



Christian Yoga Sadhana

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Abstract:

“For God in His wisdom made it impossible to know Him by means of their own wisdom” (Corinthians). Christian Yoga Sadhana is a spiritual awareness of oneself that he (man) is a sinner and a spiritual awareness that God is holy, holy, holy and between the two there is a big gulf and to cross this, sinner trusting in Christ, the crucified and resurrected, and by following the word of God in the Bible can achieve the blessed refuge of God. The goal of Christian Yoga Sadhana is not to develop or attain some spiritual power to perform miracles or to get physically fit or slim. It is also not an absorption or merging of soul with any spiritual soul like a drop of water in the vast ocean or freeing the Purusa from the reign of Parkriti or ‘Yogas Citta Vritti Nirodha’, but it is obtaining to prime innocence as in the garden of Eden and loving God with all our body, soul and mind. A Christian sadhaka or pilgrim has to climb the Jacob’s ladder one by one or Christian Sutra’s to reach to the Celestial City. My paper throws light on how the Christian Yoga Sadhana advocates an eternal life. An eternal life is knowing God as holy, holy, holy as its goal.

Key Words: Christian Yoga Sadhana, Patanjali yoga, the Bible, morality

“For God in His wisdom made it impossible to know Him by means of their own wisdom.” (The Holy Bible: Corinthians.1:22)

If Patanjali yoga aims at the cessation of thoughts or waves-*rajas*, *sativa*, and *tamas gunna’s* in the consciousness then Christian yoga aims at a “man’s relation with God and

their faith in Jesus Christ.” (*The Holy Bible*: Romans 3:22) The word yoga has several meanings and has been variously interpreted. Gita defines yoga as, “that state in which there is nothing higher or worth realizing and firmly rooted in which a person is never shaken even by the greatest pain; that states which is free from all pain and misery is yoga.” (Shrama 169) Patanjali, the exponent and the author of Yoga Sutras defines “cessation or halting or stilling of the thought movements in the consciousness.” (Patanjali 3) Yoga literally means ‘union’, a spiritual union of the human soul with the creator.

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Christian Yoga Sadhana gives a man spiritual awareness of himself that he is a wretched sinner, a speck of dust but made in God’s image. He is spoiled by sin that needs a savior and spiritual awareness of God, a loving, and redeeming God who is ready to forgive man if he repents and accepts Jesus Christ as his savior. This is only possible if the sadhaka aims to climb the spiritual ladder or the Jacob’s ladder and follows the outlines laid in the Holy Bible with simplicity and humility guided by the Holy Ghost. "For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?" (Romans 7:22-24).

It is true that all major and minor religions in the world have developed some spiritual techniques for their worshippers to attain salvation or to be with the Ultimate being that governs life and controls their conduct. In Hindu religion we have Jnan Yoga, the Karma Yoga, and the Bhakti Yoga to attain to Moksha- which is not only cessation of births and deaths, or a release from the circle of births and deaths but also

merging of soul into the Universal Soul or seeing one's own soul free from ignorance or Ajanana. Similarly the Buddhists, the Jains, the Muslims and the Christians too have develop spiritual techniques for the sadhaka to reach to his spiritual goal.

The Christian Yoga Sadhana is not to develop or attain to some spiritual power to perform some miracles but it is reconciliation with God through the priesthood of Jesus Christ. It is a spiritual awareness of man, of himself and spiritual awareness of God. It means a realization that man is a sinner who has come short of the glory of God and wages of sin is death. The spiritual awareness of God means, a loving Holy and redeeming God, a God who loves man, a God who saves. In Christian Yoga Sadhana it is not a loss of individuality or self, or ego, or the absorption, or the merging of soul with any universal soul like a drop of water in the vast ocean but obtaining to prime innocence as in the garden of Eden; singing the songs of praises in the company of the angels and saints, "Holy, Holy, Holy is the name of God, the Almighty who was, who is, and who is to come." (The Holy Bible: Revelation 4:8) When Jesus said that, "I and Father are one," this does not mean the word of God who incarnated in the person of Jesus Christ is again merged back in the God, but it is written that He sat on the right hand of the Father or God. The distance between the created and the creator remains, eternal i.e. no glory to me but "glory to God and God alone." (The Holy Bible: Genesis 28:10-11) Christian Yoga Sadhana is a spiritual exercise, diligently and whole heartily performed by the man to reach the top of Jacob's ladder .When reaching the top , "the seeker finds the Lord God standing beside him." (The Holy Bible: Geneses 28:13)

Christian Yoga Sadhana has two dimensions a) union with God. b) Love towards man, who is your neighbor. In Christian Yoga Sadhana man has to reject 'I-Hood'. It is going back to the loving Father and leaving the world of senses. It is not due to self realization but it is the love of God that inspires the human heart and mind to move from 'HIMSELF' to 'GOD'. A 'self less love' is the 'Mool-Mantra' for Christian Yoga. It is the flight of the finite soul into the bosom of infinite and thus achieves eternal life.

In Christian Yoga Sadhana, the sadhaka cannot make God his prisoner or force Him to grant him an eternal life. There is no spiritual 'give and take' between God and man in Christianity. The sadhaka has to follow different steps of Jacob's ladder through Jesus as his/hers guide. The different steps of Jacob's ladder are:

- 1) **Determination:** it propels man into action. The action is "you should love your God with all your heart, soul, and mind." Without determination, no achievement is possible. Resolution expressed in the fear of God gives strength to the purpose. Resolution made to follow Jesus reaches the deepest recess of our soul and under the influence and inspiration of the Holy Spirit the man, "decides today whom you will serve ...as for my family and me, we will serve the Lord." (The Holy Bible: Joshua: 23:15) In determination there is always hope that ushers a new energy in the body.
- 2) **Repentance:** Determination means a resolution made to go back to God and repentance means 'giving up' for,"it is the God that leadth you to repent."(The Holy Bible: Romans 2:4) Repentance from living a sinful life. Repentance is a decision, a complete turn back from self will. The sadhaka should always remember that temptations are very sweet, as even Shankkya philosopher has rightly said, "evil is alike a dancing girl that enthralls the Pursha's soul. Repentance is war with the devil within and without. It is "an upward struggle, a perennial seeking after God." (Baillie 61)
- 3) **The Moral Code:** Christian Sadhaka should always keep in mind that salvation is not possible by keeping Moses laws but along with them it is possible only by the grace of God and faith in Christ. Christian morality is contained in the twin commandments, "**Love your God with all your heart, mind, and soul and love your neighbor as thyself.**" Christianity rejects externalization of the laws but advocates the internalization of them. The laws of Moses were "Avoidance', but Jesus gave a new twist and said, "Do". Dr Zeahner writes, "Christian morality is no longer a morality of the negatives, it is no longer that thou shall not steal of, "or thou shall not kill but it is love your

enemies and give your coat and cloak. It is the morality of, “be ye perfect as your Father is and love one another as I love you.” (Zeahner 194) Christian morality is not commercialization i.e. by doing so many fasts or prayers; you can get so much of credit to merge into the universal soul. AS Jesus says, “I am the way, the door and the truth. No man can enter God’s kingdom but by me. It is God’s grace and trust in Him that man can be saved, salvation is a gift of God, and so no one can boast about it.” (The Holy Bible: Ephesians 2:9-10)

- 4) **Reading Scripture, Prayers and fasting:** First any sadhaka has to select a place for daily devotions and begin the prayers with the Lord’s Prayer. Christian Yoga Sadhana believes that prayer is a personal fortress for any sadhaka. It is an armor of the pilgrim to save his body and mind from the onslaught of Devil and temptations, “pray that you may not fall into temptations.”(The Holy Bible: Mathew 26:41) The seclusion and privacy referred means that while praying man should be able to close the doors of sensations and the worldly interests. While praying a sadhaka should not appeal to God with a long list of demands for God knows what you want. Above all the prayers should not be said in a loud voice, it should be as, a “Hannah was praying silently, her lips were moving but she made no noise or sound.” (The Holy Bible: 1Sam.1:13) Of course no Asana (physical postures) are ascribed to the sadhaka but he must follow the way Jesus prayed, “Knelt down and prayed.” (The Holy Bible: Luke.22:41)

The Christian sadhaka must hold the Holy Bible as sacred for in it man and God are in dialogue with each other, “The Bible is God speaking to us” (The Holy Bible.Romans11:10-12). It should be in a language that is easily understood by the pilgrim. The pilgrim should know the four basic concepts of the Bible: God, Jesus, Salvation, and Sin.

A sadhaka should fast every now and then. But fasting does not mean mortification of flesh. Body is not evil. It is the creation of God. What is meant is that sensual body that desires pleasure of the worldly life cannot enter the kingdom of God. Fasting makes a man attuned to God.

5) Rosary (Jaapmala): It is a spiritual exercise of 150 angelic salutations with Lord's Prayer at each decade, "while mediating on the mysteries which recall the entire life of Lord Jesus Christ." (Mechan 78) The Rosary is held in the left hand and rolling of the beads between the thumb and the adjacent figure Psalm 150 is recited.

6) Meditation: Patanjali tells us that the door which leads to Samadhi is meditation. In Pratyahara the sense are withdrawn for the external objects. Dharna and Dhyana, the undistributed consciousness focused on some object, the contemplative reaches out for Samadhi. In Patanjali Samadhi is not any kind of merger of a particular Purusha into a Veshesh Purusha but it is a release of a Purusha from the clutches of Parakrti and sometimes it means the development of physical and mental powers that lie dormant. Samadhi is the eternal salvation of the Purusha, which is a state called "Kaivalya" or "loneliness" or "solitude".

But the goal of Christian Yoga Sadhana is a loving union with God, a fellowship. St Origin writes, "Meditation is a flight or disengagement of the soul from all that is not divine." (St. Origen 217) In meditation a sadhaka has to lift heart and control the desires and silence the faculties, so that he is able to hear what the God has to speak to him. And from here the soul's upward journey continues till he reaches the **stage of "illumination" and thus "Union stage"** in the kingdom of God.

The kingdom of God means love, peace and righteousness given by the Holy Ghost and eternal life for a Christian sadhaka means, "knowing you, the only true God, and knowing Jesus whom you sent." (The Holy Bible: John. 7:2) For God's kingdom is not a matter of eating, drinking, but of the righteousness, peace and joy which the Holy Spirit gives. Christian Yoga Sadhana means attaining life eternal and entering into the kingdom of God.

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