Yoga and Meditation

Is Yoga Good for Children?

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The following article is based upon the article by Bud Press

Southern Baptist 'Kids' Bowing to Yoga

referenced in footnote [1] below.

Introduction

God has placed within parents the desire to protect their children from every kind of potential danger whether physical, emotional, intellectual, recreational, nutritional, or spiritual. A parent will say *"no"* when they can see their child's desire of the moment will hurt them, and they will gladly say *"yes, well done"* when their child makes a wise choice.

Parents eschew their child's pleas for appealing-looking but nutritionally-damaging 'junk' food. They ensure the books their children read and the TV programmes they watch will edify, not stultify or warp, their impressionable young minds. They keep a tight control on their child's use of the internet. Then they carefully steer their teenagers through the minefield of rampaging hormones, warning them of the destruction and devastation caused by drug-taking or sexual promiscuity.

So parents go to great lengths to teach their children to avoid the harm and pursue the good; always, always, guiding their little ones towards creative and responsible adulthood.

Most parents also encourage their children to participate in a good sport or healthy physical activity, and many schools require children to attend a physical education class of some kind. In recent years Yoga has overtaken many traditionally Western forms of exercise to become one of the most popular ways of keeping fit for both

adults and children, and so a number of schools now incorporate Yoga in some shape or form into their PE classes. Throughout the Western world Yoga is now a booming business:

> "Yoga books, Yoga DVDs, Yoga music, Yoga CDs, Yoga calendars, Yoga jewelry, Yoga pants [joggers], Yoga shirts, Yoga shoes, Yoga posters, Yoga mats, Yoga bags, Yoga kits, Yoga eye pillows, Yoga soda-pop, Yoga food and, Yoga classes designed for all shapes, sizes, and age-groups. Yes, Yoga is big business. All bases are covered. No stone has been left unturned" **[1]**.

> "It's everywhere. In ads for everything from IT to ice cream, meditative supermodels sit cross-legged in the Hindy Lotus position, contemplating 'nirvana'. There are yoga videos for pregnant mothers, senior citizens, toddlers and babies – even yoga for you and your dog! You can work out with yoga straps, blocks, bolsters and balls. The well-dressed yoga practitioner can wear her loose-fitting yoga togs, carry her yoga mat in her matching yoga tote and dress her daughter in Sesame Street yoga pants (featuring Elmo!). Since yoga is everywhere, it must be okay. Or is it?" **[2]**.

What Is Yoga?

The word *'yoga'* means to *'yoke'*, or to *'join'*, or to *'unite'* **[3]**. Cyndi Lee, at the *Yoga Journal Website*, explains that:

> "The word yoga, from the Sanskrit word *yuj* means to yoke or bind and is often interpreted as 'union' or a method of discipline. A male who practices yoga is called a *yogi*, a female practitioner, a *yogini*. ... The Indian sage Patanjali is believed to have collated the practice of yoga into the Yoga Sutra as estimated 2,000 years ago. The sutra is a collection of 195 statements that serves as a philosophical guidebook for most of the yoga that is practices today. It also outlines eight limbs of yoga: the *yamas* (restraints), *niyamas* (observances), *asana* (postures), *pranayama* (breathing), *pratyahara* (withdrawal of senses), *dharana* (concentration), *dhyani* (meditation), and *samadhi* (absorption). As we explore these eight limbs, we begin by refining our behaviour in the outer world, and then we focus inwardly until we reach *samadhi* (liberation, enlightenment)" **[4]**.

At the *Experience Festival* website the following information is given:

> "Yoga is one of the six branches in Indian philosophy and is referred to throughout the Vedas, the ancient scriptures of India. ... According to the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, the ultimate aim of Yoga is to reach 'Kaivalya' (freedom). This is the experience of one's innermost being or 'soul' (the Purusa). When this level of awareness is achieved, one becomes free of the chains of cause and effect (Karma) which bound us to continual reincarnation. ... The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali is a 2200 year old classical piece of Yoga Philosophy ... [in which] ... Patanjali describes 8 disciplines of yoga which must be practiced and refined in order to perceive the true self - the ultimate goal of Yoga" **[5]**.

Hatha Yoga

Hatha Yoga is the form of Yoga mainly practised in the West, which - the above definitions notwithstanding - many of its adherents insist is simply another kind of exercise such as aerobics or ballet or gymnastics that can be practiced without any religious or spiritual significance. And indeed, it is true that many of the movements

or positions of yoga are similar to those found in these three disciplines. Other practitioners of Hatha Yoga will agree that there might be more to it than purely physical benefits; but say this is a good thing for one's entire wellbeing. For example, Cyndi Lee says:

> "Hatha yoga refers to a set of physical exercises (known as asanas or postures) ... designed to open the many channels of the body - especially the main channel, the spine - so that energy can flow freely. ... Hatha yoga is a path toward creating balance and uniting opposites. ... Hatha yoga is a powerful tool for self-transformation. ... Unlike stretching or fitness, [Hatha] yoga is more than just physical postures. Patanjali's eight-fold path illustrates how the physical practice is just one aspect of yoga.
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> "Even within the physical practice, yoga is unique because we connect the movement of the body and the fluctuations of the mind to the rhythm of our breath. Connecting the mind, body, and breath helps us to direct our attention inward. Through this process of inward attention, we learn to recognize our habitual thought patterns without labelling them, judging them, or trying to change them" **[6]**.

Perhaps we agree with Ms. Lee that our *"thought patterns"* are acceptable just as they are. Be that as it may, the fact is, the true purpose of Hatha Yoga is not simply to feel good about ourselves, or even to transform our physical or mental wellbeing:

> "The purpose of Hatha Yoga is to locate and activate the chakras (centers of energy), thereby raising the kundalini (dominant spiritual power). This in turn is believed to help remove blockages (disease) in the mind and body. ... It is common for yogins [sic] and tantrics of several disciplines to dedicate their practices to a deity under the Hindu ishta-devata concept while always striving to achieve beyond that: Brahmin. ... worship of Gods is a secondary means of focus on the higher being, a conduit to realization of the Divine Ground. Hatha Yoga follows in that vein ... By balancing two streams, often known as ida (mental) and pingala (bodily) currents, the sushumma nadi (current of the Self) is said to rise, opening various chakras (cosmic powerpoints within the body, starting for the base of the spine and ending right above the head) until samadhi is attained. It is through the forging a powerful depth of concentration and mastery of the body and mind, Hatha Yoga practices seek to still the mental waters and allow for apprehension of oneself as that which one always was, Brahmin" **[7]**.
>
> "Even in this format [Hatha Yoga] … there are commonly used words and poses antithetical to God's Word. For example, the word 'namaste', often said at the close of yoga classes, means 'I bow to the god within you'. The sound 'om', chanted in many yoga classes, is meant to bring students into a trance so they can join with the universal mind. And the 'salute to the sun' posture, used at the beginning of most classes, pays homage to the Hindu sun god … It's impossible to separate Hindu spiritualism from yoga" **[8]**.

In her book, ***Like Lambs to the Slaughter***, Johanna Michaelsen asks the valid question, *"Can we separate the exercise from the philosophy?"...*

> "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" **[9]**.

Yoga IS Hinduism

"Hinduism is the soul of Yoga" **[10]** / "All of Yoga is Hinduism, Everyone should be aware of this fact" **[11]** / All of Yoga is all about the Hindu religion" **[12]** / "Hinduism is not like a recipe ingredient that can be extracted from Yoga" **[13]** / "Yoga is Hinduism" **[14]**.

"No part of Yoga can be separated from the philosophy behind it. If you do the exercises you accept the philosophy" **[15]** / "Yoga cannot be reduced to a mere form of psychophysical therapy" **[16]** / "Yoga is sold in the West as a science, but it is in truth religion" **[17]**.

"In the West most students know very little of Yoga's true scope. Many do not care to know or practice more than the physical postures, and numerous others are content with practicing breathing exercises in addition to their postures" **[18]**.

"Literally 'yoking', [yoga] refers to union with Brahman. There are several kinds and schools of Yoga, and various techniques, but all have this same ultimate goal of union with the Absolute. The positions and breath control are intended as aids to eastern meditation, and a means of controlling the body in disciplining oneself to renounce all desires which the body might otherwise impose upon the mind. Yoga is designed specifically to induce a state of trance which supposedly allows the mind to be drawn upward into a yoking with Brahman. it is a means of withdrawal from the world of illusion to seek the one true Reality. If one desires to achieve physical fitness only, exercises designed for that specific purpose ought rather to be chosen. *No part of Yoga can be separated from the philosophy behind it*" **[19]**. [my emphasis].

Do parents have any idea that, by encouraging their child to practice Yoga, they are in fact initiating them into the Hindu religion?

Animal Poses or Asanas

What do the children do in their Yoga classes?…

"In Hatha Yoga most of the poses are modeled after animals and objects found in nature. This is why Yoga appeals to a child's imagination and sense of adventure. Children are naturally strong and flexible and know how to live each moment to the fullest. That makes children natural yogis" **[20]**.

"Many asanas are based on postures that honor Hindu deities who manifest themselves in forms such as the sun, the tiger, the tree, the snake" **[21]**.

"Through the symbol each posture represents (the locust, the fish, the candle, etc.), it involves a change of personality" **[22]**.

"In this class, 4-9 year old children become hopping frogs, slithering snakes, barking dogs and even a twisting, turning rollercoaster as they are introduced to Yoga poses through fun pretend play!" **[23]**.

"[O]ne of the many Yoga programs geared specifically for children, describes the Cobra Pose ... *'You may slither around or hiss like a snake'*" **[24]**.

The Cobra Pose: The Snake-God

The following quotes explain the source of Hatha Yoga's Cobra Pose...

"Nagapanchami is a festival dedicated to the snake-God. It is the festival when snakes, the symbols of energy and prosperity are worshipped. ... It is celebrated with more fervour especially in the rural areas ... In urban areas where snake pits are rare, images of the deity are worshipped. Small clay images of the cobra are installed for being worshipped. ... Snakes have been associated with many Hindu Gods.

"Sheshnaga (Snake with Six hoods) is the vehicle of Vishnu. ... Worship of the snake Naga on Nagapanchami day is not associated with any other Gods. Naga is a deity in his own right and is worshipped as such. This indicates that apart from all mythologies which have eulogized and deified this reptile, his worship during Nagapanchami owes its origin to some other reason" **[25]**.

"Besides Vishnu, snakes are also commonly associated with Shiva. He wears a serpent across his chest, as his sacred thread Upanayanam. Coiled serpents adorn his hair, neck and arms. ... Snake festivals are held at various times of the year, depending on local customs. ... Nagapanchami, on the fifth day of Craven, is an important snake festival. On this day, snakes are worshipped to gain knowledge, wealth, and fame" **[26]**.

Shiva: The Lord of Yoga

There are around 330 million Hindu gods. The yogic cobra pose, which represents the snake-god, is linked to the third member of the Hindu trinity, Lord Shiva (or Siva), the destroyer god, who wears a cobra snake coiled round his neck. The other two gods of the Hindu trinity are Brahma the creator and Vishnu the preserver.

"The most fundamental text of Hatha Yoga is the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*, ... dedicated to Lord Adinath, a name for Lord Shiva (the Hindu god of destruction and renewal)" **[27]**.

"Shiva is Lord of Yoga (Yogeshwara) according to *Bhagavad-Gita*, and the first Hatha Yoga teacher according to *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* … a classic text for hatha Yoga (the type of yoga taught in fitness centers and many churches). According to this text, 'The (real) Yogi becomes the creator and destroyer of the universe, like God' (chapter 4.76). Yoga is motivated by a spirit that inspires self-deification" **[28]**.

"Shiva is a complex god with many roles and powers. In his destroyer role, he often haunts cemeteries, wearing a headdress of snakes and a necklace of skulls" **[29]**.

"There is a legend that says that the knowledge of Yoga was first offered by Lord Shiva to his wife Parvati and from there passed on to the world..." **[30]**.

"I am that God (Siva) who sets everything in motion and who, absorbed in Yoga and enjoying the highest bliss, is always dancing. He who knows that knows Yoga" **[31]**.

"Shiva is called the Original Yogi. As the aspect of the Divine that is responsible for change and positive [sic] transformation, *Shiva embodies the very essence of all authentic Yoga practice*" **[32]**. [my emphasis].

These quotes, from practicing Yogis and pro-Yoga websites, surely suggest that Hatha Yoga *cannot* be promoted as merely another form of bodily exercise, no matter what assurances are given about it by teachers of Yoga in the West.

In the next section, we shall see what experienced Yogis and Gurus, and other practitioners of Yoga, have to say about some of the *mental, physical, and spiritual dangers* of their discipline, for both adults and children...

Difficulties and Dangers of Yoga

For more quotes and information detailing the dangers of yoga practices, please see the webpage, ***Difficulties and Dangers of Yoga***, at **https://www.bayith.org/Yoga_DifficultiesAndDangersOfYoga.htm**

"Yoga exercises are not recommended for children under 16 because their bodies' nervous and glandular systems are still growing, and the effect of *Yoga exercises on these systems may interfere with natural growth*. 'Two of my great [sic] teachers, Rama and Lakshmanjoo, advised me of the dangers that Yoga asanas may pose for young children' … There are plenty of other activities and exercises more suitable for children" **[33]**. [my emphasis].

"In Hatha yoga the breathing exercises are more strenuous, attended by some abnormal positions of the chin, the diaphragm, the tongue, and other parts of the body to prevent expulsion or inhalation of air into the lungs in order to induce a state of suspended breathing. This can have drastic effects on the nervous system and the brain, and it is obvious that such a discipline can be very dangerous. *Even in India, only those prepared to face death dare to undergo the extreme discipline of Hatha yoga*" **[34]**. [my emphasis].

"When referring to his encounters with individuals who went mad, [Gopi Krishna] says that it is widely known in India that *hatha yoga practices can lead to insanity*" **[35]**. [my emphasis].

"Now we come to breathing exercises. Let me caution you: they can be very dangerous. Unless properly done, there is a good chance of injuring the brain ... Shortly before I left India to come to the United States, a young boy of perhaps sixteen or seventeen years of age joined our monastery to practice hatha yoga. When I returned to India after an absence of thirteen years, I visited one of our centers. While sitting on the porch talking to a swami, I happened to notice this young person in the distance. He was acting very strangely. He would prostrate fully on the ground, rise to full height, then repeat the performance - over and over again. *The swami said that he had lost his mind*" **[36]**. [my emphasis].

"To practice pranayama [yogic breath control] without real guidance is very dangerous. *I know of three persons who have died from it*..." **[37]**. [my emphasis].

> "There are many reports in the literature of yogic control of autonomic functions via the use of advanced breathing control. Experienced Hatha yoga practitioners are able to perform a variety of advanced breathing techniques, such as very slow deep breathing. However, there *advanced breathing techniques* are not suitable for beginner yoga practitioners, *as they are potentially dangerous*" **[38]**. [my emphasis].

> "My daughter, age 43, for the past 10 years has been involved with Hatha Yoga and at the present time she is experiencing … violent shaking, hallucinations, murderous impulses … uncontrollable rage … trying to commit suicide … excruciating pain" **[39]**.

We saw above that hatha Yoga is designed to prepare the practitioner to release the 'serpent power' or the 'kundalini force, which ultimately leads to their 'Spiritual Awakening'. According to one website , some of the 'signs and symptoms' of this kundalini awakening are as follows:

- Mental confusion, difficulty concentrating, memory problems;
- Severe emotional mood swings – anxiety, depression, rage, fear, dread;
- Sleep disturbances;
- Gastrointestinal problems, irritable bowel syndrome;
- Itching, burning, cramping, twitching of skin and body;
- Electrical rushes and feelings of energy moving throughout the body;
- Ego problems, grandiose and paranoid states;
- Psychic, trance states and out-of-body experiences;
- Sexual and hormonal difficulties;
- Uncontrollable vocalizations, chanting and body contortions;
- Ringing, rushing, and hissing sounds in ears;
- Paranormal activity – levitations, possession states, and spiritual assault;
- Inability to function effectively enough to work or care for children;

The author of this list *"has intimate and personal knowledge of the 'Kundalini Awakening' experience"* and warns that *"the experience is often debilitating, disabling, and sometimes life threatening [and] can drive you literally insane and can continue for years"* **[40]**.

> "*There is nothing safe about yoga*. I found myself saying this recently, in response to a metaphorical definition a student presented to me that implied that yoga equals safety … The best we can say is that yoga is a process of stepping deeper and deeper into the unknown, a way of finding relationship with 'the essential groundlessness of existence', as Tibetan Buddhist teacher Pema Chodron puts it" **[41]**. [my emphasis].

So, experienced Yoga practitioners admit that Yoga can be very dangerous for adults - let alone for children whose minds and bodies are not yet fully formed and who, because they are eager to learn (rightly in most instances), are very impressionable to any and all ideas put to them.

Dear parents, if you are contemplating enrolling your child into a Yoga class, please, please consider whether there might not be a much happier alternative to the horrors outlined above?...

What do Gurus have to say about Shiva, the Hindu god of Yoga, the 'Destroyer God, the 'Snake-God':

> "How then do we understand Lord Shiva and his distribution of mercy? Many powerful demons such as Ravan, Banasura, Vrikasura, and Sudakshina worshiped Shiva. By all appearances it seems that each of these demons were very dear to him and received his mercy. Shiva even went so far as to fight against Lord Krishna on behalf of his devotees Banasura and Sudakshina. Certainly those were signs of his mercy! Or were they? ... In his purport to Srimad Bhagavatam ... Swami Prabhupada describes Shiva as being guru for both the demons and the devotees..." **[42]**.

Most secular Western 'yogis' and 'yoginis' do not believe that they and their children are worshipping Hindu gods or the numerous animals and insects represented by the Yoga postures, and they adamantly maintain they are not in any physical, mental, or spiritual danger. Tragically, and like it or not, everyone who practices Yoga is, in reality, bowing before the demons behind Hindu's idols, and is thus opening themselves up to whatever those demons may throw at them...

Self-Realisation

'Self' is not the least of these idols. The primary aim of Yoga is to unite the *"individual soul with the Supreme Soul"*, it is to merge the *"individual soul will in the Cosmic Will"* **[43]**. This is attained by the realisation of ones-self. In other words, there is no need to worship a God 'out there', an 'other' God, because, ultimately, *you* are 'God':

> "What do we join through yoga? Two eternal beings: God, the Infinite being, and the individual spirit that is finite being. In essence they are one, and according to yogic philosophy all spirits originally dwelt in consciousness [sic] of that oneness" **[44]**.

> "Yoga is the science that teaches us the method of uniting the individual soul with the Supreme Soul, of merging the individual soul will in the Cosmic Will. ... Real Yoga is the attainment of the highest divine knowledge through conscious communion with God. Yoga transmutes the unregenerate nature of the student and raises him to the highest state of Divine Glory and Splendour" **[45]**.

> "Honor your Self, Worship your Self, Meditate on your Self, God dwells within you as you" **[46]**.

> "When you hear about the Self, meditate upon the Self, and finally realise the Self... you come to understand everything in life" **[47]**.

> "According to [*Hatha Yoga Pradipika*], *'The (real) Yogi becomes the creator and destroyer of the universe, like God'* (chapter 4.76). Yoga is motivated by a spirit that inspires self-deification" **[48]**.

Back to the Garden...

The idea that Self is God - or can become one with God - is a very old one indeed. In fact, it was first mooted right at the dawn of human history...

> "Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which

is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

"And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

"And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden. And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard they voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.

"And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me and I did eat.

"And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

"Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

"And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Genesis 3:1-19).

This exchange between the 'other' God (the LORD God), the Self-gods (the man and the woman), and the Snake (the Serpent), doesn't really bear out the lofty pronouncements so confidently stated by Gurus and Yogis such as Swami Nirmalananda Giri, Sri Swami Sivananda, Swami Swami Muktananda, and Brihadaranyaka, many thousands of years later, does it?...

"Ye shall be as gods." The Serpent has been repeating this deceitful little sentence to mankind *ad nauseam* ever since. Tragically, many millions of people throughout history - just like the first man and first woman - continue to believe him.

In stark contrast to the *"Ye shall be as gods"* lie of the Serpent and the deceivableness of Hindu Gurus and Yogis, this is what the 'other' God says:

"...ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am He: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no Saviour. I have declared, and have saved, and I have shewed, when there was no strange god among you: therefore ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, that I am God" (Isaiah 43:10-12).

> "Thus saith the LORD ... and His redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God" (Isaiah 44:6. See also Revelation chapter one).

This 'other' God also says that there will come a day when, *"that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world"* will be *"bound for a thousand years"*, and finally, at the end of time, God Himself will cast the Serpent, the devil that deceived them, *"into the lake of fire and brimstone ... [where he] shall be tormented day and night forever and ever"* (Revelation 12:9; 20:2,10).

Children Are a Precious Gift

Bud Press reminds us that the Bible teaches that children are a precious gift, whose parents are instructed to raise them in the discipline and instruction of the LORD God Who created them, not according to the ways of any pagan religions:

> "Lo, children are a heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is His reward" (Psalm 127:3).

> "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6).

> "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the LORD" (Ephesians 6:4).

The Holy Scriptures give extremely serious warnings given to any - whether parents or others - who would cause a child harm:

> "It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him through whom they come! It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones" (Luke 17:1-2).

We are very familiar with this passage above from Luke (also in Matthew and Mark), usually applying it to physical or sexual harm, but it is also talking about *spiritual* harm, and yoga is extremely spiritually harmful.

> "Eastern Mysticism has now penetrated every area of today's Western society. Children are being schooled in it from their earliest years through comic books, TV cartoons, movies, and videos … children … no longer look upon the fantastic powers exhibited by heroes or their evil enemies in videos and movies as fiction but as something to which they could attain as well if they only knew the secret **[49]**. No-one needs God anymore, because each person has the same God-powers within – it's only a matter of learning how to master them (Harry Potter has proved that to the new generation **[50]**). The Serpent's promise to Eve in the Garden that she could become one of the gods is no longer viewed (in the West) as a seductive lie that destroyed the human race in separating it from God and bringing His judgement. It has become the new truth, realized by fictional characters who are the new heroes to replace David who defeated Goliath, Daniel who came through the lions' den unscathed – and even God Himself … Yoga fits this new 'Image of Man' like a glove" **[51]**.

> "Whether knowingly or unknowingly, enticing a child to turn away from the true and living God to a false god (including the 'self-god' of Yoga) carries serious consequences … Parents should cover all bases, leave no stone unturned, and do everything in their power to protect the emotional, physical, and spiritual welfare of their children … Nowhere in Scripture – from Genesis to Revelation – does God

advocate, encourage, promote, or support the believer's involvement with Yoga or any other pagan religious practice. Yoga is a cult of self-worship, and self-worship is idolatry" **[52]**.

"Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves; ... lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image [idol], the similitude of any figure, the likeness of any male or female, the likeness of any beast that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged fowl that flieth in the air, the likeness of anything that creepeth on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the waters beneath the earth: And lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the stars, even all the host of heaven, shouldst be driven to worship them, and serve them" (Deuteronomy 4:15-19).

"There shall no strange god be in thee; neither shalt thou worship any strange god" (Psalm 81:9).

"But [they] were mingled among the heathen and learned their works [practices], and they served their idols: which were a snare unto them" (Psalm 106:35-36).

"Because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things ... Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator" (Romans 1:21-25).

"Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry" (1 Corinthians 10:14).

"Little children, keep yourselves from idols" (1 John 5:21).

As Bud Press concluded at the end of his original article on this subject:

"This is serious business. Lives are at stake. And because there is a real heaven and a real hell, we need to take it seriously" **[53]**.

Amen.

Endnotes and Source References

[1] Bud Press, Christian Research Service, *Southern Baptist 'Kids' Bowing to Yoga* at **http://www.christianresearchservice.com/SBCYoga.htm** No longer available. Hereafter referred to as *SBK*

[2] Laurette Willis, *PraiseMoves.com*

[3] Please see **https://www.bayith.org/Yoga_QuotationsAndComments.htm** for various definitions of the word yoga, and its origins, history, aims, purpose, and philosophy

[4] *The Yoga Journal* Website, *Yoga Questions Answered*

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"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.
Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest for your souls.
For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light"
(Matthew 11:28-30)