

PREVENTING DECEPTION: HOW DO PEOPLE DEFINE THE TERM YOGA?

By Chris Lawson

Terminology is important in every language and belief system on earth. So too, in every language and belief system, word definitions are important. Words are defined by definition and in context.

IS YOGA JUST AN EXERCISE?

When we ask the question: “Is YOGA really ‘just an exercise’ or a trendy new ‘health and fitness program?’ we must go one step further and define what YOGA is. Many people are led into grave deception simply because they do not define terms the right way.

In the Bible, Hebrews 5:13-14 says: *“For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, **even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.**”*

TERMINOLOGY EXERCISE

Here is a simple exercise to help you see how the Word of God can help you discern truth from error—to discern between good and evil.

1. Read 2 Thessalonians 2:3-5 and Genesis 3:5 from the Bible,
2. then read how people define the term YOGA,
3. then read 2 Thessalonians 2:3-5 and Genesis 3:5 a few more times.

You may also want to read Isaiah 14:11-17 and Ezekiel 28:11-19. These have a bit to say about Lucifer, his desire to exalt himself [attain godhood], and God’s judgment upon him for this. Based on what the Bible says in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-5 about the exalting of self, etc., see what *you* conclude about the term [and practice and philosophy of] YOGA.

2 THESSALONIANS 2:3-5

“Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition

Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?”

[**Note:** We are not implying here that the 'son of perdition' will be a yoga practitioner, but he will display some interesting parallels to the 'goal of YOGA'. See if you can find these parallels in the following definitions for YOGA.]

DEFINITIONS OF YOGA

We do not endorse any type of YOGA. The following list is a small sampling of our *Master List of Yoga Definitions* and this list ought to serve as a wake up call for every Christian who thinks that YOGA can be integrated into the Christian life.

Definitions of Yoga on the Web:

- **YOGA:** Hindu system of contemplation for effecting union of the human soul with the Supreme Being
www.mkgandhi.org/glossary.htm
- **YOGA:** A system of exercises which help your control of the body and mind. It also improves your breathing and focuses the alignment of your body.
news.bbc.co.uk/sportacademy/bsp/hi/in_the_gym/jargon_guide/html/default.stm
- **YOGA:** A Hindu discipline aimed at achieving a state of perfect spiritual insight and tranquility. In the West, the term is most commonly understood as the physical exercises that are practiced as part of this discipline.
www.natcath.com/NCR_Online/archives/022103/022103k.htm
- **YOGA:** (Sans.) A school of philosophy founded by Patanjali, but which existed as a distinct teaching and system of life long before that sage. ...
www.theosociety.org/pasadena/key/key-glo3.htm
- **YOGA:** This term means union of the attention with the ensouling entity. It has come to mean any methods or techniques that systematically unites the attention directly or progressively with the ensouling entity.
www.mudrashram.com/glossarypage.html
- **YOGA:** A Hindu series of mental, spiritual and physical exercises designed to aid in enlightenment. The exercise component of Yoga is often practiced in the West as an aid to healthy living.
www.religioustolerance.org/gl_xyz.htm
- **YOGA:** "To yoke or unite," connoting the process of yoking or fusing individual consciousness and awareness with superconscious awareness-- the natural mind state of soul and God. This yoking process ultimately leads to a realization of identity, that our innermost consciousness and Absoluteness is and always has been that of God. Yoga is the third of the four successive stages (margas) of purification and enlightenment in Saiva Siddhanta--chariya, kriya, yoga and jnana. ...
www.himalayanacademy.com/resources/books/virtue/SVGlossary.html
- **YOGA:** This name comes from a Hindu philosophy used to attain spiritual insight and harmony, but generally refers in common use to a system of exercises that is practiced as part of this discipline. The word itself is derived from the Sanskrit "yeung", meaning to join. A yoke as used on oxen is closely related, but also the same root gives us "join", "junction", "junta", "adjust", "joust", and "juxtapose" to name a few. The Mueller Center offers classes for both beginners and those more advanced. ...
www.muellercenter.rpi.edu/Glossary.asp

- **YOGA:** Meaning union with the divine, yoga is a philosophy and discipline applied to the development of mind, body, and spirit. There are many disciplines of yoga emphasizing different aspects or combination of mind body spirit. Through practices of holding a variety of body positions or asanas, and the centering of the mind and breath in a meditative way, the practitioner increases body awareness, posture, flexibility of body and mind and calmness of spirit.
www.footnotesforhealth.com/definitions.html
- **YOGA:** Derived from the Sanskrit root *yuj*, to join, to unite, to attach. The English word yoke is cognate with the Sanskrit word yoga. We can think of yoga as the joining of the atma with the paramatma, the soul with God. There are numerous means of joining with God: through action, karma-yoga; through knowledge, jnana-yoga; through devotion, bhakti-yoga; through meditation, dhyana-yoga, etc. Yoga has many other meaning. ...
www.sanskrit.org/Sanskrit/sanskritterms.htm
- **YOGA:** In Ayurveda, yoga means union, and is a traditional system of healing the mind and body. It is believed that yoga cleanses the body of toxins, improving muscle tone and blood circulation.
www.drfooster.co.uk/cam/objectlist.aspx
- **YOGA:** Spiritual and physical exercises to encourage health and well-being. Useful for conditions such as anxiety, arthritis, headache, migraine, multiple sclerosis, osteoporosis, pregnancy, rheumatoid arthritis, and more.
healingdeva.com/therapies_glossary.htm
- **YOGA:** An ancient system of practices originating in India. It is aimed at integrating mind, body and spirit to enhance health and well-being. There are many different forms of yoga. Hatha yoga — the most widely practised form of yoga in the Western world — uses specific postures and breathing exercises.
www.nature.com/nri/journal/v4/n11/glossary/nri1486_glossary.html
- **YOGA:** (Skt.): Literally "union". In Buddhism, a method for becoming one with the natural state.
www.bodhipath-west.org/glossary.htm
- **YOGA:** Lit., "yoke"—the act of yoking or joining together. Yoga is union of the individual soul with the ultimate Reality. It is also the method by which this union is achieved. There are four yogas: bhakti yoga, the path of devotion; jnana yoga, the path of knowledge and discrimination; karma yoga, the path of detached work, and raja yoga, the path of meditation.
www.vedanta.org/wiv/glossary/glossary_vy.html
- **YOGA:** Translated: WR Trask. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1958. First published in French as *Yoga: Essai sur l'origine de la mystique Indienne* in 1933, this informative and scholarly work analyses yoga as a concrete search for freedom from human limitations.
web.linux.ca/pedia/index.php/Mircea_Eliade
- **YOGA:** An ancient Indian philosophy and way of life, where complete harmony between our body and mind is achieved by special exercise, breathing and meditation.
www.gastrolab.net/dictey.htm
- **YOGA:** a spiritual practice which includes posture breath control and meditation. The word is derived from the Sanskrit meaning to bind, join, yoke, direct, to use and apply. The practitioner experiences inner union.

www.inneraccess101.com/glossary.htm

- **YOGA:** Union, communion.
www.poweryoga.com/aboutyoga/article.php
- **YOGA:** (lit., union) The spiritual practices and disciplines that lead a seeker to evenness of mind, to the severing of the union with pain, and through detachment, to skill in action. Ultimately, the path of yoga leads to the constant experience of the Self.
www.siddhayoga.org.in/glossary.html
- **YOGA:** (from Sanskrit meaning "discipline,") Yoga is an ancient philosophy of life as well as a system of exercises that encourages the union of mind, body, and spirit. The ultimate aim of yoga is to achieve a state of balance and harmony between mind and body. ...
www.reiki.nu/treatment/healing/dictionary5/dictionary5.html
- **YOGA:** (Sanskrit word meaning "yoking"): to perceive the constant union, unity, or copulation with the divine self in every breath, in every moment, in every activity, and in every achievement. Yoga is the way one can perceive divinity manifested in the whole universe as well as in the entire body.
www.storytellingmonk.org/ref/glossaries/y.htm
- **YOGA:** (rnal 'byor). 1) The actual integration of learning into personal experience. 2) See Yoga Tantra.
www.rangjung.com/books/lotus-born_glossary.htm
- **YOGA:** (Skt. yuj—to join, much the same as yoke in English). The practice aims at stilling the mind as a means to concentrated meditation for securing at-one-ment of the soul with the Universal Soul (Isvara, the Lord). (2) One of darshans or orthodox systems of Hindu philosophy developed by sage Patanjali about 300 A. D Composing Ashtang or an eight-fold path of reunion with the Divine. ...
www.ruhanisatsangusa.org/gloss.htm
- **YOGA:** (Sanskrit): Literally, "Union". System of exercises originating in India, popularized by Patangali (circa 1 st century BC).
www.boabom.org/dictionary.htm
- **YOGA:** Hindu discipline aimed at training the consciousness for a state of perfect spiritual insight and tranquility that is achieved through the three paths of actions and knowledge and devotion...
<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/yoga>
- **YOGA:** a system of exercises practiced as part of the Hindu discipline to promote control of the body and mind
wordnet.princeton.edu/perl/webwn
- **YOGA:** Yoga is a form of mysticism that developed on the Indian subcontinent in the Hindu cultural context. Its origin is impossible to trace, because it dates back to before recorded history. Yoga comes in many forms specifically designed to suit different types of people. As a result, some forms of yoga have gained significant popularity outside India, particularly in the West during the past century.
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yoga
- **YOGA:** Yoga when used as a form of alternative medicine is a combination of breathing exercises, physical postures, and meditation, practiced for over 5,000 years.
[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yoga_\(alternative_medicine\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yoga_(alternative_medicine))

WHAT IS YOGA?

Yoga teacher and studio owner Cyndi Lee (Yoga Journal) answers the question: What is yoga?

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* an 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 practiced 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 behavior in the outer world, and then we focus inwardly until we reach *samadhi* (liberation, enlightenment).

Today most people practicing yoga are engaged in the third limb, *asana*, which is a program of physical postures designed to purify the body and provide the physical strength and stamina required for long periods of meditation. (http://www.yogajournal.com/newtoyoga/820_1.cfm)

CONCISE DICTIONARY OF THE OCCULT AND NEW AGE

The following is a book excerpt from the *Concise Dictionary of the Occult and New Age*:

YOGA: A Hindu physical and mental discipline. Hinduism teaches that the self is divine and distinct from the activity associated with the body, mind, and will. Through yoga's system of exercises, people can train their consciousness to control the body and mind, thereby attaining a higher state of awareness...Through the regular practice of yoga, people can achieve perfect spiritual insight, tranquillity, and well-being, experiencing freedom from ignorance, suffering, and ultimately achieving rebirth...

The name "yoga" comes from the Sanskrit term that means "to join" or "to unite." This etymology fits with the underlying philosophy of yoga. Hindus claim that God is a vital energy source from which all reality emanates. People are connected to this universal life force and are archetypes of it. According to Hindu teaching, the human predicament is caused by a lack of awareness of this vital link between people and the cosmic consciousness...

The goal of yoga is to help practitioners reexperience their oneness with the universal self. As people practice yoga, a higher level of connection with the infinite Oneness will result. Their view of the world will be radically changed as a particularization of Ultimate Reality...

Several types of yoga exist. *Jnana* yoga refers both to the path of discrimination and wisdom, whereas *bhakti* yoga refers to the path of love and devotion to a personal god. *Kama* yoga refers to the path of selfless action, whereas *hatha* yoga, which is popular in the West, stresses physical postures or positions. *Japa* yoga requires the repetition of mantras, or sacred sounds, to enable a person to concentrate without being interrupted by external distractions. *Kriya* yoga

enables devotees to channel cosmic energy to their souls in order to establish a harmonious union of the mind, body, and spirit, releasing innate miraculous powers. *Kundalini* yoga emphasizes opening psychic energy centers called chakras supposedly located up and down the spinal column. This is thought to animate the Kundalini, a cosmic force coiled at the base of the spine...

Typical exercises, such as those found in hatha yoga, are practiced under the tutelage of a guru or yogi, a personal religious guide and spiritual teacher. Gurus teach students to combine a variety of breathing techniques with asanas, or relaxation postures. In each of the postures, students must first enter the position, then maintain it for a certain length of time, and finally leave it...

Some in the West incorrectly think of yoga as mere breathing and relaxation exercises to develop, stretch, and strengthen the body's muscles, extend and align the spinal column, and enhance cardiovascular circulation. The practice of yoga serves as a gateway to Eastern mysticism and occult. Certain postures, such as the lotus position, are taken to activate the psychic energy centers. And specific breathing exercises are practiced to infuse the soul with cosmic energy floating in the air. A guru might have students gaze at a single object, such as a candle, to develop and focus concentration. The guru might have them chant a mantra to clear their minds and become one with the object in front of them. The goal is to achieve increasingly higher meditative states until reaching oneness with the cosmic consciousness. This state of being is characterized by a blank stare in which the devotee is receptive to esoteric wisdom from the Universal Mind.

See also: CHAKRA; HINDUISM; KUNDALINI; LOTUS; MANTRA; YOGANANDA; MPARAMAHANSA

[Debra Lardie (Dan Lioy and Paul Ingram - Contributing Editors), *Concise Dictionary of the Occult and New Age* [Grand Rapids, Michigan, Kregel Publications, 2000], pp. 288-289.]

WHO IS KIDDING WHO?

So who is kidding who; the Christian [and non-Christian] yoga teachers who **say** “*Yoga is not a religious practice!*” Or the people doing yoga who knows deep down inside that *it is a religious -- and yet deny it all along?*

The Bible is very clear about any belief that brings about the exalting of *Self* to the point of “godhood”. It is a lie to be avoided at all costs!

“Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition,

Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?”

(2 Thessalonians 2:3-5)