

Can Christians practice Yoga?

Can Christians practice Yoga?

This writing is based on the firm unshakeable belief that the Bible is the infallible Word of God and anything inside the Word is taken as the Truth. This truth has been proved time and again in history and in the lives of those who have lived, loved and tasted the wonderful love of the living Lord Jesus Christ.

IS MAN SINFUL OR DIVINE?

According to the Word of God, Man is inherently sinful. Sin is inherited at the very birth (Psalm 51:5). This is totally contradictory to the basic belief of the yogic philosophic system that there is a spark of divine in every human being and the ultimate aim is to realize that divine spark within everyone.

It is very true that God created us in His own image, a little lower than angels. But when sin entered into the blood stream of mankind it corrupted the reflection of God from our

lives. We have fallen into the mire of sin, because Adam and Eve believed the Father of lies and allowed the deception of satan to enter into their lives. So from then on sin grew and flourished in the healthy soil of man's heart. Can you hear Jeremiah exclaiming, "the heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?" (17,9). The goodness which was placed by God has been slowly eaten up by the sin which is seeded deeply in our hearts. That is why even Paul the great apostle who ever walked this earth wrote, "what a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?"(Romans 7,24)

The only answer to deal with the problem of sin is ONLY through the Cross of Calvary. God gave the ten commandments for His own chosen people to live close to Him, but that was not the solution to sin, but a God-given way of life to live a godly life and stay close to Him. Since it was not a solution, it failed in many ways. But even when God gave the Ten Commandments, He knew one day He will

deal with sin not in letters of stone, but in the body of His only beloved Son Jesus Christ.

For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did that by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. Romans 8,3.

On the Cross the Greatest battle was fought and the Greatest victory was won. Sin was defeated in the guiltless, sinless body of Jesus Christ and His Blood became the atonement for sin, for every sin under this earth. Since this deep rooted sin, was totally defeated in the body of the Son of God, the greatest good news is that through this victory and appropriating the victory and righteousness of Jesus Christ personally, we too can defeat sin reigning in our bodies. Awesome yet so simple. That is why Paul exclaims, *"thanks be to God - through Jesus Christ our Lord!"* Romans 7,25.

To sum up, man is essentially sinful, and first he has to deal with the plague of sin, in his life. This sin can only be overcome, through the work of Jesus Christ on the Cross. His

precious sinless blood alone can wash our sin and root them from our system. We cannot cover up sin calling 'divine.' A rose by any other name is still a rose. A sin by any other name (divine) is still a sin.☺ One day it will surely rear its ugly head if not dealt with the Cross of Christ.

SALVATION OR ENLIGHTENMENT

Yogic meditation relentlessly talks about this, knowing thyself, mastering the senses, traveling out of the body and enlightenment. Buddha attained enlightenment. Enlightenment is a higher state of knowledge, but this knowledge again, does not ensure the salvation of souls. Siddhartha a young man, wanted to know the meaning of life, and he went to Buddha and asked him to reveal the answer. Buddha simply answered to find his own enlightenment, and Siddhartha travels yet another tedious way for years to find the meaning of life(Herman Hesse's *Siddhartha*). And that again is also not salvation.

Finding a higher state of knowledge and coming to terms with it is not going to save your soul. Let me repeat, a new knowledge system, an Enlightenment, will never save your soul. In this world there are so many belief systems that only add to the knowledge reserve, but they can never deal with the inherent problem of sin in our lives. Paul was such a learned man, but he could only lament, " Oh wretched man I am..."

So it is obvious, to save our souls we need something more than a higher knowledge system, something more than enlightenment. Our souls need salvation. And the only way to be saved is to believe that Jesus died on the Cross for me(Laura) personally and my debts are paid by His ransom. The Blood that was shed on the Cross, has completely washed my sins. This is it. Just to believe this and I am saved. It may sound ridiculously simple for a high mind, but nevertheless this is it, there is no other way. It takes humility and helplessness to say, " I cannot save me by my own meditation or enlightenment or self effort, but I stand in the need in of the Blood of Christ to wash my sins away." If anyone

would truly confess this from the depths of the heart, then s/he is saved. This simple way itself is a stumbling block to many, since they want a programme where they can substantially contribute also. No there is nothing we can add to God's plan of salvation. It is only to believe and confess and take it for me personally. That is why because of its simplicity, Paul writes salvation is foolishness for many.

Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength.

I Corinthians 1,22-25

Can I just practise only the asanas(exercises) and leave aside everything?

It is like saying that I want to save this baby snake because it looks so harmless and

helpless. Wait till it grows. Yoga is not a straight line, where you can conveniently slice and use a part which you want and leave everything aside. The basic premise of Yoga is that the divine in you should unite with the bigger divine. Yoga itself means union.

We believe only one God, who is totally divine, holy and godly. We can never become gods. Only God in His eternal mercy and grace can choose to put the treasure of His Glory, in us who are mere earthen jars of clay(II Corinthians 4,6-7).

‘To become like God,’ was the sinful desire which originated in the heart of satan, and that was the reason he fell from Glory. Even today, right from Adam and Eve to gullible souls in the 21st century, satan is effectively deceiving with this lie, that you can become like gods. *“For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” (Genesis 3,4)* . This very lie of satan is the very foundation of the Yogic system.

If you are a Christian, who believe that you are a sinner standing in need of the mercy

and grace of our Saviour, you cannot at the same time practice something which has its foundational idea of the individual divinity which is totally and diametrically opposed to that of the Christian foundational faith.

If you want only to practice the exercises, let me tell you the exercises will automatically lead you into the next level which is meditation. Meditation is not something you do to control your thoughts as is commonly taught and believed. It is only that you open your mind for something else to control your thoughts. Do not believe all that is being said. Remember where Jesus said (Mathew 12, 43-45) the demon saw that the house from where it was chased was swept clean, but still empty. So it called seven more deadlier demons and went to occupy that empty house. We either allow the Spirit of God to inhabit your heart or you allow something else. But the decision is totally ours, based on our free will. When we open our hearts and welcome the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit they will come in and make home with us (Revelation 3, 20). We also can chose not to, allowing our soul to be raped and ravaged.

I am not writing just from my head, but I have personally seen minds totally destroyed and incapable, because they have stepped into this dangerous zone of meditation. I have spent hours and hours, talking to them and even a simple sentence does not make any sense. I have been shocked at the extent their minds have been scattered. I tell you again it is like rearing a poisonous baby snake, but now it is already growing dangerously inside.

I can keep on writing but let me finish with this. Do you know the final stage of yogaic meditation is known as Kundalini? This word literally means 'uncoiling of the serpent within you.' So this is the 'divine' that was talked about so long. BEWARE BEWARE. The deception began as the divine and in the end, it is so plainly stated that it is the uncoiling of the serpent, the evil within you. He who has eyes let him see, he who has ears let him hear...

My friend if you are trapped in this system, get back, get back to the living Lord. Do not lose time. There is no distance where the arm of the Lord cannot reach. But you should be

willing to renounce and fully surrender, your heart, mind, body and soul into the safe keeping of our Lord Jesus Christ. *"For I know whom I have believed and am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him for that day. II Timothy 1,12.* Yeah our God is able. He can restore and heal the soul that has been raped and ravaged. Come back to the waiting arms of the Father. Surrender yourself into His hands, put your self on the altar.

Take Romans 6,13 as an SOS.

DO NOT OFFER THE PARTS OF YOUR BODY TO SIN, AS INSTRUMENTS OF WICKEDNESS, BUT RATHER OFFER YOURSELVES TO GOD AS THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN BROUGHT FROM DEATH TO LIFE, AND OFFER THE PARTS OF YOUR BODY TO HIM AS INSTRUMENTS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS. FOR SIN SHALL NOT BE YOUR MASTER, BECAUSE YOU ARE NOT UNDER LAW BUT UNDER GRACE.

For questions, comments and prayers, connect with laurabarnabas@gmail.com