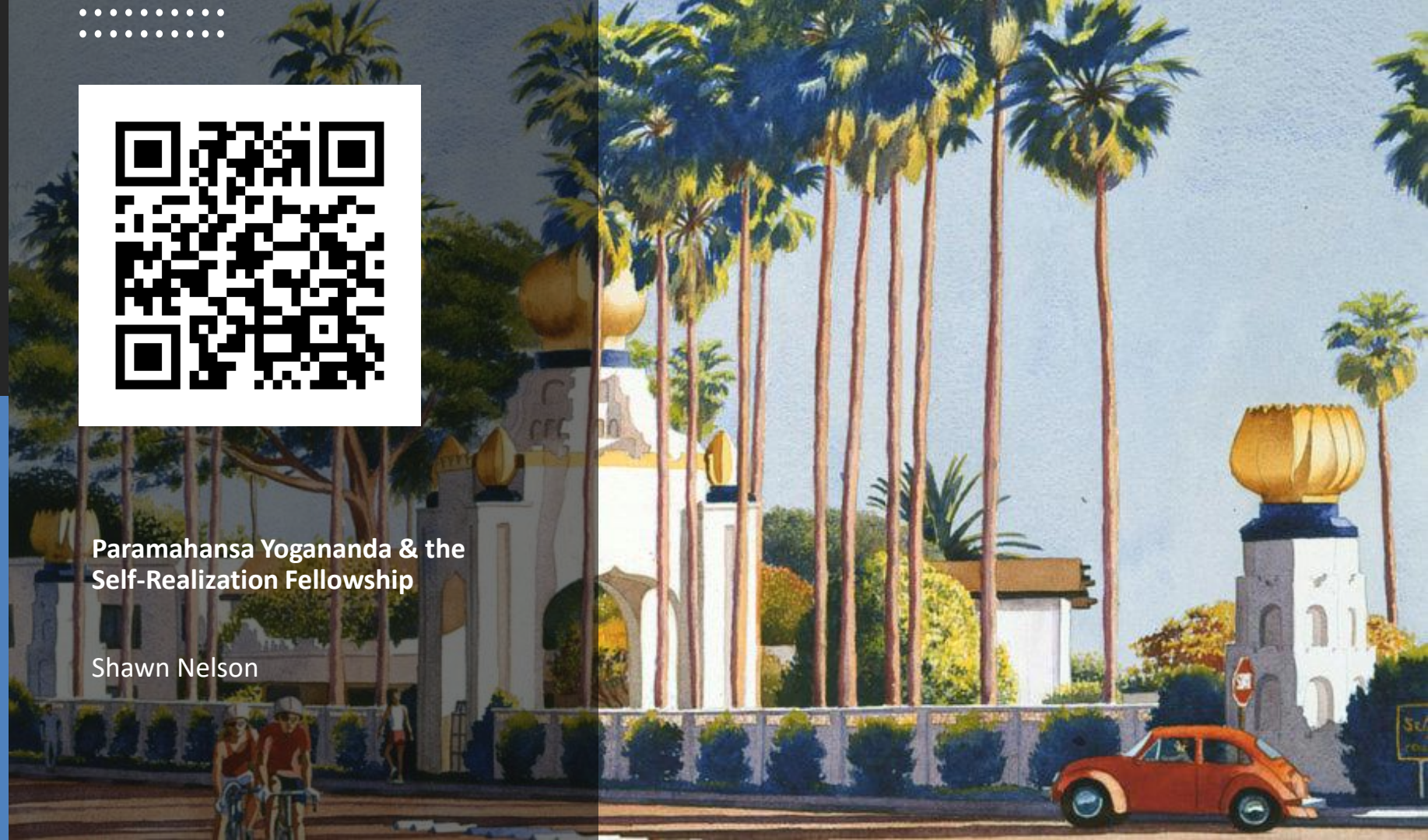




**Paramahansa Yogananda & the
Self-Realization Fellowship**

Shawn Nelson



8 Week Class Schedule

- DONE** Introduction
- TODAY** Hinduism & Yogananda
- Mar 17 New Age Movement
- Mar 24 Judaism
- Mar 31 Easter (no class)*
- Apr 7 Islam, Part 1
- Apr 14 Islam, Part 2
- Apr 21 Jehovah's Witnesses
- Apr 28 Latter-day Saints & Mormonism



North Pacific Ocean



Encinitas, CA

Swami's Beach




Many have seen it!



Many surf here





Beach Boys, Surfin' USA

...

Haggerties and Swami's
Pacific Palisades

...

Everybody's gone surfin'
Surfin' U.S.A.

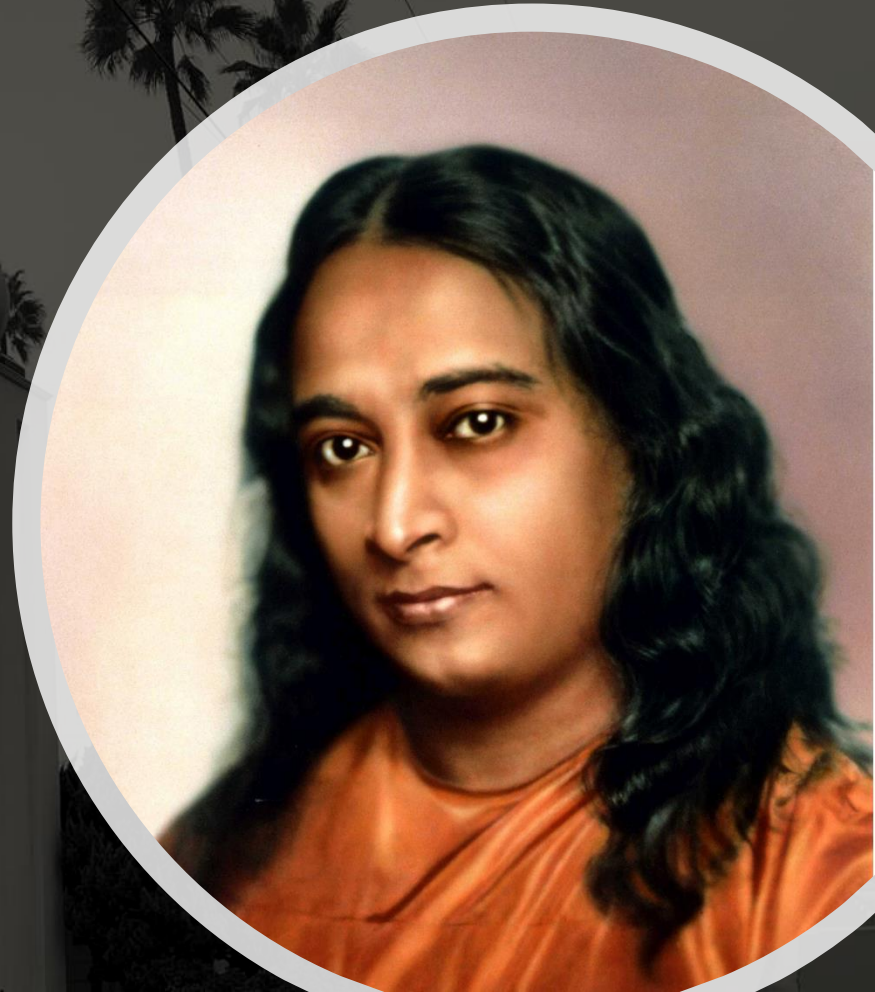
JDN PHOTOGRAPHY





Yet few locals know the story behind this iconic local landmark, and its founder...

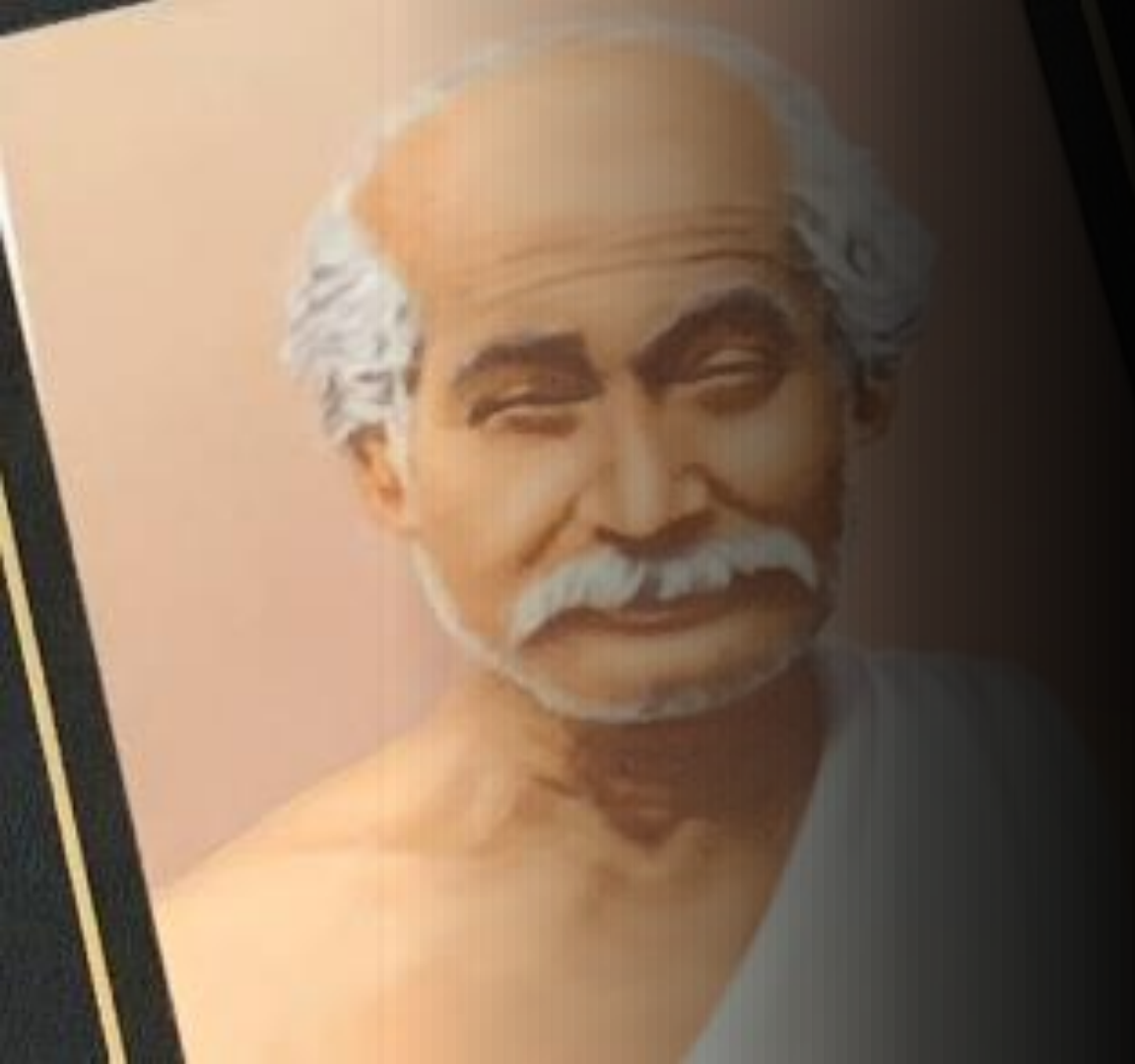
Paramahansa Yogananda



Outline

- **Paramahansa & SRF**
 - **His Background**
 - His Impact
 - His Teaching
 - A Christian Response
 - Ideas for Sharing



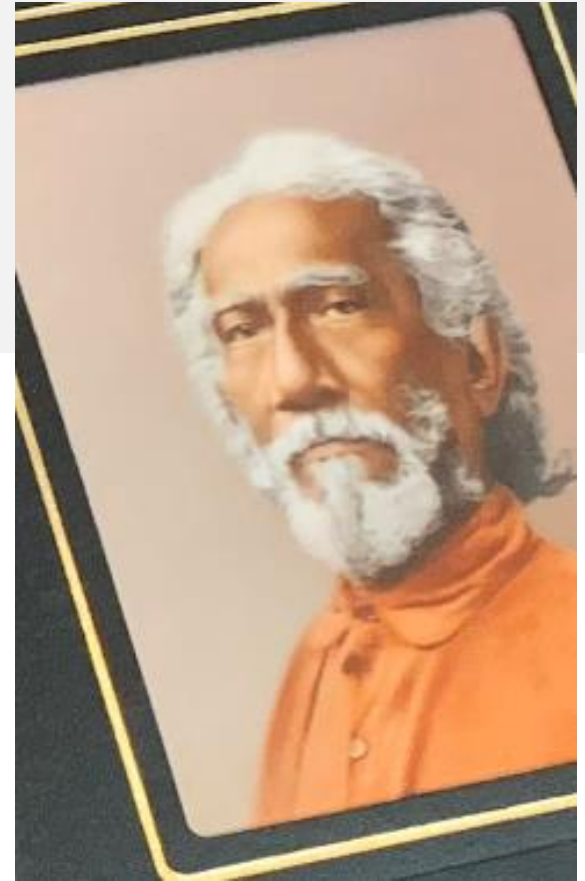
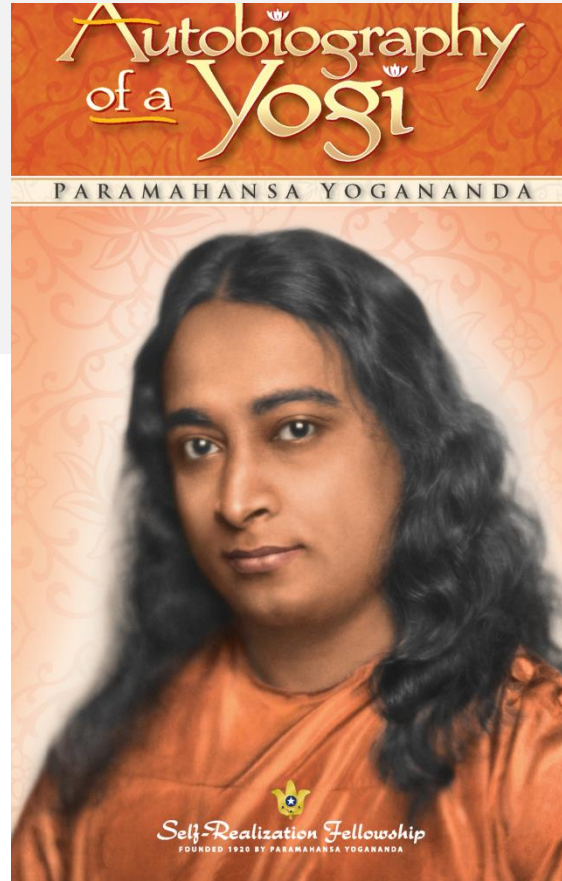


Story Starts with a Prophecy?

- **Yogananda**
Born 1893, India
- Disciple of **Lahiri Mahasaya**
- Foretold to be Yogi and spiritual ambassador to the West



In his best-selling *Autobiography of a Yogi*, Yogananda chronicles his spiritual quest of seeking and finding his guru **Yukteswar Giri** (1855-1936) in India, and how he learned to master the Hindu religion to become a yogi guru himself.

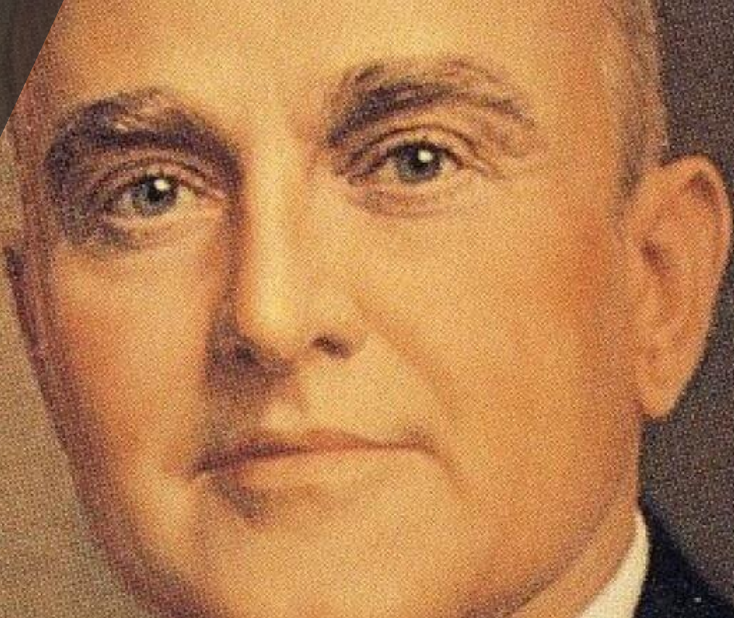




- **Yogananda in America**
1920, a message of unity
- Spread yoga
- **Charismatic presence**
Deep voice, distinctive look
- **Focus on Los Angeles**
A receptive audience for spiritual teachings

Wealthy Convert

- **James Lynn**, financier of Yogananda's vision
- **Los Angeles Center**
Established 1925 with Lynn's backing
- **Encinitas Retreat**
A gift during Yogananda's India visit
- **Global Reach**
500+ centers in 25 countries



Outline

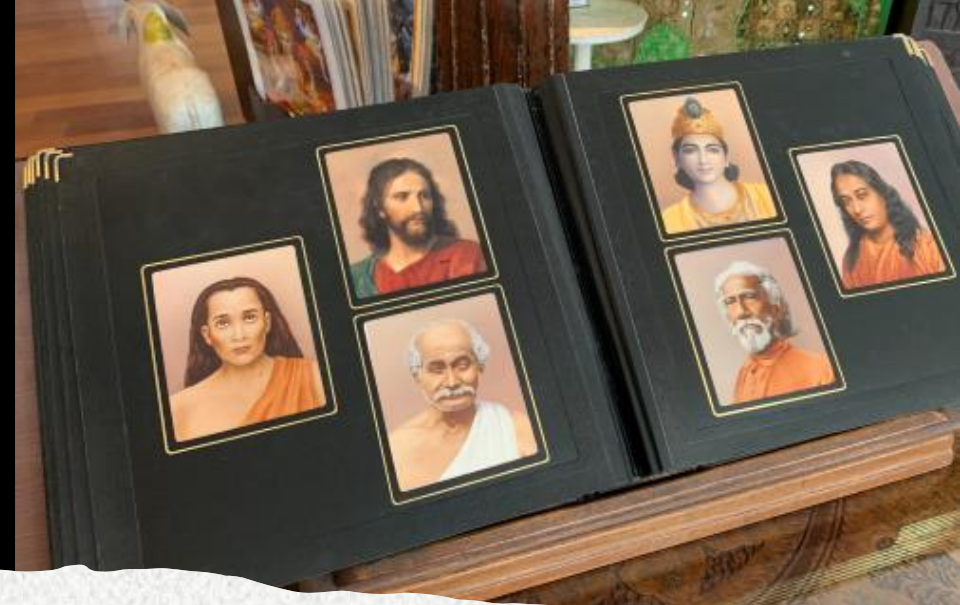
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Huge Impact
in 1960s





Yukteswar Giri



Babaji



Lahiri Mahasaya



Paramahansa
Yogananda

All four SRF gurus are featured on the popular Beatles album *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* (1967)

These were considered the **most significant people** to shape modern US culture.

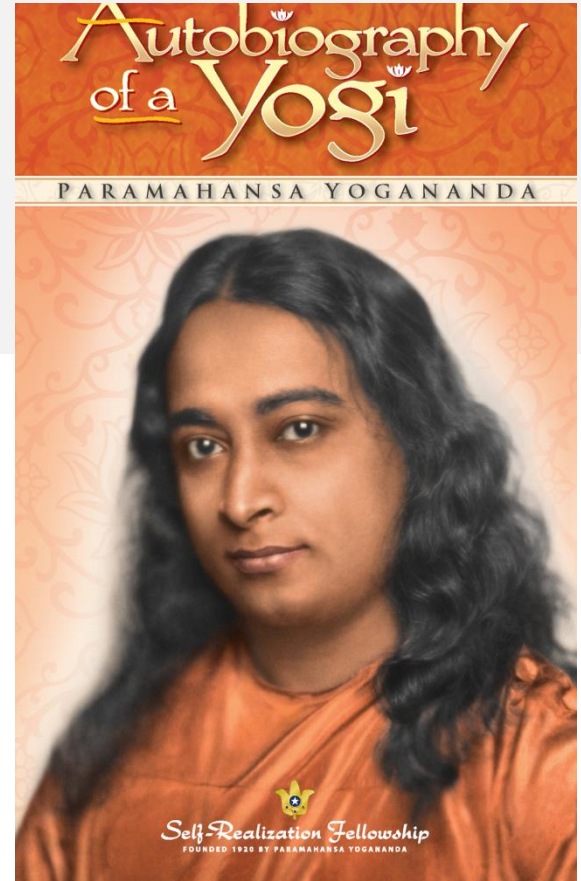
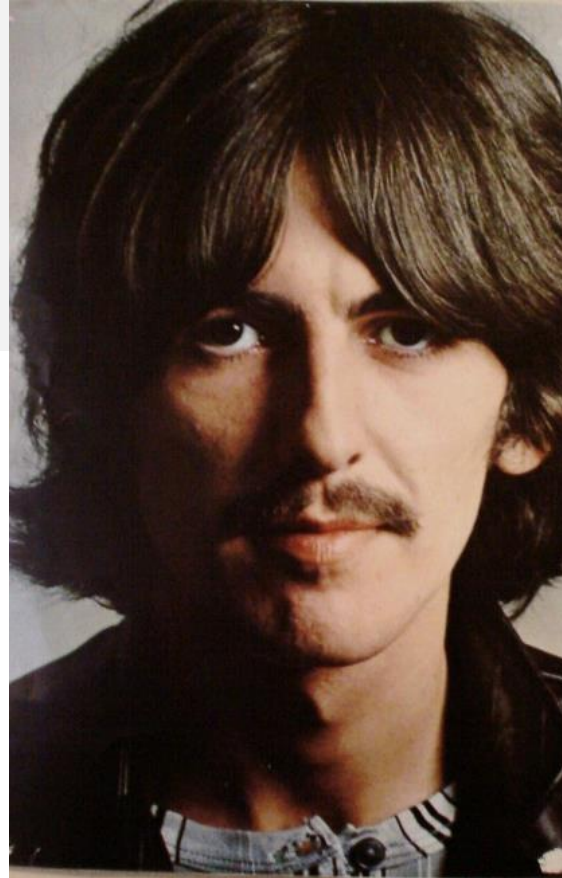


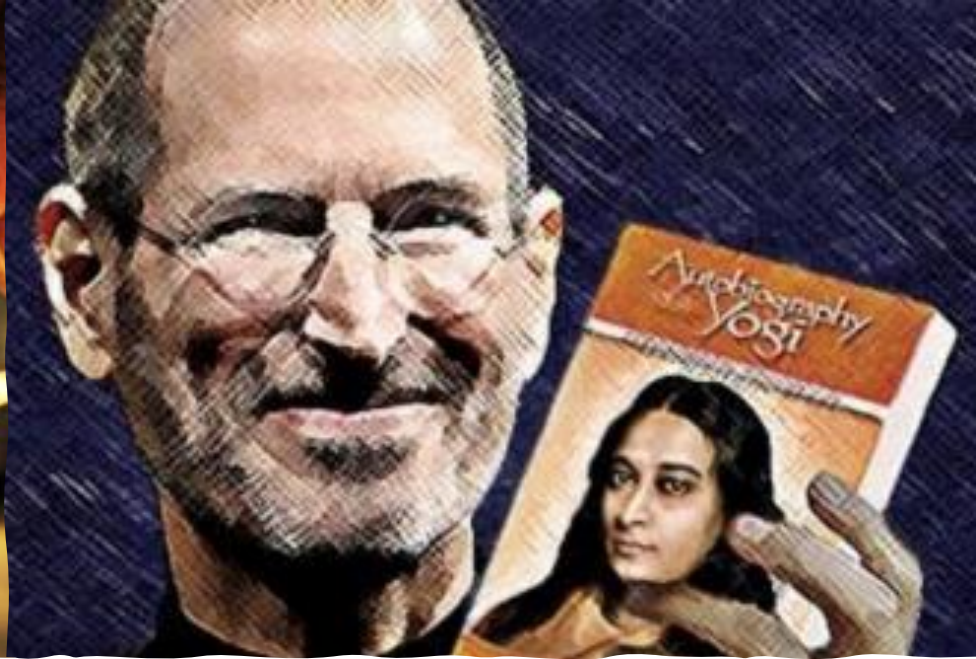
Impact

George Harrison, The Beatles:

"[I] just looked at the cover, and **he just zapped me with his eyes...** If I hadn't read that, I probably wouldn't have a life... I'd just be, you know, **some** horrible person with a pointless life. It just gave meaning to life..."

"The *Autobiography of a Yogi* is the book that I keep stacks of around the house. And **I give it out constantly, you know, to people.** You know, like when people need regrooving. Read this."





Huge Impact Today

- “**Steve Jobs** apparently had **only one book on his iPad**. Lo and behold, that book turns out to be the *Autobiography of a Yogi*.”
- Steve prearranged to **give every attendee a copy** of *Autobiography of a Yogi* at his memorial.

Yoga Blended into Our Culture

- **Yoga** and **meditation** are household words
- Taught in **community centers**, public **schools**, corporate wellness **seminars**, **malls**, **gyms**, **fitness clubs**.



START YOUR SUMMER OFF RIGHT WITH

YOGA

In the park

REDUCE YOUR STRESS | ENJOY THE OUTDOORS | RELAX YOUR BODY

FRIDAY JUNE 30TH
6:00AM - 8:00AM

DOWNTOWN PARK, 1234 BROADWAY AVE

PLEASE BRING YOUR OWN YOGA MAT

REGISTRATION INFORMATION
must register before June 20th
at Downtown Yoga Studio
\$25 Registration fee

FOR MORE INFORMATION
Please contact Sophie at 555-1234
or sophie@yogastudio.com
or visit www.yogastudio.com



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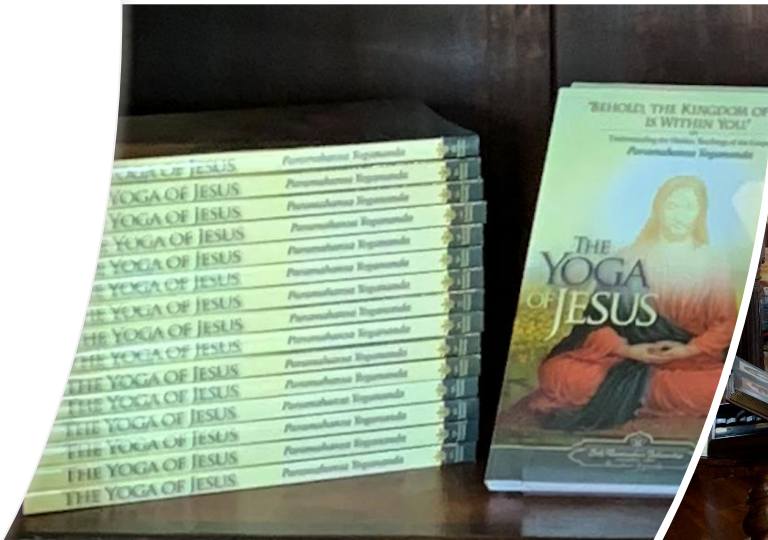
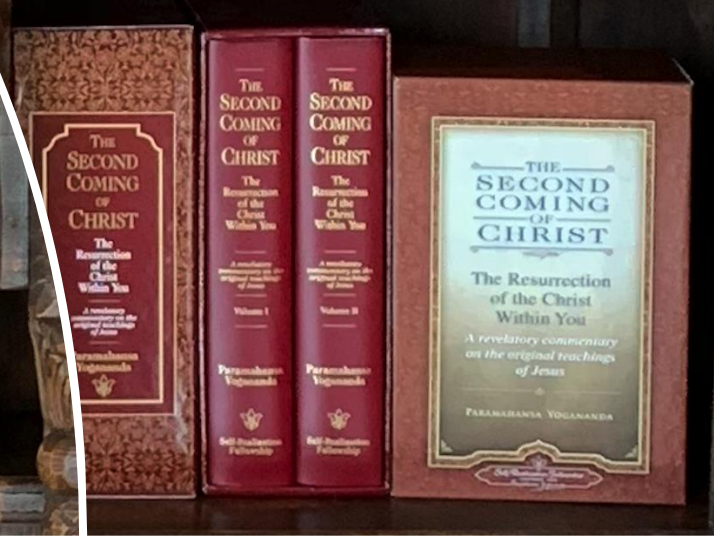
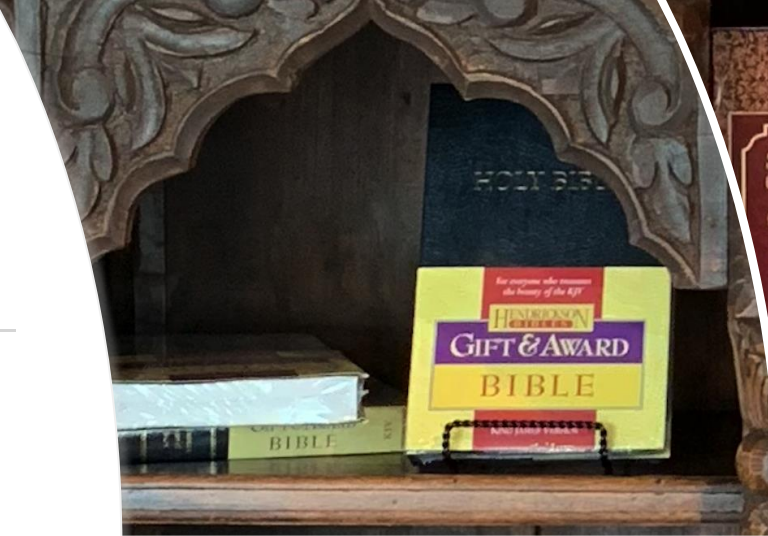


Paramahansa's Teaching

Yogananda said he was revealing **true Christianity** to the West.

With:

- *Holy Bible*
- *Second Coming of Christ.*
- *The Yoga of Jesus.*



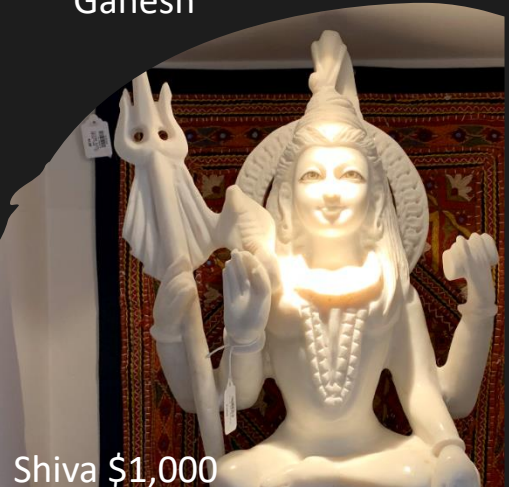
But what he brought was really **Hinduism**
repackaged using Christian words.
(Contextualization).



Ganesh



Krishna \$4,900

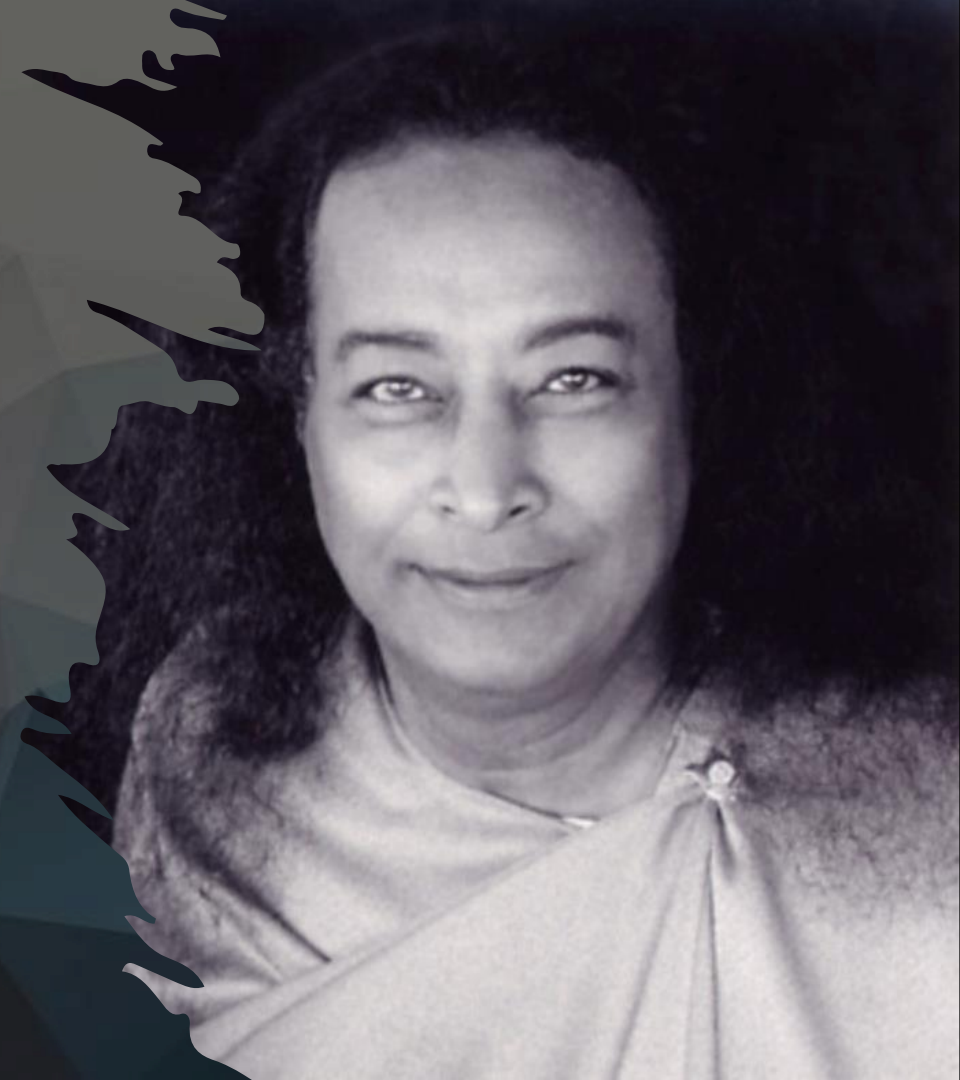


Shiva \$1,000



Can see full Hinduism from teachings on...

- God
- Creation
- Humans
- Sin/Evil
- Jesus
- Salvation



God

“Every grain of food you eat, every breath you take, is God.”

(Scientific Healing Affirmations, K882)

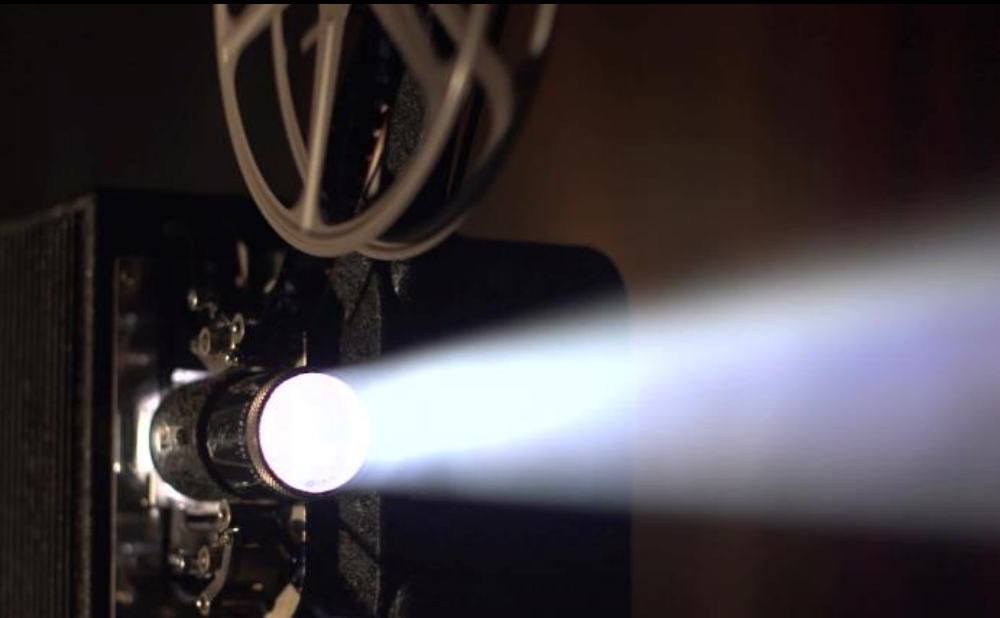
“Self-realization is the knowing in all parts of body, mind, and soul that you are now in possession of the kingdom of God; that you do not have to pray that it come to you; that **God’s omnipresence is your omnipresence**; and that all that you need to do is improve your knowing.”

- Pantheism: God is all and all is God
- Everything, including people, and even the matter of the universe, is divine.



Creation

- Spirit as the source of creation
- **The concept of *maya***
Universe as an illusion



Humans

- We are an illusion.
- True essence is divine.
- Self-realization:
Must recognize true nature

The Lotus Flowers
around the Encinitas
complex are
illustrations
of man realizing this
divinity within.



Sin & Evil

- Ignorance is the problem.
- We're duped into thinking everything is real, including our pain.
- There's no sin, no evil, no disease, no disharmony, no separateness.



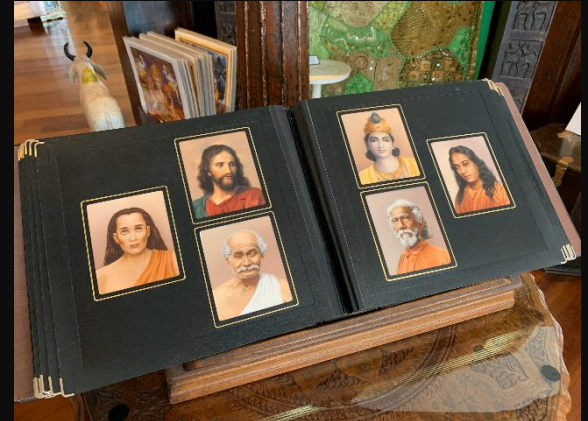


Karma & Reincarnation

- **Illusion (*maya*)**
Keeps people in **cycle of rebirth**.
- **Law of karma**
Actions from previous lives affect subsequent ones.
- Must **work out karma** through **many lifetimes**.

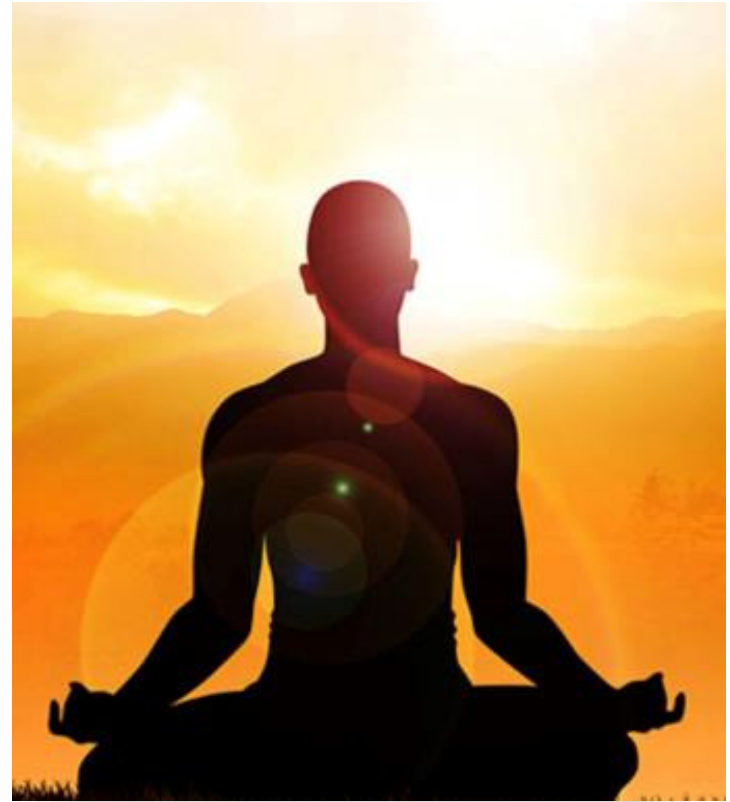
Jesus

- Jesus **ordinary man** who attained “**Christ Consciousness**”
- One of many sent to help
- **Crucifixion**
Did not die on the cross to provide salvation but **be an example** for us and show us the way to self-realization.



Salvation

- **Self-realization** (not forgiveness) is what we need.
- Our problem is **ignorance** of our divinity.
- We must **follow the example of Jesus** and become like Christ, resurrect the Christ within us, and **attain “Christ Consciousness”** for ourselves.
- The **“second coming”** of Jesus will be when the masses finally achieve this.





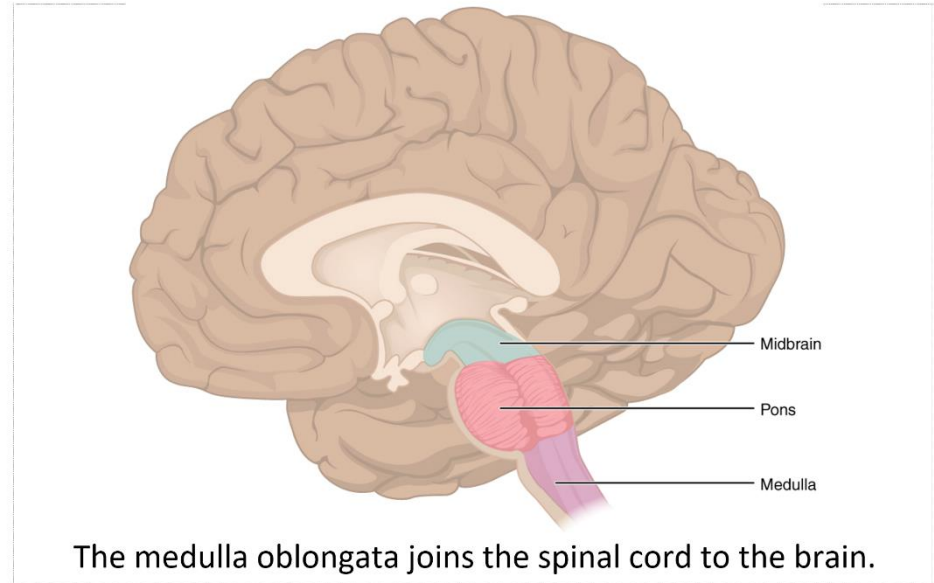
Kriya Yoga

- **Union Through Yoga**
Ancient roots, modern unawareness
- **Accelerated Evolution**
From a million years to three with Kriya Yoga
- **Direct Divine Access**
The core promise of Kriya Yoga practice

This is how he said it works...

Medulla Oblongata

- **Medulla Oblongata**
Doorway between mind and body;
Contact point for divine spirit per
Yogananda
- **Releases Vibratory Spirit Energy**
Creation to individual consciousness
- **Kriya Yoga**
Accessing and releasing vibratory
Spirit power



Direct Experience with the Divine

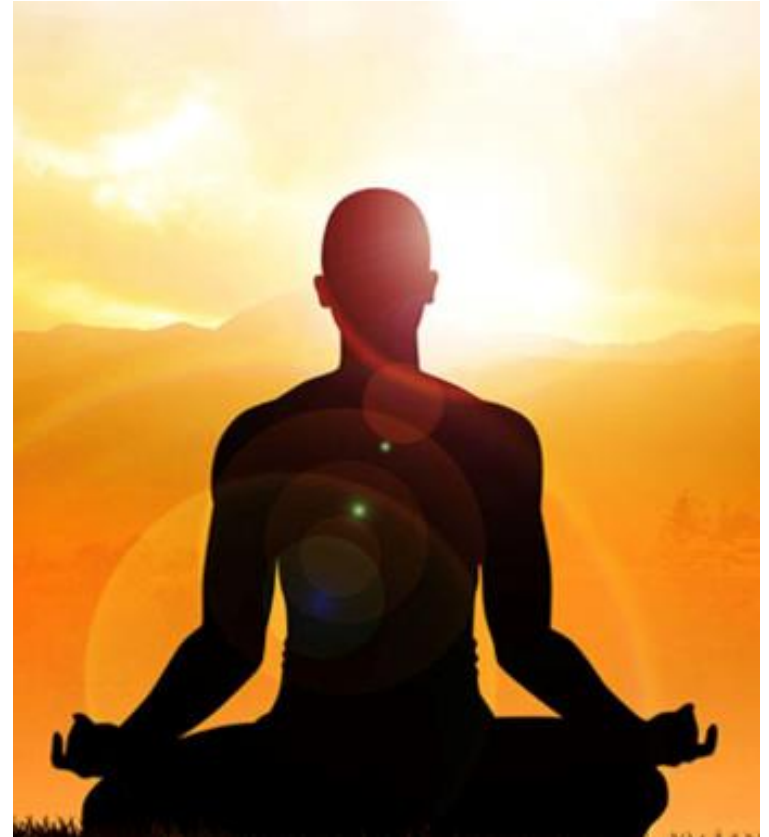
Through yoga, “God can be known, **not as a theological concept** but as an actual **personal experience**.” (*Yoga of Jesus*, Kindle 628, 629.)



Chanting and Affirmations

- Healing Power of the Mind
- Power of Affirmations

Material success, social success, physical healings, curing bad habits—anything



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Response to Pantheism

- **There's one God**
“For I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me.”
(Isaiah 46:9).
- **God is distinct from his creation**
“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, and your ways are not My ways.” This is the LORD’s declaration.
“For as heaven is higher than earth, so My ways are higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.”
(Isaiah 55:8, 9)



What the Bible says about Sin & Evil

- **Humans have serious sin problem**

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23)
"As it is written: 'There is none righteous, no, not one'" (Romans 3:10)

- **The Fall:** Genesis 3 account of humankind's corruption

- **Atonement for sin is necessary**

"And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission." (Hebrews 9:22)

- **Must be reconciled to God through Jesus's sacrifice**

"For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God" (1 Peter 3:18)





Response to Karma & Reincarnation

- **Karma**
No law of karma governing the universe, but God will hold all people accountable. **All people “will give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.” (1 Peter 4:5)**
- **Reincarnation**
We have only one life. The Bible says, **“it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment...” (Hebrews 9:27)**

Jesus & Salvation

- **Salvation**

The lie that we can be 'god' by recognizing inner divinity is from **Satan**.

"Shining morning star, how you have fallen from the heavens! ... You said to yourself: "I will ascend to the heavens... I will make myself like the Most High." (Isaiah 14:12-14)

"when you eat of it... you will be like God..." (Genesis 3:5)

- **Jesus**

Did not become a 'Christ' (God the Son at birth/incarnation). Was not showing us path to "**Christ Consciousness**".



The Bible

Christianity says the Bible alone is our textual authority for faith and conduct

- "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but **test the spirits** to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world." (1 John 4:1)
- "Sanctify them in the truth; **your word** is truth." (John 17:17)
- "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the **word of truth**." (2 Timothy 2:15)
- "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God **may be complete**, equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3:16, 17)
- "Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, **examining the Scriptures** daily to see if these things were so." (Acts 17:11)



Yogananda's Eisegesis

Eisegesis (ignoring the plain, ordinary meaning of the text and inserting one's own meaning instead).

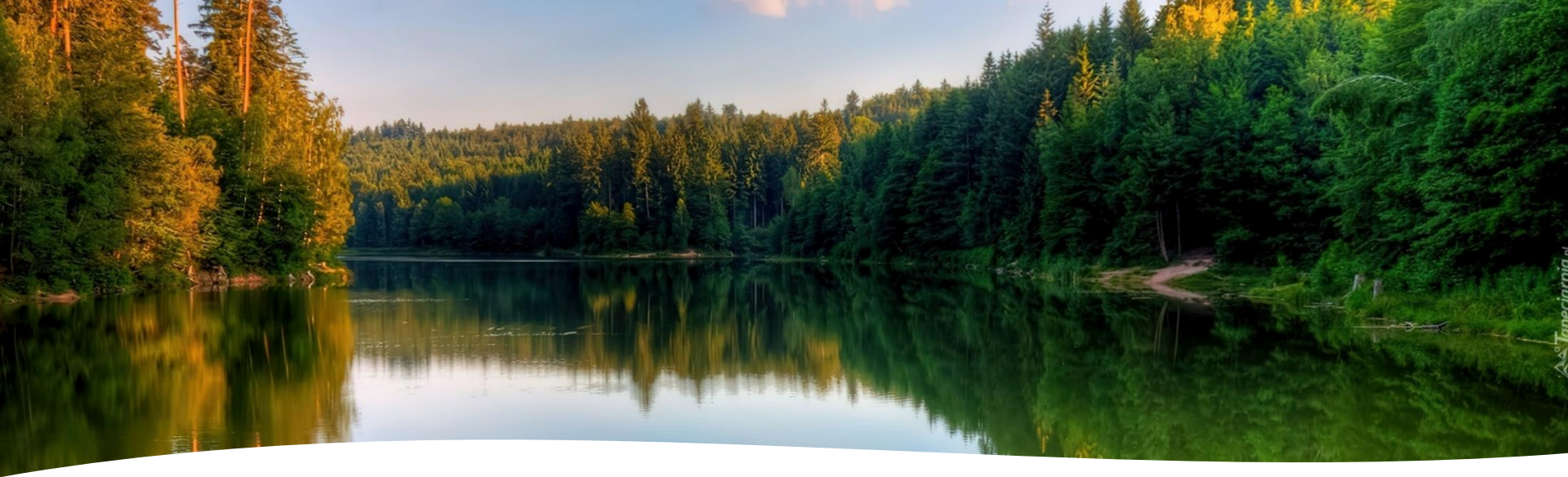
- ***Man shall live by the medulla oblongata?***
“Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God” (Mt. 4:4).
- ***The light of the body is the “third eye”?***
Matthew 6:22: “The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light.”



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Things for Hindus to Ponder

Christians can offer the following suggestions to Hindus who are interested in learning more about Christianity.

- *Jesus offers rest*
- *“Why not study the words of Jesus for yourself?”*
- *“Consider the uniqueness of Jesus”*

Important Hindu terms

Atman	Atman or the 'true self' is deep down inside our souls and this is Brahman.
Caste	Hindus believe all people are born into their caste based on karma. It is not possible to switch castes or marry outside one's caste. Four basic castes are: Brahmins, Vaishyas, Shudras, Dalits.
Dharma	The natural universal laws which must be observed to be happy and content. This Hindu word literally means 'religion.'
Enlightenment	The awareness that a person's true self is divine (Brahman).
Guru	A mentor or spiritual leader.
Karma	Actions in previous life determines effect of next life. Must accept suffering.
Liberation	Happens when a person breaks free from the cycle of rebirth through enlightenment.
Mantra	A phrase a person meditates on to invoke the powers of a deity, inviting it to enter them.
Maya	Everything else that is not Brahman is not real and called maya. Maya encompasses all physical objects, our feelings and emotions.
OM	OM is the mantra containing the 'primal vibrations' of the universe.
Swami	A religious teacher from a monastic order.
Reincarnation	Endless cycle of higher/lower lives (animals are lower, humans higher).

Questions

1. Do you think it's ok for a Christian to practice yoga? Why or why not
2. What's the difference between karma and sowing/reaping found in Galatians 6:7,8?
3. Have you met anyone who believed in Hinduism?
4. There are many alleged miracles mentioned in Paramahansa's autobiography. Do you think they really happened? Does the Bible say anything about false signs/miracles?
5. What are some differences between salvation in Christianity and salvation in SRF/Hinduism?



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More Info

More About Paramahansa Yogananda:

- See the paper this presentation is based on titled “**Paramahansa Yogananda and the Self-Realization Fellowship**” by Shawn Nelson, November 2018.

Christian Responses:

- Summary: Dean Halverson, ed., ***The Compact Guide to World Religions*** (Minneapolis, Minn.: Bethany House Publishers, 1996).
- Chapter 6 (The New Age Movement) and chapter 8 (Hindu-Based Cults) in Ron Rhodes, ***The Challenge of the Cults and New Religions*** (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001).
- More detailed and academic: See Douglas R. Groothuis, ***Jesus in an Age of Controversy*** (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Pub, 2002).
- New Age: J. Yutaka Amano and Norman L. Geisler, ***The Infiltration of the New Age*** (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Pub, 1989).

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