

*Eastern Meditation
and
Jesus Christ*

Are they compatible?

Eastern Meditation and Jesus Christ

Several years ago I was practising Siddha Yoga. I believed that all Gods were only different aspects of the same God and all religions were just different paths to the same goal.

I soon learned that these "truths" were in fact outright lies.

This is my account of how God intervened in my life and totally changed the direction I was taking.

Siddha Yoga

At Siddha Yoga we were taught that we all have god inside us and all we have to do to find that God is to stop our thoughts so we will become aware of our own true god-nature. Various techniques were taught to assist us in this pursuit. The usual method was to recite a 'mantra' over and over for about twenty minutes to prepare our minds for the quiet meditation that followed it. The mantra was a Sanskrit phrase. Our usual one, translated into English was "I bow to Shiva". (Shiva is the Hindu god of snakes.)

Another method of stilling one's mind was to concentrate on one thought or thing so other thoughts could dissipate. We were taught that because the Guru was a fully 'self-realised' being, he was in a sense God himself, and thus the most worthy object of our concentration.

My teenage years coincided with the height of the Hippie movement in Canada. In my desire to be accepted, I became a willing member of the psychedelic counter-culture of the time.

I had always wanted to find God and part of my acceptance of the Hippie philosophy hinged on my belief that the movement had a deep spiritual basis.

So when, many years later, an opportunity came up for me to practice eastern meditation with a Siddha Yoga group in Ballarat, I leapt at it.

Soon I had a photo of my Guru (Muktananda) to place before me when I meditated at home and a tape of my Guru chanting mantras so I could recite them along with him. I also had a copy of the Guru's book, *Play of Consciousness*, to read to help me draw closer to him and learn from the depth of his wisdom. I felt very pleased with my renewed "spiritual" outlook and was saving up to go to a weekend meditation workshop in Melbourne.

It was then that some very strange things began happening to me.

STRANGE HAPPENINGS

In my Guru's book he told us how becoming a self-realised being released us from all the pressures of day to day life. This occurred because we understood why various things were happening and knew how to flow along with events, rather than wasting valuable energy opposing them. He then went on to say that this effect, combined with the extra energy we would have from being in tune with our inner selves would enable us to live to a very great age in excellent health.

It sounded reasonable, but it became the first warning bell that something wasn't quite right. One night in the Ballarat group we listened to a tape prepared by Muktananda's successor after he died. It was full of exciting tales of how he knew that his time on earth was over. He called in his closest disciples in India and prepared them for his death. His successor told us of Muktananda's bad health in the last few years of his life and how he had bravely and serenely endured his illnesses right up to the end. Someone there that night even had some photos taken of him shortly before his death. It was then that I realised that the photo I revered was not the photo of an amazingly young-looking seventy-year old, but an amazingly old photo of a young man who had since aged into a toothless, worn-out seventy-year old. What had happened to the promises he made in his book? Was he really a 'self-realised being'?

There were other problems too. One night a couple from New Zealand who had been practising Siddha Yoga for decades came to the meditation. There was something very creepy about them. According to what I had been taught about Siddha Yoga, they should have been exuding joy and peace. What was wrong? A couple of weeks later, a member of our group who had been practising Siddha Yoga for several years confided in me that as time passed, the initial satisfaction he experienced had faded. But surely if Siddha Yoga was true, his satisfaction should have grown as he drew closer to his inner 'god-nature'.

Into the midst of all of this an entirely different and unexpected thread was woven.

One afternoon a neighbour's car broke down at the corner of our road. The neighbour, who I had never met until this encounter, appeared at our door. She claimed that God had sent her to our home. The conversation quickly turned to a discussion about God. Before we parted, Jenny told me about her attempts at astral projection several years before, and that God had revealed to her that

what she was doing was dangerous. She told me how God had used the Bible to lead her to the truth, and urged me to start reading my Bible again if I really wanted to know the truth.

Afterwards, I returned home thinking that I'd met another Christian nut. But somehow I found my Bible in my hands and started reading it.

Several days later a friend of ours dropped in with a friend of his we'd never met before. I started telling them about what had happened to me that day only to discover that Graeme's friend was also one of those Christian nuts. She told me how God had helped her get off drugs and how he had anointed her with the Holy Spirit. Then she told me of various miracles that had happened to her or to people that she knew since she became a Christian. She also told me to keep reading my Bible if I really wanted to know the truth. It was an interesting story, but I was far from convinced that what she said was true. Yet my Bible kept appearing in my hands. Worst of all, when I opened it, it would often open to passages that said things like "I am God, and there is no other besides me."

Then I discovered that an artist couple we'd known for several years were Christians too. They also warned me about the dangers of Eastern religions and suggested that if I really wanted to know what was going on I should read a Bible. More crazy Christians! I was starting to feel like they were picking on me.

But somehow I kept reading that Bible. And it still kept telling me that the meditation I was doing was wrong. But how could that be? Although there were a couple of things that were a bit funny about it, I liked the people I was meditating with and I enjoyed the meditation itself. I still couldn't see anything really wrong with it.

My reading alternated between *Play of Consciousness* and the Bible. The Guru's book explained that one sign that one was progressing well was that you would have a 'vision' of a cobra biting you on your hand. The Bible told me that Satan deceived Eve by speaking to her through a serpent, and is himself referred to as a serpent at times. The Book of Revelation, the last book in the Bible, told me that Satan's servants would cause his followers to receive a mark on their hand. It all seemed a little close for comfort.

Then one night at group meditation in Ballarat, a woman seemed to lose control of her head. It flopped and jerked all over the place while we were meditating. We talked about it after the meditation and were told she was working off some old 'karma' left from a previous life. I was told things like

that were common at the weekend seminars in Melbourne. They said that people would even run around the place on all four limbs, barking and howling like a dog. Others would slither along the floor like a snake. This was thought to be a good thing as getting rid of the last vestiges of our previous lives freed us to continue our development in this life. I could not help thinking of Jenny's warning that opening your mind without God's protection was to invite demonic possession. Though I preferred the meditation group's explanation, I could not get the alternative explanation fully out of my mind.

I finally reached the point where I felt I had to know which was right. Reading the bible left me in absolutely no doubt that the Siddha Yoga claim that what they did was compatible with Christianity was a lie. However, I could not decide which one was true. I still enjoyed the meditation, though I had stopped worshipping Muktananda as god. It was also far more acceptable among our friends to say that I was practising meditation than it was to say that I was a Christian. I also found the narrowness of Christianity hard to accept. Jesus's claim to be the **only** way to get to God seemed excessive. The Bible also taught that all people are basically corrupt which was something that I preferred not to believe. But somehow, I could not stop reading my Bible, and having this awful feeling in the pit of my stomach that it was true.

THE TEST

I finally decided that the simplest way to know if there was anything really wrong with the eastern meditation was to ask Jesus to show me what was wrong with it. I could see that it was at odds with the teachings in the Bible, but I still couldn't see anything seriously amiss with the meditation itself. So I asked Jesus to show me. If he was real, and he really cared about me, he should show me if there really was anything wrong with the meditation. If nothing happened, obviously the Jesus thing was just a con.

The night of the next group meditation I went along with bated breath. The time for the mantras came. Nothing unusual happened. Then came the group meditation. Nothing unusual happened.

So there it was. There was nothing wrong with the meditation group. It was the Christian thing that was the problem. Greatly relieved, I settled back into practising my Siddha Yoga without any further qualms.

The next week, I went to the group meditation meeting with a calm mind. Once everyone had arrived, we sat down and began chanting the mantras.

Within a few seconds I became aware of a 'thing' materializing in the room. The thing's presence grew stronger and stronger. It was positioned in the center of the group, suspended several feet above the floor. It then began sending 'tentacles' from itself towards everyone in the room, myself included. The thing stank of malignant evil. The thought of its 'tentacle' touching me was repugnant beyond anything else I've ever experienced.

I did the only thing that could stop that 'tentacle' from touching me. I called out for Jesus to help me.

The response was immediate. Suddenly a silver-white thread penetrated the ceiling and shot towards me. The moment it touched me, it coated me with a transparent cocoon of silver-white light. The thing in the room withdrew the 'tentacle' that was coming towards me. It then continued as if I did not exist. The remaining 'tentacles' all made their connections with each of the other people in the room.

The thing remained in the room all through the mantras and throughout the meditation time. It maintained its 'tentacle' connection to each person there the entire time. The silver-white thread coming through the ceiling also remained connected to me throughout this entire time. I sat safely inside my cocoon, acutely conscious of the warmth and the gentle power flowing to me through the thread, and yet still aware of the evil emanating from the thing in the room.

Finally, the meditation time finished. As the group leader closed the meditation the thing withdrew its 'tentacles' and then faded away. As I was now safe from the thing, the cocoon I was in also faded away.

During our tea break afterwards, I asked the others if they were aware of anything different happening during the chanting and meditation. None of them were aware of anything different happening that night!

When I got home I told Marg what had happened. I then got down on my knees and thanked God for protecting me that night. It was now clear to me that the thing had been there every time we had a group meditation, and probably had been in my home as well. It made me feel sick knowing that I had been asking that thing into my home every time I chanted the mantras and meditated.

TIME TO CHOOSE

Now I knew what was wrong with Eastern Meditation! God had answered my prayer. He had opened my eyes and the truth was worse than I had ever suspected. And by easing my concern **before** He showed me, He left me in no

doubt that what I had seen was real. He had also proven to me that His gentle strength was vastly greater than the raw power of the evil thing. So much greater that the thing instantly withdrew without any dispute when Jesus had intervened. It was clear who was **really** God.

In calling for Jesus's help when I learned about the existence of the thing, I had placed myself in His care. I now acknowledged that commitment by dedicating my life to His service.

Serving Christ has caused a complete change in my priorities and in the entire direction and meaning of my life. I had to confess that much of what I had been doing was contrary to what He said was right in the Bible. I asked Him to change my heart and give me a desire to obey Him. I asked Him to place His spirit in me. I then began to read the Bible with a new openness. In its pages I have found the principles that show me what God wants me to do in virtually every situation that arises.

I have also found that through God's Spirit I now have a permanent link with Jesus, who is both my master and friend. His help and guidance are a fountain of strength that wells up within me.

Jesus has promised to come to everyone who seeks Him with their whole heart. If you place your life in His hands and desire to truly follow Him as the Bible teaches, He will become your master and friend too.

NOT TO BE SOLD

May this gift be a blessing to you.

This pamphlet recounts the experiences of Bruce Armstrong, a member of Central Highlands Christian Publications.

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