

Light & Darkness...

The Bible tells us to avoid every appearance of evil (1 Thess. 5:22), and that we are to "Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them" (Eph 5:11, ESV). All religions that are contrary to the Christian faith are of demonic origin (1 Cor 10:20), and what pagan's offer to their gods is actually being offered to demons. Therefore, yoga is a practice that is demonically inspired. Yoga did not come from God, but rather God's enemies. What business then, does light have with darkness? Paul wrote, "For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery" (Gal 5:1, ESV).

We can no more turn baptism into a bath than we may turn Yoga into mere exercise. If you have been involved with yoga, repent and flee to Christ, and you'll find him to be a perfect Savior.

This tract is a free resource.

For more in-depth information on this topic, see *Counterfeit Religion: A Biblical Analysis of Cults, Sects, & False Religious Movements* by Michael Burgos.

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Should Christians Practice Yoga?





Two Worldviews Collide...

Yoga is one of the few Eastern religious practices that has made inroads into everyday American life. It is important for Christians to consider if this practice is compatible with a biblical worldview.

The term “yoga” is derived from a Sanskrit verb meaning “to yoke.” Yoga as a discipline is designed to yoke the participant with a panentheistic world. Within Hinduism and other Vedic religions (e.g., Buddhism, Jainism) there isn’t a distinction between God and the creation. Rather, God is viewed as the soul of the creation and is, therefore, part of the creation. This view of God is in sharp conflict with the Christian faith since one of the most fundamental doctrines of the Bible is the distinction between the Creator and his creation. The notion of being yoked in this manner ought to be disturbing to Christians since Paul told the church, “Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness?” (2 Cor 6:14, ESV).

Can One Separate Yoga from its Spiritual Aspects?

But can’t a Christian participate in yoga without participating in its spiritual aspects? While some claim to have ‘Christianized’ yoga, it is impossible to separate the practice from its eastern spiritual aspects. The many postures utilized within yoga are designed to be offerings to some of the many Hindu deities. So too, these postures are the sacrament of the Vedic religions. That is, in the same way that Christians practice the ordinances of baptism and the Lord’s Supper, Hindus practice yoga. One need only examine the Bhagavad Gita (a primary Hindu sacred text) to see that yoga and its postures are not merely exercise but rather an intrinsically religious practice. Subhas Tiwari, professor of yoga philosophy at the Hindu University of America, wrote, “The simple, immutable fact is that yoga originated from the Vedic or Hindu culture. Its techniques were not adopted by Hinduism but originated from it...The effort to separate yoga from Hinduism must be challenged because it runs counter to the fundamental principles upon which yoga itself is premised...”¹ Tiwari concluded, “Yoga is Hinduism.”¹ Moreover, the breathing and meditation techniques that are part of yoga are intended to calm and empty the mind. This notion is the opposite of the Bible’s teaching on meditation. Biblical meditation does not consist of emptying the mind, but rather filling it with the Word of God (Ps 1:2; 119:97; Josh 1:8).

1. Lisa Takeuchi Cullen/Mahtomedi, “Stretching for Jesus,” *Time*, March 29, 2005.

Looking Out for Our Brothers and Sisters

There are some very strong parallels between the issue of food being offered to idols within 1 Corinthians chapters 8-10 and yoga. Within those chapters, Paul teaches us that we are to avoid engaging in activities that could be taken by weaker brothers or sisters as participation in false religion. While participation in yoga is participation in false religion, consider the new convert who came out of an overtly religious form of yoga. That new Christian, seeing a mature Christian freely practicing what they left behind for Christ, would likely be caused to stumble as in 1 Corinthians 8:7-12.

The life of a Christian is a testimony of the work of God. It would be a tragedy to cause a weaker Christian to stumble by our participation in something a new believer left behind:

“Therefore let us not pass judgment on one another any longer, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother. I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself, but it is unclean for anyone who thinks it unclean. For if your brother is grieved by what you eat, you are no longer walking in love. By what you eat, do not destroy the one for whom Christ died. So do not let what you regard as good be spoken of as evil. For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. Whoever thus serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men. So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding.” (Romans 14:3-19, ESV)