




IS
yoga
A SIN?

ERIC WILSON



Many Christians are against yoga because they believe that yoga is demonic and, therefore, that yoga and Christianity do not mix. Is yoga a sin? Is there such a thing as “Christian” yoga.

Read on to learn the truth about yoga and Christianity.

BUT I FEAR LEST BY ANY MEANS,
JUST AS THE SERPENT BEGUILDED
EVE THROUGH HIS SUBTILTY,
SO YOUR MINDS SHOULD
BE CORRUPTED FROM THE
SIMPLICITY* THAT IS IN CHRIST.

(2 CORINTHIANS 11:3)

***Simplicity** G572, G573

singleness
union
folded together as one
clear



For more information, see the series
The Rise of Eastern Mysticism.



Today, the practice of yoga is being promoted as “a way” to achieve improved strength, flexibility and coordination, as well as to relieve stress and improve relaxation. Along with these physical benefits the modern media is also praising this ancient Hindu practice for its reported claims of promoting emotional and mental well-being. But is this the truth? Is this yoga’s real purpose?

CAN YOGA BE UNYOKED FROM ITS SPIRITUAL FOUNDATION?

Many Bible-believing Christians, as well as pastors such as John MacArthur and Robert A. Mohler, (Southern Baptist Seminary president), have raised questions of yoga’s compatibility with Biblical Christianity. The question is, “Can a follower of the Lord (Sovereign King) Jesus Christ actually practice and enjoy the physical benefits of this ancient mystical art, without also opening the door of their lives to yoga’s eastern spiritual roots and influences?”

During an interview with Mike Galanos from CNN and emergent church leader Doug Pagitt, Pastor John MacArthur responded to growing questions concerning the true spiritual nature of yoga, and the danger of seeking to blend the teachings of the Bible with the philosophies and practice of this ancient eastern art.

Said MacArthur:

Well, let me just respond to what I've been hearing. That doesn't sound anything like Christianity. If you want a whole life, if you want your life to be what it should be, you don't put yourself in some weird physical position, empty your mind, center on yourself and try to relieve your stress.

You go to the Word of God, to the gospel of Jesus Christ; you embrace in faith the sacrifice of Christ in His death and resurrection as your Savior and Redeemer. God comes, regenerates you, transforms your life, makes you a new creation, and you're saved and you're on your way to heaven. And then you can live a life of peace and joy. That's the promise of the gospel. There is no contribution made to that by any physical position . . . or any kind of meditation.¹

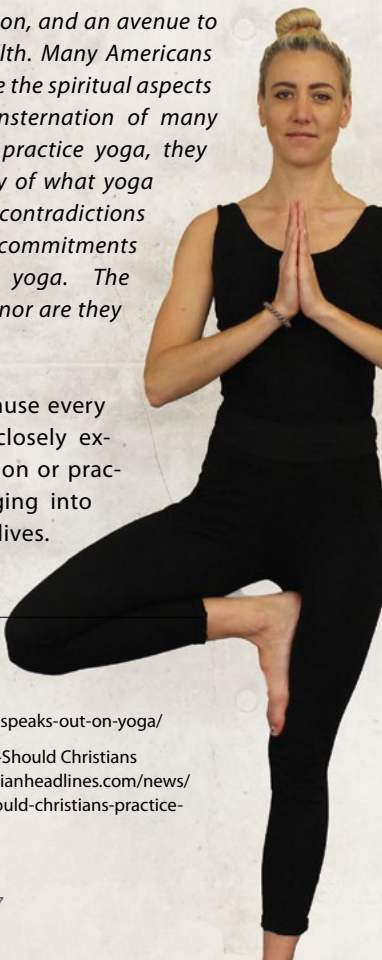
In another article written by Southern Baptist Seminary President Robert A. Mohler, he stated that,



Americans have turned yoga into an exercise ritual, a means of focusing attention, and an avenue to longer life and greater health. Many Americans attempt to deny or minimize the spiritual aspects of yoga—to the great consternation of many in India. When Christians practice yoga, they must either deny the reality of what yoga represents or fail to see the contradictions between their Christian commitments and their embrace of yoga. The contradictions are not few, nor are they peripheral.²

Statements like this should cause every Bible-believing Christian to closely examine the roots of any tradition or practice that they consider bringing into their church and their family's lives.

1. John MacArthur Speaks Out on Yoga, *Seminarian* blog. <https://seminarian.wordpress.com/2007/09/12/john-macarthur-speaks-out-on-yoga/>
2. Albert Mohler, "The Subtle Body—Should Christians Practice Yoga?" <https://www.christianheadlines.com/news/the-subtle-body-%E2%80%94-should-christians-practice-yoga-11638328.html>



WHAT IS THE ESSENCE OF YOGA?

So what do the Hindu gurus and scholars of India actually believe about the art they call yoga?

According to the ancient Hindu texts, the practice of yoga is not simply a form of stretching and exercise, but rather, it is the very physical act of worship and invocation of the Hindu gods.

The first written accounts of the spiritual processes of yoga are found in the Vedas. The Vedas (spiritual knowledge) are to Hinduism what the Bible is to Christianity or the Koran to those of the religion of Islam.

The process of “yoking” to the spiritual defines the content of the Vedas. Before the word “yoga” was used, the word yajna was (and still is) used to denote the practice of spiritual disciplines. Yajna translates into “sacrifice,” and the Latin meaning of “sacrifice” is “sacred doing.”

Sacred doing or spiritual practice is yoga—indeed the essence of all religion/spirituality.³

3. “What is Real Yoga?”
<https://www.classicalyoga.org/what-is-real-yoga>

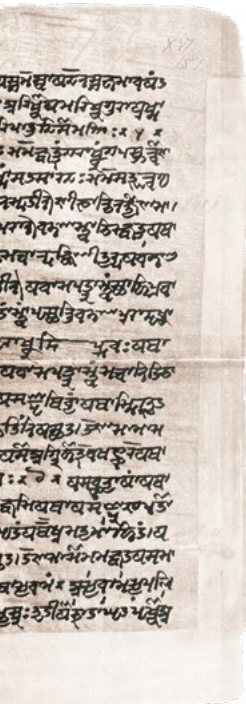
Yoga is an integral part of the Hindu religion. There is a saying: There is no Yoga without Hinduism and no Hinduism without Yoga. The country of origin of Yoga is undoubtedly India, where for many hundreds of years it has been a part of man's activities directed towards higher spiritual achievements. The Yoga Philosophy is peculiar to the Hindus, and no trace of it is found in any other nation, ancient or modern.⁴

TEMPLE OF THE LIVING GOD

The Scriptures assure us, that “our bodies are the temple of the living God” (2 Corinthians 6:14-18) and it is our solemn duty to protect and keep His temple in the very best physical condition so that we might glorify our Father in heaven and serve Him effectively in sharing the glad tidings of Christ Jesus, and the last message of mercy to our world.

That old serpent, called the Devil and Satan, is seeking to counterfeit God's great work in preparing a people to stand in the last great struggle between the powers of light and darkness. The great deceiver has introduced his own methods of health and healing and these he has subtly woven together into the fabric of eastern pagan spirituality.

4. “Yoga and Hindu Philosophy”
http://www.hinduwisdom.info/Yoga_and_Hindu_Philosophy.htm”



Vedas - ancient texts

Yoga and Ayurveda are so closely related they are often looked at as two sides of one coin. In fact, Ayurveda is the healing side of Yoga, and Yoga is the spiritual side of Ayurveda. Together they encompass a complete approach to the well-being of the body, the mind, and the spirit.⁵

The knowledge of Ayurveda has its roots in the Vedas, the sacred texts of India from which many spiritual philosophies and religions have sprung. These include Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Yoga and others.

It is a science not only of the physical body, but it goes beyond into the understanding of consciousness itself... Ayurveda's sister, Yoga, is quite well known for its physical stretching exercises. Yoga is actually much more than this—it is a complete science and philosophy leading to enlightenment.⁶

5. Marc Halpern, "Yoga and Ayurveda: Two Sides of One Coin" <https://www.ayurvedacollege.com/...>
6. Marc Halpern, "Ayurveda, Spirituality and Meditation" <https://www.ayurvedacollege.com/...>

KNOWING GOD VS. SATANIC ENLIGHTENMENT

What is this “enlightenment” which the teachers and gurus of yoga offer to our modern world? It is verily that same poison which was whispered by the serpent (Revelation 12:9) to the mother of the human race in Eden, so long ago.

And he (the serpent) said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? . . . Ye shall not surely die (the wages of sin is not surely death) . . . (but) your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing both good and evil.” (Genesis 3:1-5; see also John 17:3.)

In partaking of that fruit of the forbidden tree, Adam and his wife Eve yielded the dominion that had been given them of the Lord our God, and became servants of Satan and of sin. When we surrender our will to God, and in faith we eat the Words of our Lord Jesus Christ, we are made free and become servants of righteousness and life! (See John 6:27-58 and 6:63.)

The “knowing good and evil” is a union with one or the other of the two powers that are contending for supremacy in this world. For our Saviour tells us, that “This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent” (John 17:3).

Today, through the channel of Eastern mysticism and yoga, Satan is seeking to bind those who profess the name of Christ Jesus, to himself. For he knows that “to whom we yield ourselves as servants to obey; his servants (slaves) we are, to whom ye choose to obey” (Romans 6:16).

Yoga means union with God, or, union of the little, ego-self with the divine Self, the infinite Spirit. Most people in the West, and also many in India, confuse yoga with Hatha Yoga, the system of bodily postures. But yoga is primarily a spiritual discipline. . . .

Hatha Yoga is the physical branch of Raja Yoga, the true science of yoga. Raja Yoga is a system of meditation techniques that help to harmonize human consciousness with the divine consciousness. . . . Yoga teaches how, through breath-control, to still the mind and attain higher states of awareness.

The higher teachings of yoga take one beyond techniques, and show the yogi, or yoga practitioner, how to direct his energy in such a way as not only to harmonize human with divine consciousness, but to merge his consciousness in the Infinite.⁷

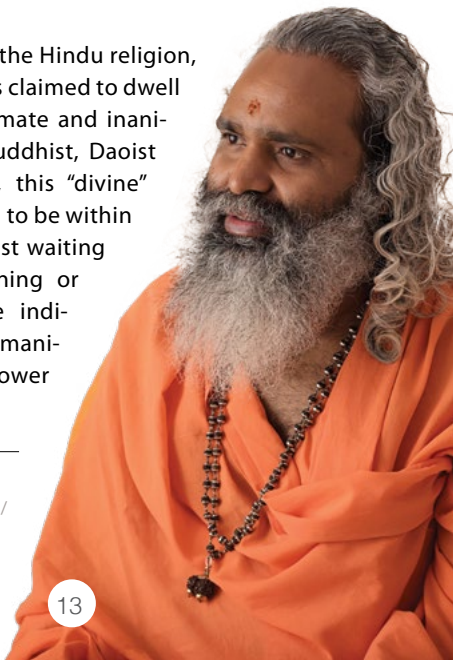
What is the divine or Infinite Consciousness which the Yoga gurus and practitioners seek to be unified with?

SATAN'S COUNTERFEIT: "DIVINE" UNION

Hinduism without apology, is both a polytheistic and *pantheistic* religion; one that worships many avatars or manifestations of what they call "god," the "divine" universal force or consciousness. And each of these manifestations is said to be but a different aspect of that one and self-same pagan deity that the Hindus call *Brahma, Krishna, Vishnu, and Shiva*.

To those who practice the Hindu religion, this pantheistic "god" is claimed to dwell in all things, both animate and inanimate. According to Buddhist, Daoist and Hindu teachings, this "divine" force or "energy" is said to be within every human being, just waiting for a spiritual awakening or enlightenment in the individual so that it may manifest its presence and power in the person's life.

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7. "What is Yoga?"
<https://www.ananda.org/meditation/meditation-support/articles/what-is-yoga/>



Deepak Chopra, a once-popular guest on the Oprah Winfrey Show, and one of our modern culture's more popular Hindu advocates, describes this religious philosophy, in these words:

Thus the Divine pervades the entire universe as well as human beings, and every person has divinity within himself or herself. Chopra writes, "We remain unfulfilled unless we nurture the seeds of divinity inside us. In reality we are divinity in disguise, and the gods and goddesses in embryo that are contained within us seek to be fully materialized."⁸

This mystical awakening or enlightenment is said to be achieved only through the correct practice of certain Eastern meditations and physical disciplines that open the mind to a "mystical experience" under the strict guidance of a guru or master.

We have been admonished of the spiritual dangers of pantheism, and its subtle deception within the Christian churches just prior to our Saviour's return by a Christian author.

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8. Deepak Chopra, *Seven Spiritual Laws of Success*, (Oakland: New World Library, 1994) 3.
 9. Ellen White, *The Ministry of Healing*, Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1905.

Today there are coming into educational institutions and into the churches everywhere spiritualistic teachings that undermine faith in God and in His Word. The theory that God is an essence pervading all nature is received by many who profess to believe the Scriptures; but however beautifully clothed, this theory is a most dangerous deception.

It misrepresents God and is a dishonor to His greatness and majesty. And it surely tends not only to mislead, but to debase men. Darkness is its element, sensuality its sphere. The result of accepting it is separation from God. And to fallen human nature this means ruin.⁹



Deepak Chopra & Oprah

If God is an essence pervading all nature (pantheism), then He dwells in all men; and in order to attain holiness, man has only to develop the power that is within himself.

These theories, followed to their logical conclusion, sweep away the whole Christian economy. They do away with the necessity for the atonement (John 17:21) and make man his own savior. These theories regarding God make His Word of no effect (2 Peter 1:4), and those who accept them are in great danger of being led finally to look upon the whole Bible as a fiction."¹⁰

Today, these Eastern spiritualistic theories are being heavily promoted through popular media, literature and the arts. And through the teachings of Spiritual Formation and many of the Emergent Church leaders, the subtle whisper of the serpent is being heard once again within the house of God.

10. Ellen White, *Counsels for the Church*, Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1991.



A MOST SUBTLE DECEPTION

The Scriptures assure us that ...

The earnest expectation of all of creation is waiting for the manifestation of the sons and daughters (begotten children) of God. (Romans 8:16-19)

That union with the Divine, which Satan is using to tempt mankind through Eastern mysticism and yoga, has already been assured to each of us by faith in and surrender to God's life-giving Word. For the apostle John, foreseeing the revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ in the clouds of heaven and glory, tells of those men and women who by living faith shall become partakers of the Divine nature (2 Peter 1:4). These sanctified saints, perfectly reflecting the character of our Creator, shall live and walk in our Saviour's complete victory over every sin and over death.

Whosoever is born (begotten) of God doth not commit sin; for God's Seed (Luke 8:11 and Galatians 3:16) remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

(1 John 3:9)

Of His own will begat He us, with the Word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.

(James 1:18)

Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.

(1 Peter 1:23)

And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. (1 John 5:4)

Whatever reasons Christians may give for participating in yoga—relaxation, exercise, improved coordination, etc.—we should keep in mind that yoga's true purpose is union with a divine spirit, that is, with Christ's enemy. Are any of yoga's physical benefits worth risking eternal life over? **AD**



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