

Former Yogi Now Christian Denounces Hindu Curriculum

Should yoga be taught as part of the curriculum in the public schools of Alabama? A former teacher of yoga at four Florida universities in 1970, Mike Shreve, says, "Absolutely not!"

Evidently, some Alabama legislators disagree, because in May of this year (2021), the Alabama Senate and House of Representatives passed a bill, introduced by Democrat Representative Jeremy Gray, lifting the ban on yoga in the public school system that's been in place since 1993.

Apparently, Representative Gray has a vested interest in the passing of this bill because he is a yoga teacher himself and promotes yoga-related concepts through his business called "Elevate Your Grind." In a statement given to the Associated Press, Gray recently proposed, "This whole notion that if you do yoga, you'll become Hindu—I've been doing yoga for 10 years and I go to church and I'm very much a Christian." That sounds convincing, but once you inspect Mr. Gray's belief system, it becomes clear that he does not embrace a traditional "Christian" worldview. On his website, he proposes the result of the study of yoga will be the following:

"Ultimately one must connect with self on a physical plane in order to connect on a spiritual plane wit [sic] God, The Universe, Buddha, Allah, Nuture [sic] or whatever deity we choose."

Shreve converted to Christianity in 1970 and he immediately shut down his yoga ashram and ceased teaching yoga classes. "The two worldviews are just not compatible," he contends.

Countering Gray's point of view, Shreve says, "A true biblical perspective does not include all religions, nor does it propose that God and the universe are one. That stems from a

Hindu belief called pantheism. Neither can you 'choose any deity you want.' Jesus clearly insisted, 'I am the way ... no one comes to the Father except through Me.' (John 14:6). And the first commandment is very plain, "I am the Lord your God ... you shall have no other gods before Me" (Exodus 20:3).

Some lawmakers have expressed regret that they voted affirmatively for the bill. "We just didn't realize what it was all about," one commented to Suzelle Josey last month at a statewide Republican gathering.

Alabama was the last of 50 states to have the yoga ban in place, but it was lifted in May of 2021.

"That was a trophy on Alabama's shelf that never should have been relinquished," Shreve insists. "I've learned one of the main reasons Alabama continued with this unpopular standard was the combined effort of some key individuals over the last 30 years like Attorney Eric Johnston of the Southeast Law Institute, Clete Hux of the Apologetic Resource Center in Birmingham, Eunie Smith of the Eagle Forum, and Craig Branch of Watchman Fellowship. It's an honor to join with these influencers to once again hold up the banner of truth. Our hope is that Alabama legislators will revisit this bill and be courageous enough to go against this cultural megatrend, as they have in the past, and reinstate the ban. It is philosophically, theologically, and politically correct to do so."

It is true that the bill (HB-246) prohibits many overtly Hindu practices like chanting mantras, the use of mudras (symbolic spiritual hand gestures), meditation, guided visualization, using Hindu names for postures, and greeting one another with the Namaste greeting (which means "I bow to the divine in you"—a way of declaring all human beings are manifestations of God).

However, according to a BBC interview, "Mr. Gray ... hopes to

remove the unnecessary aspects of these amendments in [sic] future.” That statement begs the question, “Which restrictions does he consider “unnecessary”?

Unfortunately, once yoga gets a foothold, these limitations will most likely erode over time and far eastern religious concepts will infiltrate the school system more and more.

One of the most blatant indications that the bill is unacceptable is the required wording on a permission slip that parents must sign for their children to participate. It reads:

“I am informed that my child (name of child) will participate in yoga instruction at the school named above. I understand that yoga is part of the Hinduism religion.”

What? Read that again! Anyone of a non-Hindu religious persuasion (Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh or any other), should be disturbed by the wording of this requirement. Unknown to most people, the physical exercises (asanas) and the breathing exercises (pranayama) are the third and fourth of eight steps that are supposed to lead a practitioner to Samadhi or God-consciousness (according to the Hindu teacher Patanjali).

No wonder, in an interview that described Hinduism as “the soul of yoga,” the former managing editor of the magazine Hinduism Today, Sannyasin Arumugaswami, warned:

“Based as it is on Hindu Scripture and developed by Hindu sages, Yoga opens up new and more refined states of mind, and to understand them one needs to believe in and understand the Hindu way of looking at God . . . A Christian trying to adapt these practices will likely disrupt their own Christian beliefs.”

Tim James, son of former governor, Fob James, and potential candidate for Governor in 2022, was the concerned Alabamian who first enlisted Shreve’s help in the hope of reversing this

ruling when the legislature reconvenes. A group of nine concerned leaders met on August 12 to discuss possible ways to accomplish this goal (including some of the aforementioned persons who have been involved in this cause for three decades).

Some of Shreve's strongest arguments are as follows: "There may be an opt-out clause in the bill, but there are four reasons it will not be effective in protecting the children of Alabama:

1. Many children will be too embarrassed to opt out because of peer pressure;

2. Once exposed to the fundamental principles of yoga, out of curiosity, many will explore the deeper aspects of yoga, like the goal of awakening the "kundalini" (which means "serpent power"—taught to be a dormant energy at the base of the spine);

3. In many communities, the only persons qualified to teach yoga classes will be certified yoga teachers in the area—most of whom embrace a new age or far eastern worldview. Through the normal fusion of teacher/student relationships, they will gain influence over the children that could ultimately sway them to embrace a different belief system than that held by their parents. Besides, standard certification in the yoga industry usually takes place through a group called "Yoga Alliance" and for full certification, applicants are required to take classes in Hindu beliefs and practices.

4. Whether consciously acknowledged or not, most yoga poses are acts of worship toward specific gods and goddesses."

See the article on for proof that yoga poses have a spiritual component.

Once a law is in place, removing it will likely be a challenge, but as Tim James commented, "The legislature never

should have lifted the ban to begin with.”

During James’ news conference on Sept. 15 on the steps of the capitol building in Montgomery, Alabama, he identified three things that have infiltrated the public schools of Alabama that could potentially be harmful to the hundreds of thousands of students in the school system of this state. The introduction of yoga classes was one of those issues. We agree 100% with his assessment.”

For more information on the true nature of yoga, go to Mike Shreve’s comparative religion website, [. A free downloadable mini-book of Mike Shreve’s story of conversion to Christianity is also available titled The Highest Adventure: Encountering God. You can also connect with Shreve at . {eo}](#)

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