

## Yoga and Religion

There I said it, now, I will share with you how I personally feel about this.

Please follow along with me as I set up the scene: You are at church and the sermon is being given and you become inspired with love for God and filled with gratitude. You here the prayers and they fill your heart with joy... What an amazing feeling it is to then carry that love with you as you leave church and perhaps share your joy with others. Hence, where the inspiration to preach begins and is still with us today. How great a world would we live in if we all felt that way daily?

Now another scene: You've had a rough day, or your life just seems to be filling up with one stressful situation after the next. All of our emotions are trapped inside us, where do they go? Maybe you vent these on your mate, your children, your counselor, your doctor, or even your church leader. Why do we feel we need someone else to fix our anxieties? Our families offer compassion, our doctors may give us a pill, and our church leaders have many families to guide and can only give so much. (For which I personally have always been grateful for.) First off when our bodies are stressed our breathing becomes shallow, less oxygen moving through the body and into our brain function. Do we expect our cars to run with one flat tire? Of course, we do not. What happens to your car if it never receives an oil change or tune up? We need to take deep breaths everyday!! Our bodies need to move around and get our breath moving from the top of our heads to our toes!

Once again I set up the scene, now entering your local Yoga studio: We must remember yoga is personal, the first thing you do is set up your space. Then as class begins, you close your eyes and hear only your breath; focusing on the body and mind that god gave you. Thankful for that breath, your heart remembers joy and begins to rest. That gratitude is what inspires us to move, building strength, increasing flexibility; we know that this is what we need to stay healthy in body and mind. When our bodies move with the breath our state of mind can change to positive, and we may just find compassion within ourselves! For many that believe in God, we know that Great Spirit is with us throughout our practice, just as we know it is always with us never leaving our side. And, when our hearts are filled once again with joy; (who comes to mind)?

I have had many people accuse me of not being God worthy since I started my practice of Yoga many years ago. All of which have never tried yoga at my studio, and certainly do not know me at all. And all I can say is this, God is in my heart now just as he/she will always be and no amount of exercise will ever change that. Do any of my students know how I feel? Perhaps, but remember it's my personal choice. My inspiration to write this today comes from an old school friends post on face book; nothing will destroy the faith of those who live in the light...