“What is a Christian Perspective on Reiki?”

My friend is a Christian who practices Reiki and thinks that it’s the Holy Spirit working through her. She has a heart for healing and I don’t want to discourage her from pursuing that or deny that the Spirit is at work in her. But I fear that these counterfeits are keeping her from realizing her true potential in Christ.

I guess I have two questions: how can I lovingly discuss with her what the Bible says about these practices, when she doesn’t fully accept it as God’s Word; and can you tell me more about Reiki from a Christian perspective?

Thanks for your questions. It’s terribly difficult to reason with someone from the Scriptures if they do not already accept their Divine authority. If she’s open to doing some reading in the area, you may want to encourage her to look into what conservative scholarship has said about the inspiration, authority, and inerrancy of Scripture. *A General Introduction to the Bible,* by Norman Geisler and William Nix is a fairly exhaustive treatment of the subject. Many books on Christian apologetics have chapters dealing with the trustworthiness of the Bible. One book you may want to recommend is *I’m Glad You Asked,* by Ken Boa and Larry Moody. It is an excellent, beginner’s level text in apologetics and has a chapter entitled, “How Accurate is the Bible?,” which might prove helpful. Suffice it to say, until a Christian accepts the Bible as the inspired word of God, it is difficult to use it as the final authority for proper Christian belief and practice. Such a person can always claim that the texts they don’t like are simply not inspired by God, etc. Thus, this is a critical issue to deal with.

Having said that, I think you are exactly right about your friend. There are very good grounds for rejecting Reiki if one is willing to listen to the Bible. In a book entitled *Basic Questions on Alternative Medicine*, a corporate project by members of the Center for Bioethics and Human Dignity (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Kregel Publications, 1988), there is a short chapter on Reiki (pp. 61-63). I will draw some information from that chapter. Although Reiki claims to be an "ancient healing practice that Buddha (and Jesus) used," all records of it were lost. It was allegedly rediscovered by Mikao Usui, a Zen Buddhist monk, in the mid-1800s "during a psychic experience." Additionally, it is claimed that details about lost aspects of the practice have "been revealed through channeling." Channeling is the New Age term for mediumship and involves contact with, and usually possession by, "spirit guides." The authors of this chapter state that a second-degree Reiki practitioner "learns about spirit guides and how to contact and use them in healing sessions." They further state that third degree Reiki masters give "complete control of healing sessions to their spirit guides." Healing sessions appear to be based on the use of "life-energy" (i.e. *ki*, *chi*, or *prana*), which is sent from the practitioner into the patient's body.

The greatest concern would seem to be the identity of the "spirit guides." Since they are typically contacted in ways expressly forbidden in Scripture, and since they advocate unbiblical ideas and practices, it is honestly quite difficult to view them as anything other than the biblical demons. The authors of this chapter conclude by stating: "Reiki is antithetical to biblical Christianity. Channeling is a way of communicating with spirits to obtain information not otherwise accessible. It is denounced in the Bible as sorcery, mediumship, and spiritism (Lev. 19:26, 31; 20:6; Deut. 18:9-14…)."

It seems to me that Reiki has the potential to be spiritually

harmful. I would pray for your friend and encourage her to give serious consideration to the biblical warnings mentioned above.

I wish you all the best with your friend.

Shalom,

Michael Gleghorn
Probe Ministries

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A former Reiki master who has become a Christian wrote this testimony to Sue Bohlin:

"Reiki is something that is very mis-stated, and misunderstood, by those outside of the Reiki circle. Having been in it, I can tell you everything you need to know. I will tell you right up front that it was a hard one to shake, that it was VERY real and beneficial, but that it is decidedly non-Christian.

"I highly recommend anyone looking into it to just stop. Prayer is very powerful, and is our direct link to God through Christ. If we petition directly for healing, it may come. If we have faith that it WILL come, our chances are far better. As with anything we are to test, does Reiki point either the practitioner or the client to Christ? No. Big no. It uses a Universal energy that is non-personal and can be manipulated. You can pray to God, to the Earth Mother, to Mother/Father God, etc. But it in fact leads you AWAY from Christ.

"It is all about what you FEEL in your hands, what you FEEL in your spirit, what the client FEELS in their body/emotions/spirit. In that regard it is very very real. My hands get hot, I hit a place of extreme peace and quiet, I heal people who feel a tingle or hot spot or whatever. Their headache, menstrual cramps, emotional distress, bruises,

whatever, goes away. But is God glorified? No way. Is self glorified? Yes.

“If it is so good and right, why do practitioners go on to other things once they hit Master level? The teacher who taught me was going on to accupuncture and other new Reiki teachings. Always something else, something new, something you NEED to be a true master. Sound familiar? It is like everything else in this world, but Christ. There is no lasting peace, no connection with the universe, there is a big void in your soul that is not going away. WE ALL NEED CHRIST! I told my wife when she questioned my stopping in my search for peace once I found Christ (she had followed my years of searching through New Age theologies, etc) that Jesus Christ filled the hole. All the puzzle pieces fell into place and everything suddenly made sense. For a long time after that I tried to make Reiki fit into Christianity but it didn’t. I prayed a lot about it. God firmly and solidly showed me in Scripture how it couldn’t work. The two major things against it, regardless of how well it works, are 1) it does not point anyone to Christ and in facts points people away from a single triune God, and 2) it is no different than all the pagan rituals in the Old Testament that would have people pray to the rain god or fertility god, etc. They must have worked or people wouldn’t have kept praying to them, and God’s people wouldn’t have been attracted to them. But either way it isn’t what GOD has asked us to do. Everything we need is in Him. We can pray for any healing we need.”

“Why Do You Believe the Bible

is Inspired and the Qur’an is Not?”

I have read several of your articles on Islam, and have noted you state several times your belief that the Qur’an is not an inspired text, and the Bible is. Whilst I agree with you on this, I would be interested in the reasons and evidence you have for this belief.

Although I don’t know how others might respond to your question, my own view is this. First, the Bible claims to be an inspired text: “All Scripture is inspired by God” (2 Tim. 3:16). Of course, this does NOT prove that it really is inspired. However, if the Bible nowhere claimed to be inspired, then we would hardly have good reason to believe that it was. Thus, what the text claims for itself is important.

Second, I think there is strong evidence to embrace biblical inspiration for a number of reasons. For sake of time, let me mention only one: the accurate fulfillment (in the life, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus) of very specific Messianic prophecies (made centuries before Jesus was even born). The specificity of these prophecies, and their accurate fulfillment in the life of Jesus, constitutes strong evidence for divine inspiration. After all, who else knows the future with that kind of accuracy other than an omniscient God?

Finally, if the Bible is inspired by God, then it would seem logically impossible for the Qur’an to also be divinely inspired. Why? Because both texts teach very different doctrines, doctrines that are not logically consistent with one another. For example, the Qur’an denies the doctrine of the Trinity and the doctrine of the Incarnation, etc. But the Bible teaches both doctrines. Clearly, both texts cannot be

correct, for this would violate the law of non-contradiction. Thus, if the Bible is inspired by God, then it logically follows that the Qur'an is not (because it contradicts clear biblical teaching on a number of important doctrines).

Hope this helps.

Shalom,

Michael Gleghorn
Probe Ministries

"You Anti-Mormons Haven't Come Up with Anything New Since 1830"

I was briefly looking over your site. I find it amusing when I have nothing else to do to see if you anti-Mormons have come up with anything new since 1830. It appears you have not. For members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints like myself, we indulge in the challenge of finding answers to such shortsighted claims as are found on your site. To help in these boring times I would ask for something different. To start out if you would quit using phrases like "orthodox christians", and "historic christianity", it would first eliminate a great deal of confusion for those whom you would blind by your craftiness. After all what does it matter if people believed something for thousands of years. If it is wrong it will always be so. Thus, just because "orthodox christians" believed in the trinity for hundreds of years that doesn't make it any more true than when it was spawned by

uninspired men. This will force your mind to think of new lies to tell people as you divert them from the Spirit of Truth. However I'm sure you will misconstrue and misrepresent my words. But at least you will know that you had to shade the truth to advance your own cause.

Thanks for reading the article on Mormon Doctrine of God. It is difficult to take your response seriously since you are simply making personal attacks, which involve name-calling and cynical remarks. This hardly represents the attitude the Bible teaches believers to have. 1 Peter 3:15 states, "But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you the hope you have, but do this with gentleness and reverence." I see none of that displayed in your remarks here. Your conduct and attitude says a great deal about your religious faith. I hope this is not typical of the attitude of the Mormon Church. A biblical critique of my article on a more scholarly level would be more profitable. Not only a biblical critique of my work but also a biblical defense of your position leaving out the sarcasm and personal insults would be very profitable for all parties. Until then, I cannot take your comments seriously.

Patrick Zukeran
Probe Ministries

"Your Article on A Course in Miracles Is Very Disturbing"

I found your article on A Course in Miracles very disturbing. This person is telling me that his opinion is the one I should follow because he is a Christian. I have been a practicing Catholic most of my life and I was under the impression that

Christians are supposed to be charitable in that they gently pose their opinions, not slap you over the head with the idea of If You Don't Follow Me You Are Not Following Jesus!! I do have a STRONG belief in Jesus but I do not profess any organized church as my own. Does this mean that because I don't go to a church every Sunday that I also will burn in the fires of Eternal Damnation? Please excuse me. I have been reading information on "A Course In Miracles" and as the information I have read has stated this course can be interpreted many different ways. However, so can the Bible, and this person takes the idea that Satan has written "A Course In Miracles" and that anyone taking it will meet the devil and his minions face to face a bit too far. Please excuse me once again but God forbid that any of us should follow Jesus' path and meet the devil face to face and say through the strength Jesus brings "Get Thee Behind Me Satan"!

Mother of 2

Thank you for writing with your concerns about our article on "A Course in Miracles." Although I didn't write the article, it is my privilege to respond to your letter as one "Mother of 2" to another.

This article was written to educate and warn people about the true source of the Course, because most people don't know what the Bible says and therefore they don't recognize spiritual danger. As a mom, you can recognize dangers that your kids can't because they aren't as well-educated in the ways of the world as you are, and because you know more about how life works than they do. The author of this article, Russ Wise, has been studying the occult for many years and is extremely well-versed in the many doors into it. He wrote this article in the same spirit in which we as moms lovingly warn our kids, because it really IS a doorway to demons even if it looks innocent and spiritual on the outside.

As I read your letter, it seems to me that you're angry about

religious things that have nothing to do with either this article or The Course. I can understand that. . . I was REALLY angry with God and with the church when I stopped going in high school. I found out later that my anger wasn't about God at all, it was about the frustrations of the emptiness of organized religion when what my soul longed for was a personal relationship with God. It took me several years to discover that I could have that relationship, through Jesus.

I'm glad to hear you have a strong belief in Jesus. That's great, since He has a strong belief in YOU! [smile] And that's why we have articles like this one on The Course, because it very subtly attacks His rightful place as King of Kings and Lord of Lords by making him just another spiritual guru, and one of many ways to God. But Jesus said He was the ONLY way to the Father, and proved it by dying on the cross in our place and coming back to life three days later.

To get back to your original letter, I would suggest that perhaps it would be good to do some research on your own—find out if it really is true that saying that The Course will lead one to demons is going "a bit too far." Either it's true or it's not. If it's not, there's nothing to fear. If it is, that's a very scary proposition. . . and that's why we posted this article.

I pray God's good and rich blessings on your life and heart.

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“Does God Saying Something Is Right Make It Right?”

My daughter’s philosophy professor posed the question, “Does God saying something is right make it right?” He says that if the answer is “yes” then God is arbitrary, and thus not loving, and if the answer is “No” then right and wrong had to exist prior to God and He is not all powerful. (The professor says that the later is the Catholic view, and seems to indicate that these are very early levels of philosophical thought.)

On a Web site about Socrates’ ideas on the good life (http://academics.vmi.edu/psy_dr/socrates.htm), there is this paragraph:

> *In the Euthyphro the main question raised is: Are right/good acts right/good just because God (or the gods) says so, or does God say so because they are right/good? If it is just because God says so, then God’s commandments seem arbitrary. And what if God does not exist? Does anything go? On the other hand, if God’s commandments are made for a reason, i.e. if there is something else (other than God’s arbitrary decree) about bad acts that makes them bad, what is it? And is God then irrelevant to ethics?*

The answer to the next-to-the-last question is the option your daughter’s professor didn’t offer, namely, the nature or character of God. Theologian J. Oliver Buswell said this about God’s law: “The divine character is expressed by the divine will in the divine law” (*A Systematic Theology,* 1:264). What God says is good is good because it reflects the character of God which is good. What makes things bad is being against God’s character. If God just plucked a law out of thin air, He would be arbitrary. However, seeking some other source of

right and wrong wasn't the only other option. God's law reflects God's character. Thus, the answer to the last question in the above paragraph is no—God isn't irrelevant to ethics. Morality is grounded in His nature and made known by His will.

I hope this helps.

Rick Wade
Probe Ministries

"Did Christianity Really Come From Zoroastrianism?"

I am a Christian and have been one all of my life. I am moderately well versed in apologetics. As far as I can tell, as of now, there is only one real argument against Christianity and that comes from Zoroastrianism. I do not know how much you know about this religion, but it was founded by someone called Zoroaster or Zarathushtra who was born around 1200 BC and has a holy text called the "avesta." It used to be one of the most popular religions in the world, but has since dwindled down to about 140,000 members, most in India.

The argument that people make is that the Jewish ideal of a savior comes from Zoroastrianism, apparently there is a strong savior figure in Zoroastrianism that will die, become resurrected, and then judge the dead. People claim that when the Jews were taken in Babylon they were exposed to this faith and adopted parts of it as their own; they say this explains why the idea of a savior figure emerges in the parts of the Bible that were written during or after the Jews' stay in Babylon. People will then go on to say that Zoroastianism

developed many cults, particularly among Romans, about the time of Jesus that claimed a divine figure will come to earth and defeat "the bull" or something like Satan or the devil, and then judge everyone. These people claim that this made the acceptance of Jesus much more likely and also point out that the three wisemen that went to see Jesus were called "magi" which is a priest in Zoroastrianism. One of the tenants of Zoroastrianism says that the savior figure will be found by following a certain star, which is what the three wisemen did. Also Zoroastrianism seems to hint that the savior will be born by a virgin (but I am not sure of that).

People would claim that the prophecies that are fulfilled in the New Testament are added in by the authors and would counter the martyrdom of the authors as evidence for belief by saying that they eventually grew to believe it, which is possible according to modern day psychology. They would then say that Jesus was either made up, or a historical figure that happened to be very intelligent but also insane in a way that was not apparent to people around him. A very unlikely event, but one that must be used to explain something amazing as the spread of Christianity according to them.

Now I have of course not cited any evidence for my references on the argument for Zoroastrianism leading to Christianity which is because much of what I have learned is from people who I think reference A History of Zoroastrianism by Mary Boyce. I have not read that book (it is in two volumes I believe), so I cannot judge its arguments, but from a purely historical point of view, if Zoroastrianism really said all the aforementioned material before Jesus was around and then it traveled to Babylon, it does seem like a good argument against Christianity.

I must admit that there some things wrong with this theory, one is that Zoroastrianism is very big about purification by fire, which Christianity never mentions, although it would be possible to think that Zoroastrianism was diluted by the time

it got to Babylon and Christianity also does talk about hell being very fiery. I do not know how much of the language the avesta is written in we can actually translate, maybe all, maybe not that much. And I also am well aware of people distorting facts to suit their own purpose and I have no idea how respected Mary Boyce is among historians. I would also like you to check out the web page www.geocities.com/Pentagon/6315/religion/zoro.html as it argues that Christianity is the result of a cult and cites sources.

Please tell me your thoughts on this matter and on any other argument that Christianity resulted from cults or other religions; it has been pulling at my heart for a while.

Thanks so much for writing! The argument that Judaism/Christianity borrowed from Zoroastrianism is, as yet, unproven. In fact, if any borrowing was done, it was quite possibly the other way around (i.e. Zoroastrianism borrowed from Judaism/Christianity).

In the first place, the evidence actually indicates that Zoroaster wasn't even born until about the time of the Babylonian Captivity. Kenneth Boa states that his dates are sometimes given as 628-551 B.C. (*Cults, World Religions and the Occult* [Illinois: Victor Books, 1990], 45). Other scholars give similar, though not identical, dates (e.g. Herzfeld, 570-500 B.C.; Jackson, 660-583 B.C – see W.S. Lasor, "Zoroastrianism," in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Walter Elwell [Michigan: Baker Book House, 1984], 1202). If these dates are even relatively accurate then it is quite possible that Judaism did not borrow from Zoroastrianism. Rather, it may actually have been Zoroaster who borrowed from the religion of the Jewish captives in Babylon.

It is certainly true that Zoroaster spoke of such things as "… the coming of a savior and the resurrection of the body," etc. (Ibid., 44). But he may have borrowed these ideas from the

Jewish captives in Babylon. Indeed, it appears that all of these ideas can be found in the Jewish Scriptures PRIOR to the Babylonian Captivity.

For instance, even if we grant the contention of the person who wrote the web article you referred me to, that Isaiah offers the first, full monotheistic conception of God (e.g. Isaiah 43:10-13), it by no means follows that Isaiah borrowed this conception from Zoroastrianism! Indeed, Isaiah wrote his book BEFORE Zoroaster was even born! The period in which Isaiah was writing was roughly that of 740-680 B.C. Thus, if there was any borrowing, it was Zoroaster borrowing from Isaiah—not vice-versa. Besides this, LaSor argues that Zoroaster was not a true monotheist anyway, but a polytheist. At most he was a dualist: "He exalted Ahura Mazda…as supreme among the gods…and viewed the world as an agelong struggle between Ahura Mazda and Angra Mainyu" (Ibid., 1202).

In addition, the coming of a savior is promised as early as Gen. 3:15 in the Bible. This was long before the birth of Zoroaster. Genesis was probably written between 1450-1410 B.C. And there are numerous other Messianic prophecies before the Babylonian Captivity (e.g. in Numbers 24:17 (Law); Psalm 22—especially v. 1, 7-8, 14-18 (writings); Isaiah 52:12-53:12 (Prophets)). All of these prophecies were given BEFORE the birth of Zoroaster and the development of Zoroastrianism. Thus, we need not think that Judaism/Christianity borrowed the idea of a Savior from Zoroastrianism; likely it was just the reverse.

The resurrection of the body seems clearly alluded to in Job 19:25-27. Although this book may have been written during the time of Solomon (approx. 965 B.C.), the events themselves are almost certainly from the patriarchal period (approx. 2000 B.C.). Additionally, Psalm 16:10, written by David long before the Babylonian Captivity also alludes to the physical resurrection of the Messiah (see Acts 2:25-32). Thus, the idea of bodily resurrection (including the resurrection of the

Messiah) would seem to predate the advent of Zoroastrianism.

Finally, angels are mentioned in the Bible frequently in Genesis (e.g. 3:24; 19:1; 28:12; etc). Thus, the biblical doctrine of angels is also prior to the beginning of Zoroastrianism.

As for the NT authors adding in Messianic prophecies after the fact, it is simply false. For example, a copy of the text of Isaiah, dating to around the 2nd cent. B.C., was found among the Dead Sea Scrolls. This copy of Isaiah is thus PRIOR to the birth of Christ. The prophecies are genuine. Not only this, they also predate the origin of Zoroastrianism as I mentioned previously.

As for Jesus being either unhistorical or insane, both conjectures are entirely without merit. The first flies in the face of an immense amount of information from both ancient Christian and non-Christian sources that were roughly contemporary to Jesus. For instance, aside from the NT and early Christian writers, there are references to Jesus in the Talmud, Josephus, Tacitus, Pliny the Younger, etc. The second notion, that Jesus was insane, is pure speculation with virtually no evidence whatsoever to support it. People say all sorts of strange things, but the evidence in support of these theories is flimsy in the extreme. And the evidence against such ideas is truly overwhelming.

I hope this sets your mind at rest a little. The ties between Judaism/Christianity and Zoroastrianism are certainly interesting, but the evidence is insufficient to say that the former borrowed from the latter. Indeed, if any borrowing was done, it was likely Zoroastrianism borrowing from Judaism/Christianity.

God bless you,

Michael Gleghorn, Ph.D.
Probe Ministries

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I thank you for answering my question. I would just like to add to that response, which detailed how the Jews did not "steal" from Zoroastrianism, that in Deuteronomy 18:10 the Jews are forbidden to have anyone "pass through fire," a practice that Zoroastrianism used and adopted. The passage goes on to say that they are forbidden to do many things that the other pagan cults did, such as the Zoroastrians. That would suggest that the adoption of Zoroastrian traditions would be unlikely considering that they were forbidden to have anything to do with them.

Thanks, _____, for this addendum!

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries Webmistress

"I want to know more about Buddhism, but your Christianity is garbage!"

While I was interested in your article on Buddhism, one small statement disturbed me: "The resurrection of Christ is a proven historical fact." What (excuse my French) a load of bollocks. It is not a true historical fact. It is a story perpetuated by weak minds and altered over the ages to suit the ruling organizations' needs, wants and sick individual agendas. Christianity is not about the care of people, it is living your life caring about little other than a false god, doing wrongs against others and expecting some sort of forgiveness at the end … what ever that may be. That in

essence is why the teachings of Buddha like you say it is a way of life and can never be compared to any religion.

Thank you for your time.

Yes, I will excuse your French. I do not think that represents the spirit of Buddha's teachings very well. On the resurrection, please go to the Probe Ministries web site, www.probe.org. Look for two articles, Resurrection: Fact or Fiction and Cruci-Fiction and Resuscitation. I hope these articles help. The resurrection is indeed an historical event.

I would caution you on calling the people of Greek, Roman and Jewish times, people of weak minds. The foundation of our philosophy, our language, foundation for medicine and science were given to us by the Greeks. The Romans gave us the foundation for our great governement here in the U.S., and the Jewish people gave the world a foundation for moral laws. They have given human civilization a tremendous contribution; I would be very careful in calling them people of weak minds. I do not think Buddha would approve of such statements, which reflect an arrogant spirit. Humility was a virtue of Buddha's teachings.

The story was not altered to fit the ruling organizations' needs. When the gospel was first preached, the Christians were not in power. The Romans and the Jewish authorities sought to destroy this new faith, not twist it to meet their needs. The New Testament has not changed in 2000 years. We have over 24,000 ancient manuscripts dating back to the first century. They remain consistent in their message. Please reveal the evidence that shows where the textual evidence reveals a change in the message of the New Testament. Scholars have not found any evidence. It seems you have—please reveal the specific changes made and where.

Chrisitanity has done tremendous good over the centuries. More hospitals, orphanages, schools, homeless shelters, colleges,

and rescue centers have been built in the name of Jesus than any other person who ever lived. In fact, soon I am going to the Philippines for a medical mission and aid mission to the orphanages there.

I perceive you may have a personal reason for hating Christianity. Obviously it is not for these that you listed. Let us maintain a cordial spirit governed by integrity and friendly discussion. If this is not possible, this will be my final response. Thank you.

Patrick Zukeran

Dear Mr. Zukeran,

Thank you for your E Mail. Between the time that I wrote that letter and the time that I received your letter I met a man that let me see that what a person says and what a person does and thinks are two different things. He sounded to me like I probably looked to you in my initial letter.

Thank you for responding and if you have any attachments on Buddhism I would be most appreciative as many of my personal beliefs are similar to Buddhism and I have a growing interest and would like to know more about a variety of subjects related to and including Buddhism.

See Also Probe Answers Our E-mail:

- I Would Become A Christian Except that It's Based on Lies and Deception
- You Don't Really Understand Buddhism

“Is Tai Chi Always Related to Eastern Meditation Practices?”

I was interested to read your response to the email regarding Christians training in martial arts and I agree with it. I have a related question. Is Tai Chi always related to Eastern meditation practices? I like the peacefulness and gracefulness of the movements but I am hesitant to learn it myself as I fear it is another form Eastern meditation.

You ask a very good question. In *Encyclopedia of New Age Beliefs,* the chapter on “The Martial Arts” has a number of interesting quotes, comments and practical advice useful for Christians considering involvement in the martial arts (Ankerberg and Weldon, Eugene, Oregon: Harvest House Publishers, 1996; pp. 351-378).

Probably the first question we need to answer is whether or not Eastern meditation is inherently bound up with Tai Chi. Can the physical exercises be separated from the meditative elements of Tai Chi? Historically, “the development of Tai Chi is often credited to Chang San-Feng (ca. 1260-1368)…His strong interest in the I Ching and other occult pursuits were well known and, in part, eventually led him to develop Tai Chi” (Ankerberg & Weldon, 363). The origin of Tai Chi appears to have strongly influenced the philosophical rationale for its various movements. For instance, one text states: “[T]he movements of Tai Chi Chuan and the [I Ching] hexagrams upon which they are based are both methods of describing the circulation of psychic energy in the body of the meditator” (Da Liu, *Tai Chi Chuan and I Ching,* New York: Perennial/Harper

& Row, 1978; cited in Ankerberg & Weldon, 366).

But does this mean that the physical movements cannot be separated from the Eastern meditation practices? It seems to depend on who you ask. One book on Tai Chi states, “The great majority [in China]…have always engaged in it, and do so still, quite without mystic or religious purpose” (Edward Maisel, *Tai Chi for Health*, New York: Dell/Delta, 1972; cited in Ankerberg & Weldon, 369). However, another source declares, “The ancient and elegant system of Chinese exercise known as T’ai Chi Ch’uan is designed primarily to maintain and enhance health by giving full expression to the life-force, or ch’i, of the universe, embodied in each of us…Tai Chi is more than a mere physical exercise…it is a silent meditation, an energizing exercise…a daily ritual and prayer…It embodies the vibrant philosophy of Taoism…” (Jerry Mogul, “Tai Chi Chuan: A Taoist Art of Healing,” Part One, *Somatics: The Magazine-Journal of the Bodily Arts and Sciences,* Autumn 1980; cited in Ankerberg & Weldon, 369).

Personally, I would be hesitant to say that Tai Chi exercise programs ALWAYS incorporate Eastern meditation practices. However, it would probably be true to say that they OFTEN incorporate such practices. Thus, I would be extremely careful about becoming involved with Tai Chi. Here are three important principles to help one in making a wise, informed decision about a Tai Chi exercise program:

1. What is the world-view of the instructor teaching the class? If the instructor embraces Eastern philosophical and religious ideas this will almost certainly come out in how the class is conducted. Ankerberg and Weldon write, “In large measure, the religious or nonreligious nature of martial arts instruction depends more on the instructor than on any other factor” (354). If the instructor embraces Eastern ideas, I would definitely avoid the class.

2. “It may also be prudent to observe an advanced class. This

will help the prospective student determine whether Eastern philosophy is taught only as the practitioner progresses" (Erwin de Castro, et al., "Enter the Dragon?" Part 2, prepublication copy, *Christian Research Journal*, 1994; cited in Ankerberg & Weldon, 373). Again, if you notice Eastern ideas surfacing in advanced classes, I would avoid even beginning your training there.

3. Carefully seek God's guidance in prayer.

Like many of the issues we face in life, I doubt whether this one is completely black or white. However, I would carefully avoid involvement in any form of Tai Chi which incorporates Eastern thought and practices. Since many programs likely do incorporate such things, I would be very cautious about becoming involved in this discipline. However, if you are able to find a completely non-religious program, taught by an instructor who does not hold any Eastern philosophical and religious ideas, and if you have carefully sought God's guidance in prayer and have a clean conscience about participating, then I doubt that the physical exercises are somehow wrong or sinful in themselves. That's my opinion, at any rate.

God bless you,

Michael Gleghorn
Probe Ministries

"Magic: The Gathering is

Better than Other Bad Stuff Kids Can Get Into”

This article has been removed while we do further research.

“Is Magic: The Gathering’ OK For Kids?”

This article has been removed while we research this topic again.