

# The Influence of Eastern Mysticism

By Dave Hunt (*Occult Invasion*, Harvest House, 1998)

There is a growing missionary spirit in Hinduism.... A small army of yoga missionaries is ready to go to the West. They may not call themselves Hindu, but Hindus know where yoga came from and where it goes. — (From an editorial in *Hinduism Today* titled “An Open Letter to Evangelicals,” by its editor, Reverend Palaniswami, a Hindu monk <sup>1</sup>)

In 1974, Stanford Research Institute (now SRI), with funds from the Charles F. Kettering Foundation, undertook a study to determine how Western man could be deliberately turned into an Eastern mystic/psychic. Directed by Willis W. Harman (who later became president of Edgar Mitchell’s Institute of Noetic Sciences), the project was called *Changing Images of Man*. The scientists involved sincerely believed that a turn to Eastern mysticism was the only hope for human survival. <sup>2</sup>

The task of persuading the public to accept this new direction fell to one of Dr. Harman’s friends and admirers, Marilyn Ferguson. She fulfilled her assignment with the publication in 1980 of her groundbreaking bestseller, *The Aquarian Conspiracy*. In it she said:

**A great, shuddering irrevocable shift is overtaking us... a new mind, a turnabout in consciousness in critical numbers of individuals, a network powerful enough to bring about radical change in our culture.**

**This network—the Aquarian Conspiracy—has already enlisted the minds, hearts and resources of some of our most advanced thinkers, including Nobel laureate scientists, philosophers, statesmen, celebrities... who are working to create a different kind of society....**

**The [Eastern mystical] technologies for expanding and transforming personal consciousness, once the secret of an elite, are now generating massive change in every cultural institution—medicine, politics, business, education, religion, and the family. <sup>3</sup>**

Eastern mysticism has penetrated every area of Western society. Children’s comic books that once offered Charles Atlas courses in body building now advertise courses in mind power, which teach how to control the minds of others. Movies such as the *Star Wars* and *Star Trek* series, TV series such as “Kung Fu,” “Highway to Heaven,” and “Touched by an Angel,” and TV cartoons by the dozens (“Mutant Ninja Turtles,” “Power Rangers, Masters of the Universe,” etc.) have made Eastern mysticism the normal way of thinking. Across America, YMCAs offer classes in yoga, and churches of all denominations follow the trend. According to Palaniswami, the editor of *Hinduism Today*, yoga and other forms of Eastern meditation “were too sophisticated for public consumption 30 years ago, but today they’re the hottest item on the shelf.” <sup>4</sup>

Universities now offer courses in Yoga Psychology; Metaphysics, Hatha Yoga, The Origins of Salem Witchcraft, Eckankar, Tarot Card Workshops, Psychic Development and Techniques, Astrology, Self-Awareness Through Self-Hypnosis, and similar subjects. A *Washington Post* article about a Maryland grammar school was titled “Meditation Comes to the Classroom,” <sup>5</sup> while the *Seattle Times* reported that inmates at Walla Walla State Penitentiary were learning “stress management” through the regular practice of Hatha Yoga. <sup>6</sup> A nationally syndicated columnist wrote:

**Instead of singing hymns, they're sitting in the lotus position chanting "omm" at America's oldest school of theology [Harvard Divinity School].**

**The Nave's [school paper] calendar reminds students that March 20 is... "a special time to listen to the Buddha and meditate on the perfection of enlightenment...." There's no mention of Palm Sunday or Passover, reflecting their insignificance at an institution where all is venerated, save Western religion....**

**Harvard... is an elite institution, training the next generation of mainline church leadership. Its degrees are passports to power in the Protestant establishment....**

**Will the last graduating Christian please collect the Bibles and turn out the lights?<sup>7</sup>**

## **The Evangelists of Eastern Mysticism**

How did this transformation overtake a "Christian" America? The drug movement in the '60s and '70s opened the West to the cosmic gospel of the invading Eastern gurus. Most Westerners find it difficult to think of these smiling and bowing yogis, swamis, and lamas as *missionaries* determined to win us with their mystic gospel. It comes as a great surprise that the largest missionary organization in the world is not Christian but Hindu—India's Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP).

Yes, *missionary* organization. Twenty years ago, in January 1979, at the VHP-sponsored second "World Congress on Hinduism" in Allahabad, India (attended by about 60,000 delegates from around the world), a speaker declared, "Our mission in the West has been crowned with fantastic success. Hinduism is becoming the dominant world religion and the end of Christianity has come near." By law, no Christian missionary activity is allowed among Hindus in India, but Hindus aggressively evangelize the West, and with great success. Among the primary goals listed in VHP's constitution are the following:

**To establish an order of missionaries, both lay and initiate, [for] the purpose of propagating dynamic Hinduism representing... various faiths and denominations, including Buddhists, Jains, Sikhs, Lingayats, etc. and to open, manage or assist seminaries or centers for spiritual principles and practices of Hinduism... in all parts of the world....<sup>8</sup>**

Interestingly, the 1979 World Hindu Conference was chaired by the Dalai Lama, who publicly proclaims tolerance for all religions. Hinduism and Buddhism infiltrate our society, government, and even public schools as science, while Christianity is banned as a religion.

Of all the gurus who have come to the West, none has done more to establish the credibility of Eastern mysticism than Tenzin Gyatso, the Dalai Lama, spiritual leader in exile of Tibet's Gelugpa, or Yellow sect, of Mahayana Buddhism. He claims to be the fourteenth reincarnation of the original Dalai Lama, a god on earth with the power to initiate others into their own godhood. Here we have again the persistent occult theme of human deification echoing the serpent's lie in the Garden of Eden.

## **A Worldwide Deceit**

As part of the most massive missionary effort in history—aimed directly against Christianity—every guru who has come to the West (from Maharishi Mahesh Yogi to Bhagwan Shri Rajneesh to Baba Muktananda) was sent here by his guru specifically to win converts to the Hindu/Buddhist pantheistic faith. Yogananda, for example, founder of the Self-Realization Fellowship (SRF) and one of the forerunners of this massive evangelism campaign,

personally initiated more than 100,000 disciples into *kriya yoga*. Maharishi has initiated millions into his TM brand of yoga. Yet the missionaries from the East all protest that they are teaching the *science* of yoga, health, and higher states of consciousness, not *religion*.

We can register no legitimate complaint against those who seek to persuade others of what they sincerely believe to be important truth. However, they should not lie about their product or their purpose. And that is exactly what the gurus from the East have done. “Yoga” is a Sanskrit word meaning to “yoke,” and its aim is to yoke with the Hindu concept of God through self-realization: to achieve the enlightenment of realizing that *atman*, the individual soul, is identical with *Brahman*, the universal soul—i.e., that one’s true self is God. Yet yoga instructors solemnly swear that yoga has nothing to do with religion, when in fact it is the very heart of Hinduism.

The magnitude of the deceit is comparable to the Pope claiming that, instead of heading a church, he represents a group of nonreligious scientists. India has banned foreign missionaries since shortly after it gained independence. All the while, India’s missionaries travel the world converting millions to Hinduism and Buddhism while protesting their tolerance for all religions and denying the religious nature of their mission.

There has been much criticism, some of it no doubt justified, of Western missionaries who have gone to Africa, China, and India with the gospel of Jesus Christ and attempted to westernize other cultures. That goal cannot be justified. Western culture is not Christianity. In fairness, however, we must ask why there has been little or no criticism of Buddhist, Hindu, and Muslim missionaries who have aggressively pushed their religion and way of life upon an unsuspecting Western world?

#### **Notes:**

1. Cited in *Christianity Today*, April 8, 1991, p. 64.
2. Copy of confidential report on file.
3. Marilyn Ferguson, *The Aquarian Conspiracy: Personal and Social Transformation in the 1980s* (J. P. Tarcher, 1980), inside jacket.
4. Cited in *Christianity Today*, April 8, 1991, p. 64.
5. *Washington Post*, May 10, 1990.
6. *Seattle Times*, April 29, 1990.
7. Don Feder, “Omm’ echoes from Harvard,” in *Washington Times*, April 4, 1994.
8. Johannes Aagaard, “Hinduism’s World Mission,” in *Update*, September 1992.