

Aug 07, 2010

Julia Roberts Hindu? Who knew?! Sarah Palin next?

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Perhaps we should add some words to Julia Roberts' new movie title and make it *Eat, Pray, Love, Chant, Pose*.

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In her September [Elle](#) magazine cover story, Roberts announces that since her film-making sojourn in India, she and her family now worship as Hindus and go together to a temple to "chant and pray and celebrate. I'm definitely a practicing Hindu."

Roberts, who was brought up Christian, has already named her production company Red Om Films," drawing on the mystical syllable Hindus say encompasses the universe.



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By Associat

Evidently, you don't convert to Hinduism the way people adopt Judeo Christian faiths -- by taking teachings and practices. You take on Hinduism Nike-style -- Just do it.

[Her children already have Hindu names](#), according to a 2009 Associated Press story relying on *The Times of India* newspaper. It quoted a Hindu priest, Swami Dharam Dev, as saying

I have named her twins Hazel and Phinnaeus as Laxmi and Ganesh, while Henry will be called Krishna Balram.

[David Gibson at Disputations](#) asked Suhag Shukla, managing director of the Hindu American Foundation who explains:



As a non-proselytizing, pluralistic faith, Hinduism does not seek converts nor does anyone need to 'convert' formally to become a practicing Hindu. (There are) countless examples of prominent people in the West who have drawn inspiration from Hindu philosophy, converted formally or for all intents and purposes could be considered practicing Hindus.

▶ CAPTION
Associated Press

With that, Shukla claims a range from Henry David Thoreau to NFL running back Ricky Williams.

Yoga at Walden Pond? What about Wasilla, Alaska? After all, Sarah Palin does poses. But stretching the body is only as spiritual as you make it. Palin who grew up Pentecostal, shows no sign of twisting in a new religious direction. Still, she was photographed in the tree pose for [Runners World](#).

The *Yoga Dork* blog says [Palin mangled the pose](#) but we have never been a nation of purists. Americans like philosophic mash-ups -- such melding a belief in reincarnation with Christianity which has a very different understanding of salvation --- but we still identify overwhelmingly with name-brand Western religions. Surveys find only about 2 million Americans identify themselves as Hindu.

Yet, we have been doing [Hindu-Lite for years, sampling of the flavor](#), images and style of a 6,000-year-old faith but with no actual theology involved. Anywhere you look you can find loose chatter about *dharma* (a way of living leading to spiritual advancement) and *karma* (the "neutral, self-perpetuating law of the inner cosmos," Hindu monk Sannyasin Arumugaswami, editor of *Hinduism Today* magazine, told me in 2006) .

Yoga Journal estimated at that time that nearly a third of folks who try the 5,000-year-old Hindu physical and meditative discipline, say they're seeking "spiritual development." I would bet that's a higher percentage now than my four-year-old story..

If you want to actually learn something about Hinduism and self-realization, Rajan Zed, president of the [Universal Society of Hinduism, recommended](#) to Julia and her fans ...

... the Ancient Hindu scripture, *Katha Upanishad*, (which) points out that when the wise realize the Self, they go beyond sorrow. Self is supreme, and those who meditate on Self are freed from the cycle of birth and death. When one realizes Self, there is nothing else to be known.



▶ CAPTION
By Brian Adams, Associated Press

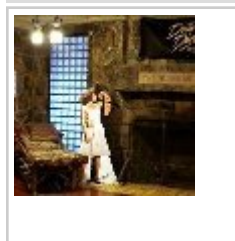
Got that? Hmm, maybe just strolling to temple and taking up chanting is easier.

Do you think this is a lasting choice for the Roberts clan or one that will fade with the next filming in some other culture? Have you been intrigued by the spiritual side of yoga?

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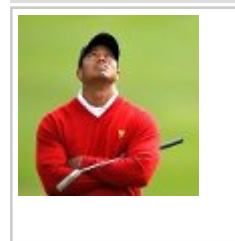
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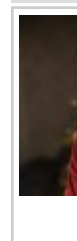
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[frieswiththat](#) (78 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 10m ago

No surprise here... Hollywood types will fall for anything that makes them feel worthwhile of their existence.

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[doctor pangloss](#) (67 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 13m ago

No BIG MACS for Julia.

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[saidwhat](#) (0 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 21m ago

I have no comment about this but I do have a question...

If it is so fluid and simple why is it necessary to rename the kids?

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[JimF](#) (0 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 29m ago

Oh boy, another Hollywood wierdo!!!

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[Gezus](#) (0 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 29m ago

Her kids are going to grow old hating the name convention used here like some hippie moonflower love child. The rich are eccentric enough to do otherwise idiotic things due to boredom, and as far as her spiritual growth, she's following a leader whose name will be forgotten in a decade after his death, or even sooner.

She should funnel her hollywood earned dollars to American charities and give back to the people that paid her wages, not a recluse supposed holy man in a cave.

I have pity on her lost ways. Christ died for her sins, This man hasn't done anything remotely holy.

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[Wo-Hen Nankan](#) (0 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 51m ago

Whoa...If Julia Roberts wants to worship a god with an elephant's trunk and name her kids after him, who are we to judge her. I'll bet that Tom Cruise could have converted her to scientology if she did not have that restraining order on him.

Sigh. Hollywood stars, Is there anything they don't know?-Homer Simpson

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[Eagleman](#) (2 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 51m ago

PVPerson slandered: **It's odd, when I was young I went to church and there they taught lessons on tolerance, turning the other cheek, loving your neighbor, charity and having empathy for others. Today, Christians seem to be the most intolerant, uncharitable and least sympathetic to others that any group I know. What happened? Did you people lose faith?*

No, PV Person, you're mangling the Biblical texts and are yourself, no doubt, a gay marriage supporter.

Take a look at all of the charitable Christian organizations out there, such as the Salvation Army, whose finances are impeccable and who have been helping the homeless for decades before Hollywood made a fad out of it, and the Christian organizations who have been helping to feed and build shelter for poor Haitians. I have a very good friend who goes out there every year to help out.

Christians have a moral creed they strive to live up to. Some fail, but that does not invalidate the creed any more than divorce invalidates the tradition of marriage. As for "tolerance", take a peek at the story of Jesus and the adulteress - it's the one with the line "Let he who is without sin, cast the first stone". After the would-be judges of the adulteress has dispersed, Jesus asks the adulteress, "So, have your accusers gone? Is there no one left who will condemn you?" She says, "None, Lord." Jesus says, "Then neither will I condemn you. Go, AND DO NOT SIN AGAIN." Jesus was not giving the adulteress a pass on her behavior, you see. He gave her a second chance. Now why don't you go read the Bible and actually learn from it before spouting off about it, hmmm?

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PVperson (0 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 1h 2m ago

It's odd, when I was young I went to church and there they taught lessons on tolerance, turning the other cheek, loving your neighbor, charity and having empathy for others. Today, Christians seem to be the most intolerant, uncharitable and least sympathetic to others that any group I know. What happened? Did you people lose faith?

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BOBSTER II (0 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 1h 6m ago

Sarah Palin will more likely convert to Islam and become democrat (depends who offers her more money)

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BOBSTER II (0 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 1h 9m ago

Hindus, or I better say, all Indian people are really strange or unusual to me on every aspect; business, religion, life, politics, economics, technology, basically on everything. But I can tell you, once you have Indian as friend, he is really your friend and you are going to like them all and want to be friend with all of them, and I believe that is what happened to Julia Roberts.

Anyway, I am glad she found religion she likes, after all, we all believe in same God, we are just not aware of that.

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