

has published over two hundred books. This is an indication of how popular the sexual path of salvation has become in recent years.

In his lectures, Rajneesh asserts that Jesus taught the way of salvation was through sex. His discourse on the "new birth," published in his book *The Mustard Seed*, would be a typical example of his thesis.

Reality is one, he says, but we perceive other things to be different from ourselves. This is our fundamental problem; we perceive reality as dualistic. The ultimate duality is sexual. We see everyone either as a man or woman. We realize Oneness only when we transcend this duality. Jesus taught that the way to enter the Kingdom of God is through the new birth. And we experience this new birth, or the Kingdom of God, when the two "become one flesh." He writes, "when you make the male and female into a single one . . . then you shall enter the kingdom."¹⁸

The Role of the Guru in Granting Liberation

Each sect describes the role of the guru in the liberation of a devotee differently. Essentially, the guru's task is only to teach the technique of achieving liberation. The devotee has to achieve liberation by his own efforts in practicing the technique.

However, some sects also teach that at initiation the guru will take the *karma* of a disciple upon himself. Karma is defined as "action," or the sum of one's good and bad deeds. Without getting rid of his bad karma, the disciple must face repeated rebirths in order to repay his karmic debt. According to the *law of karma*, each person must reap the consequences of his actions through continual reincarnations into this world. But if the guru takes the karma, and the need for a future reincarnation vanishes and one can be delivered from the cycle of repeated births and deaths. The guru claims to take the disciples karma upon himself out of love and grace. And therefore, it is believed that without the guru's grace, one cannot be saved.

This concept of grace and the guru taking the disciples karma is a recent development in Hinduism directly borrowed from Christianity. The only difference is that Jesus took our sin and its consequence (death and eternal separation from God) upon himself. The guru says he takes our karma upon himself, but he does nothing about it. The devotee is acquitted of his karma without anybody paying the penalty of reaping the consequences. Thus, the most that they offer is that law of karma is not satisfied but simply set aside. They have no power to fulfill Karma and remove it

from another person. The Hindus do not see the need for atonement or the necessity for Christ's death because they do not view the law of karma to be an absolute moral law, rooted in God's character, whose demands have to be met. The believe God is not a moral being, man is not morally guilty, and therefore, the need for propitiation does not arise.

The Talking Point

The Hindus often consider our "one way" preaching to be narrow-mindedness⁹ because they think that there are many ways to alter consciousness and thus many ways to attain "salvation." Therefore, a meaningful conversation about salvation must come to grips with two questions: What is man's problem? And, what is salvation?

Once a Hindu sees that man's basic problem is a moral condition called sin (Rom. 3:23: 6:23) and that we are guilty of breaking God's law and deserve punishment, it will be easier for him to see that Christ is the only way to salvation—i.e., forgiveness and reconciliation—because He is the only one who has died as a sinless Savior to "atone" or cover our sins through His shed blood, which qualifies Him to forgive us and save us. (See 1 John 1-2; Romans 3 and 5.)

1. Other dualists or qualified monists explain man's problem and salvation differently, but in almost all sects the problem is metaphysical, and the solution in terms of realization.
2. The word *yoga* has, for many Westerners, become synonymous with the physical exercises of *Hatha yoga*. Physical yoga is only one form of *yoga*. *Yoga* means union, the union of soul with God or the merging of finite consciousness into the infinite.
3. Originally *yoga* was associated with a dualistic philosophy called Sankhya. Its goal was separation of *Purusha* (soul) and *Prakriti* (nature). But ever since *yoga* has been accepted by monistic schools, its goal has been defined as union, not separation.
4. *Japa yoga* is also called *Mantra yoga*. Some forms of *Japa yoga* come close to the principle of *raja yoga* or *Patanjali yoga*. *Raja yoga* consists of eight steps. The first five are external and preparatory. The last three are internal: concentration, meditation, and experience of alteration of consciousness. One may concentrate and meditate on a photo, an idol, a name or a thought. Such concentrated focus may eventually give an experience of void or emptiness, which is supposed to be the experience of Pure Consciousness or God.
5. *The Science of Being and Art of Living* (New York: New American Library, 1968), p. 291.
6. DLM has not split into two groups. One is headed by Bal Yogeshwar (popularly known as Guru Maharaj Ji) and the other is headed up by his elder brother, Bal Bhagwan.
7. Radha Soami Satsang started in Agra (North India) in the middle of the last century. Later a breakaway group was formed at the bank of the river Beas in the Punjab (West India). The latter is more influential today.
8. Bhagwan Rajneesh, *The Mustard Seed*. (London: Penguin, 1984).
10. 9. However, many current Hindu sects also claim uniqueness and exclusivity. Although they may not believe theirs is the only path, they often claim that "in this age, our way is the best and the easiest." Note: (Copyright 1984 by JPUSA Productions. Jesus People USA, 939 W. Wilson Ave., Chicago, IL 60640. Revised in 1988 by Kurt Van Gorden with permission of JPUSA. 2015 edition.)

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material world. He has to re-establish his link with Krishna and gain Krishna-Consciousness. Only then will man get out of the cycle of births and deaths and live forever with Krishna in Goloka or heaven.¹

In summary, salvation in Hinduism consists in the realization, perception or experience of our so-called "true nature." This realization takes place when we are able to alter our consciousness and attain what is called a "higher" state of consciousness. How can we alter our consciousness? It is through the manipulation of our nervous system, because the consciousness is dependent upon the nervous system.

During the preceding millennia numerous techniques have been developed to manipulate one's nervous system in order to alter one's consciousness. These are generally called *yoga*.² Here we can discuss only a few of the techniques that have been popularized by the modern gurus.

Hatha Yoga:

Salvation Through Physical Exercises

Hatha yoga, which consists of physical and breathing exercises, is a very ancient method. The belief that one can attain "salvation" through physical exercises rests on the fact that salvation is believed to be a matter of perception. This perception relies upon the state of one's nervous system, which is caused by one's physical condition. By physiological manipulation of one's body, the nervous system can be affected and consciousness altered. The problem with Hatha yoga for the initiate is that it is a long and tedious process requiring much discipline and a competent teacher.

The question is frequently asked whether a Christian can practice Hatha yoga. Many Christians see nothing wrong in practicing it because it is often advertised as non-religious in nature and sold for its therapeutic values. But once a person experiences the alteration of consciousness and has a "vision of possibilities" (cf., Maharishi Mahesh Yogi), he becomes open to the Hindu philosophy upon which Hatha yoga rests. There may be some teachers of Hatha yoga who are not interested in propagating its philosophical basis at all, but only in teaching it to make money or impart health. The supposed therapeutic benefits of Hatha yoga are unscientific and quite debatable among qualified persons. It seems, though, that if a person is practicing certain exercises developed in India for health, then he should *not* say that he is "practicing yoga." For the physical exercises become yoga only when they are practiced to alter consciousness or to merge into God, for yoga means "union" of soul with "God."³

Yoga and Christianity

Is There Any Union?

By Vishal Mangalwadi
Vishal Mangalwadi is a Christian citizen and philosopher of India. He has a fruitful ministry among Hindus. Mr. Mangalwadi answers the challenge of Yoga in America, as presented by Hindu and New Age gurus.

Man's basic problem, according to Hinduism, is not moral but metaphysical. It is not that man is guilty of having broken God's moral law, but that he has *somehow* forgotten his true nature and he experiences himself to be someone other than what he is. Man is not a sinner; he is simply ignorant of his true self. His consciousness is his problem and his salvation consists in attaining that original state of consciousness that he has lost.

Man's true nature, or original consciousness, is defined differently by monistic and non-monistic gurus. The monistic gurus, who believe that God, man, and the universe are ultimately one, teach that man is "infinite Consciousness or God," but has somehow become entangled in finite, personal, rational consciousness. So long as he remains in this state, he is born repeatedly in this world of suffering. Salvation lies in transcending finite, personal consciousness and merging into (or experiencing ourselves to be) the infinite Impersonal Consciousness, and thereby getting out of the cycle of births and deaths or reincarnation.

In different words, salvation is a matter of perception or realization. You are already one with God, you have to perceive or realize this fact. Perceiving, in this context, is not cognitive activity. It is not a matter of intellectually knowing or logically deducing that we are God, but rather transcending this cognitive, rational consciousness and experiencing a "higher" state of expanded consciousness, which is believed to be God and our true self.

The non-monistic gurus and movements, such as Hare Krishna, do not believe that man is or ever becomes God. God, according to the Hare Krishna movement, is a personal Being—Krishna. Man's original state is Krishna Consciousness and his true nature is to be a loving servant of Krishna. But man has forgotten this and become entangled in this