagan Planet e-newsletter reports that Twenty million Americans practice Yoga—including Madonna, Oprah, Gwyneth Paltrow, Monica Lewinski, Hillary Clinton, Phil Jackson (with many L.A. Lakers) the Gores and Sandra Day O'Connor, of the Supreme Court.

Because Hollywood is involved it has brought it more attention to the practice." Time magazine Also reported that the Berkeley-based *Yoga Journal* has nearly doubled its circulation over the past five years. The widespread teaching of yoga in America today, is probably, due more to a tolerant attitude toward the religions of other cultures than it is to an open mindedness about whatever wisdom may be extracted from it. It seems to the secular population that is being targeted to accept only that selected aspect of yoga which fits their naive notion. That what yoga is supposed to do, is to relieve stress and make a fit and beautiful body. Many participants merely presume that the exercises are neutral, harmless, if they are not practiced with any spiritual intent. After all it only bodily exercise!

But the fact remains that even physical yoga is inextricably united in the whole of Eastern metaphysics. I personally had practiced yoga and meditation and at times was quite dedicated. It was something I believed in, as I tried to work my way to be in tune with the universe as well as my body. One of the early pioneers of Hatha Yoga, Richard Hittleman, (who was a personal influence to practice Yoga) "*stated that as yoga students practiced the physical positions, they would eventually be ready to investigate the spiritual component which is "the entire essence of the subject"*" (Yoga Journal, May/June 1993, p. 68 Quote from [http://cana.userworld.com/cana\\_yoga.html](http://cana.userworld.com/cana_yoga.html) ).

This is how I began a spiritual journey into meditation one practice led to another as one wanted to grow in the spiritual pursuit. From this spiritual philosophy I learned to be a vegetarian, thinking I was cleansing the temple for the energy to flow unobstructed. While vegetarianism can be helpful to some people that are unable to digest meat, it is not the optimum diet for all. It can at times make one unhealthy if they do not get sufficient vitamins and minerals.

This practice is ancient but can be traditionally traced to approximately the 200 B.C., To a man named Patanjali. Who is credited with being the originator of the yoga system. His work is a collection of many short terse sentences which convey the barest minimum of teaching about yoga. The rest was learned from his teacher personally. Little is known about him; he was supposedly a physician, Sanskrit scholar, a yoga practitioner (yogi), a teacher who lived in India. Some authorities believe that he was more of a cataloguer than an author, and that he did not originate this practice, but collected and edited the teachings from traditions and is credited for its revival. Yoga was introduced by Hindu's Lord Krishna in the Baghavad Gita as the sure way to Hindu heaven. In one of the most authoritative Hatha Yoga texts, the fifteenth-century Hathayoga Pradipika, Svatmarama lists Lord Shiva, (one of Hinduism's most feared Hindu deities, called "The Destroyer") as the first Hatha Yoga teacher. Shiva is addressed as Yogeshzuara, or Lord of Yoga.

There are many types of Yoga. Besides the Ashtanga Yoga of Patanjali, - the most famous forms of yoga are those described in the Bhavagad Gita, the Hindus sacred scriptures. The best-known part of the epic Mahabharata, the Gita mentions Karma, Jnana, and Bhakti Yoga. These are not different types of yoga but are different applications of yoga to daily life. Since Yoga means to unite they are all part of the whole. In addition to these, there is Raja, Tantra, and Integral Yoga.

The concept presented is the body contains a network of channels for divine and cosmic energy. Where these channels cross, they create pulse points of psychic and spiritual energy in the body known as *chakras*. There are said to be as much as 88,000 *chakras* throughout the human body, but ... of these, only seven are considered to be of supreme importance, Each has its own corresponding color, musical sound, psychological function, stone and gems, symbols, endocrine gland, internal organ, illnesses and ailments.

Tantra, sometimes called Kundalini Yoga, is the worship of God as the Divine Mother; (for those who are femininely inclined) it stresses the union of the male and female aspects of the individual, to awake the Snake. Tantra's most important and unique characteristic is its use of sexual imagery to portray enlightenment, the return to Oneness beyond duality of life. When Kundalini has been awakened, as a result of secret yogic techniques, she rises through the *chakras* of the spine slithering like a snake upward to reunion with Shiva at the crown of the head. When god and goddess unite in sexual embrace, enlightenment occurs, illusion vanishes, and there is only One. This rising Kundalini flow also causes one to go into an altered state of consciousness, as the heart chakra opens. This can be one of the most dangerous practices in yoga and is not to be underestimated in its ability to harm. Connected with the Kundalini practice is an elaborate occult system that sees the human body as integrated to within and without. The occultists world view is summed up by the statement as "within so without." The Beatles sang a song influenced by the Maharishi "life flows within you an without you." Yogis have the ability to slow down their breathing surviving on almost no oxygen and to remain motionless for hours, thus freeing themselves from the supposed "illusion" of this life.

Without going into all the different aspects and functions of each yoga, I would like for us to examine the one most commonly practiced, Hatha yoga.

The words *Ha* and *tha* represent the energy which is on each side of the spinal column. Hatha yoga suppresses the flow of energies through these passages, forcing the kundalini ("serpent power") to rise from the base of the spine through the psychic energy channel in the sushumn (the spine), up through each of the chakras.



The goal of advanced yoga students is to attain their highest possible degree of physical, mental, and spiritual integration. Ultimately to reach union with Brahma is not simply for exercise. It is a fact that yoga migrated to the west first as a spiritual discipline. At the time Vegetarianism and non-violence were promoted quite successfully as key elements of yogic philosophy. It actually helped change the culture and promote the hippie lifestyle which later transformed and matured into the new age movement we have today.

Today it is now popular to bring the children to Yoga classes to calm them down from their hyperactivity and get them under control.

The typical American taking yoga classes has little or no idea of the how's and why's of yoga's seeming effectiveness. Yoga is a series of exercises and postures (asanas) which are advertised as a way to tone up, reduce stress and experience tranquility. In the traditional understanding, physical yoga has a great deal more to do with the practitioner's invisible, "subtle" body, than it does with the flesh and bones and muscles that encase it. While yoga does purport to first of all work on the muscular, glandular, and physical nervous systems, its real import, as Danielou says, is as "a process of control of the gross body which aims at freeing the subtle body." (Danielou, p. 18 referenced from *SCP Journal*).

This subtle body is extremely complex, but can be superficially described as consisting of 72,000 invisible psychic channels called *nadis*, which constitute an other-dimensional body that directly corresponds to the physical, or gross body. The subtle body is connected to the gross body at several points, which are the seven chakra points. Almost all those who practice new age therapies would be familiar with energy points called chakras.

There is no Hinduism without its practice, it is essential and spiritual. There is no yoga that is strictly aimed for the physical body, it is essentially spiritual because of its purpose. Asanas (the body postures) are one of the first methods of arousing the kundalini. Yoga is used to escape from this unreal world of time and sense which is called maya, an illusion. The goal is to reach moksha, a Hindu Nirvana. Yoga was developed as an escape from endless reincarnations. Georg Feuerstein, Ph.D., founder and director of the Yoga Research and Education center says that Yoga has two meanings: it's the discipline and the actual union.

When we have the union, we don't need the gear anymore. But few people can claim to have reached that level. There are practitioners who have been allowed glimpses of it, but full enlightenment is a very rare accomplishment.

The word yoga is Sanskrit; it derives from a verbal root, yuj, meaning "to yoke or join or fasten or harness, as in horses to a chariot; to concentrate the mind in order to obtain union with the Universal Spirit; to be absorbed in meditation." Its meaning in plain language is union or yoking with the God consciousness.

Yoga is an intrinsic part of Hinduism. Swami Vishnudevananda, well known authority of Yoga, in his book "The Complete Illustrated Book of Yoga" explains the purpose of Yoga, *"It is the duty of each developed man to train his body to the highest degree of perfection so that it may be used to pursue spiritual purposes... the aim of all yoga practice is to achieve truth wherein the individual soul identifies itself with the supreme soul of God."* In the Hindu philosophy is taught that the ultimate reality is consciousness or energy (God-Brahman). Each individual soul (Atman) has seven energy centers known as chakras in his body that run along the spinal column. By opening up these energy centers aligning these chakras, for the energy to merge with the ultimate cosmic energy and to experience "Atman who is Brahman."

B. K. S. Iyengar, the founder of the more popular form of Hatha Yoga used in the U.S. states yoga is, *"the means by which the human soul may be completely united with the Supreme Spirit pervading the universe and thus attain liberation"* (Yoga Journal, May/June 1993, p. 69 Quote from [http://cana.userworld.com/cana\\_yoga.html](http://cana.userworld.com/cana_yoga.html) ). The yoga teachers do admit that its function is spiritual not just physical.

Focusing on a series of stretching exercises, breathing practices, and meditation to reach a state of peace and harmony, this physical discipline is merely a means to an end. It is a spiritual exercise and the spiritual awakening is really the serpent power (Kundalini) an energy that when released streams up the spine, where tremors, spasms and sometimes violent shaking and twisting are experienced.

The yoga positions are designed to reach the state of Samadhi, or a state of union with self as God. Hatha yoga in its postures bring the subtle body into a specific alignment with the physical which will alter the consciousness of the participant. In other words one is practicing one of the essential elements of Hinduism when doing their Hatha Yoga exercises; whether they are aware of it or not.

"Hatha Yoga plays an important part in the development of the human being... the body working in harmony with the mind, to bring the seeker into closer contact with the Higher Self."

Swami Sivenanda Radha, a well-known yoga teacher, has said in the book on Hatha Yoga, *"Asanas are a devotional practice...each asana creates a certain state of mind...to bring the seeker into closer contact with the Higher Self"* (Quote from [http://cana.userworld.com/cana\\_yoga.html](http://cana.userworld.com/cana_yoga.html) ).

Pranayama is the breathing process; by inhalation, exhalation one absorbs vital energy. Some claim by controlling Prana (life force), one can control all the forces of the universe, gravity (this why some claim to levitate), magnetism, electricity and their own nerve currents.

John Weldon and Clifford Wilson wrote in *Occult Shock and Psychic Forces* that Yoga is really pure occultism. Hans-Urich Rieker, in his book *The Yoga of Light*, also warns that misunderstanding the true nature of Yoga can mean "death or insanity." Also a little known fact is that virtually every major guru in India has issued warnings similar to these; i.e., *deep breathing techniques such as the ones taught in Yoga are a time-honored method for entering altered states of consciousness and for developing so-called psychic power."*

Yoga is one of the basic means of reaching this altered state of consciousness. And the altered state is the doorway to the occult. Sir John Eccles, Nobel Prize Winner for his research on the brain, said the brain is "a machine that a ghost can operate." In a normal state of consciousness one's own spirit ticks off the neurons in his brain and operates his body. We are spirits connected **with** a body. But in an altered state, reached under drugs, **Yoga**, hypnosis, visualization, this passive but alert state, the connection between the spirit and the brain, is loosened. That allows another spirit to interpose itself, to begin to tick off the neurons in the brain, and create an entire universe of illusion. You've then opened yourself up to the spiritual realm which God forbids for us to enter. It's called sorcery. Those encouraged to use meditation, yoga, visualization, chakra energizing, Spirit guides could certainly take advantage of these open areas.

Unbeknown to many people they are literally teaching themselves how to be demonized, asking guiding spirits to help teach and relieve them of their stress. All in the name of stress reduction and developing one's full potential. The fact is that one practicing yoga, the asanas, are to be able to release themselves from the trappings of reincarnation by working off their karma.

Yoga is to help one neutralize their karma and find a way off the cycle of rebirth (reincarnation). How can this spiritual exercise be sanitized for Christian use. And for what reason would it be used? To relax! The Bible teaches God will "keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You." (Isa. 26:3). One cannot make an excuse that they want to us it to experience peace and or the divine.

The poses that they so diligently practice in their stretching are named after Hindu Gods, and what one is actually doing, is calling on them. In that worshipful pose, they are bowing and for all intents and purposes worshipping that God. Our God says "You shall have no other Gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God.

As Christians who are in relationship with the God who created the universe, we should not be among those who exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worship and serve created things rather than the Creator (Romans 1:25). While many Christians rationalize the exercises as neutral they only need to ask a professional Yoga instructor what it is really about to find that it is in fact religious. As a Christian we need to ask ourselves would Jesus or the apostles be doing yoga? If not why not. Would they promote another religions way to be united with a different gods? According to the Bible Yoga is an idolatrous practice which leads one away from the one true God and into the spiritual realm of false gods and demonic spirits, and there are consequences? If we sin ignorantly God understands, He is merciful, giving us grace on the one hand, but not to continue after we receive knowledge of the truth. On the other He cares of our sin, not willing to leave us to our deception. "My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge," in In Hosea's time people had a lack of knowledge concerning God, as a result, they turned to other gods, and their idolatrous practices became a snare to them and a delusion. they became the prey of false gods-even while thinking that their lifestyle was pleasing to God.

There is absolutely no problem in stretching exercises in and of themselves. What would be wrong is taking yoga positions assuming they are stretching exercises and non-religious, when in fact they are worshipful poses to Hindu gods. No one can deny that stretching helps the blood flow, nor that breathing in oxygen helps our overall health. There are numerous other ways unattached to a religion that can accomplish this. There are numerous exercise programs that incorporate stretching that in no way relates to yoga (and it worldview) that one can substitute. Religious syncretism is probably the most dangerous we can involve ourselves in because we can rationalize its purpose. From the Hindu viewpoint nothing is merely physical, because in Hinduism the physical is merely maya, an illusion, so when you practice yoga it is not a physical exercise for the body but a spiritual exercise. All exercise helps the blood flow and keeps us limber. Breathing in oxygen helps our overall health and vitality. All

these can be pursued in other ways than having it attached to a religion that teaches to discover you are god.

Essentially one cannot practice a portion of Hinduism and continue to walk with the true Christ who is not a Hindu Guru.

I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE. NO MAN COMES TO THE FATHER EXCEPT BY ME.




---

"When Westerners employ yoga techniques as a means to improve their health, they should understand that they can also be producing subtle changes within themselves which will have dramatic spiritual consequences that will not be for the better. Regardless of the school or spiritual tradition, yoga practice tends to alter a person's consciousness in an occult direction."—John Ankerberg, **Innocent Yoga?**

---

## Innocent Yoga

By Dr John ankerberg and Dr John Weldon

When Westerners employ yoga techniques as a means to improve their health, they should understand that they can also be producing subtle changes within themselves which will have dramatic spiritual consequences that will not be for the better. Regardless of the school or spiritual tradition, yoga practice tends to alter a person's consciousness in an occult direction.

Even when yoga is practiced innocently, it can eventually produce dramatic occult transformation. "Personality changes can be brought about in Hatha Yoga by changing the body so that it influences the mind." 1 Consider the experience of Christina Grof, who, prior to her experience with yoga, was an average housewife with normal plans for her life. She took up yoga entirely without suspicion as a practice that would help her physically during her pregnancy. After all, there are widespread claims that "during pregnancy, yoga exercises are extremely beneficial and will keep you supple and relaxed." 2

What Christian Grof got was far more. She found herself transformed from a "conservative suburban housewife" into a New Age leader by means of hatha yoga. All she had to do was "join a hatha yoga class for exercise" and the logical progression ensued:

**During the birth of my first child, for which I had prepared with the Lamaze method of breathing (very much like yogic *pranayama*), this enormous spiritual force was released in me. Of course, I didn't understand it and was given morphine to stop it as soon as the baby was born.... Then the same thing happened when my second child was born. This all led to more and more experiences. I threw myself into yoga, although still not acknowledging it as a spiritual tool. My meeting with Swami Muktananda really blew the lid off everything. He served as a catalyst to awaken what I had been resisting, which was kundalini (the universal life force). 3**

Thus, an innocently practiced yoga-for-exercise routine led to numerous psychic experiences that had the cumulative impact of dramatically changing her life. She became a disciple of the Hindu guru Muktananda and then, as we will see, a leader in the New Age Movement with a specific mission: to assist people who

were having "spiritual emergencies" from their occult practices and help them to "properly interpret" and successfully integrate these "divine" experiences into their lives. 4

Initially, however, as the standard *kundalini* yoga symptoms emerged in her life, the prognosis was not good. (Hindu kundalini mythology is discussed in a separate article: *Kundalini Yoga*, see New Age archives, May, 2001.) Grof herself was in the midst of a spiritual emergency and increasingly convinced of her own insanity. "I was convinced I was headed for a life of psychopathology. I was afraid I was going crazy." 5 Nevertheless, counseling through occult philosophy put matters in their "proper" perspective. Her marriage ended, "which it was destined to do anyway." And the late popular mythologist Joseph Campbell helped her recognize, "The schizophrenic is drowning in the same waters in which the mystic is swimming with delight." He also referred her to LSD and consciousness researcher Stan Grof for more counseling.

The rest is history. The couple were eventually married and today coordinate some 50 SEN (Spiritual Emergency Network) regional information centers around the globe. 6 They also publish a significant amount of literature in the field of occult metaphysics. Their reinterpretation of the pathological phenomena induced by occult practice—as a positive transforming spirituality (a spiritual "emergence")—not only helps undergird and legitimize the occult, but it also effectively inhibits discernment of the true issues involved.

For example, in the case of kundalini yoga, symptoms of mental illness and demonization are gratuitously redefined as emerging manifestations of "higher" or divine consciousness. Thus, we are not to question or fear the kundalini process but to surrender to it and trust it implicitly, for it is indeed part of that ageless wisdom of evolutionary transformation which is far wiser than ourselves. A chapter in a recent book edited by Stan and Christina Grof, *Spiritual Emergency*, reveals a basic approach of SEN counseling. The title is "When Insanity Is a Blessing." 7

Thus, a slow but sure yoga-induced occult transformation catapulted Christina Grof headlong into the world of occultism. In the long run, her innocent flirtation with yoga altered her entire life and resulted in her becoming a leader in the New Age Movement, with influence over hundreds of thousands of people.

Consider one more example of the potential consequences of innocent yoga practice. While Christina Grof used yoga for help in her pregnancy, Carole, a friend of coauthor John Weldon, used yoga for medical and health reasons. We published her story in *The Coming Darkness: Confronting Occult Deception*. 8 We first met Carole as a result of exchanging information on the famous Indian guru and yogi Swami Rama. The following information is taken from material sent to us.

Carole was very sick and doctors were unable to find the cause of her illness. When she went to a physician-nutritionist recommended by a friend, she found some literature in his office about the Himalayan Institute, of which the doctor was a staff member. The institute was founded by Indian Swami Rama, one of the most scientifically studied of the gurus, beginning with famous biofeedback researcher and spiritist Dr. Elmer Green. Carole decided to attend the institute, where she began lessons in hatha yoga. Eventually, she was initiated and received her mantra, or word of occult power, from Swami Rama. As he laid his hands upon her head, the typical transfer of "occult energy" began (termed *shaktipat diksha*). Carole was in heaven:

**Currents of electrical energy began to permeate my head and went down into my body.... It was as if a spell had come over me, the bliss that I felt was as if I had been touched by God. The power that had come from his hand, and simply being in his presence, drew me to him irresistibly.**

The night after receiving her mantra, Carole was visited by a spirit being who claimed to be the spirit of Swami Rama himself. Although no one had ever mentioned the spirit world in her church (they did not believe in such things), Carole felt that this was the means of directly communing with God. She experienced wonderful powerful forces and energies, while thoughts entered her mind with a magnetic-like force:

**Electrical currents were pulsating around my body and then moved into my hand, the currents were shaking my hand and strong, almost entrancing thoughts were impressed into my mind, "Meditate, meditate. I want to speak with you." It was a miracle. I was communicating with the spirit world. I had found God. Sitting in the darkness of my living room I began to repeat my mantra. A presence seemed to fill the room. I began to see visions of being one with the universe and the magnetic thoughts were now leaving and I was hearing a voice, which identified itself as Swami Rama, saying he was communicating with me through astral travel.**

**Within one week, after meditating many hours each day and still in constant communication with this spirit, forces began to come upon me and gave me powers to do yoga postures; I was floating through them, the forces giving me added breath even... postures that before would be very painful to do.**

However, after two weeks of daily yoga meditation, Carole became engulfed in a nightmare of utter dread and terror. Voices that once claimed they were angelic turned threatening, even demonic. She was brutally assaulted, both physically and spiritually by spirits. During meditation, in the midst of being violently shaken, she could sense that the same energy received at initiation, energy which was now felt to be *personal*, was attempting to remove her life-essence from her physical body—in her words, "to literally pull the life from my shell of a body." She sensed an overwhelming and implacable hatred directed toward her from this "energy," as if "monstrosities of another world were trying to take my very soul from me, inflicting pain beyond endurance, ripping and tearing into the very depths of my being."

The intermittent suffocation and torment seemed interminable; her fears increased as she realized there was no one to help her. Finally, the attack subsided. But it was merely the first of many.

It seems that nothing could stop the assaults. Her agonized pleas to the spirits were ignored; her husband was powerless. Her father wanted her to see a psychiatrist; others also doubted her sanity. In desperation, her mother contacted psychic friends from a local church of the Unity School of Christianity. They laid hands on Carole and commanded that "the divinity within" deliver her, but to no avail.

Dr. C. Norman Shealy, M.D., Ph.D., entered the picture. He is a noted neurosurgeon, a former professor at Harvard University, past president of the American Holistic Medical Association, and the author of *Occult Medicine Can Save Your Life*. Dr. Shealy also works in conjunction with psychics and spiritists such as Caroline Myss. When Dr. Shealy was unable to help, he referred Carole to Dr. Robert Leichtman, M.D., a spiritist who is coauthor of several dozen books received by revelation from the spirits.

Leichtman admitted that Carole's situation was not uncommon among followers of Eastern gurus. He even told her some have died as a result of similar psychic attacks. But he, too, was unable to help. His instructions, such as visualizing herself in the white "Christ light" of protection, were useless. By this time, Carole was near the end.

**I had to endure the torture, unable to free myself. To those around me I was insane. No one believed me and no one could free me. The hopelessness I felt was unbearable. No one believed me except the psychics... and they could do nothing.**

**I was defenseless against these never-ending attacks... hundreds of presences filling my room, which itself would be filled with thick, ice cold air, my body drenched with perspiration as my whole being fought against them.**

**After spending several weeks at my parents' we decided perhaps I could try returning home. But that night the spirits started to exert their full power.**

**First, against my skull. I felt as if they were trying to crack it open, like the air was being cut off to my brain. Incredible pressure was exerted upon my back and chest, pulling with a wrench-like grip. It felt like they were trying to pull my shoulder from its socket, pressing on my eyes trying to blind me, pushing on my throat trying to choke me. Filled with fear and exhaustion, on the brink of death I screamed to my husband, "I'm dying; I can't take it anymore. Get me to the hospital."**

**I was taken to the hospital where I laid like a scared dog cowering on a cart. I could hardly speak but at least the spirits were gone—temporarily.... The doctor on duty recommended a psychiatrist who saw me the next morning. He told me I was covering up some deep problems with this "talk of evil spirits." "There is no such thing as the devil," he said coldly.**

Carole admitted herself to the hospital, but once more no one could help. The attacks finally subsided and she was released. Upon returning home, the attacks began again. More unimaginable torment. Although she was terrified of dying, death was now her desire. Wishing to take her life but too fearful of dying, she readmitted herself to the hospital. Once again, she was placed in locked ward. She felt that here she would die, alone and in torment

But today, Carole is alive and well. Even her psychiatrist is amazed at the miraculous transformation. She is now in perfect health, both mentally and physically.

How did Carole get free? No one had been able to help her. Today, Carole attributes both her health and her life to a living Jesus Christ who delivered her from a desperate plight. Reflecting back on her predicament, she is awed that such terrible destruction could be purchased at the price of a simple, supposedly harmless form of yoga meditation.

Events like these reveal that there is more to yoga than meets the eye. Whether yoga can trigger some unknown psychospiritual, physiological response, or whether changes are produced spiritistically, or both, few can deny yoga is a powerful spiritual discipline that has been used for millennia to secure occult, pagan goals. As we proceed, we will better understand the reasons for this.

**Notes:**

1. Ann Hill, ed., *A Visual Encyclopedia of Unconventional Medicine*, New York: Crown Publishers, 1979, p. 223.
2. Brian Inglis, Ruth West, *The Alternative Health Guide*, New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1983, p. 143.
3. Stan and Christina Grof, "Spiritual Emergencies," *Yoga Journal*, July-August 1984, p. 40.
4. Stanislav Grof, Christina Grof (eds), *Spiritual Emergency*, Los Angeles, CA: J. P. Tarcher, 1989.
5. Grof, *Yoga Journal*, p. 41.
6. cf. Grof, *Spiritual Emergency*, p. 227.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 77-97.
8. John Ankerberg, John Weldon, *The Coming Darkness: Confronting Occult Deception*, Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1993.

## New Age Authors

Mr. Gary Kah  
Mr. Craig Branch  
Dr. John Weldon  
Dr. John Ankerberg

## Gimmie Yoga, a Burger and Fries

This week I had yet another new shock to the system. While standing in line to order a Number 3 meal at the local McDonalds®, I noticed an interesting new promotion that is taking place. They now have Adult Happy Meal. This is pretty cool because the kids always got some pretty neat toys. The adult meal also comes with a prize, but I was kind of shocked when I found out what it is ... a DVD on Yoga.

Well on my bag for my Big Mac®, I found a handy URL telling me more about this and I checked it out. Here is what they say...

15 Minutes of Sane Feeling stressed? Try Yoga. It helps relax the mind and rejuvenate the body and spirit. Plus, it's great for improving flexibility.

Your exclusive McDonald's® Yourself!Fitness® Yoga DVD offers four different 15 minute workouts to help improve your mood and your energy level. You can customize your Yoga workout by choosing a language, difficulty level and your area of focus—flexibility, stress relief, balance or strength.

The eastern thought of New Age mentality is not only entering the burger joints of America, but it has made a strong entrenchment in a place not as suspecting ... our churches today. **Read entire article by Ray Gano of Prophezine.**

<http://www.lighthouse trailsresearch.com/ganomcdonaldsarticle.htm>

## Gimmie Yoga, a Burger and Fries

By Ray Gano

This week I had yet another new shock to the system. While standing in line to order a Number 3 meal at the local McDonalds. I noticed an interesting new promotion that is taking place. They now have Adult Happy Meal. This is pretty cool because the kids always got some pretty neat toys. The adult meal also comes with a prize, but I was kind of shocked when I found out what it is a DVD on Yoga.

Well on my bag for my Big Mac, I found a handy URL telling me more about this and I checked it out.

Here is what they say:

### 15 Minutes of Sane

Feeling stressed? Try Yoga. It helps relax the mind and rejuvenate the body and spirit. Plus, it's great for improving flexibility.

Your exclusive McDonald's Yourself!Fitness Yoga DVD offers four different 15 minute workouts to help improve your mood and your energy level. You can customize your Yoga workout by choosing a language, difficulty level and your area of focus flexibility, stress relief, balance or strength. (1)

The eastern thought of New Age mentality is not only entering the burger joints of America, but it has made a strong entrenchment in a place not as 'suspecting' our churches today.

**Christian yoga** - the marriage of the ancient practice of exercise, breathing techniques and meditation with Christian spirituality - is exploding in popularity. Organizations that certify Christian yoga instructors are seeing an increase in enrollment, and classes with an openly Christian focus are popping up in churches and studios across the country.

Christian yoga is also a thriving business. Boon will release a Holy Yoga DVD set later this year that has already been picked up for distribution by the Home Shopping Network and QVC. Yahweh Yoga plans to franchise throughout the Valley, co-founder DeAnna Smothers said. (2)

It amazes me today that so many New Age /eastern occultist practices are entering the church today under so many guises, and you know what; it isn't very hard either. All you have to do is slap the word 'Christian' on it and WHAMMO, its gotta be good and right with God, because it's 'CHRISTIAN'

I have been reading many of the sites that promote Christian yoga and they fight tooth and nail to make yoga seem ok.

The Outstretched philosophy is simple: we believe God will bless our sincere efforts at deepening a relationship with Him. He wants our fellowship and appreciates creative approaches to seeking His face. This is why Outstretched is dedicated to a Christ-centered pursuit of physical healing and spiritual growth through a practice of yoga.

This Christian approach to yoga simply allows us to combine these two essential goals: becoming physically healthy and spiritually healthy. We become more spiritually healthy through the yoga practice by calming our minds and quieting ourselves to the point that we can tune out the world's frequency and tune into God's frequency. (3)

### So what is Yoga?

The word YOGA means UNION, the union of the physical self with the spiritual self, a tricky concept to grasp. Yoga is one of the six fundamental systems of Indian thought collectively known as Darsana, it has its origins in pre Vedic times, the oldest record of Indian culture and in the view of some considered sources, believed to have arisen at the beginning of human civilization itself.

It was not until 200 B.C. (There is uncertainty surrounding this date) that it was organized into a system in the classic treatise The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali which, though only a brief text of ten pages, managed to embody the essence of practical wisdom, bearing witness to Patanjali's transcendence. (4)

You can do more research on the origins of Yoga, and they all say the same thing. It is a Hindu religious practice and is one of the ORTHODOX systems of Indian thought known as Darsana. In this research you will not find Moses bringing the practice down from a mountain top no matter how hard you look. Yoga is an eastern religion. These people pushing some sort of Christian form are strongly deceived.

### **East and West**

Isa 2:6 For You have abandoned Your people, the house of Jacob, Because they are filled with influences from the east, And they are soothsayers like the Philistines, And they strike bargains with the children of foreigners.

It is interesting to do a study on east vs. west. Because the sun rises in the east and light is often used as a metaphor for divine revelation, it is usually understood that God dwells in the east. But when you do a study on this, the east always represents the world, exile and turning away from God.

The Hebrew word for 'east' is qedum which literally means 'faceward' or 'frontward.'

**Qedem**, literally, "before"; for in describing the points of the compass the person faced the E. or sunrise (Greek anatolee, the E.), which was thus before or in front of him; the S. was on his right, and so is called in Hebrew "the right hand"; the N. was on his left, and so is called in Hebrew "the left hand." Job\_23:8-9, "forward," i.e. eastward; "backward," i.e. westward; "on the left hand," i.e. to the N.; "on the right hand," i.e. in the S. So the Hindus call the E. para, "before "; the W. apara, "behind "; the S. doschina, "the right hand"; the N. bama, "the left." Mizrach, "the sunrise," is used when the E. is distinguished from the W. (5)

In Gen 2:8 we read that God planted the garden 'toward the east in Eden.'

Gen 2:8 The LORD God planted a garden toward the east, in Eden; and there He placed the man whom He had formed. (NASB)

This means that God's presence was specifically located in the western part of the Garden and when he drove man out from before his face was in an eastwardly direction.

In Gen 3:24 we read that God placed cherubim at 'the east of the garden of Eden' to prevent man from returning west to the tree of life.

The placement of the tabernacle and the temple were also on an east - west setting. To enter into the holy of holies or come into the presence of God you entered from the east, going and facing west.

To travel eastward is to travel in the direction of exile and away from God. Is it not strange that we refer to the mystery religions as religions of the east? East is the direction of idolatry, exile and away from God.

In Ezekiel 8:16 we read the following:

Eze 8:16 And he brought me into the inner court of the LORD's house, and, behold, at the door of the temple of the LORD, between the porch and the altar, were about five and twenty men, with their backs toward the temple of the LORD, and their faces toward the east; and they worshiped the sun toward the east.

These men have their backs toward the temple and their faces toward the east. They purposefully turned their backs on God and with intent they faced eastward toward the sun; thus the way of false worship.

Here is how Albert Barnes Notes on the Bible state it.

In the temple the seat of the Divine Majesty was at the west, appointed for this very purpose, to guard against the idolatrous adoration of the rising sun. Therefore the idolatrous priests must in worshipping the false sun-god turn their backs upon the True. The worship of the heavenly bodies was one of the earliest forms of idolatry Job 31:26-27 and was expressly forbidden in the Law Deu 17:3. (6)

What we are seeing in our churches is a turning away from the west and the holiness of the Lord and turning towards the false teaching and deception of the east.

In order to understand where New Ageres / eastern occultists are coming from we must understand the heart of the movement. It is pretty simple to sum up. The god of the New Age / eastern occultism is one where all is god and all is one. So not only are we part of the all, the New Ageres / eastern occultists believe that we are also god. It is a form of monism and pantheism all rolled up into a nice anything goes package. So with that said; god is good and bad, light and dark, male and female, salt and pepper. The New Age god is an impersonal god, that is because every rock, stick, flower, bug, person sitting next to you is all part of god and is god.

The God of the Bible though is a loving caring personal God. He sent his son Jesus to die on the cross for us and to atone for our sins.

Here is what God's Word says:

Joh 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Rom 3:23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

Rev 3:20 Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

I would encourage you to not delay in receiving Christ as your Savior today if you have not already done so. He died for your sins, and rose from the dead. He offers you eternal life, but that's your choice to make. I hope you will consider doing that today.

#### **Sinners Prayer:**

Father in Heaven, I know that I am a sinner in need of a savior. I need your forgiveness through Jesus Christ who died on the cross just for me to cover the sins that I have committed against you. Please forgive me of my sins and come into my heart. I want to live for you Lord Jesus and from this day forward be known as a Child of God. Thank you for forgiving my sins and coming into my life, in Jesus' wonderful name. Amen

If you are a Christian, but have fallen away from the Lord, come back to Him. Our Heavenly Father is a good and loving Father. Just ask and commune with Him. You see, He never left your side, we just left Him. Reach out and renew your relationship with Jesus Christ our Savior today.

I also ask that if you know someone who would benefit from this article, please freely share it with them. You can print out a copy of this article at <http://www.prophezine.com>. If you are an owner of a website, please feel free to post this article to your site. I also ask that you do not edit this document in anyway by adding to or taking away from.

If I can be of any help in answering any questions, please contact me at [ray.gano@prophezine.com](mailto:ray.gano@prophezine.com)

#### **About the Author:**

Ray & Tracye Gano are the Executive Directors of Prophezine. Prophezine deals with Bible Prophecy and World Events from a Pre-trib, pre-millennial, dispensationalist stand point. They currently serve close to 20,000+ (and growing) people world wide with a weekly newsletter, daily news updates, community based website and internet radio show. Please visit Prophezine by going to <http://www.prophezine.com>

#### **Endnotes**

1 - <http://mcdonalds3.promotions.com/yourselffitness/page.do?page=yoga.html>

2- <http://www.azcentral.com/community/ahwatukee/articles/0928ar-christianityoga28-ON.html#>

3- <http://www.christianyoga.us/home.htm>

4 - [http://www.omshop.com/aboutyoga\\_origin.asp](http://www.omshop.com/aboutyoga_origin.asp)

5 – Fausett's Bible Dictionary

6- Barnes Notes on the Bible

---

## Yoga - Helping to Unite the World's Religions

"Jacobs teaches meditation Judeo-Christian-style and minimizes the more overtly Hindu aspects of yoga in his classes—not to accommodate his Catholicism so much as to accent his universalism. 'I honor the Hindu path, the Buddhist path, the Sufi path,' he states with Midwestern matter-of-factness. 'I do not think that Christians have a monopoly on paradise.'—

**A Look at Yoga and Religious Belief By Alan Reder**

[http://www.yogajournal.com/views/309\\_1.cfm](http://www.yogajournal.com/views/309_1.cfm)

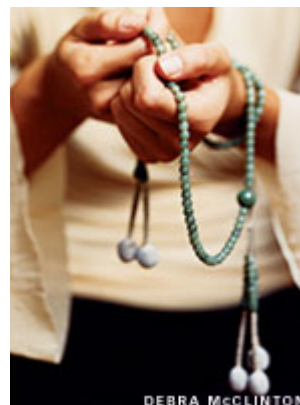
### Firsthand: A Look at Yoga and Religious Belief

**A Buddhist, a Christian, a Jew, and a Muslim share how they blend yoga with their religious beliefs.**

*By Alan Reder*

***Andrea Cohen-Keiner***

Andrea Cohen-Keiner, 47, of West Hartford, Connecticut, wandered into her first yoga class in the 1970s, seeking to quench a spiritual thirst that typified much of her baby boom generation. But unlike many young seekers of that time, she hadn't cut the last thread to the religion of her youth. Raised as a Conservative Jew, she first learned yoga on campus at the University of Minnesota where she was an undergraduate. When she did the Hindu mantra meditation that closed the class, a little voice inside would nudge her about the Torah's law against idolatry. For Jews, idolatry means worship of anything besides the One God. "I, of course, had no idea what [the mantra] was saying, and I did kind of look around and say, 'Is there a blue elephant in here somewhere?'" she laughs.



Cohen-Keiner practiced her yoga only casually in those days and strayed far enough from her family's religion to explore Christian mysticism among other sacred traditions. Today both Judaism and yoga play a much more prominent role in her life. In July, 2000, she was ordained as a rabbi in the Jewish Renewal Movement, a sort of grassroots Judaism with a coterie of socially progressive and spiritually inquisitive leaders like Cohen-Keiner. For the past six years, she has also studied yoga with M'eshyah Albert, a teacher at Elat Chayyim (a Jewish Renewal retreat center in the Catskills) who integrates yoga with Judaism.

"The mythic stories of the Hindu tradition probably do look like idol worship to traditional Jewish eyes," she says, "but here's how I understand it: I believe that God is oneness. So that ultimately all the filters we look at that ultimate reality through are nothing more than creations of our mind. Those creations don't limit the Creator."

#### ***Anna Douglas***

When it comes to blending her yoga and her Buddhism, Anna Douglas feels it's simply a matter of getting one's priorities straight. "My Buddhist practice is primary," she says. "I see yoga as a support for that, so I've never gone into the philosophical implications of yoga. I've only used it as a physical and energetic discipline."

But Douglas, who lives in Fairfax, California, is clear that yoga helps her be both a better Buddhist and a more comfortable one. She discovered early on that unblocking her body with yoga deepened her meditation by unblocking her mind. She also found that her yoga-flexed body stood up better to the

physical discipline of meditation, especially on three-month retreats. A teacher at Spirit Rock, the prominent vipassana meditation center in Woodacre, California, she took her discoveries public in 1990, developing a Friday morning class that combines yoga and meditation Douglas-style. "It's too hard for the average American to go right to sitting still," she says. "Yoga helps them relax, helps them connect with the body, helps the body itself to open energetically. Plus, the energy that comes up in yoga teaches people to handle the increased levels of energy from *samadhi* (heightened awareness). Learning how to handle *samadhi* is a big part of meditation practice."

Raised as a Presbyterian, Douglas, 60, began pulling away from her family religion at the age of 8. "I asked the minister 'Who wrote the Bible?' and I could tell it upset him," she recalls. "I began to wonder about the whole deal." She started doing yoga in 1973 in Berkeley, California, after moving from New York a few years before. A doctoral intern in psychology at the time, she was counseling high-risk clients who were pushing her own stress to risky levels. When a friend suggested yoga for some relief, she tried a class in her neighborhood, got what she came for, and has been doing it ever since. She got her toes wet in Buddhism after meeting a Tibetan Buddhist monk whose fathomless presence made her profoundly curious. After a rigorous tour through Zen, she attended a vipassana retreat led by American teachers Jack Kornfield and Joseph Goldstein. Hearing the Dharma from people of her own culture and age group made all the difference. Mindfulness meditation became her spiritual practice. Now, it's her career.

So, Buddha-like, Douglas waves off supposed clashes like the Hindu chanting in yoga class. "I just allow the experience to be felt and don't worry about the rest," she smiles.

### ***John Monastra***

John Monastra, who converted to Islam in 1984, prays to Allah five times a day as commanded in the Koran. He also fasts for the 30 days of Ramadan and, with his family, has already made his *Hajj* (pilgrimage) to Mecca, required of all Muslims once in their lifetime. Clearly Monastra does not do things halfway. So when he says that Islam and his yoga practice complement each other beautifully, you know he's considered the matter with great care.

"The essence of all religions is to devote your whole being to God, even in the midst of worldly life," notes Monastra, 41, a library science data analyst in Herndon, Virginia. "Islam gets us to do that by having us pray five times a day and otherwise remind ourselves of the presence of God. As Patanjali says, yoga is the stilling of fluctuations in consciousness to concentrate on the object of concentration. For a religious person, that's God."

A Sicilian-American, Monastra drifted away from his family's Catholicism when he started college and tried on a succession of spiritual traditions for size, including yoga. While in graduate school in international studies, he befriended a number of Muslim students from other countries. Impressed by their "refined courtesy," he suspected that their gracious demeanor was based in their religion. Recently divorced and ready for a new life, he began reading the Koran and it called out to his heart. Before long, he found himself formally converting at a mosque.

In 1998 Monastra also resumed serious yoga practice. To his mind, yoga is not an outside interest; it serves his faith completely. "You become a better person by having your body in good shape, your breathing and your mind all integrated together," Monastra observes. And he applies the mantra meditation techniques he learned in yoga after every daily prayer. In the Sufi tradition that Monastra follows, one sits for a while after praying, feeling oneself in the sacred presence and invoking the name of God. Monastra does this semi-yogically by substituting "Allah" for a Sanskrit mantra and doing yogic breathing. "I don't think of yoga as a religion," he says. "I think of it as a technique that helps anybody do their own religion better."

### ***Tom Jacobs***

Tom Jacobs was only 6 when a defining moment at his Catholic school in Atchison, Kansas, started him down a more inclusive spiritual path—one that would eventually encompass yoga. In Jacobs' religion class, a nun asserted that only Catholics could be admitted to Heaven. Jacobs was horrified. Although mom qualified for a blessed afterlife, his Jewish dad was doomed. At dinner that night, Jacobs was inconsolable. He finally told his parents what was bothering him; as the words spilled out, they sounded utterly wrong-headed to him. "The nun's teaching," he recalls, "didn't feel like the mind of God."

Jacobs, 46, is quick to note that the Second Vatican Council in the mid-'60s broadened the Church's attitude toward salvation to include even non-Christians. And he still largely practices his Christianity as a Catholic because he was raised as one and "it's in my blood." Indeed, for four years in the early '80s, he served as a Benedictine monk, although he left the order before taking final vows. But his own ecumenicism preceded the Church's. In part, that's because his parents were of different faiths, he says. Just as important, however, were the lessons he pulled from the life of Jesus: "Jesus was a man for all peoples, with no distinctions. And as a Jew, he taught that people should stretch beyond the rules, make it a connection from your heart."

Jacobs first studied yoga with a teacher at a spiritual retreat community where he lived from 1976 to 1977. He began teaching it in 1989 in Kansas City. He currently lives in nearby Drexel, Missouri. Besides his yoga classes, he also makes his living today by leading meditation workshops and performing as a singer-songwriter. To his mind, all his work serves the same end and underscores the reason he left the monastery: "I realized I didn't need to be a monk to minister to people." Indeed, his yoga students jokingly call the relaxation period at the end of class when he talks about how yoga relates to daily life, "The Sermon on the Mats."

Jacobs teaches meditation Judeo-Christian-style and minimizes the more overtly Hindu aspects of yoga in his classes—not to accommodate his Catholicism so much as to accent his universalism. "I honor the Hindu path, the Buddhist path, the Sufi path," he states with Midwestern matter-of-factness. "I do not think that Christians have a monopoly on paradise."

March/April 2001

### Can We Separate the Exercise From the Philosophy?

"There is a common misconception in the West that hatha-yoga, one of about ten forms of Yoga that supposedly leads to self-realization, is merely a neutral form of exercise, a soothing and effective alternative for those who abhor jogging and calisthenics ...

"[However], Hatha-yoga is 'one of the six recognized systems of orthodox Hinduism' and is at its roots religious and mystical. It is also one of the most difficult and potentially dangerous [spiritually] forms of Yoga. "The term hatha is derived from the verb hath, which means 'to oppress.'... What the practice of hatha-yoga is designed to do is suppress the flow of psychic energies through these channels ["symbolic, or psychic, passages on either side of the spinal column"], thereby forcing the 'serpent power' or the kundalini force to rise through the central psychic channel in the spine (the sushumna) and up through the chakras, the supposed psychic centers of human personality and power. Westerners mistakenly believe that one can practice hatha-yoga apart from the philosophical and religious beliefs that undergrid it. This is an absolutely false belief. ...

"You cannot separate the exercises from the philosophy. ... 'The movements themselves become a form of meditation.' The continued practice of the exercises will, whether you ... intend it or not, eventually influence you toward an Eastern/mystical perspective. That is what it is meant to do! ... There is, by definition, no such thing as 'neutral' Yoga" —**Johanna Michaelsen, Like Lambs to the Slaughter, pp. 93-95).**

\*\*\*\*\*