

Christian Yoga?

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There is an interesting article in the September 5th issue of Time magazine. This particular article covers a spectrum of opinions about mixing Christianity with Yoga. Even, if you don't agree with a single opinion, it's a good read, as long as you remain objective.

Over the course of time, I have been lucky enough to teach, or practice, with someone from every known religious denomination so the statement by a Professor Tiwari at the Hindu University of America, where he states that, "Yoga is Hinduism," is surprising, coming from a scholar. Possibly, this statement was taken out of context, but fundamentalism exists, to a degree, in every form of religion.

If some Christians want to practice Yoga to make a closer connection to God, who are any of us to criticize it? Isn't one of Yoga's purposes, the union of self with a Supreme Being? So what is the big deal?

Truthfully, many fundamentalists are all about division - keeping the masses divided, at war with each other, and preferably, in a "holy war." They fear the unity of mankind, letting go of power, and world peace. They don't want to loosen their grip on their followers, so they squeeze a little more.

So if a Christian group wants to practice "Son Salutations," or "Praise Moves," give them a break. Yoga is practiced in sectarian atmospheres by a variety of different religions. Nobody has a monopoly on Yoga. Yoga is a complete health maintenance system for mind, body, and spirit.

There is a type of Yoga for everyone, and some people want a little more spiritual flavor than others. Since Yoga has been around for at least 5,000 years, there is a very big variety to choose from.

As for skeptics who "point the finger" at each other - "He that is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone!" It might be best if we all practice a little more mindfulness, and loving kindness, before we decide to criticize things we don't understand.

Yoga is "out of the bag." It is no longer practiced by a particular group. Therefore, Yoga is a public treasure, and not a genie that we will confine to a bottle. No matter how many people try to patent, or copyright, Yoga, it will be practiced within every corner of the earth.

So, please read the article in Time magazine and enjoy it, but take the time to remain objective. Recognize motives and words for their hidden agenda. Most of all, remain in good relations with your fellow man.

Paul Jerard, is a co-owner/director of Yoga teacher training at Aura Wellness Center. He has been a certified Master Yoga teacher since 1995. He is a master instructor of martial arts. He teaches Yoga, martial arts, and fitness to children, adults, and seniors. Recently he wrote: Is Running a Yoga Business Right for You? For Yoga students, who may be considering a new career as a Yoga teacher. <http://www.yoga-teacher-training.org>

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