

Yoga-Relaxation or Occult?

Adapted by Linda Fimbres from an Internet Article

Yoga is from the Sankrit word *Yug*, meaning "union" (with the Divine, your higher "SELF"). Yoga is a path for transcending the ordinary mind (who you think you are) in order to merge with your "higher SELF" or "God SELF." Yoga means "to yoke" -- to yoke with Brahman (i.e., the "Infinite," the "Universal Spirit," the impersonal force that the Hindus call "God") via the realization of an altered state of consciousness, thereby theoretically releasing oneself from the bondage of endless reincarnation. Yoga comes out of the Hindu Vedas. It can be traced back to Patanjali, who was a religious leader. Shiva, one of Hinduism's three most powerful gods, was known as, "The Destroyer." He's called Yogi Swara or the "Lord of Yoga." Yoga has its roots deeply embedded in Hinduism.

Consider the following portion of an article from a secular newspaper:

"It is estimated that there are 10,000 yoga teachers in the United States, who teach between 4 and 5 million students a week. Yoga is a program that involves conscious stretching, deliberate movements, and controlled breathing and relaxation exercises. Its purpose is to develop strength, flexibility, balance, body alignment, body awareness, muscular balance, calmness and controlled breathing. Yoga originated from a school of thought in the Hindu religion, which suggests that postures can isolate the soul from the body and the mind.

"In the Western world, yoga is used mainly as a form of exercise. Yoga comes from the original Sanskrit word, 'yoga,' which means 'to join.' Yoga means to join body, mind and breath; to get them to work together in harmony [This is a lie!]. It's very gentle, slow and meditative; but it requires concentration. Yoga instructors say they have received a handful of complaints from people who believe yoga is intertwined with mysticism and the occult. [We] acknowledge that yoga does indeed come from a portion of India's Hindu religion, but [our] classes deal mainly with the physical aspects of yoga, and do not in any way coerce people to become involved in Eastern religion" [another lie]. (Source: *The Bloomington Herald-Times*, 1991.) (Emphasis added.)

Sadly, even professing Christians have bought into this lie. Every Yoga teacher is, in effect, a Hindu or Buddhist missionary, even though he or she may wear a cross, insist that Jesus was a great Yogi, and protest that Yoga is not a religion, but science. This is the most blatant of lies. Yet it has been so widely proclaimed and believed that in America's public schools, beginning in kindergarten and in almost every other area of society today, Yoga and other forms of Hindu-Buddhist occultism are taught and accepted as science. In contrast, Christianity has been thrown out of the schools and is being crowded out of every other area of life in the 'broad-minded' move to replace religion with the New Age 'science'!" (Source: *Peace, Prosperity, and the Coming Holocaust*, p. 147.)

Yoga is clearly a New Age Concept that is deeply religious and pantheistic in its origin. It is widely practiced and supported by New Age proponents. The New Age movement denies the reality of sin and total depravity, and believes that man is generally good and is divine. They teach that there is a god within us, and we are to harness that and develop it through meditation and other metaphysical techniques. They teach that the only thing people need is enlightenment regarding their divinity. They believe that through reincarnation man is reunited with God. They believe in *karma*, which is a debt one owes because of his previous life. They also believe and teach the evolution of man as opposed to the Creation that is taught in the Bible. Yoga is also associated with imagery, visualization, hypnosis, mind magic, chanting of

mantra, positive thinking, and Silva mind techniques, which are not only unbiblical, but are potentially dangerous. When practiced by professing believers, it allows a certain external spiritual influence in our lives, which is inconsistent with, and disallowed (2 Cor. 6:14-18), in the teachings of the Holy Scriptures (2 Cor. 4:4).

The practice of Yoga is pagan at best, and occultic at worse. Its teachings emanate from the Eastern religions, all of which teach that *self* is God, only we just don't realize it:

I maintain that "Christian yoga" is an oxymoron, says Jan Markell of Olive Tree Ministries, and she is right.

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. So if you want to get closer to Krishna or Buddha, go ahead, but you won't get closer to the God of the Bible by altering your consciousness and stretching.

Author Dave Hunt has written "Yoga and the Body of Christ" soundly denouncing this practice. While the promoters of Christian yoga insist it will get a person closer to God, Hunt rightly insists that it is a spiritually dangerous practice designed to expose people to demonic influence. Hunt says, "Many practitioners view its teachings as a means of seeking higher states of consciousness, being, and 'enlightenment . . . ' " Hunt says, "Don't get into things that were designed for self-realization and to help you realize that 'you are God.' "

There is no way to modify yoga and make it acceptable for Christians. Listen to one man explain what happened to him when he began to practice Yoga and the breathing techniques:

..."I was assailed by all sorts of perverse and defiling emotions. My body started to move, and went on like this in a confused sort of way.... After a time, my breathing changed, becoming disturbed. Sometimes my abdomen would swell with air, after which I would exhale it with great force. Often the breath that I took in would be held inside me. I became more and more frightened... my mind was sick with fear."..

God does not give us a spirit of fear, but of sound mind.

"The goal of Yoga is 'self-realization ' -- to look deeply within what ought to be the temple of the one true God and there to discover the alleged 'true Self' or 'higher Self' and declare self to be God. Nothing could be more religious than that, yet with straight faces all of the Yogis insist that practicing Yoga will not change anyone's religious beliefs. This is the religion of the Antichrist; and for the first time in history it is being widely practiced throughout the Western world as Transcendental Meditation and other forms of Yoga." (Source: *The Seduction of Christianity*, p. 54.)

Yoga calls itself *science*. "By calling itself *science*, Yoga (which is the very heart of Hinduism) has within the last [30] years become an integral part of Western society, where it is taught in nearly every YMCA or YWCA, in clubs, in public schools, in industry, and in many churches. Dressed in Western clothes, Yoga has gained acceptance in medicine, psychology, education,

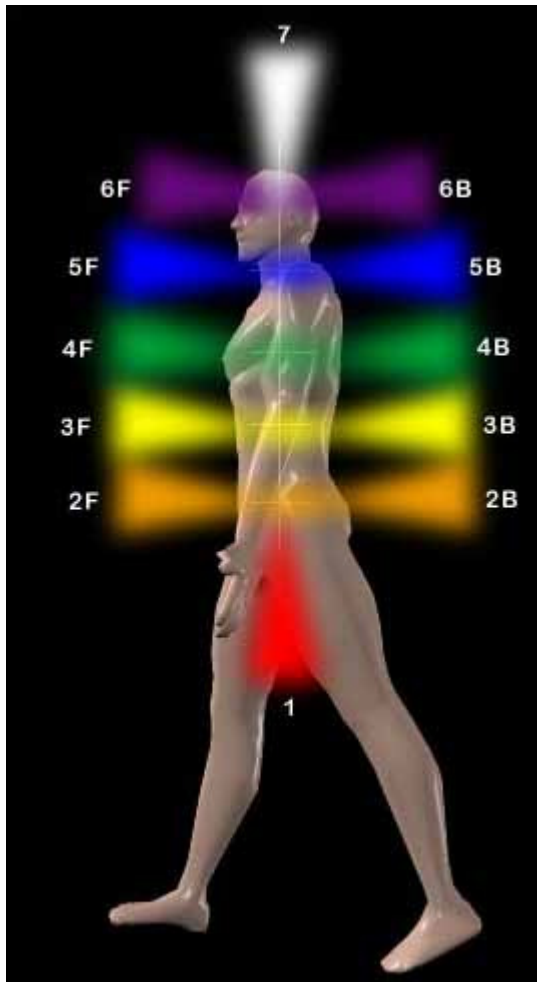
and religion under such euphemisms as 'centering,' 'relaxation therapy,' 'self-hypnosis,' and 'creative visualization.' Yoga is designed to lead to the 'realization' of one's true 'godhood' through an inward meditative journey that finally locates the ultimate source of everything within the human psyche." (Source: *The Seduction of Christianity*, p. 110.)

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." 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. Tantra is also the basis for tantric sex and the Kama Sutra.

Hatha-yoga is a popular form of Yoga practiced today by those looking for a form of relaxation and non-strenuous exercise. Johanna Michaelsen, however, correctly discerns:

"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 [spiritually] dangerous forms of Yoga.

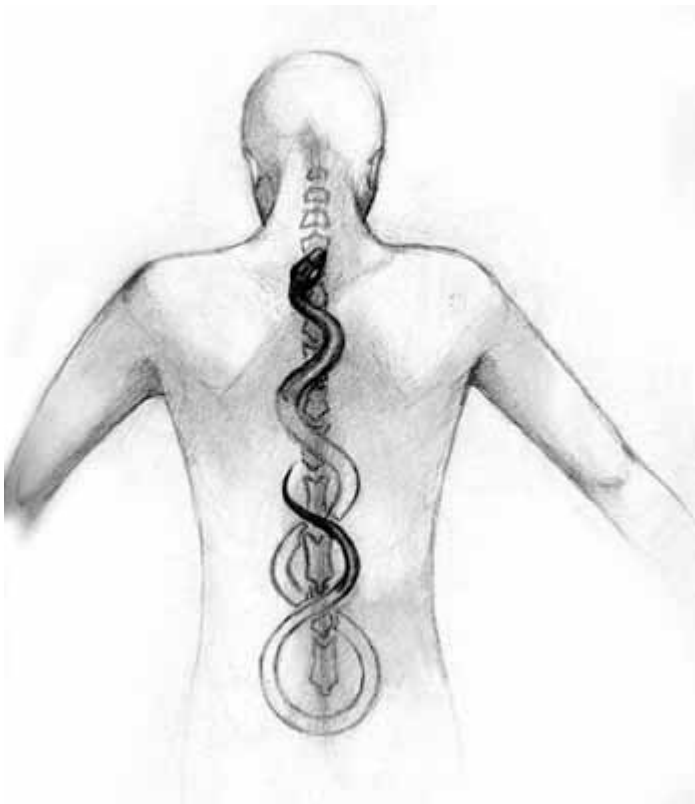
"The term *hatha* is derived from the verb *hath*, which means 'to oppress.'... What the practice of hatha-yoga is designed to do is suppress the flow of psychic energies through these channels ["symbolic, or psychic passages on either side of the spinal column"], thereby forcing the 'serpent power' 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 undergird 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" (*Like Lambs to the Slaughter*, pp. 93-95). (Last emphasis added.)



Chakra means *Wheel* in Sanskrit. The body has spinning energy centers that look like spinning wheels and are called, Chakras. They are linked to sound, light and color. To heal, is to bring the chakras into alignment and balance then understand the nature of creation and your purpose in it. The word comes from the Sanskrit "cakra" meaning "wheel, circle", and sometimes also referring to the "wheel of life". (Yoga is centered on chakra points)

In Hinduism and its spiritual systems of yoga and in some related eastern cultures, as well as in some segments of the New Age movement -- and to some degree the distinctly different New Thought movement - a chakra is thought to be an energy node in the human body.

The seven main chakras are described as being aligned in an ascending column from the base of the spine to the top of the head. Each chakra is associated with a certain color, multiple specific functions, an aspect of consciousness, a classical element, and other distinguishing characteristics.



Kundalini Spirit along the spine

Other types or brands of Yoga:

(a) Laya Yoga: Path of Universal Body -- In Laya Yoga, the Macrocosm (the Universe) is directly networked with the Microcosm (the human body). There are five centers (*chakras*, or "wheels") along the spine and one between the eyebrows that directly corresponds with some aspect of creation. These *chakras* are linked through an etheric channel along the spine. A primordial creative energy (*kundalini*) lies dormant at the base of the spine in the root *chakra*. The Laya Yogi (someone who practices Laya Yoga), through meditation and *Asanas* (posture exercises), will coax this *kundalini* energy into traveling up the channel through each *chakra* until it reaches its point of origin at the top of the skull. At that point, the yogi will have merged with the source of creation. If the yogi then chooses to reverse the process, the *kundalini* energy will travel back down the channel recharging each centre with an increased amount of *Prana* (life force energy). The result is that the yogi will then have more understanding of, and control over, all aspects of creation each time this process is done.

(b) Karma Yoga: Path of Selfless Action -- Action performed for the purpose of satisfying a desire has the effect of generating new desires that require additional actions. Addiction to pleasure (in any form) is a good example of this. Once the desire is satisfied, it generates more desire, which then needs to be satisfied *ad infinitum*. In Karma Yoga, one seeks to end this cycle by not being attached to the outcome of anything he does. Actions are thus performed based on what seems appropriate in a given situation. The person performing the action has no concern about whether the end result is "good" or "bad." Since the actions are not performed

for self-gratification, the person is free of them. As a result of not being attached to the outcome, a person can become completely involved in whatever he is doing. In this way, yogis seek to end the eternal cycle of death and rebirth.

(c) Jnana Yoga: Path of Transcendental Knowledge -- This type of yoga is geared toward those who have an intellectual curiosity, who like to reason and analyze. The ordinary mind can never know Ultimately and Absolutely. Therefore, the goal is for the ordinary mind to realize that and, thereby, get out of the way. In effect, one uses the ordinary mind to transcend the ordinary mind. Gradually the ordinary mind reveals its true nature to itself. In the "Who am I?" inquiry, as taught by the great Indian guru Ramana Maharshi, the mind's false identities are discounted one by one until it is exhausted. Once the mind has exhausted all its answers, then the higher Self may emerge.

(d) Bhakti Yoga: Path of Devotion -- Bhakti Yoga is considered the simplest of the Yogas. Bhakti is a practice of self-surrender for the purpose of eventually identifying with the source of love, or the higher Self. It is not unlike devotion and service associated with religion in the West. The yogi selects a Saint, Guru, or another figure to direct his devotional love. Every act in daily life is done to serve the beloved one. Visualizations and *mantras* are also part of Bhakti Yoga practice. The goal is to visualize the beloved one all the time. At first one may have a picture or representation to look at as the visualization skill is developed. A sound is repeated at the same time as the visualization. Although there are many words that can be selected, the sound of "GM" (A-U-M) is one anyone can use. This practice is especially suitable for people with intense emotional natures. Key words are: worship, devotion, self-surrender, visualization, and *mantra*.

(e) Raja Yoga: Path of Stillness -- In Raja Yoga, the goal is to quiet the mind through meditation where the attention is fixed on an object, *mantra*, or concept. Whenever the mind wanders, it is brought back to whatever is the object of concentration. In time, the mind will cease wandering and become completely still. A state of focused, uninterrupted concentration will occur. From this state, the yogi will eventually merge with the higher SELF.

(f) Kriya Yoga -- Babaji's Kriya Yoga is a scientific art of perfect God Truth union and Self-Realization. The great Master of India, Babaji Nagaraj, revived it as a synthesis of ancient teachings of the 18 Siddha tradition. Kriya Yoga claims to bring about an integrated transformation of the individual in all five planes of existence: physical, vital, mental, intellectual, and spiritual. It includes a series of 144 techniques or, "Kriyas," grouped into five phases, or branches.

1. Kriya Hatha Yoga: including "Asanas," physical postures of relaxation, "bandhas," muscular locks, and "mudras," gestures, all of which bring about greater health, peace, and the awakening of the principal energy centres, the "chakras." Babaji has selected a particularly effective series of 18 postures, which are taught in stages and in pairs. One cares for the physical body, not for its own sake, but as a vehicle or temple of the Divine (religious, not just an exercise).

2. Kriya Kundalini Pranayama: the "potential" technique, is a powerful breathing exercise to awaken powerful latent energy and circulate it through the seven principal *chakras* between the base of the spine and crown of the head. It awakens their corresponding psychological states and makes one a dynamo on all five planes of existence.

3. Kriya Dhyana Yoga: meditation, the scientific art of mastering the mind: to cleanse the subconscious; develop concentration, mental clarity, and vision; to awaken the intuitive and

creative faculties; and bring about the breathless state of communion with God, "samadhi" (not the God of the Bible).

4. Kriya Mantra Yoga: the mental repetition of subtle sounds to awaken the intuition, the intellect, and the *chakras*; the *mantra* becomes a substitute for the "I" centred chatter and facilitates the accumulation of great amounts of energy. The *mantra* is supposed to cleanse habitual subconscious tendencies (it is a religious repetitive chant).

5. Kriya Bhakti Yoga: devotional activities and service to awaken pure Divine universal love and spiritual bliss; it includes chanting and singing, ceremonies, pilgrimages, and worship.

If someone is interested in physical exercises that are designed to help one's body, he should *not* take Yoga, which is designed for death, and teaches how to reach this state of consciousness (see note) where one gets a better reincarnation. Even the physical positions in Yoga come right out of the Hindu scriptures, and are designed to put one into this state of consciousness where you imagine that you're God. Therefore, Christians who think they think they're getting relaxation and/or exercise, are really getting Hinduism! They think they're getting science, but they're getting religion. It's mislabeled and it's dangerous! (Source: a 1988 *John Ankerberg Show* program, "The New Age in Society.")

John Weldon and Clifford Wilson wrote in *Occult Shock and Psychic Forces* that Yoga is really pure occultism. Hans-Ulrich Rieker, in his book *The Yoga of Light*, also warns that misunderstanding the true nature of Yoga can mean "death or insanity." Another 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. [Note: 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, etc., 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. It's called sorcery. People are literally teaching themselves how to be demonized, all in the name of developing one's full potential.]

* Unless otherwise cited, parts of this report have been excerpted and/or adapted from *Examining & Exposing Cultic & Occultic Movements*, Jack Sin, "Should a Christian Practice Yoga?," April 2000, pp. 79-84.